

# Criminal justice evaluation and performance monitoring

## Guideline 6: Measuring outcomes

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## Acronyms

|        |                                                                |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABS    | Australian Bureau of Statistics                                |
| ACPQ   | Australian Community Participation Questionnaire.              |
| ACT    | Australian Capital Territory                                   |
| ANU    | Australian National University                                 |
| ATOP   | Australian Treatment Outcomes Profile                          |
| BIS-11 | <a href="#">Barratt Impulsiveness Scale-11</a>                 |
| CJS    | Criminal justice system                                        |
| CSS-M  | Criminal Sentiments Scale – Modified                           |
| ICO    | CSS-M sub-scale; identification with criminal others           |
| LCP    | CSS-M sub-scale; attitudes towards the law, courts and police; |
| LSI    | Life Skills Inventory                                          |
| MDS    | Minimum Dataset                                                |
| MSPSS  | Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support             |
| NDIS   | National Disability Insurance Scheme                           |
| PCA    | Pro-criminal attitudes                                         |
| PSC    | Parenting Scale                                                |
| PSI    | Problem Solving Inventory                                      |
| PSOC   | Parenting Sense of Confidence                                  |
| RSES   | Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale                                    |
| URICA  | University of Rhode Island Change Assessment -24               |
| SWLS   | Satisfaction with Life Scale                                   |
| TLV    | CSS-M sub-scale: tolerance for law violations                  |
| VET    | Vocational Education and Training                              |

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## Introduction

This guideline focuses on measuring outcomes—the changes that occur for clients because they engage with your program or service. Measuring outcomes is crucial for demonstrating the impact of your work, improving service delivery, and securing ongoing funding.

### What are outcomes?

Outcomes are the changes that happen for clients because of their engagement with your service. These might include changes in attitudes, behaviours, skills, relationships, or circumstances (e.g., housing status). Unlike client feedback, which focuses on satisfaction with the activities or outputs of a service (see Guideline 5), outcome measurement is about understanding whether those activities and outputs have led to meaningful change in a person's life.

This guide focuses specifically on short- and medium-term outcomes—the kinds of changes that can realistically be observed during or shortly after someone's participation in a program.

- **Short-term outcomes** – Changes seen during or immediately after service participation.
- **Medium-term outcomes** – Changes that take a little longer to emerge.
- **Long-term outcomes** – Sustainable, lasting change. This often takes years, which may be longer than the timeframe of your program.

Shorter-term changes lay the groundwork for longer-term outcomes. Even small shifts—such as securing stable housing or engaging in community activities—are significant milestones.

**Example:** James has been in the X program for three months. He has long-term alcohol and drug use issues, which he is discussing with his caseworker.

After six months in the program, James has reduced his alcohol use significantly and is more knowledgeable about the services he can access if he relapses (short-term outcome). At the end of the 12-month program, he rarely drinks alcohol and is starting to reduce his use of other substances as well (medium-term). When James' caseworker bumps into him a few years later, she learns he is now a peer mentor at a substance use recovery program (long-term).

## What outcomes should services measure?

Every service will be working towards different outcomes, based on the type of program they run, their client group, and their approach (you will have considered your outcomes, when developing your program logic: see Guideline 1). Stakeholder consultations and a review of best practices identified that programs working with justice-involved people typically focus on the following seven key outcome areas:



While contact with the criminal justice system is listed as a separate outcome, many of the other outcome areas contribute to justice-related outcomes, such as recidivism, incarceration, completion of court orders and diversion from the criminal justice system. Programs generally address risk factors that increase the likelihood of further justice system contact (e.g., drug and alcohol use), while also strengthening protective factors that promote long-term positive change (e.g., education).

## Health and wellbeing



Improving health and wellbeing is not just beneficial for clients—it plays a key role in reducing reoffending and supporting desistance. People in the criminal justice system often experience poor physical and mental health, including higher rates of chronic illness, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders than the general population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2023). These issues can create barriers to stability, employment, and relationships, making it harder for people to move away from offending (Link et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2023). Research shows that poor health can lead to increased substance use, financial difficulties, and family conflict, all of which raise the risk of reoffending (Ward et al., 2023). By addressing physical and mental health needs, services can help clients build stability, resilience, and opportunities for long-term change.

## Drug and alcohol use

Substance use is strongly linked to offending and recidivism, making it a crucial area for intervention. Many justice-involved people use alcohol and drugs to cope with trauma, mental health issues, or unstable living conditions, increasing their risk of reoffending (AIHW, 2023). Research shows that reducing substance use is associated with better engagement in treatment, improved relationships, and increased stability in housing and employment (Darke et al., 2012). However, substance use change is not always linear—relapse can be part of the recovery process. Measuring short-, medium-, and long-term changes in alcohol and drug use helps services understand progress, setbacks, and overall trends in recovery. Tracking frequency, severity, and impacts of substance use can help tailor interventions to support long-term desistance and wellbeing.



## Community and family relationships



Strong relationships help justice-involved people move away from crime. Problem-solving skills, communication, and trust support positive connections. Reducing contact with offending peers is important, while strengthening pro-social relationships—with family, friends, and community—can motivate desistance (McNeill & Maruna, 2007). For women, caregiving responsibilities are a key driver of change (Barr, 2018). Family and community provide practical support—housing, employment, and childcare—reducing pressures that lead to reoffending. Most importantly, being surrounded by people who believe in their ability to change makes desistance more likely (Weaver, 2013, 2015).

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity

Strong cultural identity is a key protective factor for wellbeing, resilience, and desistance among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Connection to Country, kin, community, language, and culture provides a sense of belonging and strength, supporting healing and positive change (Dudgeon et al., 2014). Research shows that cultural disconnection—often linked to colonisation, discrimination, and systemic disadvantage—can contribute to justice system involvement and poorer outcomes (Blagg et al., 2021). Programs that embed cultural identity, self-determination, and community connection help create meaningful pathways for change. Strengthening cultural identity can increase engagement with services, build self-efficacy, and support long-term desistance. Measuring cultural participation and connection is vital in understanding how services contribute to healing and justice outcomes.



## Housing



Stable housing is critical for reducing reoffending, making it essential to track housing outcomes. People facing homelessness are at higher risk of offending, while secure housing helps them stay safe, healthy, and engaged in support (Sered, 2021). However, a criminal record creates significant barriers to housing, especially in the current housing crisis (Doyle et al., 2022). Beyond meeting basic needs, housing provides ‘ontological security’—a stable foundation for routine, employment, and identity change (Low et al., 2023). It also helps people cut ties with negative influences and build pro-social networks. Without it, disengaging from past networks may lead to isolation rather than positive change. Measuring access to safe, stable housing is essential for supporting desistance

## Education and employment

Stable employment and education support desistance by providing structure, financial stability, and a sense of purpose. Justice-involved people often face barriers to both, including stigma, lack of qualifications, and unstable housing (Uggen, 2000). Research shows that consistent work and education reduce reoffending, especially when opportunities align with a person’s skills and interests (Visser et al., 2013).

Employment and training also build pro-social networks and boost self-esteem, reinforcing a non-offending identity. However, unstable or low-quality jobs can increase stress and reoffending risks (Farrall, 2005). Ensuring access to meaningful, long-term work and education is key to supporting sustainable change.



## Contact with the criminal justice system

Stopping offending (desistance) is a long and complex process, often involving relapse and remission before stabilising. While some people completely stop offending, for others, reducing or de-escalating their involvement in crime is a more realistic goal (Fagan, 1989; Maruna, 2001).

Services play a key role in supporting change, even when complete desistance isn’t immediate or likely. By focusing on short- and medium-term progress, such as reduced offending, improved stability, and engagement with support, we take a strengths-based approach rather than focusing only on setbacks. Desistance research highlights that maintaining positive change is an ongoing process, requiring social support, opportunity, and internal motivation (Gadd & Farrall, 2004; Walker et al., 2013a).



## Alignment between outcomes and the ACT Wellbeing Framework and Closing the Gap

Throughout these resources, each identified outcome is mapped to the relevant [ACT Government Wellbeing Framework](#) domains and [Closing the Gap](#) targets. This alignment helps services understand how their work contributes to broader government priorities, supports consistent reporting, and strengthens the evidence base for the impact of funded programs



The ACT Wellbeing Framework provides a shared understanding of what matters for the quality of life of people in the ACT. It identifies 12 domains of wellbeing—including health, safety, secure housing, social connection, education and lifelong learning, and standard of living—measured through a set of indicators. These domains reflect a holistic view of wellbeing that goes beyond economic outcomes, recognising the importance of social, cultural, and environmental factors. The Framework is used by government to guide policy, evaluate progress, and ensure programs contribute to a stronger, fairer community.



Closing the Gap is a national agreement between Australian governments and the Coalition of Peaks aimed at improving life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It sets 17 socio-economic targets across priority areas such as health, education, employment, justice, housing, and community safety. The agreement emphasises shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, building the community-controlled sector, and addressing systemic barriers. The ACT Government has committed to these targets and integrates them into policy, funding, and service delivery to ensure measurable progress toward reducing disadvantage and promoting equity.

## What tools should services use to measure outcomes?

This guideline is designed to help you build a client outcomes survey that captures the changes your clients experience while using your service. You can use this survey to collect data at entry, exit, and—if appropriate—midway or post-exit, depending on your program.

Each outcome in this guide includes suggested tools and questions you can use to measure change. For many outcomes, we provide two options:

- **A simple set of questions:** These are short, easy to administer, and suitable for most services. They provide a basic indication of whether change has occurred.
- **A validated scale:** These are more detailed tools that have been tested through research. They often use scoring systems that can detect smaller shifts over time and are useful for capturing nuanced or complex changes.

You can mix and match these options depending on the needs of your service and clients. Some services may focus on just one or two key outcome areas; others may track multiple outcomes across domains.

Importantly, you don't need to collect detailed data on every outcome. Instead, prioritise the outcomes that:

- align with your **program logic** (see Guideline 1)
- are practical to measure at both entry and exit and
- will generate useful information to support service improvement or reporting

**Tip:** Validated scales may be most appropriate for services that provide more intensive, therapeutic, or specialised support, where tracking subtle changes is important. For lower-intensity or short-term programs, simple question sets may be more manageable and still highly informative.

### What is a validated scale?

A validated scale is a measurement tool that has been tested through research to ensure it accurately measures what it is intended to measure. Validation involves assessing the tool's reliability (producing consistent results over time) and validity (measuring the right concept).

Where we have provided the details for a validated scale, we have made sure that they are publicly available and so can be used by services.

