

Social engagement program development report: A 2-day webinar-workshop for Bureau of Corrections Officers on enhancing interview competencies for pre- and post-release reintegration of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)



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Abstract

This program development report presents the design, implementation, and evaluation of a 2-day webinar-workshop titled *Enhancing Interview Competencies for Pre- and Post-Release Reintegration of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)*, conducted for Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) program officers in the Philippines. This report integrates findings from a pre-workshop needs assessment ($n = 33$), the evidence-based program design, and post-workshop evaluation data ($n = 20$). The needs assessment revealed high self-rated competency in empathy, rapport-building, and open-ended questioning ($M = 4.44-4.68$ on a 5-point scale), alongside identified gaps in emotional regulation, advanced probing, handling resistance, structured interview flow, and trauma-informed communication. In response, the program was designed around seven core learning outcomes aligned with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model (Andrews & Bonta, 2017), motivational interviewing (Magill et al., 2018), and trauma-informed practice (Miller & Najavits, 2017). Post-workshop evaluation data indicated a mean satisfaction rating of 4.32 out of 5.00 across all program dimensions, with the highest ratings for facilitator knowledge and topic relevance. Qualitative feedback highlighted motivational interviewing, hands-on role-play scenarios, and structured interview flow as the most impactful learning elements. Findings support the value of needs-driven, evidence-based training in correctional settings and underscore the need for continued face-to-face, skills-based professional development for reintegration officers. Statistical analyses appropriate for a single-group pre-post design are recommended for future evaluations. Implications for program enhancement and policy are discussed.

Keywords: interviewing skills, reintegration, Bureau of Corrections, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed practice, persons deprived of liberty, program development, correctional rehabilitation

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1. Introduction

The rehabilitation and successful reintegration of incarcerated individuals into the community represents one of the most significant challenges facing correctional systems worldwide (Duwe, 2017; Visher & Travis, 2017). In the Philippines, the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) is mandated to implement programs that prepare Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) for a productive and law-abiding return to society. Central to this mandate is the professional competence of program officers who conduct initial and exit interviews—structured conversations that assess reintegration readiness, identify needs, and secure informed participation in post-release monitoring programs (Taxman, 2016; Visher & Travis, 2017). Despite the critical role of interviewing in correctional rehabilitation, research consistently documents significant gaps in the skills of frontline correctional officers, particularly in areas such as motivational interviewing, trauma-informed communication, emotional regulation, and structured assessment (Fazel et al., 2016; Knight, 2019; Walters et al., 2018). These gaps are especially pronounced in under-resourced correctional systems where systematic, competency-based training remains limited (Fixsen et al., 2005; Taxman, 2016). In the Philippine correctional context, the increasing emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration necessitates the strengthening of evidence-based interviewing competencies among correctional personnel.

Research further demonstrates that effective reintegration programs significantly reduce recidivism, improve psychosocial adjustment, and increase community reintegration success among formerly incarcerated individuals (Duwe, 2017; James, 2015). Interviewing competencies are essential because correctional officers frequently serve as the first point of psychosocial engagement for PDLs during pre-release and post-release transition periods (Bonta & Andrews, 2017). Accordingly, the present program was grounded in the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and strengths-based approaches, which have all demonstrated effectiveness in correctional rehabilitation settings (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Knight, 2019; Magill et al., 2018).

Theoretical Frameworks - The program was grounded in three primary evidence-based frameworks. First, the *Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model* (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Bonta & Andrews, 2017) guided the assessment component, emphasizing that effective interventions must be calibrated to each PDL's risk level, criminogenic needs, and individual responsivity factors. Second, *Motivational Interviewing (MI)* (Magill et al., 2018; Miller & Rollnick, 2013) informed the relational and communication components of the training, given its substantial evidence base in justice-involved populations (Walters et al., 2018). Research indicates that MI significantly increases engagement and voluntary participation compared to confrontational or directive interviewing styles (Lundahl et al., 2010). Third, *trauma-informed interviewing* principles (Knight, 2019; Miller & Najavits, 2017) were integrated throughout, recognizing that many PDLs present with histories of complex trauma that require adaptive, safety-centered communication approaches.

Statement of the Problem and Significance - Effective pre- and post-release interviewing is not merely an administrative formality; it is a clinical and rehabilitative intervention that directly influences reintegration outcomes. Research by Duwe (2017) demonstrated that structured pre-release planning substantially reduces recidivism rates, while Visher and Travis (2017) established that the quality of reintegration support during the transitional period is among the strongest predictors of successful community reintegration. Despite this evidence, formal competency-based training programs for BuCor officers in the Philippines remain underdeveloped, and the specific interviewing skill gaps of this population have not been systematically documented. This report fills that

gap by presenting an integrated, data-driven program development cycle—from needs assessment through intervention design to post-training evaluation—that can serve as a replicable model for continuing professional development in the Philippine correctional system.

