Overview of Swift Certain Fair—Principles, Practices, and Innovations

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Swift Certain Fair Resource Center

Supporting innovation in community supervision.
Background

- 7 million+ adults in the US on community supervision
- Sizable share are drug involved
- Little guidance as to what strategies work
- Failure rates are high
- Inefficient application of confinement sanctions
Problem

Large caseloads—limited supervision, treatment
Rules unclear and violations go undetected
Message: probability of sanction low
If detected, violations not sanctioned
Message: probability of sanction even lower
Unpunished strings of violations
Message: violating is OK
If detected and sanctioned, response slow
Message: punishment is arbitrary, unfair

Does not tie behavior to consequence
What is “Swift Certain Fair”? 

SCF implementations differ in operational details, but share:

- Close monitoring
- Swift and certain responses
- Modest sanctions

{ Legitimacy }
SCF Model

- Clearly articulated rules
- Credible threats
- Formal orientation
- Supervision conditions closely monitored, actually enforced
- Regular random drug testing, as appropriate
- Every violation met with an immediate, modest sanction
- Incentives and rewards to reinforce compliance
What Is the Evidence Behind SCF?
Hawaii’s HOPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>HOPE</th>
<th>Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No-shows for probation appointments</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(average of appointments per probationer)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive urine tests (average of tests per</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>probationer)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Revocation rate (probationers revoked)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incarceration (days sentenced)</td>
<td>138 days</td>
<td>267 days</td>
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HOPE RCT Outcomes (7-Year Followup)

- 50% reduction in drug charges
- Small changes in other charges
- 50% reductions in returns to prison
- Tracked all (~100) early-terminations—no new CJ encounter
- No difference in implementation or outcomes by race/ethnicity
SCF Expansion

▪ Adapted to different jurisdictions, different CJ populations
  ▪ High-risk, violent parolees (Seattle)
  ▪ High-risk juveniles (two counties in Arizona)
  ▪ Pre-trial supervision (Honolulu)
  ▪ Prison (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington)

▪ Now in at least 30 states and an Indian nation

▪ Statewide rollouts (Washington), pilots (Alaska, NY, Michigan, Oklahoma, Illinois)

▪ Federal and international interest
HOPE Demonstration Field Experiment

- Counties in AR, MA, OR, TX
- Randomized controlled trial of replication of HOPE
- Findings: Replications of HOPE in other jurisdictions do not appear to be any more effective and can be more costly than supervision as usual
- What does that mean for SCF as a model?
SCF Applied through Deliberate Corrections

Washington
Ohio
New York
Graduated Reintegration
Graduated Reintegration: The Model

- Release inmates early into a tightly supervised community setting with appropriate conditions
- Provide housing, appropriate services and employment/education/training opportunities; and
- Gradually relax supervision requirements (step-down) as a reward for compliance and achievement.
For More Information

See the USDOJ-supported SCF Resource Center

scfcenter.org