Multi Agency Performance Review (MAPR)

Statewide Bulletin: The Status of Standardized Offender Assessment (SOA) Training in Community Corrections, Probation, TASC/Parole, and Offender Treatment Programs.

Interagency Advisory Committee on Adult and Juvenile Correctional Treatment

Multi Agency Review Team (MART)   January 2002

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Abstract

This bulletin provides an overview regarding the status of SOA training among staff in Probation, Community Corrections, TASC, and Offender Treatment Programs.   It presents the results of a questionnaire that was sent to all staff who conduct SOA assessments and/or who make drug/alcohol treatment referrals. Findings include:

- Most staff have received some form of SOA training
- Some staff began administering assessments and/or making treatment referrals prior to being formally trained on the SOA process
- Few staff receive SOA booster training
- There are multiple sources for SOA training among the different agencies
- Staff are generally satisfied with the SOA training they received
- There are several barriers to obtaining formal SOA training
- Agency policy regarding the approved source for SOA training is unclear

Background

The Standardized Offender Assessment (SOA)

In the early 1990's, the State recognized substance abuse assessment and treatment as a significant programmatic need among criminal offenders. A landmark approach to providing a consistent and standardized response to substance abuse at all points in the criminal justice system was employed when House Bill 91-1173 was signed into law. This law, eventually codified in 1991 and now known as Colorado Revised Statute 16-11.5-101 et. Seq., mandates that all felony offenders (except class 1) in Colorado shall be assessed for substance abuse in an objective and uniform manner incorporating a systemic response to substance abuse through education, treatment and sanctions.

The Interagency Advisory Committee on Adult and Juvenile Correctional Treatment[i]

Also in the 1990's, legislative efforts encouraged the State of Colorado's offender-serving agencies[ii] to work together to identify and address common areas of concern in order to better deliver services to the adult correctional populations. In 1993, the 11.5 Advisory Committee[iii] created a working Advisory Committee now known as the Interagency Advisory Committee on Adult and Juvenile Correctional Treatment (Interagency Advisory Committee). This committee consists of division directors within Colorado's offender-serving agencies. The Interagency Advisory Committee was formed to better coordinate the delivery of treatment services to adult and juvenile correctional populations which includes improved communication among agencies and shared assessment instruments and processes. Accordingly, the Interagency Advisory Committee established four subcommittees to manage projects related to Assessment; Treatment, Sanctions & Incentives; Research & Evaluation; and Training.

The Multi Agency Performance Review (MAPR)

In 1994, in response to House Bill 93-1302, Colorado offender-serving agencies agreed on several areas of operational activity on which to focus their coordinated efforts. Developing a Standardized Offender Assessment (SOA) process was one area, merging the interests of House Bill 91-1173 and House Bill 93-1302. A second focus was to develop and implement a Multi Agency Performance Review which was legislatively funded in 1998. The purpose of which was to identify and evaluate intermediate performance measures and outcome measures.

The Multi Agency Review Team (MART)

The year 2000 marked the formation of the Multi Agency Review Team (MART), including representatives from the Division of Probation Services (State Court Administrators Office/Judicial Branch), Division of Criminal Justice (Dept. of Public Safety), Office of Planning and Analysis (Dept. of Corrections), and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (Dept. of Human Services). With the availability of drug offender surcharge funds, the Interagency Advisory Committee was able to create the legislatively funded, 4-person MART team to develop and operationalize the Multi Agency Performance Review.

As a first step in evaluating the implementation of the SOA process in the offender population, MART decided to analyze the status of SOA training among the offender-serving agencies.

Preparation for the Multi Agency Performance Review

When researching the history of the SOA process and how it was implemented, MART found no written interagency 'position' or agreements related to SOA training. Each individual agency adopted internal policies, regulations, standards, or practices regarding SOA training and has implemented them accordingly.