This study aimed to develop, implement, and evaluate a 2-day webinar-workshop on enhancing interview competencies for pre- and post-release reintegration of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) among Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) program officers. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the identified interviewing competency needs of BuCor program officers in conducting pre- and post-release reintegration interviews with PDLs?
- What challenges do BuCor program officers encounter during initial and exit interviews with PDLs?
- How can a needs-responsive and evidence-based webinar-workshop be designed to address the identified interviewing competency gaps of BuCor program officers?
- What are the participants' evaluations of the webinar-workshop in terms of: relevance of topics; clarity of objectives; adequacy of instructional materials; quality of presentation; and facilitator effectiveness?
- What significant learnings and recommendations do participants report after completing the webinar-workshop?
- What statistical design may be recommended for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention in improving interviewing competencies among BuCor program officers?

Objectives of the Report - This report aims to:

- Document the needs assessment findings that informed the design of the 2-day webinar-workshop.
- Describe the evidence-based program design, including learning objectives, content, methodology, and theoretical grounding;
- Present and analyze post-workshop evaluation data to assess participant satisfaction and perceived learning outcomes;
- Identify an appropriate statistical design for evaluating the effect of the intervention on interviewing competency; and
- Discuss implications for program improvement and policy in correctional officer training.

2. Review of Related Literature

Correctional Rehabilitation and Reintegration - Correctional rehabilitation has evolved from punitive approaches toward evidence-based reintegration frameworks that prioritize behavioral change, psychosocial adjustment, and successful community reintegration. Modern correctional systems increasingly recognize that incarceration alone is insufficient to reduce recidivism and that structured reintegration planning is necessary to support long-term rehabilitation outcomes (Duwe, 2017). According to Visher and Travis (2017), the transition period immediately before and after release is among the most critical stages in the reintegration process. Formerly incarcerated individuals often face multiple barriers including unemployment, stigma, housing instability, disrupted family relationships, and psychological distress. These barriers significantly increase the likelihood of recidivism when not addressed through structured reintegration support.

Research further indicates that reintegration outcomes improve when correctional interventions incorporate individualized assessment, psychosocial support, and collaborative goal-setting processes (Bonta & Andrews, 2017). The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework remains one of the most empirically validated models for

correctional rehabilitation because it emphasizes matching interventions to offenders' risk levels, criminogenic needs, and learning styles (Andrews & Bonta, 2017). Smith et al. (2012), through a meta-analysis of correctional intervention studies, found that programs adhering to RNR principles consistently produced stronger reductions in recidivism compared to non-adherent interventions. These findings suggest that correctional personnel require competency in conducting structured assessments and individualized reintegration planning.

Interviewing Competencies in Correctional Settings - Interviewing skills are central to correctional rehabilitation because they influence the quality of assessment, treatment engagement, and collaborative planning processes (Ivey et al., 2018). Effective interviewing requires the integration of active listening, empathy, reflection, clarification, and culturally responsive communication. Research shows that correctional officers frequently encounter challenges when conducting interviews with justice-involved populations, including client resistance, mistrust, emotional dysregulation, dishonesty, and trauma-related behaviors (Walters et al., 2018). These challenges necessitate specialized competencies that extend beyond routine administrative interviewing. Taxman (2016) emphasized that correctional personnel involved in rehabilitation must transition from purely custodial roles toward more therapeutic and collaborative approaches. This shift requires training in communication techniques that promote engagement rather than confrontation. Ivey and Daniels (2016) highlighted that interviewing microskills such as paraphrasing, reflection of feeling, summarization, and open-ended questioning are associated with stronger helping relationships and improved client disclosure. In correctional contexts, these skills are particularly important because trust and psychological safety are often limited.

