



# Carey Guides and BITS FAQs

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**Q:** What are the Carey Guides?

**A:** Research demonstrates that traditional methods of supervision are ineffective in reducing recidivism among adult and juvenile offenders. For behavior change and recidivism reduction to be possible, offenders must understand the personal and environmental factors underlying their illegal behavior and be taught the skills they need in order to make positive changes in the future. The Carey Guides are designed to equip corrections professionals with the information and tools they need to support these changes among their clients.

We know that corrections professionals have a heavy workload and little time, so we have made the Guides short, practical, and easy to use. They are designed to translate evidence-based practices (EBP) into a series of strategies and tools that are quick and to the point.

The Carey Guides includes 33 handbooks that help corrections professionals use EBP with their clients. There are 14 Blue Guides that specifically address offenders' criminogenic needs and 19 Red Guides that address common case management issues. Each Guide follows a consistent format. Background information provides the corrections professional with important research findings and contextual information to support the application of evidence-based approaches. Each Guide also contains two to five tools (worksheets). These tools are designed for use by offenders—with the assistance of their corrections professional—to understand and address risk factors, triggers, and other conditions that are essential to their success. In total, the Guides contain 100 tools that corrections professionals can use as they work with offenders to address their skill deficits and make positive changes in their lives.

**Q: What are the BITS?**

**A:** The BITS, or Brief Intervention Tools, were created to help corrections professionals effectively address key skill deficits—particularly those associated with criminogenic needs—in short, structured interventions. There are six BITS tools: “Decision Making,” “Overcoming Automatic Responses,” “Problem Solving,” “Thinking Traps,” “Overcoming Thinking Traps,” and “Who I Spend Time With.” The six skill areas addressed by these BITS were identified through a series of interviews with corrections professionals as the most common barriers to risk reduction and therefore most important to teach offenders.

Each BITS tool is

- short: only one page, front and back
- situational: designed to be used when a spontaneous “teachable moment” arises or to target problematic behavior patterns
- versatile: can be useful in many circumstances, with both adult and juvenile offenders
- user-friendly, both for the offender and corrections professional. There are no manuals to read and no training classes to attend in order to effectively use the BITS.

The BITS can be used as a supplement to the Carey Guides; they are also useful to practitioners who do not have the training, comfort level, or opportunity to follow the longer term case management strategies that the Guides support. They are, therefore, designed for all corrections professionals.

**Q: Are the Carey Guides and BITS supported by research?**

**A:** The Carey Guides and BITS were developed based upon the research on cognitive behavioral interventions, social learning theory, effective risk reduction strategies, and the specific subject matter of the Guides and BITS (e.g., antisocial thinking, antisocial associates, problem solving, motivation, impulse control, female offenders, substance abuse, case management, etc.). (Research citations are available for those who are interested at <http://careygrouppublishing.com/sites/documents/Carey-Guides-Research-Support-Final-and-Updated-2018.pdf>.) In addition, each Carey Guide was developed by a subject matter expert, reviewed by Carey Group Publishing staff, and then peer-reviewed by a panel of researchers (to ensure the accuracy of content) and practitioners (to ensure the applicability of the content).

**Q: Has Carey Group Publishing conducted research on the Guides and BITS?**

**A:** Carey Group Publishing has made a deliberate effort *not* to conduct research on these tools out of concern for a potential conflict of interest; many would conclude that the findings of such research were suspect since we are the developers of the material and have a vested interest in the outcome of such research. Instead, Carey Group Publishing has urged users of the Guides and BITS to conduct their own research and, indeed, we have been informed that Carey Group Publishing tools are the subject of agency studies in several states. We have seen results from one large jurisdiction in California, Santa Clara County Probation, that has used BITS in their juvenile detention facility with excellent results. Their findings are available at <http://www.careygrouppublishing.com/the-carey-guides-and-bits-contest-winners>. In addition, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) conducted a study of the Division of Community Corrections' use of structured worksheets such as the Carey Guide tools. A summary of the results can be found at <http://careygrouppublishing.com/structured-worksheets-yield-positive-results>.

**Q: Are there other products similar to the Carey Guides and BITS?**

A: There are several products available from other companies that strive to achieve the same behavior change and risk reduction goals as we do. Carey Group Publishing's product line is more extensive than those of our competitors; with that said, we support the use of any tools that seek to achieve risk reduction.

**Q: How widely are the Guides and BITS used?**

A: The number of Carey Guides and BITS users has consistently grown since these resources were released. At the time of this writing, more than 500 agencies in 42 states and four countries are using the Guides, and more than 450 agencies in 34 states are using the BITS. Carey Group Publishing estimates that more than 8,000 supervision officers, case managers, and programming staff are using Guides or BITS in the U.S. as of this writing.

A significant number of agencies have made the Guides and BITS a routine part of their business. For example, North Carolina Department of Public Safety keeps track of their officers' usage of the Guides. They report over 100,000 Carey Guides used to date with a constant 86% completion rate.

**Q: What types of agencies are using the Guides and BITS?**

A: Carey Guide and BITS customers are largely justice system agencies, with the majority being state departments of correction and state and local probation/parole agencies. Private agencies are also using these resources. The Guides and BITS are being used in community settings as well as residential settings, including detention facilities and camps for youth and jails, prisons, and day reporting centers for adults. Guides and BITS are also being used by numerous community-based service organizations and several social/human service agencies. They are being used as behavior change tools in non-criminal justice schools with adolescents, and in several colleges. Some jurisdictions are using the BITS with pretrial populations and the Guides and BITS with diversion populations.