The Standardized Offender Assessment Training Questionnaire

The MART Team developed and implemented a questionnaire between March and July 2001. The questionnaire pertains to staff who administer the standardized offender assessments and/or who make drug/alcohol treatment referrals. The questionnaire was distributed to Investigating and Supervising Probation Officers, Community Corrections Case Managers (or Case Manager Equivalents), Supervisors, and Directors; TASC Case Managers and Directors; and staff in ADAD licensed Offender Treatment Programs. This report outlines the results of this questionnaire.

Strength and Limitations of the Analysis

A notable strength of this survey and the report is that it adequately represents each agency surveyed. Because of the high rate of return, it provides an accurate and comprehensive analysis regarding the status of SOA training statewide.

It is important to note that for five (5) of the elements of the training questionnaire, staff responded with their perceptions and opinions. Data presented for these elements should be regarded as such.

Organization of This Report

The data in this report is separated into two major sections. The first section reports the data in criminal justice agencies. The second section reports data from offender treatment programs. The data was intentionally not combined because criminal justice agencies require use of the SOA and offender treatment programs are not required by ADAD to administer the SOA. The ADAD supports the administration and use of the SOA package by criminal justice agencies in assessing and referring offenders into treatment. It is through this process the offender treatment programs are made aware of the level of treatment and treatment focus of the offender being referred.

Status of SOA Training in Community-Based Correctional Agencies

Agencies/Sample

Each agency targeted a 90 percent return rate of the SOA Training Questionnaire from staff who administer the SOA and/or who make treatment referrals. This rate of return was achieved. Therefore, this report represents a comprehensive picture of the status of SOA training across Colorado's community-based correctional agencies and ADAD-licensed offender treatment programs.

<u>Probation</u>

There are 22 Judicial Districts in Colorado, each with a probation office that provides probation investigation/assessment and supervision of adult offenders. In each probation office, the Investigations Officers and/or Regular Supervision Officers are responsible for administering the SOA and/or for making treatment referrals. The majority of SOA administration lies with investigating officers when a jurisdiction has a formal investigations unit.

Each probation office is adequately represented in the data set by a 90 percent rate of return. For purposes of this analysis, the sample includes only staff who administer all four (4) SOA instruments.

<u>Community Corrections</u>

The common term for a Community Corrections agency is 'Halfway House.' However, for the purposes of this report, the agency will be referred to as a community corrections 'Agency.'

There are 22 Judicial Districts in Colorado with 23 appointed boards who contract with local agencies to provide services to adult felony offenders sentenced to Community Corrections from the Court or who are in transition from the Department of Corrections. In each agency, Case Managers and their equivalents; or Case Manager Supervisors are responsible for administering the SOA and for making drug/alcohol treatment referrals. The Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) is the State of Colorado agency who adopts and enforces standards for Colorado Community Corrections boards and agencies.

Questionnaires were returned by 95 percent of Case Managers (or Equivalents), Case Manager Supervisors, and Program Directors. Each program is adequately represented in the data set.

<u>TASC/Parole</u>

Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) agencies contract with the Department of Corrections (DOC), with coordination through the Office of Alcohol & Drug Services. There are four TASC regions covering the state of Colorado: Mile High, Northeast, Southeast, and Western. Each TASC region serves the drug & alcohol and case management needs of adult parolees depending on their respective parole region. Specifically, Mile High TASC covers the Central Metro Region, West Metro Region, and South Metro Region; Northeast TASC covers the Northern Region; Southeast TASC covers the Southern Region; and Western TASC covers the Western Region. In each agency, Case Managers or TASC Directors are responsible for administering the SOA and for making drug/alcohol treatment recommendations to Parole Officers.

Questionnaires were returned by 91 percent of the Case Managers and Directors in TASC. Each TASC office is adequately represented in the data set.

Findings

Who administers the SOA instruments and package?

The questionnaire asked each staff member *"Do you administer this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. The respondents self-reported questionnaire data showed that not all staff in each criminal justice agency administer each of the SOA instruments and the SOA as a complete package. This is equally true of staff in the treatment agencies.