Motivational Interviewing in Correctional Rehabilitation - Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative, goal-oriented communication style designed to strengthen intrinsic motivation for change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). MI has gained substantial empirical support in correctional and rehabilitation settings because it reduces resistance and promotes behavioral engagement. A meta-analysis conducted by Magill et al. (2018) involving 93 studies found that MI produced significant positive effects across multiple behavioral outcomes. In correctional populations, MI has been associated with improved treatment participation, reduced defensiveness, and stronger commitment to rehabilitation. Similarly, Lundahl et al. (2010) reported that MI is more effective than confrontational or directive communication approaches in promoting behavioral change. Walters et al. (2018) further emphasized that correctional staff trained in MI demonstrate improved rapport-building and more effective management of resistant clients. The OARS framework—Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflective listening, and Summarizing—has been identified as a particularly effective communication structure in correctional interviews because it encourages client autonomy and collaboration (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Trauma-Informed Practice in Correctional Systems - Trauma-informed care has become increasingly important in correctional rehabilitation because incarcerated populations demonstrate disproportionately high rates of trauma exposure, adverse childhood experiences, and psychological distress (Knight, 2019). Miller and Najavits (2017) argued that trauma-informed correctional care requires environments and communication strategies that prioritize safety, empowerment, and emotional regulation. Traditional confrontational approaches may inadvertently retraumatize individuals with histories of abuse, neglect, or violence. Research also indicates that trauma-informed communication improves engagement and decreases emotional dysregulation among justice-involved populations (Porges, 2017). Correctional officers who understand trauma responses are better able to interpret withdrawal, anger, or emotional reactivity as adaptive survival responses rather than deliberate noncompliance. Knight (2019) emphasized that trauma-informed social work and correctional practice require empathy, emotional regulation, and nonjudgmental communication. These competencies are especially important during reintegration planning because formerly incarcerated individuals often experience anxiety and uncertainty during the transition back into the community.

Emotional Regulation and Professional Competency - Emotional regulation is an essential competency for helping professionals working in emotionally demanding environments. Correctional personnel frequently encounter emotionally charged situations involving deception, aggression, grief, and trauma disclosures (Taxman, 2016). Elliott et al. (2018) found that empathy and therapeutic engagement significantly influence client outcomes

across helping professions. However, without adequate emotional regulation, helping professionals may experience burnout, countertransference, or reduced effectiveness. Implementation science literature also highlights that competency development requires more than one-time training sessions. Fixsen et al. (2005) emphasized that sustainable skill acquisition requires ongoing coaching, supervised practice, performance feedback, and organizational support.

Professional Development and Skills-Based Training - Evidence suggests that experiential learning approaches are among the most effective methods for developing interviewing competencies. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory proposes that individuals learn best through cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. Lichtenberg et al. (2015) similarly found that role-play simulations, structured feedback, and supervised practice significantly improve counseling and interviewing skills among trainees. Ericsson (2006) further emphasized that deliberate practice is necessary for the development of professional expertise. In correctional contexts, skills-based training is particularly important because officers must apply communication strategies in unpredictable and emotionally complex environments. Research indicates that practical rehearsal improves confidence, behavioral consistency, and transfer of learning into workplace settings (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Synthesis of Literature - The reviewed literature demonstrates that effective correctional reintegration requires evidence-based interviewing competencies grounded in motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, emotional regulation, and structured assessment frameworks. Existing studies consistently support the value of experiential, competency-based professional development programs for correctional personnel. Despite the growing international evidence base, there remains limited Philippine literature examining the interviewing competencies of BuCor personnel and the effectiveness of structured reintegration-focused training programs. The present study contributes to addressing this gap by documenting the development, implementation, and evaluation of a needs-responsive webinar-workshop designed to strengthen interviewing competencies among BuCor program officers.

3. Method

Research Design - This program development report employed a mixed-methods, single-group, pretest-posttest design. Quantitative data from a pre-workshop survey (needs assessment) and post-workshop evaluation were analyzed descriptively. A single-group pre-post design was adopted given the pilot nature of the intervention and the limited sample size, consistent with recommendations for applied professional development evaluations in organizational settings (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). This design allows for the documentation of perceived skill levels prior to training and participant satisfaction and learning gains following training, while acknowledging the limitations of the absence of a control group. For future evaluations of this program, a *one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test* or *paired-samples t-test* (depending on the normality of the distribution) is recommended to evaluate the statistical significance of pre-post changes in self-rated competency. Given the ordinal nature of Likert-scale items and small sample sizes typical in BuCor training contexts, non-parametric alternatives are preferred. Effect size should be reported using Cohen's *d* (for parametric tests) or the matched-pairs rank biserial correlation *r* (for non-parametric tests) to provide practical significance estimates (Cohen, 1992; King, 2012).

Participants - Participants were program officers employed by the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) of the Philippines who were engaged in pre- and/or post-release reintegration activities. A total of $n = 34$ officers participated in the pre-workshop needs assessment, with one declining to provide informed consent, yielding an analyzable pretest sample of $n = 33$. The post-workshop evaluation was completed by $n = 20$ participants. The attrition between pretest and evaluation was attributed to participants being recalled for field duties during the second day of the webinar. Participation was voluntary, and all data were collected with informed consent consistent with ethical standards for applied social science research (American Psychological Association, 2017). Participant profiles reflected a range of experience levels, from officers with extensive interviewing backgrounds

to those who had not yet conducted PDL interviews. Self-reported strengths and challenges in the needs assessment suggested a heterogeneous group, warranting a tiered instructional approach that addressed both foundational and advanced competencies (Ivey et al., 2018).