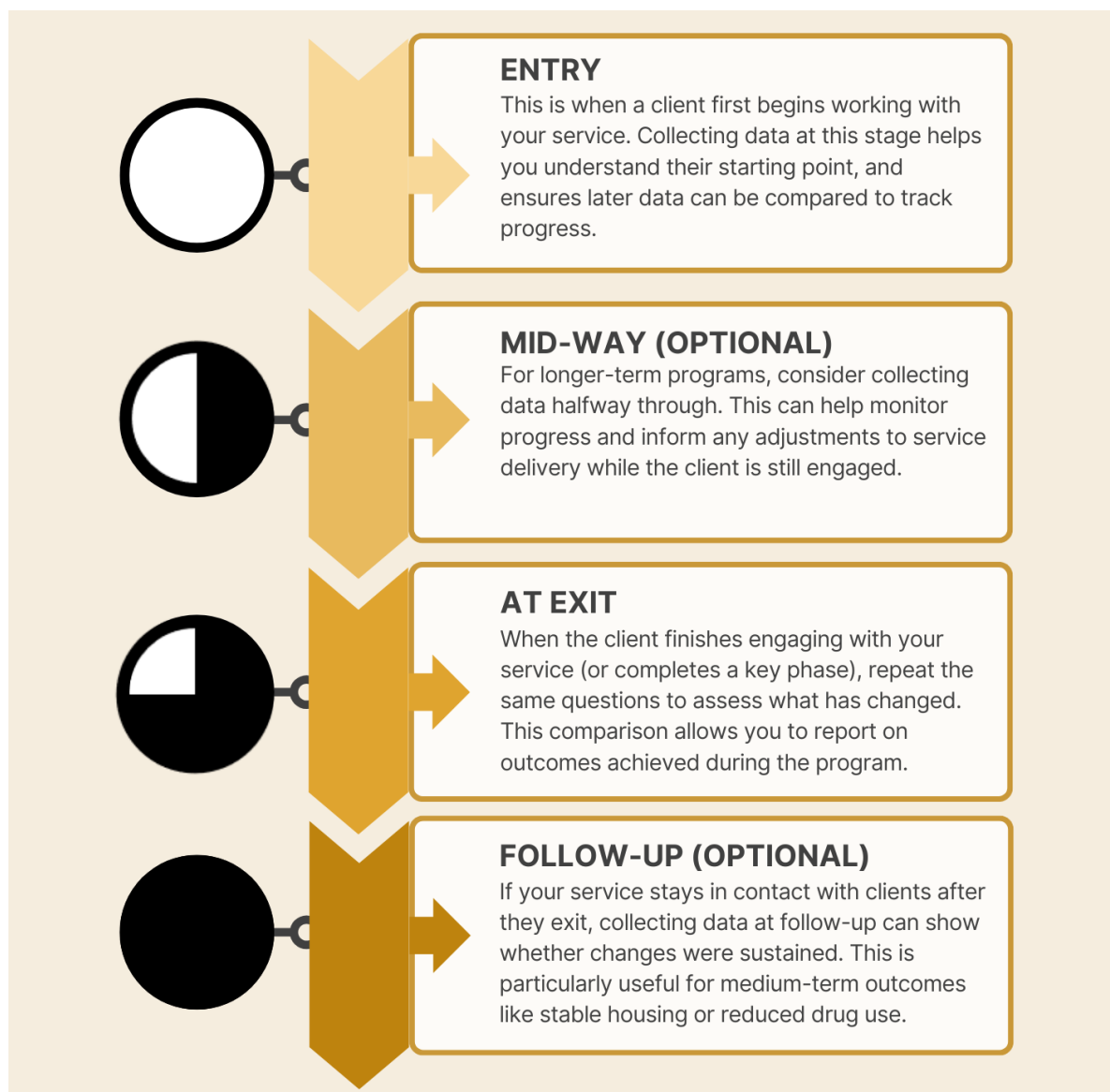
Using a validated scale can offer key benefits:

- **More sensitive to small changes:** Helps track subtle shifts in client progress.
- **Backed by research:** Has been tested to ensure it accurately measures the intended outcome.
- **Links to long-term impact:** Many validated scales have been used in research on recidivism
- **Standardization and Comparability:** Validated scales act as a standard that is understood without needing to explain the full methodology. They also allow for easier comparison of results across different studies and populations.

### When should services collect outcomes data?

To measure change, you need to know where you started. Baseline data—information collected before or at the start of a client's engagement—provides a crucial reference point for assessing progress. Without baseline data, it's difficult to demonstrate impact.

We recommend collecting data at the following points:



Challenges such as limited staff training, lack of funding, technical difficulties, and competing priorities often make data collection difficult.<sup>1</sup> This guide offers practical solutions to help you implement workable solutions despite these barriers.

<sup>1</sup> M Bamberger & L Mabry (2019). *Real World Evaluation: Working Under Budget, Time, Data, and Political Constraints*. Sage.

## What are some next steps services can take?



## How to use Guideline 6

This guideline is designed to help you measure short- and medium-term outcomes—the changes your clients experience during or shortly after their engagement with your service.

It includes over 40 suggested outcomes grouped by domain (e.g., housing, health, relationships, reoffending). For each outcome, we have provided:

- a short explanation of why the outcome matters, and
- suggested questions or tools for measuring change.

**Every service is different, so this is not a one-size-fits-all survey. Instead, think of it as a pick-and-mix guide—you can choose the questions that best suit your clients and the goals of your program. Some services might focus on just one or two key areas, while others may track multiple outcomes.**

For each outcome, we have tried to provide multiple measurement options. Where we provide more than one option:

- **Option 1:** Simple questions – Quick and easy to use, ideal for most services.
- **Option 2:** Validated scales – More detailed tools developed through research, useful for services offering intensive or therapeutic support.

You can use these questions to build your own client outcomes survey, combining several short questions or scales depending on your program's focus. See the “How to measure outcomes” section for tips on building and administering a survey.

Outcomes are grouped by theme (e.g., motivation, substance use, family connection), rather than rigid categories. This is because many outcomes are relevant to multiple areas of change. For example, “increased interpersonal trust” may relate to health, justice, or housing depending on your context. By focusing on *what* you want to measure, rather than *where* it fits, this guide allows for greater flexibility.

The screenshot on the next page shows an example outcome page from this guideline. We've included it to help you understand how each outcome is presented and how to use the different sections—such as the measurement options and pop-out boxes. These call-outs provide extra guidance on when and how to use particular tools, making it easier to select the right approach for your service.

## Employment readiness increases

Employment readiness refers to a person's skills, mindset, and practical ability to secure and maintain a job. This includes job-seeking skills, confidence, workplace behaviours, and stability in other areas of life (e.g., housing, health) that support employment success.

Many justice-involved people have a history, lack of qualifications, and services track progress that need to be addressed to secure long-term employment more

The measurement options we are recommending. Option 2 is usually a validated scale

employment, such as gaps in work history, lack of qualifications, and services track progress that need to be addressed to secure long-term employment more

Performance indicators show how the data collected will be used to measure change

### Measures

Clients are asked four questions about their employment readiness.

**Table 8: Employment readiness increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                   | Response categories                                                              | Performance indicators                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I feel sure that I can find a job and keep it.                  | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I feel ready to go to a job interview and talk about my skills. | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                               |                                                                                                                  |
| If I was offered a job tomorrow, I could start work.            | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                               |                                                                                                                  |
| My life is stable enough for me to keep a job if I get one.     | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                               |                                                                                                                  |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Plan



Indicator: Employment (3.2.4)

If the outcome is aligned with the ACT Wellbeing Framework or Closing Gap, we provide that

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 7 – Increase proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in employment, education or training:
- Target 8 – Increase proportion of adults in employment

## Short-term outcomes

The key short-term outcomes that your service may be working towards are:

- Knowledge of support services increases
- Engagement with health services increases
- Access to Centrelink payments increases
- Problem solving-skills improve
- Interpersonal trust increases
- Motivation to become connected to culture increases
- Independent living skills improve
- Employment readiness increases
- Motivation to enrol in/complete education and training increases
- Parenting attitudes, knowledge and skills improve
- Motivation to change increases
- Recognition of the costs associated with their negative behaviours increases
- Insights into behaviours, including triggers and causes, increases
- Pro-criminal attitudes decrease
- Understanding of bail / court orders and conditions increases

## Knowledge of available services increases

A key short-term outcome for many programs is ensuring that clients are aware of the support services available to them and feel confident accessing them. Without this foundational knowledge, clients may struggle to seek help when they need it, limiting their ability to achieve positive long-term outcomes.

### Measures

To measure changes in knowledge of support services, we recommend using the questions included in Table 1.

**Table 1: Knowledge of available support services increase – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                                                             | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Performance indicators                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Imagine you needed help with [specific issue, e.g., housing, mental health]. Which statement is closest to you right now? | 1) I wouldn't know where to go for support.<br>2) I've heard of some support services but don't know much about them.<br>3) I know about some support services but I'm not sure how to access them.<br>4) I have a good understanding of support services and how to access them.<br>5) I know a lot about support services and could explain them to someone else. | Number and proportion of clients whose knowledge of support services has increased (e.g., level 1 to 2)                      |
| How confident are you in your ability to access the support services you need?                                            | 1) Not at all confident<br>2) Slightly confident<br>3) Somewhat confident<br>4) Quite confident<br>5) Very confident                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Number and proportion of clients whose confidence in their ability to access support services increases (e.g., level 1 to 2) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Access and connectivity - Access to services.

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 1: Life expectancy
- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Engagement with health services improves

Engagement with health services is a key indicator of progress for clients whose offending is linked to physical, mental, or psychosocial health needs. For these clients, consistent and meaningful participation in health programs—such as mental health support, AOD treatment, medical care, or therapeutic case management—can help stabilise their lives, improve overall wellbeing, and reduce the risk of reoffending. Engagement reflects more than attendance; it includes active involvement in treatment, openness to support, and follow-through on care plans. Tracking engagement helps services identify what supports are working, where clients may be facing barriers, and how health interventions can be better tailored to their needs and goals.

### Measures

The client is asked four questions about their perceived ability to access health services when they need them.

**Table 2: Engagement with health services improves – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question                                                                                                | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In the past 3 months, I have been able to see a doctor, nurse, or health professional when I needed to. | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Slightly agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I know where to go if I need to see a doctor, nurse, or health professional.                            | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| If I need medical or health care, I can afford to get it.                                               | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| I feel confident that I can get medical or health care when I need it.                                  | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |

### Other measurement options

- Case management notes: Service providers may include information about client attendance at health services and keep track of this over time as a measure of change.

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Access and connectivity - Access to services.
- Health - Access to health services.