MART analysts will formally assess the implementation of each SOA instrument and the SOA as a full package in the offender population statewide in the future. These data will provide

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a more complete picture of how the SOA is administered in the community-based correctional settings in Colorado.
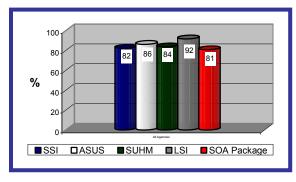
Standardized Offender Assessment Training

Initial Training

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"Did you receive training on this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. The percentage of staff across criminal justice agencies who received some form of training in each of the four (4) SOA instruments, ranged from 82 percent to 92 percent **(SSI – 82%, ASUS – 86%, SUHM – 84%, LSI – 92%).** These percentages include all sources of training such as the Interagency Training Team, individual agency trainers, coworkers, supervisors, and other individuals.

There are, however, a percentage of staff across criminal justice agencies who have not received any form of SOA training despite the fact that they may supervise offenders, conduct assessments, and/or make drug alcohol treatment referrals. The percentages range from eight (8) percent to 18 percent. **(SSI – 18%, ASUS – 14%, SUHM – 16%, LSI – 8%).**

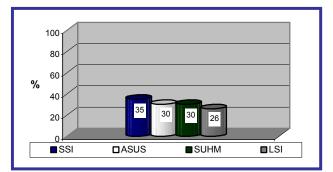### Percent of Respondents Trained in Each SOA Instrument Statewide

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"Were you trained on this instrument prior to administering it for the first time?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. The percentage of staff across criminal justice agencies who were trained prior to administering each instrument ranged from 65 percent to 74 percent **(SSI – 65%, ASUS – 70%, SUHM – 70%, LSI – 74%).**
Therefore, 26 to 35 percent of staff across criminal justice agencies are assessing clients

and making drug/alcohol treatment referrals for some period of time without any SOA training.

Percent of Respondents Statewide Who Administered SOA Instruments Prior to Receiving Formal Training
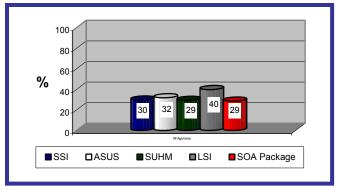

Booster Training

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"Did you receive Booster training on this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. The percentage of staff across agencies who received some form of booster training in each of the four (4) SOA instruments, ranged from 29 percent to 40 percent **(SSI – 30%, ASUS – 32%, SUHM – 29%, LSI – 40%).** These percentages include all sources of training such as the Interagency Training Team, individual agency trainers, coworkers, supervisors, and other individuals.

Therefore, 60 percent to 71 percent of staff across agencies have not received any form of booster SOA training.

Percent of Respondents Statewide Who Received SOA Booster Training

Source for SOA Training

At some point, a team of interagency SOA trainers was made available to the community-based correctional agencies. For the purposes of this report, this team is known as the "Interagency Training Team." However, it was unclear whether or not this team was the preferred source for SOA training or if agencies were allowed to obtain training from other sources. In the course of analyzing survey data, MART analysts observed that many respondents are unclear about the make-up of the "Interagency Training Team."

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"Please tell us who provided your initial SOA training."* Respondents were asked to distinguish between training provided by the "Interagency Training Team" and "Other" sources.

The questionnaire data showed that across agencies, there are multiple formal and informal sources for SOA training. It is evident that each agency has its own source(s) for SOA training.

- 81 to 90 percent of TASC/Parole uses the Interagency Training Team.
- 80 to 98 percent of Probation uses the Interagency Training Team or other Judicial-sponsored trainers.
- 36 to 44 percent of Community Corrections uses the Interagency Training Team.

Other sources for SOA training identified in the questionnaire were co-workers, supervisors, and other various individuals.

Staff Perceptions Regarding Efficacy of Standardized Offender Assessment Training

Re: Administration of the SOA Instruments

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"In your opinion, was the SOA training you received adequate to prepare you to administer the SOA instruments effectively?"* Across all agencies, 76 percent believed that the SOA training they received was either very adequate or adequate to prepare them to administer the instruments effectively. Thirteen (13) percent believed the training they received was either usually or marginally adequate. Two (2) percent of staff statewide believed their SOA training was inadequate.