A total of 34 participants took part in the initial needs assessment. One participant declined to provide informed consent for participation in the research component of the study; therefore, 33 participants were included in the pretest analyses. During the implementation and evaluation phases, participant attendance varied across sessions, resulting in 20 participants completing the post-evaluation measures. To assess the potential influence of attrition on the findings, the demographic characteristics and qualitative responses of participants who completed the post-evaluation were compared with those of the original pretest sample. No substantial differences were observed in terms of key demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and professional role), suggesting that attrition was largely non-systematic. Furthermore, the major qualitative themes identified during the post-evaluation remained consistent with those emerging from the larger needs-assessment dataset. While some themes were represented by fewer participants due to the reduced sample size, no theme was exclusively associated with participants who discontinued participation. Thus, attrition did not appear to meaningfully alter the overall thematic balance of the qualitative findings. Nevertheless, the reduced post-evaluation sample should be considered when interpreting the transferability and generalizability of the results.

Instrumentation - Three instruments were used in this program development cycle:

Pre-Workshop Needs Assessment Survey. A structured survey was administered prior to training to assess participants' self-rated competency across 15 specific interviewing behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all competent*; 5 = *highly competent*). In addition, open-ended questions explored typical challenges during initial and exit interviews, perceived strengths and weaknesses, learning expectations, and clarification needs. The survey was developed by the program facilitators based on evidence-based interviewing competency frameworks relevant to correctional settings (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Ivey et al., 2018).

Program Design Document. The intervention was documented through a structured program design that specified the overall goal, learning objectives, two-day schedule, content modules, teaching methods, and theoretical references. This document was used to ensure fidelity between the identified needs and the training activities delivered.

Post-Workshop Evaluation Form. A structured evaluation form was administered immediately following the 2-day workshop to assess participant satisfaction across seven dimensions: topic relevance, clarity of objectives, program duration, instructional materials, presentation quality, speaker clarity, and facilitator knowledge and effectiveness. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Additional open-ended questions elicited feedback on speaker performance, most interesting topics, significant learning takeaways, and recommendations for program improvement.

Program Design - The 2-day webinar-workshop titled *Enhancing Interview Competencies for Pre- and Post-Release Reintegration of Persons Deprived of Liberty* was delivered via synchronous online modality using a video conferencing platform. The program was facilitated by two licensed professionals with expertise in counseling and clinical psychology and guidance and counseling. Day 1 focused on conducting effective initial interviews for pre-reintegration planning, and Day 2 addressed exit interview competencies for post-release transition. The instructional design followed a spiral approach (Bruner, 1960), introducing foundational microskills before progressively layering advanced competencies such as trauma-informed interviewing, motivational interviewing, and structured interview flow. Teaching methods included lecturettes, guided discussion, paired skill practice, case-based group exercises, role-play simulations, and reflective debriefing. This multi-modal approach is consistent with evidence-based adult learning principles that prioritize experiential and reflective learning (Kolb, 1984) and with findings that skills-based practice significantly enhances competency acquisition in counseling training programs (Lichtenberg et al., 2015).

Data Analysis - Descriptive statistics (means and frequencies) were computed for all Likert-scale items from both the needs assessment and the post-workshop evaluation. Qualitative responses from open-ended items were analyzed using a content analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with themes identified inductively from participant responses and subsequently mapped to the program's learning objectives. The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings followed an integrated mixed-methods reporting convention as recommended for applied program evaluations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For the present report, pre-workshop scores serve as a descriptive baseline documenting the state of competency prior to training. A recommendation for future controlled evaluation of training impact—including appropriate statistical tests and effect size measures—is detailed in the Discussion section.

4. Results

4.1 Needs Assessment Findings

Quantitative Self-Rated Competency - Pre-workshop survey data from $n = 33$ BuCor program officers revealed generally high self-rated competency across all 15 assessed interviewing behaviors, with item means ranging from 4.44 to 4.68 on a 5-point scale (Table 1). The highest-rated items were *demonstrates empathy and understanding of the PDL's experience* ($M = 4.68$) and *respects confidentiality and ethical boundaries* ($M = 4.68$), reflecting strong perceived relational and ethical foundations. Also highly rated were *promotes collaboration and shared decision-making* ($M = 4.62$), *uses open-ended questions effectively* ($M = 4.62$), and *maintains professionalism and adherence to correctional protocols* ($M = 4.62$). The lowest-rated competencies included *affirms strengths and personal capacities* ($M = 4.44$), *avoids confrontation or coercion* ($M = 4.44$), and *demonstrates trauma-informed sensitivity* ($M = 4.44$). These scores, while still relatively high in absolute terms, indicated relative areas of competency development compared to other skills, particularly given the critical importance of these behaviors in correctional reintegration work (Knight, 2019; Taxman, 2016).