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 1: Life expectancy
- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Access to Centrelink payment increases

Access to stable income support can be a critical factor in reducing financial stress, improving housing stability, and supporting long-term desistance from the criminal justice system. Many people involved in the criminal justice system rely on Centrelink payments as a key source of income. For example, 80% of people being discharged from prison expected to receive a government payment through Centrelink on release.<sup>2</sup> However, there are also significant barriers to accessing Centrelink payments, including lack of identification documents, difficulty navigating the application process, and uncertainty about eligibility. By collecting information on changes in access to Centrelink payments over time, services can assess whether their support is helping clients overcome these challenges. This data can also highlight gaps in the system, inform advocacy efforts, and strengthen service delivery by identifying where additional assistance—such as financial literacy support or direct application assistance—is needed.

### Measures

Clients are asked two questions about their Centrelink payments:

- whether they are receiving any Centrelink payments, and
- their level of confidence that they are receiving the correct payments.

**Table 3: Access to Centrelink payments increase – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                                      | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                             | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Are you currently receiving any Centrelink payments?                                               | 1) Yes<br>2) No<br>3) Not sure                                                                                                                                                                  | Number and proportion of clients who report receiving Centrelink payments increases (comparisons at program entry and program exit).                  |
| Do you feel confident that you are receiving the correct Centrelink payment(s) for your situation? | 1) Yes, I am confident I am receiving the right payment(s)<br>2) No, I am unsure if I'm on the right payment<br>3) No, I believe I should be receiving more support but don't know how to apply | Number and proportion of clients whose confidence that their Centrelink payments are right increases (comparisons at program entry and program exit). |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Living Standards - Economic security and Financial Position

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). *The Health of People in Australia's Prisons 2022*. Australian Government.

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision making in their own lives.

## Problem-solving skills improve

A key domain of interpersonal skills is problem-solving. Problems that a client may be facing include social problems, such as the inability to get along with friends, as well as life-related issues such as deciding whether to get a divorce, move interstate or whether to start a new course.

Problem solving involves two interrelated components:

- **problem orientation** - our perceived ability to deal with problems, our motivation to deal with problems and the expected outcomes of problem-solving activities, and
- **problem-solving skills** – the behaviours we put into action to address identified problems.<sup>3</sup>

Research shows that people with negative problem orientation (e.g., feeling overwhelmed or helpless) and dysfunctional problem-solving skills (e.g., impulsivity, avoidance) tend to have lower resilience. They are also less likely to seek help or complete treatment.

Because of this, helping clients build confidence in problem-solving and develop structured, rational approaches to challenges can be a valuable part of your service. Supporting clients to shift from avoidance or impulsivity to practical problem-solving can improve their ability to manage day-to-day issues, make better decisions, and engage more effectively with support services.

## Measures

**Option 1:** Ask clients to rate the accuracy of seven statements about themselves (Table 3). These questions have been influenced by the Problem-Solving Index.

**Option 2:** The Problem-Solving Index (PSI). The PSI consists of 35 questions and can be completed either independently by the client or with support from a service provider.

While the PSI provides an overall problem-solving ability score, it also includes three key areas:

- Problem-solving confidence (11 questions) – How confident a person feels in their ability to solve problems.
- Problem-solving approach (16 questions) – Whether a person tends to approach problems systematically or avoid them.
- Personal control (5 questions) – The extent to which a person feels in control when faced with challenges.

In most evaluations, the overall PSI score is used rather than the individual sub-scales. The score range is 32–192, with lower scores indicating better problem-solving skills.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> T D’Zurilla & A Nezu (2010). ‘Problem-Solving Therapy’ in Mary McMurran and James McGuire (editors), *Social Problem Solving and Offending: Evidence, Evaluation and Evolution* (3rd edition) (Guilford Press).

<sup>4</sup> R Tate (2010). ‘Problem Solving Inventory (PSI)’ in *A Compendium of Tests, Scales and Questionnaires The Practitioner’s Guide to Measuring Outcomes after Acquired Brain Impairment*. Taylor & Francis Group.

**Table 4: Problem-solving skills increase – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                             | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | When I am faced with a challenging situation, I feel confident in my ability to solve it. | 1) Strongly Agree<br>2) Agree<br>3) Slightly Agree<br>4) Slightly Disagree<br>5) Disagree<br>6) Strongly Disagree | Number and proportion of clients, whose problem-solving abilities increase over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and midway, midway and exit, exit and follow-up) |
| 1      | I often feel overwhelmed when trying to solve a problem.                                  | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1      | I believe I can find a good solution to most problems I face.                             | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1      | When dealing with a problem, my first response is to avoid thinking about it.             | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1      | I take time to think through different solutions before acting on a problem.              | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1      | If one solution doesn't work, I try a different approach.                                 | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1      | When I have a problem, I tend to put off dealing with it.                                 | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 2      | PSI<br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a>        | PSI                                                                                                               | Number and proportion of clients, whose PSI score increases over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and midway, midway and exit, exit and follow-up)                |

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Interpersonal trust increases

Interpersonal trust refers to how much we trust others in our daily interactions (Clarke et al., 2021). This includes both people we have close relationships with (such as family and friends) and those we interact with briefly (such as service providers or community members).

Interpersonal trust has three key dimensions:

- **Behavioural trust** – The willingness to be vulnerable around others.
- **Cognitive trust** – The expectation that others will not take advantage of us when we are vulnerable.
- **Affective trust** – A sense of connection to others based on shared values, goals, or experiences.<sup>5</sup>

Trust plays a crucial role in help-seeking behaviours. People with low interpersonal trust are often less likely to seek help from family, friends, or support services when they need it.<sup>6</sup> This can lead to worse long-term outcomes, particularly for justice-involved individuals, who may already face barriers to accessing support.

### Measures

**Option 1:** One question, which is taken from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines for measuring trust in surveys.<sup>7</sup>

**Option 2:** Interpersonal trust sub-scale of the Intermediate Outcomes Toolkit developed by HM Prison & Probation Service in the UK. This involves asking the client six questions, resulting in a score of 6-30. Lower scores demonstrate low levels of interpersonal trust.

<sup>5</sup> N Potter (2020). 'Interpersonal Trust' in Simon, J (editor), *The Routledge Handbook of Trust and Philosophy*. Taylor & Francis Group.

<sup>6</sup> A Clarke et al. (2021). 'Interpersonal Trust Reported by Adolescents Living with Mental Illness: A Scoping Review' *Adolescent Research Review*, 6(2): p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017). *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust* (2017). OECD.

**Table 5: Interpersonal trust increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                                                        | Response categories                                                                                  | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all, and 10 is completely, in general, how much do you trust most people? | Number                                                                                               | Number and proportion of clients, whose trust in others increased over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and exit)            |
| 2      | There are some people who I trust                                                                                    | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Neither agree or disagree<br>4) Agree<br>5) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients, whose interpersonal trust score, increased over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and exit) |
| 2      | There are people who really understand me                                                                            | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2      | There are people I can turn to when I have a problem                                                                 | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2      | I have close friends I can trust                                                                                     | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2      | There are people I feel close to                                                                                     | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2      | Nobody really knows me well                                                                                          | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                   |

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Motivation to become (more) connected to culture increases

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, connection to culture—including identity, community, and Country—plays an important role in healing, resilience, and reducing contact with the criminal justice system. Strong cultural connections are linked to improved mental health, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging, all of which are protective factors against reoffending. Engaging with culture can also provide pathways to community support, strengthen relationships with Elders and knowledge holders, and reinforce a sense of purpose and identity. Conversely, some clients with background of trauma may not feel safe identifying as Indigenous and may not wish to discuss their heritage or culturally connect with other incarcerated people who are Indigenous. This may affect their sense of belonging and psychosocial health. Building the trust necessary to increase clients' motivation to connect to culture may take time.

By collecting data on changes in cultural connection over time, practitioners can better understand the impact of their work and ensure their services are culturally responsive. Tracking shifts in cultural connection—such as increased interest, engagement in cultural activities, or strengthened relationships with community and Elders—can provide valuable insight into how programs support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in meaningful and culturally safe ways. This data can also be used to advocate for culturally relevant services and demonstrate the role of cultural connection in achieving positive outcomes for clients.

### Measures

Clients are asked two questions about how important it is to them to feel connected to their culture, and the barriers they have experienced to feeling closer to culture.

**Table 6: Motivation to become (more) connected to culture increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                                             | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How important is it for you to feel connected to your culture?                                            | 1) Not important to me<br>2) A little bit important to me<br>3) Fairly important to me<br>4) Very important to me                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Number and proportion of Indigenous clients whose views on the importance of being connected to culture increases (comparisons between entry and exit) |
| Do any of these things make it hard for you to connect with your culture?<br><i>Select all that apply</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Not being able to visit Country<br><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling distant from family or community<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not knowing much about cultural traditions<br><input type="checkbox"/> Rules that stop you from travelling or joining in<br><input type="checkbox"/> No support to help you connect<br><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling judged or unwelcome when trying to join cultural activities | Number and proportion of Indigenous clients whose barriers decrease (comparisons between entry and exit)                                               |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework

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- Social Connection - Sense of social connection
- Identity and Belonging - Participation in community events and activities

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 16: People access, maintain, and strengthen connection to culture and land

## Independent living skills improve

Independent living skills are the essential abilities a person needs to manage daily life and live independently. These skills cover a wide range of areas, including money management, housing, personal care, health, cooking, transportation, and problem-solving. Strong independent living skills enable people to make informed decisions, maintain stability, and navigate life's challenges with confidence.

For justice-involved individuals, people experiencing housing instability, or those transitioning out of institutional settings, developing and strengthening independent living skills is crucial. Gaps in these skills can increase the risk of re-offending, financial hardship, or difficulty maintaining housing and employment.

### Measures

**Option 1:** The Personal Self-Assessment Tool for Independent Living is a self-report questionnaire designed to help clients evaluate their readiness for independent living. Completed by the client themselves, this tool encourages self-reflection on key life skills in six areas.

**Option 2:** The Life Skills Inventory (LSI) is a structured assessment tool designed to evaluate independent living skills across multiple domains. The LSI is completed by a service provider, caseworker, or support staff, and assesses 15 main categories.

### Customising the assessment: Selecting relevant domains

Services can pick specific independent living skills to assess, rather than using the entire tool. Both tools are designed to be flexible, allowing services to focus on the most relevant areas for their clients. By adapting the tools to fit your client's situation, you ensure that assessments remain focused, practical, and aligned with your service goals.