**Q:** Is it possible to talk to Guides and BITS users?

**A:** Absolutely. Numerous customers have indicated that they are more than willing to talk to others about their experiences using the Carey Guides, BITS, and other Carey Group Publishing products. Please contact us directly for references.

**Q:** What other products and services are available to support the effective use of the Guides and BITS?

**A:** Carey Group Publishing has developed the following resources to support the effective use of the Carey Guides and BITS:

- **The Carey Guides User's Guide** includes charts listing all the Carey Guides and tips on when you might use each one, as well as answers to frequently asked questions on topics such as how to integrate the Guides into casework, how to work with offenders on the Guide tools, what reading level is needed for the Guide tools, etc.
- **The Carey Guides Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Kit** includes a manual that explains the importance of CQI and that recommends a process for administering three tools that help ensure the Carey Guides are being implemented with fidelity. The Client Feedback Survey measures offenders' perceptions regarding the usefulness of an appointment in which a Carey Guide tool is used. The Carey Guides Case Audit Tool measures the degree to which the Carey Guides are used under appropriate circumstances. Finally, the Carey Guides Direct Observation Tool measures the degree to which staff are using the Carey Guides as intended and the extent to which staff incorporate the use of the four core competencies—building professional alliance, using skill practice, effective case planning and management, and appropriately using rewards and responses to noncompliance—in their work with offenders.
- **The BITS Primer** offers information about how the BITS can be used to help address offenders' criminogenic needs.
- **The 8 Keys to Success Skills Poster** lists, in strength-based terms, the key behaviors that lead to successful living (for example, "Live a Sober Lifestyle" and "Maintain Healthy and Supportive Family

Relationships”), skills that are essential to success in each area, and strategies that corrections professionals can use to help offenders build these skills. The poster is intended to be used as an interactive tool between corrections professionals and offenders, to aid in the recognition and identification of specific skill deficits that can lead to harmful and illegal behavior, and to support the development of strategies to address these skill deficits.

In addition to the poster, a one-page “cheat sheet” translates each “Key to Success” into one of the eight criminogenic needs and directs corrections professionals to Carey Guides and BITS that can help offenders build new, prosocial skills in each area.

- **The Offender Tool Organizer** includes a pocket folder for storing assigned and completed worksheets, such as Carey Guide and BITS tools. Each folder contains a 15-page memo pad that prompts offenders to record their assignments, learnings, and topics to discuss with their corrections professional. The cover of the Offender Tool Organizer identifies the 8 Keys to Success.
- **Goal Appointment Cards** list, in strength-based terms, the key behaviors that lead to successful living (as identified on the 8 Keys to Success Skills Poster) and identify the primary case plan goal on which the offender is working, the specific skill that is being developed to support achievement of that goal, the offender’s take-home assignment (e.g., the Carey Guide or BITS assignment that will enhance and reinforce their skill development), the date of their next appointment, and the corrections professional’s name and phone number. The purpose of the Goal Appointment Cards is to keep interactions between case managers and offenders focused on offenders’ criminogenic needs and on the skills they need to be successful in their day-to-day lives.
- **Criminogenic Needs Cards** are pocket-sized cards that, on one side, list the criminogenic needs in research-based terms and, on the other side, list the criminogenic needs, or “key life areas,” in terms that are more appropriate for use in discussions with offenders. These discussions are critical to engaging offenders in the change process.

- **The Driver Workbook** helps corrections professionals and offenders identify the driver—the criminogenic need that is driving the illegal behavior. Identification of the driver helps determine the focus of the case plan and, by extension, resources that can be used to address criminogenic needs.
- The **Supervisor’s EBP BriefCASE** (**C**oach and **A**dvan**C**e **S**taff in **E**BP) is an 18-module curriculum designed to be delivered by supervisors to their staff in one-hour sessions—one per month. The BriefCASE was developed to provide supervisors with the structure to establish a collaborative coaching relationship with staff and the knowledge and skills to teach and reinforce EBP and core competencies. Among the topics covered in BriefCASE sessions are interpreting and sharing assessment results, identifying drivers, identifying skill deficits, conducting skill practice sessions, case planning, and using the Carey Guides. Two skills cards, *Using the Carey Guides* and *10 Tips for Using the Guides and Working with Offenders*, contain key points to keep in mind when introducing the Guides to offenders, using the Guides with offenders, and working with offenders in general.

Further support for the Carey Guides and BITS is available through Carey Group Publishing’s partner company, The Carey Group. The Carey Group provides training and coaching for agencies that are interested in supporting skill staff development in the use of Carey Group Publishing’s risk reduction tools. These trainings include courses on the effective use of the Carey Guides, BITS, and Supervisor’s EBP BriefCASE, as well as on evidence-based practices, motivational interviewing, the development of four core competencies (building professional alliance, effective case planning and management, using skill practice, responding effectively to prosocial and noncompliant behavior), effective case planning and management, 10 steps to risk reduction, achieving risk reduction through effective staff interactions, risk reduction coaching, and continuous quality improvement/coaching.