

TABLE 12.1

Evidence-Based Parole Policy and Practices and Their Rationales

	PAROLE POLICY AND PRACTICE	RATIONALE
Guiding Philosophy	Offenders' likelihood of success can be increased by aligning the intensity and type of prison and community interventions with assessed risk level. Postrelease supervision offers an opportunity to address criminogenic needs, monitor offenders' community adjustment, and address risk factors prior to release from criminal justice control.	Ninety-five percent of all incarcerated offenders will eventually be released from prison. A large body of knowledge is available to support decisions that are demonstrated to reduce the likelihood of reoffense.
Risk Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determinations regarding the timing of parole release and requirements of release are guided by clear policy that incorporates an assessment of risk as well as a structured consideration of other factors as defined by the sentencing structure of the jurisdiction. 2. Offenders at lower risk of reoffending are identified for parole <i>review</i> and consideration as early in the sentence as possible, in light of other sentencing considerations. Where the law directs the paroling authority to give primary consideration to public safety and the reduction of the likelihood of future crime, offenders at lower risk levels should be identified for release as soon as possible. 	Research demonstrates that it is possible to identify individuals who are most—and least—likely to reoffend. Furthermore, research demonstrates that all categories of offenders (high, moderate, and low risk) are more successful when interventions are tailored to address their risk level.
Prison-Based Interventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Requirements for in-prison treatment are based on assessed criminogenic needs. 4. In-prison programming is prioritized for higher risk offenders and used only selectively with lower risk offenders. 	In-prison programming is costly and limited. Reserve these resources for those who can benefit from them most. Community-based programming is not only less expensive, but research demonstrates it can also be more effective than in-prison programming.
Parole Supervision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Parole supervision intensity is based on assessed level of risk. 6. Terms and conditions of supervision are individually tailored and based on assessed criminogenic needs. 7. Parole officers devote their time and attention to addressing offenders' criminogenic needs. 8. Parole supervision practices align with other evidence-based supervision approaches. Paroling authorities with responsibility for supervision practices are aware of and adhere to this body of knowledge. Those without this responsibility are nonetheless familiar with these findings. 	Assessment tools enable professionals to determine both the level of recidivism risk and the specific factors likely to result in reoffense. Research demonstrates that tailoring interventions—both in terms of intensity and type—to these findings offers the greatest recidivism reduction potential. Furthermore, a body of knowledge exists that provides specific guidance with regard to reducing reoffense through the nature and type of interactions between supervision officers and offenders.
Community-Based Interventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Three to eight criminogenic needs are targeted for programming and services with moderate- and high-risk offenders (both in prison and in the community). 10. Paroling authorities and supervision agencies are familiar with the body of research on effective interventions and engage with providers to ensure that this body of knowledge is integrated into therapeutic practice. 	Research demonstrates that the rate of recidivism among moderate- and high-risk offenders is reduced when interventions are matched to assessed criminogenic needs, when multiple criminogenic needs are addressed, and when the interventions themselves are evidence-based (e.g., they use appropriate program methodologies and are delivered by skilled staff in research-supported doses).
Responding to Violations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Violations of conditions of supervision are responded to swiftly by parole supervision officers and, where appropriate, boards. 12. Responses to violations are proportional and aimed at reducing future noncompliance/criminal behavior rather than punishment alone. 	Many offenders will violate their conditions of supervision one or more times. Research demonstrates that responses are most effective when they are delivered quickly and when the actions taken seek to positively change, rather than punish, behavior.