**Table 7: Independent living skills improve – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                                                                             | Response categories                                   | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Personal Self-Assessment Tool for Independent Living<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | Personal Self-Assessment Tool for Independent Living. | Number and proportion of clients, whose self-assessed independent living skills increase over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and exit) |
| 2      | LSI<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> .                                                  | LSI                                                   | Number and proportion of clients, whose assessed independent living skills increase over the course of participation in the service (comparisons between entry and exit)      |

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Employment readiness increases

Employment readiness refers to a person's skills, mindset, and practical ability to secure and maintain a job. This includes job-seeking skills, confidence, workplace behaviours, and stability in other areas of life (e.g., housing, health) that support employment success.

Many justice-involved people face barriers to employment, such as gaps in work history, lack of qualifications, and stigma. Measuring employment readiness helps services track progress in building job-related skills and confidence, identify barriers that need to be addressed, and ensure clients are supported in a way that makes long-term employment more achievable.

### Measures

Clients are asked four questions about their employment readiness.

**Table 8: Employment readiness increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                   | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I feel sure that I can find a job and keep it.                  | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I feel ready to go to a job interview and talk about my skills. | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                  |
| If I was offered a job tomorrow, I could start work.            | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                  |
| My life is stable enough for me to keep a job if I get one.     | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                |                                                                                                                  |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Economy - Employment

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 7: Increase proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in employment, education or training
- Target 8: Increase proportion of adults in employment

## Motivation to enrol in/complete training and education increases

Education and training can play a big role in helping people who have been involved in the criminal legal system to move forward in their lives. Having a qualification or learning new skills can make it easier to get stable work, earn an income, and build confidence. These are all important steps in reducing the chances of returning to the justice system.

But many clients face real challenges when it comes to education. School might have been disrupted by family problems, health issues, or time in custody. Some clients may not feel confident in their learning ability, or they may be dealing with practical barriers such as transport, childcare, or money. Stakeholder organisations report that many clients rule themselves out of furthering their education or trying to gain employment, because of their criminal conviction. Because of this, it's not enough to only ask whether someone is studying — it's also important to understand how motivated they are to enrol or to keep going once they start and the reasons for this.

### Measures

The below measures assume that the client is not, at time of completing the survey, enrolled in any education or training program (see Guideline 3). If the client is enrolled in some form of training/education program, then the wording should be changed from enrolment to completion.

**Option 1:** Client completes the [Readiness Ruler](#) – one item scale with higher scores (0-10) indicating higher levels of readiness to enrol in education or training.

**Option 2:** Client answers three questions taken from the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire and Academic Motivation Scale.

**Table 9: Motivation to enrol/complete education and training increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                               | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                                          |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | On a scale from 0 to 10, how ready are you to enrol in (or complete) education or training? | Number                                                                                                            | Number and proportion of clients whose 'score' on the <a href="#">Readiness Ruler</a> increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | Enrolling in (Completing) education/training will help me reach my future goals             | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                  |
| 2      | I don't see much point in enrolling in (completing) education/training right now.           | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                | Number and proportion of clients whose disagreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit)               |

|   |                                                                                       |                                    |                                                                                                                   |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | I am not motivated to begin (complete) an education or training program at this time. | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose disagreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Education and life-long learning

## Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 5: Increase the proportion of people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification.
- Target 6: increase the proportion of people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above).
- Target 7: Increase the proportion of youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training.

## Parenting attitudes, knowledge and skills improve

Parenting can be a powerful motivation for change among people involved in the criminal justice system, especially for women.<sup>8</sup> However, low parenting skills and confidence can create barriers to building positive relationships with their children and to family reunification. Many justice-involved parents may have lacked stable parental role models themselves, making it difficult to know how to parent effectively.

Even when a parent has a strong bond with their child, involvement in the criminal justice system—particularly incarceration—can disrupt that relationship. Studies show that parents face significant challenges reconnecting with their children after release, including:

- loss of parental authority,
- emotional distance,
- children's feelings of anger, resentment, or hostility, and
- feeling out of touch with their children's lives.<sup>9</sup>

Building parenting skills and confidence can support parents' mental health and wellbeing, which in turn has positive effects in other areas of their lives. Because of this, many parenting programs include measures of mental health and wellbeing, alongside parenting attitudes, knowledge, and skills.<sup>10</sup>

### What can be measured

Currently, there are no publicly available tools that comprehensively measure parenting attitudes, knowledge, and skills in a single assessment. However, several tools assess one or two of these constructs individually, and they have been widely used in evaluations of parenting programs, including those for justice-involved parents.<sup>11</sup> Practitioners selecting tools should consider which parenting constructs are most relevant to their evaluation and whether a validated scale or a custom approach is best suited for their program. We have provided suggestions to measure two parenting aspects:

- “Parenting attitudes and practices” and
- “Parenting confidence and self-efficacy”

<sup>8</sup> U Barr (2018). ‘Gendered Assisted Desistance: A Decade from Corston’ *Safer Communities*, 17(2): p. 81; K Seay et al. (2017), ‘Substance Abuse Treatment Engagement among Mothers: Perceptions of the Parenting Role and Agency-Related Motivators and Inhibitors’ *Journal of Family Social Work* 20(3): p.196.

<sup>9</sup> V Perry et al. (2011). ‘The Impact of a Correctional-Based Parenting Program in Strengthening Parenting Skills of Incarcerated Mothers’ *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 22(3): p. 457.

<sup>10</sup> V Troy et al. (2018). ‘The Feasibility, Appropriateness, Meaningfulness, and Effectiveness of Parenting and Family Support Programs Delivered in the Criminal Justice System: A Systematic Review’. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(6): p. 1732.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; S Blower et al. (2019). ‘Psychometric Properties of Parent Outcome Measures Used in RCTs of Antenatal and Early Years Parent Programs: A Systematic Review’ *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 22(3): p. 367.

For the measurement of “parenting knowledge” there are no standardised, publicly available tools so programs will often develop bespoke tools to assess clients’ retention of course-specific content.<sup>12</sup>

### Measures: Parenting attitudes and practices

**Option 1:** Client answers three questions (drawn from the Parenting Scale – see Option 2) about their parenting attitudes and practices.

**Option 2:** The Parenting Scale (PSC) is a 30-item tool that measures parenting practices and is composed of three constructs – laxness, over-reactivity and verbosity. It is completed by the client.

**Table 10: Parenting attitudes and practices improve – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                            | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                           |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | When my child misbehaves, I stay calm and think about the best way to respond.           | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit)  |
| 1      | I am consistent in setting and enforcing rules for my child.                             | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit)  |
| 1      | I sometimes react too quickly or harshly when my child misbehaves.                       | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                | Number and proportion of clients whose disagreement with this statement increase (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | PSC<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | PSC                                                                                                               | Number and proportion of clients whose parenting 'scores' increase (comparisons at entry and exit)               |

<sup>12</sup> V Troy et al. (2018). ‘The Feasibility, Appropriateness, Meaningfulness, and Effectiveness of Parenting and Family Support Programs Delivered in the Criminal Justice System: A Systematic Review’. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(6): p. 1732.

## Measures: Parenting confidence and self-efficacy

**Option 1:** Client answers three questions (drawn from the Parenting Sense of Confidence Scale) about their confidence parenting their children.

**Option 2:** The Parenting Sense of Confidence (PSOC) scale is a -17 item tool that measures parenting satisfaction and self-efficacy. The scale is often used to generate an overall score of competency, with higher scores indicating higher levels of parenting self-esteem. However, the two sub-scales can also be used separately as measures of satisfaction (9 items; measures enjoyment and confidence in parenting) and efficacy (8 items; assesses perceived ability to handle parenting challenges).

**Table 11: Increased parenting confidence and self-efficacy – recommended measures and performance indicators**

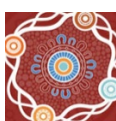
| Option | Question text                                                                             | Response categories                                                                                                  | Performance indicators                                                                                           |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | I feel confident in my ability to handle parenting challenges.                            | 7) Strongly Disagree<br>8) Disagree<br>9) Slightly Disagree<br>10) Slightly Agree<br>11) Agree<br>12) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit)  |
| 1      | I believe I am doing a good job as a parent.                                              | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                   | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit)  |
| 1      | I often feel frustrated in my role as a parent.                                           | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                   | Number and proportion of clients whose disagreement with this statement increase (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | PSOC<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | PSC                                                                                                                  | Number and proportion of clients whose PSC 'scores' increase (comparisons at entry and exit)                     |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – protect children and reduce family violence

## Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 4: Reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care

## Motivation to change increases

Research shows that justice-involved people who are ready to change are more likely to stop offending (i.e., desist) in the future. Because of this, readiness to change is an important short-term outcome that can indicate whether a client is on the path to long-term behaviour change.

### Measures

If you have collected information about your client's readiness to change as part of the Minimum Dataset (see Guideline 3), measuring a client's progress against this outcome can be straight-forward. You can just re-administer the same questions midway through the client's engagement with the service and again at exit.

If you have not collected this information during the client's initial engagement with the program, you could embed them in your Client Outcomes Survey.

**Option 1:** Clients are asked to answer one question that best describes their level of motivation to change.

**Option 2:** Readiness to change scale from the Intermediate Outcomes Toolkit developed by HM Prison & Probation Service in the UK. The seven item responses are 'summed' for an overall score (7-42) with higher scores indicating higher levels of readiness/motivation to change.

**Option 3:** The University of Rhode Island Change Assessment (URICA-24) is a self-report tool that helps to identify the stage of readiness to change a client is at: precontemplation (lowest), contemplation, action, and maintenance (highest). The tool is completed by the client, who is asked to answer 24 questions about themselves.

**Table 12: Motivation to change increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Short-term outcome                                        | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                  | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                               |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Which statement do you think is closest to you right now? | (1) I have stopped offending<br>(2) I have made a definite decision to try and stop offending<br>(3) I would like to stop offending but I'm not sure if I can<br>(4) I am unlikely to stop offending | Number and proportion of clients, whose motivation to change increased over the course of participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit)               |
| 2      | I think it's important that I change my life              | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Slightly agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly agree                                                                                    | Number and proportion of clients whose perceived ability to change 'score' increases over the course of participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | I want to change my life                                  | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                      |

|   |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | I owe it to myself to change                                                              | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                             |
| 2 | I am really working hard to change my life                                                | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                             |
| 2 | Anyone can talk about change themselves; I'm actually going to do something about it      | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                             |
| 2 | The people who care about me want me to change my life                                    | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                             |
| 2 | There's nothing that I really need to change about myself                                 | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                             |
| 3 | URICA-24<br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | URICA-24<br>Number and proportion of clients whose URICA-24 'scores' increased over the course of participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration;
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention

## Recognition of the costs associated with negative behaviours increases

As part of your service, you may run activities that help clients understand the costs of their offending and/or challenge the perceived rewards they associate with it. Research suggests that some offending can be explained through rational choice theory—where individuals weigh up the risks and consequences of committing an offence against the perceived benefits. These benefits may be:

- material (e.g., financial gain),
- social or psychological (e.g., admiration from peers), and
- practical (e.g., meeting an immediate need)

By helping clients recognise these factors, services can support behaviour change by increasing awareness of the real consequences of offending and reducing the appeal of any perceived rewards.