Table 1

Pre-Workshop Self-Rated Interviewing Competency Scores (n = 33)

Interviewing Competency Item	M (1–5 scale)
Creates a safe, respectful, and non-judgmental environment	4.47
Demonstrates empathy and understanding of the PDL's experience	4.68
Uses open-ended questions effectively	4.62
Practices active listening without interruption	4.53
Provides accurate reflections of thoughts and feelings	4.47
Encourages discussion of goals and integration plans	4.53
Affirms strengths and personal capacities	4.44
Avoids confrontation or coercion	4.44
Respects confidentiality and ethical boundaries	4.68
Demonstrates trauma-informed sensitivity	4.44
Explores reintegration readiness	4.56
Identifies barriers (family, stigma, employment)	4.56
Supports realistic and culturally appropriate goal setting	4.47
Promotes collaboration and shared decision-making	4.62
Maintains professionalism and adherence to correctional protocols	4.62

Qualitative Findings from the Needs Assessment - Content analysis of open-ended responses revealed five major thematic areas:

Communication and Language Barriers. The most frequently cited challenge across both initial and exit interviews was language and communication difficulty, including dialect differences, low literacy, and difficulties with elderly or hearing-impaired PDLs. Multiple participants noted that standard interviewing approaches were inadequate for these populations. This finding aligns with research demonstrating that communication barriers are among the most significant obstacles to effective assessment and engagement in correctional settings (Fazel et al., 2016).

Client Resistance, Dishonesty, and Incomplete Information. Participants consistently reported challenges in eliciting truthful, complete, and consistent information. Themes included PDLs providing false information about their identity or contact details, giving inconsistent narratives, and refusing to elaborate on answers. These challenges are consistent with documented difficulties in justice-involved interviewing that require non-confrontational probing and motivational approaches (Magill et al., 2018; Walters et al., 2018).

Emotional and Relational Challenges. Several officers disclosed difficulty maintaining emotional neutrality, including feeling upset when sensing dishonesty and becoming emotionally over-invested in clients' life stories. Difficulty managing client emotional distress—particularly when PDLs cried—was also noted. These findings reflect the documented challenge of countertransference in correctional helping relationships, which requires deliberate emotional regulation training (Elliott et al., 2018; Porges, 2017).

Structural and Environmental Constraints. Participants reported insufficient or inappropriate interview venues, time constraints, and logistical challenges such as absent family contact information for PDLs with long incarcerations. These contextual factors echo broader findings on the environmental barriers to effective correctional interviewing (Taxman, 2016).

Reintegration-Specific Challenges. In exit interviews specifically, officers noted difficulties related to PDL excitement overshadowing focus, reluctance to disclose residence for safety reasons, lack of stable housing, and insufficient preparation for post-release planning. These findings parallel research on the structural vulnerabilities that complicate reintegration planning for formerly incarcerated individuals (Visher & Travis, 2017).

Self-reported strengths across participants converged on active listening, empathy, rapport-building, and calmness. These relational strengths form a strong foundation consistent with evidence that therapeutic alliance factors are among the most robust predictors of reintegration engagement outcomes (Norcross & Lambert, 2019). Participants' learning expectations centered on practical strategies, emotional management tools, communication techniques, and clearer standards for quality interviewing practice.

4.2 Program Design Description

Overall Goal and Learning Objectives - The overall goal of the intervention was to enhance the knowledge, skills, and professional competencies of BuCor officers in conducting ethical, trauma-informed, and evidence-based interviews in support of the successful reintegration of PDLs. Eight specific learning objectives were formulated, aligned with established competency domains in correctional rehabilitation (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Ivey et al., 2018) and encompassing foundational microskills, trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches, management of complex interviewing challenges, structured reintegration assessment, motivational interviewing, collaborative goal setting, accurate documentation, and professional self-awareness.