Overall, the levels of satisfaction ('Very Adequate' or 'Adequate') among the three agencies varied to some degree with TASC/Parole having the highest rate (86%) of satisfaction. The Probation rate (79%) of satisfaction was slightly higher than that of Community Correction (73%).

Re: Making Drug/Alcohol Treatment Referrals

Questionnaire respondents were asked *"In your opinion, was the SOA training you received adequate to prepare you to make drug/alcohol treatment referrals?"* Across all agencies 67 percent believed that the SOA training they received was either very adequate or adequate to prepare them to make drug and alcohol treatment referrals. Twenty-two (22) percent believed the training they received was either usually or marginally adequate. Three (3) percent of staff statewide believed their SOA training was inadequate.

Overall, the levels of satisfaction ('Very Adequate' or 'Adequate') among the three agencies varied to some degree with TASC/Parole having the highest rate (76%) of satisfaction. The Probation rate (69%) of satisfaction was slightly higher than that of Community Corrections (64%).

Comparison

There was a higher level of satisfaction regarding the *instrument administration* aspect of the SOA training in comparison to the *treatment referral* aspect of the training. Overall, the difference in the level of satisfaction was nine (9) percent. This would indicate that, in general, staff believe that the Standardized Offender Assessment training better prepares them to administer the instruments effectively than it does in preparing them to make drug/alcohol treatment referrals. This may be useful if considering making changes to the SOA training curriculum.

Barriers to Obtaining SOA Training

The Interagency Training Team members were consulted prior to designing the survey questionnaire. This consultation resulted in a list of the six (6) most commonly reported barriers to obtaining the Interagency Training Team SOA Training. Those barriers were then

used in this questionnaire. Additionally, the questionnaire allowed the respondents to write-in any additional barriers not listed on the questionnaire. Less than one (1) percent of respondents identified any barriers in addition to those already listed on the questionnaire.

These six (6) barriers are as follows:

1. It is difficult to attend interagency training due to heavy **caseload/workload**
2. **Location** for interagency training is inconvenient
3. **Waitlist/delay** for interagency training is too long
4. Agency doesn't have **funds** to send staff to interagency training
5. Agency is often **unaware** of interagency training opportunities
6. High staff **turnover** makes interagency training attendance difficult

The frequencies of which the six (6) barriers were reported are as follows:

Caseload/Workload	**36%**
Location	**31%**
Funds	**27%**
Waitlist/Delay	**26%**
Unaware	**25%**
Turnover	**22%**

Agency Policy Regarding the Source for SOA Training

Questionnaire respondents were asked three separate questions related to their agency policy regarding the appropriate source for SOA training. Across agencies, there was substantial disparity in their responses to each of the three questions.

It was unclear whether or not agencies have policies regarding the approved source for SOA training. If agencies do have policy in this regard, staff are unclear about their agency policy. A relatively high percentage of staff do not know what their agency policy is.

Status of SOA Training in Offender Treatment Programs

Agencies/Sample

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) of the Colorado Department of Human Services formulates and maintains alcohol and other drug treatment licensing and standards, authorized by the State Board of Human Services. ADAD also licenses and monitors 250 treatment providers, operating 611 treatment sites throughout Colorado. Of the 250 treatment providers that ADAD licenses, 80 treatment providers are licensed to provide treatment services to the offender population.

In each treatment facility, staff administers standardized assessments to clients for treatment planning, service provision, case management and/or making referrals. Although the ADAD does not require licensed offender treatment programs to administer the SOA, these programs are supposed to accept the SOA in lieu of other assessments. However, MART analysts wanted to determine how many of the ADAD licensed offender treatment providers administer the SOA instruments. Seventy-seven (77) of the 80 providers were mailed an SOA questionnaire (three are community corrections programs). Providers who did not return the questionnaire were contacted by phone and asked the information on the SOA questionnaire. Questionnaires or phone contact responses were returned by 96% of the providers contacted or 74 treatment providers

Findings

Standardized Offender Assessment Training

Initial Training

Offender treatment providers were asked *"Do you administer this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. Twenty two (22) percent of ADAD licensed offender treatment programs that responded to the survey administer the SOA package.