### Measures

**Option 1:** Clients are asked two questions about the perceived consequences of being arrested in the future.

**Option 2:** Clients are asked to estimate the likelihood of experiencing negative social costs if they were arrested again (6 questions). These questions have been taken from the [Pathways to Desistance Study](#) in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 13: Recognition of costs associated with negative behaviours increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question                                                                                                         | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                  |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | How much do you think being arrested again would affect your future goals (e.g., housing, money, travel, study)? | 1) Not at all (It wouldn't affect my future at all)<br>2) A little (It might affect my future a small amount)<br>3) Some (It would affect my future in some ways)<br>4) Quite a lot (It would make things harder for me)<br>5) A lot (It would really affect my future)<br>Completely (It would change my future in a big way) | Number and proportion of clients whose expectation that being arrested again would affect their future goals increased (comparisons at entry and exit). |

<sup>13</sup> K Thomas et al (2022). 'Structural Predictors of Choice: Testing a Multilevel Rational Choice Theory of Crime' *Criminology*, 60(4): p. 606.

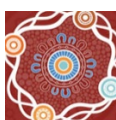
|   |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | If you were arrested again, how likely do you think it would be to affect your relationships with important people in your life (e.g., family, employer, community)? | 1) Not at all likely (It wouldn't change my relationships)<br>2) A little likely (It might change things a little)<br>3) Somewhat likely (It would affect some of my relationships)<br>4) Quite likely (It would make some relationships harder)<br>5) Very likely (It would cause big problems in my relationships)<br>6) Extremely likely (It would really damage my relationships) | Number and proportion of clients whose expectation that being arrested again would affect their relationships increased (comparisons at entry and exit).                                                     |
| 2 | If you were arrested by the police again, how likely would it be that you would lose respect from your close friends?                                                | 1) Not at all likely<br>2) A little likely<br>3) Somewhat likely<br>4) Quite likely<br>5) Very likely<br>6) Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Number and proportion of clients whose expectation of informal social costs associated with their offending increases over the course of their participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit). |
| 2 | Family members?                                                                                                                                                      | Not at all likely – Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | Your partner?                                                                                                                                                        | Not at all likely – Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | Neighbours                                                                                                                                                           | Not at all likely – Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | Children                                                                                                                                                             | Not at all likely – Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | If you were arrested by the police again, how likely would it be that you would lose your job or find it harder to get a job?                                        | Not at all likely – Extremely likely                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

## Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration;
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention

## Insights into behaviours, including triggers and causes, increases

Understanding why people engage in certain behaviours—and recognising the triggers and underlying causes—is a key step toward lasting behaviour change. Many justice-involved individuals may have limited awareness of the factors driving their decisions, such as stress, trauma, substance use, or peer influences.

By tracking changes in self-awareness and insight, services can assess whether clients are developing a greater understanding of their behaviours and learning to identify high-risk situations and adopting strategies to manage triggers. This is particularly important for reducing reoffending, improving emotional regulation, and supporting engagement with interventions. Measuring these insights helps ensure that services are effectively equipping individuals with the self-awareness needed for long-term change.

### Measures

Clients are asked five questions about their understanding of triggers, and insights into their behaviours. These are based on self-regulation theory and tools measuring resilience.

**Table 14: Insights into behaviours increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                            | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I know what situations, thoughts, or feelings make me more likely to make risky choices. | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Slightly agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I can recognise the things that set me off or lead me to act in ways I don't want to.    | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| Lately, I have learned more about why I make certain choices.                            | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| I can see patterns in my behaviour and understand them better.                           | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| I feel more aware of what helps me make good choices.                                    | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration;
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention

## Pro-criminal attitudes decrease

Addressing pro-criminal attitudes (PCAs) can contribute to longer-term desistance pathways.<sup>14</sup> PCAs contribute to offending by making it possible for offenders to justify their behaviours when they may be in conflict with social norms and expectations and can emerge both before and after engaging in a crime.<sup>15</sup>

### Measures

Over the past 30 years, different tools have been developed to measure PCAs. These tools generally fall into two categories:

1. General PCA measures – Can be used with any justice-involved person, regardless of their offence type.
2. Offence-specific PCA measures – Focus on attitudes linked to particular types of offending (e.g., violent or sexual offences).

Many of these tools have been validated across different populations, meaning they are likely to be reliable for a range of clients.<sup>16</sup> However, none appear to have been validated with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, so their appropriateness in this context is unclear.

**Option 1:** Clients are asked to answer two questions about their pro-criminal attitudes. These have been drawn from the Criminal Sentiments Scale - Modified (CSS-M).

**Option 2:** The CSS-M. The CSS-M is completed by the client and includes three sub-scales; attitudes towards the law, courts and the police, (LCP); identification with criminal others (ICO); and tolerance for law violations (TLV).

While the full CSS-M consists of 41 questions, we recommend using the tolerance for law violations (TLV) sub-scale specifically to measure attitudes towards crime.

<sup>14</sup> R Banse et al. (2013). 'Pro-Criminal Attitudes, Intervention, and Recidivism' *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 18(6): p. 673; S Mazher et al. (2022). 'A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified' *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 49(9): p.1295; J McGuire & R Hatcher (2001). 'Offense-Focused Problem Solving: Preliminary Evaluation of a Cognitive Skills Program' *Criminal Justice and Behavior*; 28(5): p. 564.

<sup>15</sup> Banse et al (ibid).

<sup>16</sup> V Martínez & A Pueyo (2015). 'The Spanish Version of the Criminal Sentiment Scale Modified(CSS-M): Factor Structure, Reliability, and Validity' *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 7(2): p. 67-72; S Mazher et al. (2022). 'A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified' *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 49(9): p.1295

**Table 15: Pro-criminal attitudes decrease - recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question                                                                                       | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                                |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | It's OK to break the law as long as you don't get caught.                                      | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement decreases over the course of their participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit). |
| 1      | You're crazy to work for a living if there's an easier way, even if it means breaking the law. | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement decreases over the course of their participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit). |
| 2      | CSS-M<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> .     | CSS-M                                                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose CSS-M 'score' decreases over the course of their participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit).                 |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration;
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention

## Understanding of bail / court orders and conditions increases

If a client has a good understanding of bail / court orders and conditions, they may be less likely to breach these conditions and so be re-arrested and charged with additional offences, which may in turn contribute to longer-term reoffending patterns.

### Measures

The client is asked to answer three questions to assess their understanding of their bail/court order conditions.

**Table 16: Understanding of bail / court orders – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question                                                            | Response categories                                                                                                                                | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Do you understand all the conditions of your bail / court order?    | 1) Yes, completely<br>2) Mostly, but some parts are unclear<br>3) A little, but I don't fully understand it<br>4) No, I don't understand it at all | Number and proportion of clients whose understanding of their bail conditions increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                                     |
| If you break your bail /court conditions, what could happen?        | 1) Nothing will happen<br>2) I might get a warning, but it's not serious<br>3) I could be arrested or get into legal trouble<br>4) I'm not sure    | Number and proportion of clients whose understanding of the legal consequences of breaching their bail conditions increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| How confident are you that you can follow all your bail conditions? | 1) Very confident<br>2) Somewhat confident<br>3) A little confident<br>4) Not confident at all                                                     | Number and proportion of clients whose confidence they can be compliant with their bail conditions increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration;
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention

This section provides an overview of the medium-term outcomes that services may aim to achieve as clients move beyond the initial stages of change. These outcomes often build on short-term gains—such as increased motivation, knowledge, or confidence—and reflect progress in applying those gains in real-world contexts. The outcomes listed here are designed to be achievable within or shortly after a client's engagement with your service and can be measured using the tools provided in this guide.

The key medium-term outcomes that your service may be working towards are:

Psychosocial health improves

Physical health improves

Drug and alcohol use decreases

Involvement and identification with offending peer networks decreases

Sense of belonging and social support increases

Engagement in community activities increases

Confidence in cultural identity increases

Access to appropriate and stable accommodation increases

Engagement in paid employment increases

Financial security increases

Enrolment and completion of education and training increases

Ability to avoid high-risk situations increases

Impulsivity decreases

Compliance with bail conditions and court orders increases

Access to children increases (where safe and appropriate)

## Psychosocial health improves

Psychosocial health is about how well a person manages their emotions, handles stress, connects with others, and functions in daily life. It includes:

- self-esteem,
- life satisfaction, and
- social support (measured at [Sense of belonging increases](#)).

All of these play a big role in whether someone can make positive changes. Poor psychosocial health can lead to isolation, trouble coping with challenges, and difficulties finding or keeping a job or stable housing.

Measuring psychosocial health is crucial because it provides insight into a person's ability to function in society, maintain stable relationships, and engage positively with support services. Poor psychosocial health is often linked to higher rates of stress, substance use, social isolation, and difficulty in maintaining employment or housing stability. By tracking changes in psychosocial well-being over time, services can identify barriers to rehabilitation, tailor interventions to client needs, and ensure that individuals have the support necessary to sustain positive long-term outcomes.

### Measures: Self-esteem

**Option 1:** Clients are asked one question about their level of self-esteem.

**Option 2:** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a 10-item self-report measure that assesses overall self-worth by evaluating positive and negative feelings about oneself. Scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater self-esteem.

**Table 17: Self-esteem improves – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question                                                                                   | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                         |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | I feel good about myself most of the time.                                                 | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Slightly agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | RSES<br><br>Full tool is available at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | RSES                                                                                                              | Number and proportion of clients whose RSES 'score' increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                  |

## Measures: Satisfaction with life

**Option 1:** Clients are asked one question about their overall quality of life.

**Option 2:** The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a brief, 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. Responses are summed, with score ranging from 5-35. Higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction.