Content Map and Instructional Design - The program was organized into two thematically distinct days. Day 1 addressed conducting effective initial interviews for pre-reintegration planning. Content modules covered the purpose and objectives of the initial interview, rapport-building skills, seven core interviewing microskills (attending, open-ended questioning, paraphrasing, reflection of feelings, clarification, summarizing, and affirmations), advanced competencies (emotional regulation, advanced probing, special populations interviewing, trauma-informed interviewing, structured interview flow), reintegration assessment across five domains (housing, family, employment, psychological readiness, and life skills), SMART goal setting, and individualized pre-reintegration program planning. Day 2 addressed facilitating post-release transition through the exit interview. Content included the purpose and objectives of the exit interview, transition-focused communication, motivational interviewing using the OARS framework (Open-Ended Questions, Affirmations, Reflective Listening, Summarizing), reintegration planning review, information-giving and clarification skills, ethical communication and respect for PDL autonomy, documentation of conformity or non-conformity decisions, and full simulation of the complete exit interview. The design incorporated role-play scenarios with structured observer checklists, which have demonstrated efficacy in building skill acquisition and self-monitoring capacity in applied counseling and

human services training (Lichtenberg et al., 2015). Table 2 summarizes the correspondence between needs assessment findings and program design responses.

Table 2

Alignment of Needs Assessment Findings with Program Design Responses

Survey Finding / Gap	Program Design Response
Emotional difficulty (managing client distress, countertransference)	Emotional regulation module (Day 1, Advanced Skills)
Handling dishonesty and incomplete information	Advanced probing and detecting inconsistencies module
Language and dialect barriers: PWDs and elderly clients	Special populations interviewing module
Repetitive, unfocused, or time-mismanaged interviews	Structured interview flow and time management module
Complex reintegration cases (no housing, no family contact)	Reintegration barrier identification and referral module
Ethical concerns (bias, emotional reactions, boundaries)	Ethical decision-making and trauma-informed ethics module
Need for practical, hands-on skill-building	Role-play simulations and structured skills drills

4.3 *Post-Workshop Evaluation Results*

Quantitative Satisfaction Ratings - Post-workshop evaluation data from $n = 20$ participants indicated an overall mean satisfaction rating of 4.32 out of 5.00 (Table 3). The highest-rated dimension was *the facilitator/speaker is knowledgeable and effective in the subject matter* ($M = 4.50$), followed by *the topics discussed were appropriate and relevant* ($M = 4.45$). The speaker's clarity of presentation received a mean rating of 4.40. Slightly lower but still positive ratings were recorded for *the seminar was clearly presented* ($M = 4.35$) and *the seminar objectives were clear* ($M = 4.35$). The dimensions receiving the lowest ratings, though still positive, were *the length of the program was just right* ($M = 4.05$), and *platform, instructional materials, and learning aids were clear and adequate* ($M = 4.15$).

Table 3

Post-Workshop Evaluation Summary by Dimension (n = 20)

Evaluation Dimension	M (1–5 scale)
Topics discussed were appropriate and relevant	4.45
Seminar objectives were clear	4.35
The length of the program was just right	4.05
Platform, instructional materials, and learning aids were clear and adequate	4.15
The seminar was clearly presented	4.35
The speaker's presentation was clear	4.40
The speaker/facilitator is knowledgeable and effective in the subject matter	4.50
OVERALL	4.32

These ratings reflect strong overall participant satisfaction, consistent with evidence that well-designed, needs-responsive training programs generate higher participant engagement and perceived learning value (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The relatively lower rating for program length is consistent with qualitative feedback requesting more time for practice activities, and the lower rating for instructional materials aligns with participant recommendations for face-to-face delivery with more interactive elements.

4.4 *Qualitative Evaluation Findings*

Open-ended responses yielded three primary thematic clusters:

Speaker Knowledge and Professionalism. Nearly all participants characterized the facilitators in terms of expertise, clarity, and professional effectiveness. Descriptors included highly knowledgeable, professionally competent, clear and engaging, and directly applicable to field duties. One participant noted that the facilitators demonstrated strong subject-matter mastery and professionalism, and that the content was directly applicable to their roles as program officers.

Most Valued Learning Content. The most frequently cited topics as most interesting or impactful were

motivational interviewing, the structure of exit interviews, pre- and post-release reintegration strategies, and the hands-on role-play scenarios featuring realistic PDL profiles (PDL A, B, and C). Several participants highlighted the practical value of learning to differentiate approaches based on PDL readiness for reintegration. Active listening and rapport-building were also frequently mentioned, underscoring participants' recognition of relational factors as foundational to effective practice (Norcross & Lambert, 2019).