Offender treatment providers were asked *"Did you receive training on this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. Of the treatment providers responding, 100 percent of those who administer the SOA instruments received some form of SOA training.

Offender treatment providers were asked *"Were you trained on this instrument prior to administering it for the first time?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. Twenty five (25) percent of the offender treatment programs did not receive training prior to administering the SOA instruments for the first time.

Booster Training

Offender treatment providers were asked *"Did you receive Booster training on this instrument?"* for each of the four (4) SOA instruments. Thirty one (31) percent of the Offender Treatment Programs received SOA Booster training.

Source for SOA Training

Offender treatment providers were asked *"Please tell us who provided your initial SOA training."* Respondents were asked to distinguish between training provided by the "Interagency Training Team" and "Other" sources. Sixty nine (69) percent of the Offender Treatment Programs who administer SOA use the Interagency Training Team. Thirty one (31) percent use other sources.

Staff Perceptions Regarding Efficacy of Standardized Offender Assessment Training

Offender treatment providers were asked *"In your opinion, was the SOA training you received adequate to prepare you to administer the SOA instruments effectively?"* Sixty two (62) percent of the Offender Treatment Programs indicated that the SOA training was either 'very adequate' or 'adequate' in preparing them to administer the instruments effectively.

Barriers to Obtaining SOA Training

Offender treatment providers were asked to identify barriers to obtaining SOA training from the Interagency Training Team. The frequencies of which the six (6) barriers were reported are as follows:

Location	31%
Unaware	31%
Caseload/Workload	25%
Waitlist/Delay	25%
Funds	13%
Turnover	6%

Issues for the Interagency Advisory Committee to Consider

The analysis of the questionnaire data resulted in several issues for the Interagency Advisory Committee to consider. Except as noted, all issues pertain to the community-based correctional agencies as well as the offender treatment programs who administer the SOA.

1. Most staff have received some form of SOA training. *Should all staff be required to receive SOA training if they administer the SOA process or make drug/alcohol treatment referrals?*

2. Some staff began administering assessments and/or making treatment referrals prior to being formally trained on the SOA process. *Should staff be required to receive formal SOA training prior to being allowed to conduct SOA assessments and/or prior to making drug/alcohol treatment referrals?*

3. Few staff receive SOA booster training. *Is SOA Booster training important? If so, should staff and/or treatment providers who administer the SOA be required to obtain Booster training and how often?*

4. There are multiple sources for SOA training among the different agencies. *Should there be a defined and centralized interagency source (with specifically identified trainers) who both organize and implement SOA training?*

5. Staff are generally satisfied with the SOA training they received. Staff in the community-based correctional agencies are more satisfied with the instrument administration aspect of the SOA training than they are with the treatment referral aspect of the training. *Should the SOA training curriculum be reviewed with respect to this information?*

6. There are several barriers to obtaining formal SOA training. *Should there be more extensive analysis of this issue?*

7. Agency policy regarding the approved source for SOA training is unclear. *Should Interagency agreements be written regarding SOA training? Should these agreements result in State or local policy?*

[i] The Interagency Advisory Committee on Adult and Juvenile Correctional Treatment is currently made up of the following individuals:
Dennis Kleinsasser, Ph.D., Director of Programs, Department of Corrections;
Tom Barrett, Ph. D., Director, Mental Health Services, Department of Human Services
Vern Fogg, Director, Division of Probation Services, State Court Administrators Office
Stephan Bates, Director, Division of Youth Corrections, Department of Human Services
Jeaneene Miller, Director, Division of Adult Parole and Community Corrections, Department of Corrections
Raymond T. Slaughter, Director, Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Public Safety
Janet Wood, Director, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Department of Human Services

[ii] The Offender Serving Agencies in Colorado State government applicable to this report are the Department of Corrections, Judicial Branch, State Parole Board, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Human Services.

[iii] The 11.5 Advisory Committee was a committee made up of the cabinet-level Executive Directors of the offender serving agencies in Colorado State Government.