**Table 18: Satisfaction with life improves – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question                                                                                                 | Response categories                                                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | On a scale from 0-10, all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? | 0 = Not at all satisfied<br>10 = Completely satisfied                                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose overall life satisfaction increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.                                                              | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Neither agree or disagree<br>5) Slightly agree<br>6) Agree<br>7) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose SWLS 'score' increases (comparisons at entry and exit)              |
| 2      | The conditions of my life are excellent.                                                                 | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                |                                                                                                            |
| 2      | I am satisfied with my life.                                                                             | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                |                                                                                                            |
| 2      | So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.                                               | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                |                                                                                                            |
| 2      | If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.                                             | Strongly disagree – Strongly agree                                                                                                                |                                                                                                            |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Health – Mental health improves

## Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Physical health improves

Physical health plays a critical role in a person's ability to engage with work, education, treatment, and daily life. Many justice-involved individuals experience chronic health conditions, untreated injuries, or limited access to healthcare, which can create barriers to stability and positive change. Poor health can also increase stress, substance use, and difficulty in maintaining employment or housing.

By measuring changes in physical health, services can track whether clients are accessing healthcare, improving their well-being, and gaining the stability needed for long-term success. Understanding these changes helps ensure that health needs are addressed alongside other support, improving overall outcomes in rehabilitation, desistance, and community reintegration.

### Measures

Client is asked to self-assess their physical health using 2 questions, with responses rated on a scale from 1 to 10.

**Table 19: Physical health improves – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question                                                                                                                                      | Response categories                             | Performance indicators                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall physical health?                                                                     | 1 = not good at all<br>10 = very good           | Number and proportion of clients whose health score increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| On a scale from 1 to 10, how confident do you feel in managing your health conditions (e.g., taking medication, seeing a doctor when needed)? | 1 = not confident at all<br>10 = very confident | Number and proportion of clients whose health score increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Health – physical health improves

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 1: Life expectancy

## Drug and alcohol use decreases

If you have collected information about your client's alcohol and drug use as part of the Minimum Dataset (see Guideline 3), measuring a client's progress against this outcome can be straight-forward. You can just re-administer the same questions midway through the client's engagement with the service and again at exit.

If you have not collected this information during the client's initial engagement with the program, you could embed them in your Client Outcomes Survey.

### Measures

Section 1 of the Australian Treatment Outcomes Profile (ATOP). The ATOP assesses clients' responses about substance use, focusing on the past four weeks.

**Table 20: Drug and alcohol use decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

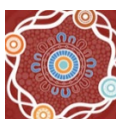
| Question text                                                                          | Response categories | Performance indicators                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ATOP<br>Full tool is available at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | ATOP                | Number and proportion of clients whose self-reported use of alcohol and drugs decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Health – physical and mental health improve
- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 1: Life expectancy
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration.
- Target 12. Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention.
- Target 14 – People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Involvement and identification with offending peer networks decreases

Involvement and identification with offending peer networks are discrete constructs.

**Involvement** is about how much time someone spends with offending peer networks, and the proportion of their peer groups that are involved in offending. In comparison, **identification** is concerned with the extent to which someone's identity and sense of self is informed by their attitudes and norms of their peer networks that may condone or support offending behaviours.

### Measures: Involvement with offending peers

Clients are asked two questions about the amount of time they have spent with friends who have been in trouble with the police, and whether their friends discourage them from offending.

**Table 21: Involvement with offending peers decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question                                                                                                     | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                           | Performance indicators                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In the past six months, how often have you spent time with friends who have been in trouble with the police? | 1) Never<br>2) Rarely<br>3) Sometimes<br>4) Often<br>5) All the time                                                                                                                                          | Number and proportion of clients whose contact with peers who have been in trouble with the police decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| Do you think the people you spend time with encourage or discourage you from staying out of trouble?         | 1) They always discourage me from offending<br>2) They mostly discourage me<br>3) They don't really influence me either way<br>4) They mostly encourage me to offend<br>5) They always encourage me to offend | Number and proportion of clients who say that their peers discourage them from offending increases (comparisons at entry and exit)           |

## Measures: Identification with offending peers

**Option 1:** Clients are asked to answer two questions about their identification with deviant peers. These have been drawn from the Criminal Sentiments Scale - Modified (CSS-M).

**Option 2:** The CSS-M. The CSS-M is completed by the client and includes three sub-scales; attitudes towards the law, courts and police, (LCP); identification with criminal others (ICO); and tolerance for law violations (TLV). While the full CSS-M consists of 41 questions, we recommend using the identification with criminal others (ICO) sub-scale only.

**Table 22: Identification with offending peers decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question                                                                                                       | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                                |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | People who have been in trouble with the law are more like me than people who don't have trouble with the law. | 1) Strongly Disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly Disagree<br>4) Slightly Agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly Agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements decrease over the course of their participation in the service (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 1      | People who have broken the law have the same sorts of ideas about life as me.                                  |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2      | CSS-M<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> .                     | CSS-M                                                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose identification 'score' decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)                                                               |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

## Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in incarceration

Sense of belonging and social support increases

Social connections play a key role in the desistance process.<sup>17</sup> One way to measure this is by assessing whether people feel a sense of belonging and believe they can rely on their social networks for support when needed.

Having strong, supportive relationships—alongside stable housing and other basic needs—helps build a sense of security and stability. This foundation, often called ‘ontological security’, gives people the confidence and stability needed to reshape their identity and move away from offending.

Measures

**Option 1:** Perceived Social Support Questionnaire – Revised. A three-item scale that measures general feelings of being supported <sup>18</sup>. The scale provides an overall score from 3-15, with higher scores indicating higher levels of social support.

**Option 2:** [Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support \(MSPSS\)](#). A 12-item scale assessing the level of support provided by three key sources: family members, friends and an intimate partner. The scale produces an overall score range between 12-84 with higher scores indicating higher levels of social support. Alternatively, an average score (1-7) can be generated by dividing the overall score by 12.

**Table 23: Increased sense of belonging and social support – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                                                    | Response categories                                                                        | Performance indicators                                                                           |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | There is someone very close to me whose help I can always count on.                                              | 1) Not at all true<br>2) Rarely true<br>3) Sometimes true<br>4) Often true<br>5) Very true | The number and proportion of clients whose score increases (comparisons at entry and exit)       |
| 1      | When I am sick, I can ask friends or family members to take care of important matters for me without hesitation. | Not at all – Very true                                                                     |                                                                                                  |
| 1      | If I am very depressed, I know who I can turn to.                                                                | Not at all – Very true                                                                     |                                                                                                  |
| 2      | MSPSS<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> .                       | MSPSS                                                                                      | The number and proportion of clients whose MSPSS score increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

<sup>17</sup> K Fox (2022). ‘Desistance Frameworks’ *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 63(101684).

<sup>18</sup> J Petersen et al (2024). ‘Development and Validation of a Brief Three-Item Form of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire (F-SozU K-3)’ *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 24(3): 100496.

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework

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- Social Connection: Sense of social connection
- Identity and Belonging: Participation in community events and activities

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Engagement in community activities increases

As discussed in the previous section, social connections play a key role in the desistance process. Apart from assessing a subjective sense of belonging, we can also ask more concrete questions about how often people participate in community activities.

Such participation can help people move away from offending peer networks, as discussed earlier, and begin new supportive relationships that aid wellbeing and desistance.

### Measures

**Option 1:** Three items adapted from the Australian Community Participation Questionnaire (ACPQ) relating to community activities. Two questions are scored from 1-5 and one is scored from 1-3, with higher scores indicating higher levels of participation.

**Option 2:** The 15-item version of the [Australian Community Participation Questionnaire](#).<sup>19</sup> This questionnaire assesses seven separate types of participation:

- contact with immediate household,
- contact with extended family,
- contact with friends,
- contact with neighbours,
- religious observance,
- organised community activities, and
- active interest in current affairs.

Participants respond to each item using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “never, or almost never” (1) to “always, or almost always” (7). An index of breadth of participation can be derived by dichotomising average scores for each participation type using a mean-split as follows: a score of one indicates a ‘participator’ for those at or above the mean, or zero for ‘non-participators’, i.e. those below the mean. This mean-split procedure is conducted for each of the seven types. Scores are then summed to give an eight-point index with a range of zero to seven.

<sup>19</sup> L, Brett et al (2019). 'Ageing well: evaluation of social participation and quality of life tools to enhance community aged care (study protocol)'. *BMC Geriatrics* 19(78).

**Table 24: Increased engagement in community activities – recommended measures and performance indicators**

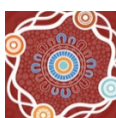
| Option | Question text                                                                                         | Response categories                                                | Performance indicators                                                                          |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | I take an active part in organised group activities in my community                                   | 1) Never<br>2) Rarely<br>3) Sometimes<br>4) Often<br>5) Very often | The number and proportion of clients whose score increases (comparisons at entry and exit)      |
| 1      | I am a member of at least one sporting, hobby or community-based club or association                  | 1) None<br>2) One<br>3) More than one                              |                                                                                                 |
| 1      | I attend events that bring people together such as fetes, shows, festivals, or other community events | 1) Never<br>2) Rarely<br>3) Sometimes<br>4) Often<br>5) Very often |                                                                                                 |
| 2      | ACPQ<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> .             | ACPQ                                                               | The number and proportion of clients whose ACPQ score increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Social Connection: Sense of social connection
- Identity and Belonging: Participation in community events and activities

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

## Confidence in cultural identity increases

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultural identity is a key protective factor that influences wellbeing, resilience, and pathways out of the criminal justice system. A strong sense of cultural identity—through connection to Country, community, kinship, language, and traditions—can support healing, reduce recidivism, and promote social and emotional wellbeing.

Measuring changes in cultural identity over time helps services understand whether their programs are effectively fostering cultural reconnection and strengthening identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Many justice-involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced forced disconnection from culture due to colonisation, intergenerational trauma, and systemic discrimination. Restoring cultural identity can support self-worth, purpose, and a sense of belonging, which are all critical factors in rehabilitation and reintegration

### Measures

**Option 1:** Clients are asked four questions about their confidence explaining their cultural identity and participating in cultural events.

**Option 2:** The culture and knowledge section of the Mayi Kuwayu questionnaire, a national survey developed as part of the [Mayi Kuwayu Study](#), Australia's largest longitudinal study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing<sup>20</sup>. Developed by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, clients are asked about the frequency of their involvement in a number of cultural practices.

**Table 25: Confidence in cultural identity increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                                                 | Response categories                                           | Performance indicators                                                                                          |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | How strongly do you feel connected to your Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity?                     | 1) Not at all<br>2) A little bit<br>3) A fair bit<br>4) A lot | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with these statements increase (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 1      | How confident do you feel in sharing cultural knowledge with others (e.g., family, friends, community)?       | Not at all – A lot                                            |                                                                                                                 |
| 1      | How confident are you in taking part in cultural activities (e.g., ceremonies, arts, language, storytelling)? | Not at all – A lot                                            |                                                                                                                 |
| 1      | How comfortable do you feel attending cultural events and gatherings?                                         | Not at all – A lot                                            |                                                                                                                 |

<sup>20</sup> Mayi Kuwayu (2023). *Information for Study Participants*. Mayi Kuwayu.