Recommendations for Program Improvement. The most consistent recommendation was the transition from online/webinar format to face-to-face delivery, with participants citing poor internet connectivity as a barrier to engagement. Several participants requested more time for practical demonstrations, question-and-answer sessions, and small group discussions. Requests for follow-up training and provision of reference materials for continued learning also emerged as recurring themes. These recommendations reflect a desire for sustained, competency-building professional development rather than one-time training events, a finding consistent with evidence on the conditions required for durable skill transfer in human services (Fixsen et al., 2005).

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Needs Assessment Findings

The pre-workshop needs assessment revealed a profile consistent with correctional officers who have developed strong relational instincts through field experience but have not received systematic, evidence-based training in the more technical dimensions of rehabilitative interviewing. The high self-ratings for empathy, rapport, and confidentiality align with research indicating that prosocial helping orientations are often present among correctional staff who are drawn to rehabilitation-oriented roles (Bonta & Andrews, 2017). However, the relative gaps in trauma-informed sensitivity, affirmation, and avoidance of confrontation suggest that while interpersonal motivation is present; evidence-based frameworks for translating this motivation into structured, competency-driven practice are less developed. The qualitative data further nuanced this picture by revealing that emotional regulation challenges, including difficulty managing one's own reactions to client distress or deception, represented a significant professional development need. This is consistent with research documenting that correctional officers frequently experience emotional labor demands that, without structured support, can lead to burnout or reversion to authoritative interaction styles (Taxman, 2016). The inclusion of emotional regulation and countertransference management in the program design was therefore both clinically appropriate and professionally necessary.

5.2 Program Design and Evidence Base

The program design's alignment with multiple converging evidence bases strengthens its validity as an evidence-based intervention. The integration of motivational interviewing is particularly well-supported: meta-analytic evidence by Magill et al. (2018) across 93 randomized trials demonstrates MI's superiority over comparison conditions in producing behavior change, with effect sizes ranging from small to medium in justice-involved populations. Similarly, Walters et al. (2018) specifically documented MI's effectiveness in reducing resistance and increasing engagement among offenders in correctional settings, making it a high-value competency for BuCor officers to develop. The trauma-informed component is equally well-grounded. Research by Miller and Najavits (2017) found that trauma-informed approaches significantly improve treatment outcomes in justice-involved populations characterized by complex trauma histories. The Philippine correctional population shares these characteristics, given the high prevalence of poverty, violence exposure, and adverse childhood experiences among incarcerated individuals (James, 2015). The program's explicit attention to recognizing trauma responses—such as withdrawal, anger, or inconsistency—as potential trauma-driven behaviors rather than non-compliance represents a paradigm shift with meaningful implications for engagement quality. The use of the RNR model (Andrews & Bonta, 2017) as an organizing framework for the reintegration assessment component also reflects current best practice. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Smith et al. (2012) involving over 100 studies confirmed

that programs adhering to RNR principles produce significantly greater reductions in recidivism than non-adherent programs, with effect sizes consistently in the moderate-to-large range. By training BuCor officers to conduct individualized, domain-specific assessments of housing, employment, family, psychological readiness, and life skills, the program directly supports RNR-adherent case planning.

5.3 Post-Workshop Evaluation and Interpretation

The overall satisfaction mean of 4.32 out of 5.00 is highly positive and compares favorably with benchmarks for professional development training in applied settings, where means between 4.00 and 4.50 are considered indicative of strong program quality (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The highest ratings for facilitator knowledge and topic relevance suggest that the training successfully delivered credible, applicable content, which is among the strongest predictors of training transfer to the workplace (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The relatively lower rating for program length is interpretively important. The qualitative data reveal that participants did not find the training too long; rather, they found it insufficient in time for hands-on practice. This suggests a productive tension between content density and skills practice that future iterations should address by redistributing time from didactic presentation to experiential learning activities. This recommendation is consistent with evidence that practice with feedback is the most effective mechanism for skill development in helping professions (Ericsson, 2006). The near-universal recommendation for face-to-face delivery warrants serious programmatic consideration. While online delivery has demonstrated efficacy for knowledge transmission, evidence is strong that skill-based training, particularly for interpersonal competencies such as motivational interviewing, benefits significantly from in-person facilitation, real-time feedback, and embodied role-play (Lundahl et al., 2010; Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Future iterations of this program should explore blended or hybrid delivery models that use online platforms for didactic content while reserving face-to-face sessions for skills laboratory components.