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                      |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | How much time do you spend...<br>On Country?                                                                                                                                      | 1) Want to but can't<br>2) Not at all<br>3) A little bit<br>4) A fair bit<br>5) A lot | Number and proportion of clients who report that the time they spend in cultural events and activities has increased (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2 | With someone who has cultural knowledge (elder or knowledge holder)                                                                                                               | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Learning and using knowledge from Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Law (or Lore)?                                                                                                | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Getting or eating bush tucker (includes traditional foods and fishing)?                                                                                                           | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Making art, music and paintings?                                                                                                                                                  | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Passing on cultural knowledge?                                                                                                                                                    | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | With someone who has cultural knowledge (Elder or knowledge holder)?                                                                                                              | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Learning culture, kinship, and respect?                                                                                                                                           | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Receiving Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander healing methods (such as traditional healers, bush medicine)?                                                                         | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Participating in social events related to Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people<br>*such as NAIDOC week, Sorry Day events, cultural festivals, corroboree, marches or rallies) | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Contributing to your community (such as participating in community meetings, organising events, volunteering, healing, being on committees or boards)?                            | Want to but can't – A lot                                                             |                                                                                                                                                      |

## Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Social Connection: Sense of social connection
- Identity and Belonging: Participation in community events and activities

## Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 16: People access, maintain, and strengthen connection to culture and land

## Access to appropriate and stable accommodation increases

Stable housing is essential for wellbeing, safety, and long-term stability. Without a secure place to live, people face higher risks of reoffending, poor health, and difficulty finding work or accessing support. Maintaining stable housing helps individuals focus on their goals, stay engaged with services, and build a more secure future. Tracking housing stability over time ensures that people are getting the right support to prevent homelessness and maintain a safe, suitable home.

### Measures

To measure changes in housing security, we recommend asking the client three questions about:

- their housing situation at time of being surveyed,
- how long they have been in this housing situation, and
- the stability of their housing situation.

If you have collected information about your client's housing status as part of the Minimum Dataset (see Guideline 3), measuring a client's progress against this outcome can be straightforward. You can just re-administer the same questions midway through the client's engagement with the service and again at exit to assess changes in housing status.

If you have not collected this information during the client's initial engagement with the program, you could embed them in your Client Outcomes Survey.

**Table 26: Access to appropriate and stable housing increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                   | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Where are you living currently? | (1) Own home<br>(2) Private rental<br>(3) Rent Housing ACT<br>(4) Homeless/ Sleeping rough/ In a car/ Tent / The street<br>(5) Temporary accommodation/Boarding house/Caravan park<br>(6) Supported accommodation (including through NDIS or other service)<br>(7) Living at a partner's/relative's/friend's house<br>(8) Prison/youth detention/in-patient<br>(9) Other (please specify)<br>(X) Client does not know<br>(R) Refused<br>(99) Not asked | Number and proportion of clients who report being unhoused (i.e., self-report being homeless / sleeping rough / In a car / Tent / The street) decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

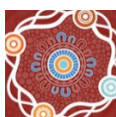
|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How long have you been living there?                      | (1) Less than a month<br>(2) 1–3 months<br>(3) 4–6 months<br>(4) More than 6 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Number and proportion of clients who report being in their current residence for longer periods of time increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| How stable do you feel your current housing situation is? | (1) Very stable – I feel confident I can stay here for the long term (12+ months)<br>(2) Mostly stable – I can stay here for now, and I expect to stay for at least 6 months<br>(3) Somewhat stable – I can stay here for now, but I’m unsure about the next few months<br>(4) Unstable – I don’t know if I will have housing in the next month<br>(5) I don’t have stable housing | Number and proportion of clients who report their housing situation is 'stable' increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                         |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Housing and Home: Canberrans have access to secure, suitable and affordable accommodation throughout their lives
- 

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 9: People secure appropriate, affordable housing without overcrowding

## Engagement in paid employment increases

Securing and keeping a job is a key factor in reducing reoffending and supporting desistance. Employment provides financial stability, routine, social connections, and a sense of purpose—all of which contribute to long-term positive change. Research shows that consistent, meaningful employment reduces the risk of reoffending, but low-quality or unstable jobs can have the opposite effect. By tracking employment outcomes, services can assess whether clients are not just finding work, but also staying employed and benefiting from it in a meaningful way.

### Measures

Clients are asked five questions about their involvement in paid work, measuring their:

- employment status,
- hours worked,
- whether they are under-employed (i.e., not working as much as they would like to be),
- job stability, and
- overall job satisfaction.

**Table 27: Engagement in paid employment increases– recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                               | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                           | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Are you currently in paid work?             | (1) Yes<br>(2) No                                                                                                                                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients who report being employed increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                                                      |
| How many hours a week do you usually work?  | (1) Less than 10 hours<br>(2) 10–19 hours<br>(3) 20–29 hours<br>(4) 30–39 hours<br>(5) 40+ hours                                                                                                              | Number and proportion of clients who report the number of hours they are working increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                                |
| Would you like to be working more hours?    | (1) Yes, I want a lot more hours<br>(2) Yes, I want a few more hours<br>(3) No, I'm happy with my current hours                                                                                               | Number and proportion of clients who are "underemployed" (i.e., are working less hours than they would like to) decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| How stable do you feel your current job is? | (1) Very stable – I expect to stay in this job long-term<br>(2) Somewhat stable – I am not sure how long I can keep this job<br>(3) Unstable – I could lose this job soon<br>(4) I don't have a job right now | Number and proportion of clients who report being engaged in stable employment increases (comparisons at entry and exit)                                  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                |                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thinking about your current job or work situation, how good do you think it is overall? (This includes things like how safe it feels, how steady it is, how you get along with people at work, and whether it suits your needs.) | (1) Very bad<br>(2) Bad<br>(3) OK<br>(4) Good<br>(5) Very good | Number and proportion of clients who report being in quality employment increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Economy: Employment

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 7 – Increase proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (aged 15-24) in employment, education or training;
- Target 8 – Strong economic participation and development of people and communities - Increase proportion of adults (aged 25-64) in employment

## Financial security increases

Financial security is about having enough money to meet basic needs and feeling in control of finances. It includes two key areas:

- **Financial stress** – feeling worried or overwhelmed about money, debt, or the future.
- **Economic hardship** – struggling to afford essentials like food, rent, or bills.

Many justice-involved people face financial insecurity, which can make it harder to find stable housing, stay engaged in programs, or focus on change. Tracking financial security over time helps practitioners see whether clients are improving, what barriers remain, and where extra support is needed. This can guide referrals to income support, budgeting help, or employment services to support long-term stability.

### Measures: Financial stress

**Option 1:** Clients are asked to assess their level of financial stress, relative to 12 months ago. Where clients were incarcerated at this point, they should be asked about their financial stress, compared to 'just before entering prison'.

**Option 2:** The Financial Anxiety Scale asks clients to indicate their level of agreement with five statements measuring different symptoms that are consistent with financial stress. Responses are summed, with scores ranging from 5-25. Higher scores indicate higher financial stress levels.

**Table 28: Financial stress decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                                                                        | Response categories                                                                                                    | Performance indicators                                                                                                             |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Compared to 12 months ago, my level of financial stress has                                                                          | 1) Increased a lot<br>2) Increased a little<br>3) Stayed about the same<br>4) Decreased a little<br>5) Decreased a lot | The number and proportion of clients who report that their level of financial stress has decreased (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 1      | [If client was incarcerated during the past 12 months]<br><br>Compared to before I entered prison, my level of financial stress has] | Increased a lot -<br>Decreased a lot                                                                                   | The number and proportion of clients who report that their level of financial stress has decreased (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| 2      | I feel anxious about my financial situation.                                                                                         | 1) Never<br>2) Rarely<br>3) Sometimes<br>4) Often<br>5) Always                                                         | Number and proportion of clients whose financial stress 'score' decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)                          |

|   |                                                                                           |                |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2 | I have difficulty sleeping because of my financial concerns.                              | Never - Always |
| 2 | I feel stressed about my personal finances in general.                                    | Never - Always |
| 2 | I am worried about my financial future.                                                   | Never - Always |
| 2 | I feel nervous when reviewing my financial statements (e.g., bank account, bills, loans). | Never - Always |

### Measures: Economic hardship

Clients are asked to identify whether they have experienced one or more of 6 forms of economic hardship. These questions have been taken from the General Social Survey (ABS).

**Table 29: Economic hardship decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Response categories        | Performance indicators                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>In the last 12 months, have any of the following happened to you?</p> <p>Could not pay for one or more essential household bills or expenses on time? This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• electricity, gas, or telephone bills</li> <li>• mortgage or rent payments</li> <li>• car registration or insurance</li> <li>• home and/or contents insurance</li> <li>• credit card payments</li> <li>• child care or school fees</li> <li>• groceries</li> </ul> | <p>1) Yes</p> <p>2) No</p> | <p>The number and proportion of clients who report that they are able to pay household bills increases (comparisons at entry and exit)</p> |
| Pawned or sold something                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>1) Yes</p> <p>2) No</p> | <p>The number and proportion of clients who had pawned or sold something decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)</p>                     |
| Went without meals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>1) Yes</p> <p>2) No</p> | <p>The number and proportion of clients who went without meals decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)</p>                               |

|                                                      |                 |                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Went without medical or dental treatment when needed | 1) Yes<br>2) No | The number and proportion of clients who went without medical/dental treatment decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| Was unable to heat or cool your home                 | 1) Yes<br>2) No | The number and proportion of clients who were unable to heat their home decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)        |
| Asked to borrow money from friends or family members | 1) Yes<br>2) No | The number and proportion of clients who had to borrow money decreased (comparisons at entry and exit)                   |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Living Standards: Canberrans can be economically secure and have the means to help manage their lives

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 8 – Strong economic participation and development of people and communities - Increase proportion of adults (aged 25-64) in employment

## Enrolment in and completion of education increases

While motivation to study is an important first step, real change occurs when clients enrol in, participate in, and complete education or training programs. These medium-term outcomes demonstrate that clients are moving from intention into action.

Tracking enrolment shows whether services are supporting clients to take up opportunities that match their interests and abilities. Monitoring participation provides insight into whether clients can sustain their engagement despite challenges such as transport, housing instability, financial stress, or caring responsibilities. Completion of courses or qualifications is a particularly strong milestone, as it represents persistence through barriers and results in tangible credentials that can improve life opportunities.

### Measures

To measure changes in participation in and completion of education and training, we recommend asking the client three questions about:

- their current enrolment in education and training,
- their education level, and
- their attendance/engagement in education.

If you have collected information about your client's education level and enrolment in education and training as part of the Minimum Dataset (see Guideline 3), measuring a client's progress against this outcome can be straight-forward. You can just re-administer the same questions midway through the client's engagement with the service and again at exit to assess changes in housing status.

If you have not collected this information during the client's initial engagement with the program, you could embed them in your Client Outcomes Survey.

**Table 30: Education participation increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                              | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Performance indicators                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What is the highest level of education you have completed? | (1) Postgraduate degree<br>(2) Graduate Diploma/Certificate<br>(3) Bachelor degree<br>(4) Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree/Diploma<br>(5) VET Certificate (I-IV)<br>(6) Secondary School Certificate (Year 12)<br>(7) Some secondary school (Year 7-10)<br>(8) Primary school<br>(9) No education | Number and proportion of clients whose education level increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

|                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Are you currently enrolled in a tertiary education or a training program?                                                                  | (1) Yes – postgraduate tertiary program<br>(2) Yes – undergraduate tertiary program<br>(3) Yes – vocational education or training (VET) course<br>(4) Yes – another type of apprentice or traineeship<br>(5) No | Number and proportion of clients whose participation in education increases (comparisons at entry and exit)       |
| <i>If client is enrolled in tertiary education or a training program</i><br><br>How often do you attend your classes or training sessions? | (1) All or almost all<br>(2) Most<br>(3) Some<br>(4) Rarely<br>(5) Not at all                                                                                                                                   | Number and proportion of clients whose attendance at training/education increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Education and life-long learning

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 5: Increase the proportion of people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification.
- Target 6: increase the proportion of people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above).
- Target 7: Increase the proportion of youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training.

## Ability to avoid high-risk situations increases

While insight into behaviours helps people understand what leads to risky choices, the ability to manage triggers is about putting that awareness into action. Someone may recognise their triggers but still struggle to control their reactions without the right skills and strategies.

Measuring trigger management separately allows services to track whether clients are developing practical coping mechanisms—such as avoiding high-risk situations, using de-escalation techniques, or seeking support when needed. This distinction is important because insight alone doesn't always lead to change, but building skills to manage triggers supports long-term behaviour change and desistance.

### Measures

Clients are asked three questions about their ability to manage triggers for behaviours they want to avoid.

**Table 31: Ability to avoid high-risk situations increases – recommended measures and indicators**

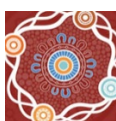
| Question text                                                                                | Response categories                                                                                               | Performance indicators                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| When I notice a trigger, I know what I can do to stop myself from going down the wrong path. | 1) Strongly disagree<br>2) Disagree<br>3) Slightly disagree<br>4) Slightly agree<br>5) Agree<br>6) Strongly agree | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I have ways to deal with situations that used to get me into trouble.                        | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |
| I feel more in control of how I react to tough situations.                                   | Strongly disagree –<br>Strongly agree                                                                             | Number and proportion of clients whose agreement with this statement increases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in incarceration

## Impulsivity decreases

Impulsivity is a key factor in offending behaviour and includes three main components:

- **Response initiation** – Acting quickly before fully processing a situation.
- **Response inhibition** – Struggling to stop a behaviour once it has started.
- **Consequence sensitivity** – Preferring immediate rewards over long-term consequences.<sup>21</sup>

People with lower impulse control are more likely to persist in offending and disengage from treatment.<sup>22</sup> While much research focuses on young people, impulsivity is also a risk factor for adult offending.<sup>23</sup> This is particularly relevant for neurodivergent individuals and those with substance use disorders, as well as violent and drug/alcohol-related offending.<sup>24</sup> Because of this, reducing impulsivity is often a key outcome in evaluations of programs for justice-involved adults.<sup>25</sup>

## Measures

**Option 1:** The Weinberger Adjustment Inventory - Short Form, Impulse Control sub-scale. The client answers three questions, responses are added to create a score from 3-15 with higher scores indicating higher levels of impulsivity.<sup>26</sup>

**Option 2:** The [Barratt Impulsiveness Scale-11](#) (BIS-11). The BIS-11 includes 30 questions, with scores ranging from 30-120. Higher scores on the scale are associated with higher levels of impulsivity, although it has been suggested that a score of 72 and above indicates that someone has high levels of impulsivity.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> C Mathias et al. (2008). 'Behavioral Measures of Impulsivity and the Law' *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 26(6): p. 691.

<sup>22</sup> E Palmer & L Humphries (2016) 'Differences between Completers and Non-Completers of Offending Behaviour Programmes: Impulsivity, Social Problem-Solving, and Criminal Thinking' *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 21(2): p. 407.

<sup>23</sup> A Berman (2004). 'The Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program: Assessing Short— and Long-Term Outcomes Among Male Swedish Prisoners', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 40(1–2): p.85; T Butler et al. (2010). 'Reducing Impulsivity in Repeat Violent Offenders: An Open Label Trial of a Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor' *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44(12): p. 1137.

<sup>24</sup> C Expósito-Álvarez et al. (2023). 'Participants in Court-Mandated Intervention Programs for Intimate Partner Violence Perpetrators with Substance Use Problems: A Systematic Review of Specific Risk Factors' *Intervención Psicosocial*, 32(2): p. 89; Mathias et al. (2008). 'Behavioral Measures of Impulsivity and the Law' *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 26(6): p. 691.

<sup>25</sup> A Berman (2004). 'The Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program: Assessing Short— and Long-Term Outcomes Among Male Swedish Prisoners', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 40(1–2): p.85; T Butler et al. (2010). 'Reducing Impulsivity in Repeat Violent Offenders: An Open Label Trial of a Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor' *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44(12): p. 1137.

<sup>26</sup> T Baker & A Piquero (2010). 'Assessing the Perceived Benefits—Criminal Offending Relationship' *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(5): p. 981.

<sup>27</sup> M Alford et al. (2020). 'Examining the Factors Associated with Impulsivity in Forensic Populations: A Systematic Review' *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 54: 101409.

**Table 32: Impulsivity decreases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Option | Question text                                                                               | Response categories                                                                        | Performance indicators                                                                            |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | I do things without giving them enough thought.                                             | 1) Not at all true<br>2) Rarely true<br>3) Sometimes true<br>4) Often true<br>5) Very true | Number and proportion of clients whose 'score' decreases (comparisons at entry and exit)          |
| 1      | I become "wild and crazy" and do things other people might not like.                        | Not at all true – Very true                                                                |                                                                                                   |
| 1      | When I'm doing something for fun, I tend to get carried away and go too far.                | Not at all true – Very true                                                                |                                                                                                   |
| 2      | BIS-11<br><br>Full tool is provided at <a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a> . | BIS-11                                                                                     | The number and proportion of clients whose BIS-11 score decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration
- Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in incarceration

## Compliance with bail conditions and court orders increases

Keeping track of whether clients follow their bail or court orders helps services understand what supports are working and where clients might be struggling. If someone breaches their conditions—whether intentionally or not—it can lead to serious legal consequences, including further justice system involvement or incarceration. By measuring compliance, practitioners can spot barriers early, such as housing instability, mental health challenges, or difficulty understanding conditions, and provide the right support. It also helps identify systemic issues that make compliance harder. Supporting clients to meet their legal obligations reduces their risk of reoffending and helps them move forward with their lives.

### Measures

Clients are asked to show much they agree or disagree with the statement "In the past six months, I have found it difficult to comply with the conditions of my bail/court orders."

**Table 33: Compliance with bail and court orders increases – recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                                                                             | Response categories                                                                                  | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In the past six months, I have found it difficult to comply with the conditions of my bail / court orders | 1) Strongly agree<br>2) Agree<br>3) Neither agree or disagree<br>4) Disagree<br>5) Strongly disagree | Number and proportion of clients whose self-reported difficulties complying with the conditions of their bail decreases (comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Other measurement options

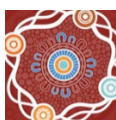
- **Case management notes:** If services receive notifications from ACT Policing or Community Corrections that their client has breached the conditions of their bail/court orders, they may record this in case notes.
- **Linked administrative datasets:** Linking a client's information with ACT Policing would provide the most accurate measure of bail/court order breaches.

### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework



- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

### Alignment with Closing the Gap



- Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration.
- Target 11. Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention.

## Access to children increases (where safe and appropriate)

For many justice-involved parents, gaining or increasing contact with their children is a key step toward stability and positive change. Barriers such as legal restrictions, family conflict, or unstable housing can make it difficult for parents to maintain relationships with their children, and ensure their safety. Tracking changes in access over time helps practitioners understand whether clients are improving their contact, what obstacles remain, and where additional support may be needed. This information can guide services in addressing barriers, advocating for clients, and supporting long-term family connections.

### Measures

To measure change in access to children, we recommend asking clients who have children two questions about the:

- frequency of their contact with children, and
- the type of contact they have with children (e.g., supervised vs unsupervised),

If your service included the items on child-care arrangements in the MDS (see guideline 3), then measuring this outcome could be as simple as asking these questions again at exit from the program and/or follow-up. Alternatively, it can be included as additional questions in the Client Outcomes Survey.

**Table 34: Access to children increases– recommended measures and performance indicators**

| Question text                                              | Response categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Performance indicators                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How often do you have contact with your child/children?    | (1) I have full-time care<br>(2) I see them regularly (weekly or more)<br>(3) I see them sometimes (monthly or less)<br>(4) I have phone/video contact only<br>(5) I have letters or message contact only<br>(6) I do not have any contact | Number and proportion of clients who report that the frequency of their contact with their children has increased (comparisons at entry and exit)               |
| What type of contact do you have with your child/children? | (1) Living with me<br>(2) Face-to-face visits<br>(3) Phone or video calls<br>(4) Letters or messages<br>(5) Other: _____                                                                                                                   | Number and proportion of clients who report their type of contact has increased (e.g., from phone or video only to face-to-face; comparisons at entry and exit) |

### Other measurement options

- **Case management notes:** If services receive notifications from ACT Child and Youth Protective Services that their client's access to their children has changed, they may record this in case notes.

- **Linked administrative datasets:** Linking a client's information with ACT Child and Youth Protective Services would provide the most accurate measure of changes in parenting responsibilities.

#### Alignment with ACT Wellbeing Framework

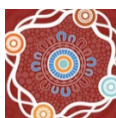
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- Safety – reduce crime so Canberrans feel safe

#### Alignment with Closing the Gap

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- Target 4: Reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care