5.4 Appropriate Statistical Design for Future Evaluation

Given that the present report documents a pilot implementation without a control group, a more rigorous evaluation design is recommended for subsequent program cycles. Several options are appropriate depending on contextual constraints:

Single-Group Pretest-Posttest with Inferential Testing. The most feasible design for the current BuCor context involves administering the 15-item competency self-rating scale both before and immediately after the workshop, then analyzing pre-post differences using a *paired-samples t-test* if the distribution of difference scores approximates normality, or the *Wilcoxon signed-rank test* for ordinal or non-normally distributed data (Field, 2018). Effect size should be reported as Cohen's *d* (for parametric analyses) or rank-biserial correlation *r* (for non-parametric analyses). A 3-month follow-up assessment would also allow evaluation of skill maintenance, using the same inferential approach.

Wait-List Control Design. If staffing and training cycles permit, a wait-list control design in which one cohort receives the training first while another cohort waits would substantially strengthen causal inference by controlling for history, maturation, and regression-to-the-mean threats to internal validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Between-group comparisons at posttest would employ an *independent-samples t-test* or *Mann-Whitney U test*, depending on normality.

Objective Behavioral Assessment. Future evaluations should supplement self-report ratings with structured behavioral observation checklists (e.g., the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity scale [MITI 4.2.1; Moyers et al., 2016]) applied to video-recorded or observer-rated mock interviews. Behavioral observation ratings provide more externally valid evidence of training impact than self-report alone and allow for the identification of specific competency domains requiring further development. Intraclass correlation coefficients should be computed to assess inter-rater reliability of observer ratings (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979).

Limitations - Several limitations of the present program evaluation should be acknowledged. First, the absence

of a control group in the current implementation limits the ability to attribute post-training changes in competency to the intervention specifically. Second, the post-workshop evaluation captured only participant satisfaction and perceived learning, rather than actual skill acquisition or long-term transfer to practice. Third, participant attrition between the pretest ($n = 33$) and post-evaluation ($n = 20$) may introduce response bias if those who completed the evaluation differed systematically from those who did not. Fourth, the online delivery modality, while necessitated by logistical constraints, may result in lower engagement and lower-quality skill practice compared to an in-person format. Fifth, self-report measures are subject to social desirability bias, which may have inflated pretest competency ratings and post-training satisfaction scores.

Implications for Policy and Practice - The findings of this program development report carry several implications for correctional training policy and practice in the Philippines. First, the demonstrated feasibility and positive reception of structured, evidence-based interviewing skills training support the institutionalization of this program within BuCor's continuing professional development curriculum. Given the central role of program officers in PDL reintegration, systematic training in evidence-based interviewing should be recognized as a professional standard rather than an optional supplement (Taxman, 2016). Second, the documented challenges with emotional regulation, trauma-informed practice, and motivational interviewing suggest that training in these areas should be sustained rather than delivered as one-time workshops. The implementation science literature indicates that durable skill development requires initial training, coached practice, performance assessment, and ongoing technical assistance (Fixsen et al., 2005). A phased professional development pathway—from introductory training through supervised practice to advanced certification—would better support the depth of competency development required for effective rehabilitative interviewing. Third, the findings emphasize the importance of addressing structural barriers to effective interviewing, including inadequate interview venues, limited internet connectivity, and time constraints. Evidence-based training cannot fully compensate for inadequate practice environments, and advocacy for appropriate infrastructure investment is therefore part of a comprehensive competency development strategy (Duwe, 2017).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This program development report documents a complete cycle of needs-responsive, evidence-based professional development for Bureau of Corrections program officers in the Philippines. The pre-workshop needs assessment identified a competency profile marked by strong relational foundations but meaningful gaps in trauma-informed practice, emotional regulation, advanced probing, and structured interview management. The 2-day webinar-workshop was designed to directly address these gaps through a theoretically grounded, multi-method instructional approach integrating motivational interviewing, trauma-informed practice, the Risk-Need-Responsivity model, and evidence-based microskills training. Post-workshop evaluation data indicated strong participant satisfaction and perceived learning gains, with participants highlighting motivational interviewing, structured exit interview skills, and hands-on role-play scenarios as particularly impactful. Qualitative data confirmed that the program was experienced as relevant, professionally credible, and directly applicable to BuCor practice contexts. The primary recommendation for program improvement—transition to face-to-face delivery with expanded skills practice time—reflects a productive desire for deeper competency development rather than dissatisfaction with the program. To fully evaluate the effect of this intervention on interviewing competency, future program cycles should incorporate a paired-samples pretest-posttest design with inferential statistical analysis, supplemented by behavioral observation measures and a 3-month follow-up assessment of skill maintenance. When feasible, a wait-list control design would provide more robust causal evidence of training impact. These methodological enhancements would allow BuCor to build a systematic evidence base for the value of interviewing skills training in supporting the mission of rehabilitation and reintegration, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for PDLs and the broader Philippine community.

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