

Authors

Christopher Blattman
The University of Chicago

Julian Jamison
University of Exeter

Margaret Sheridan
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY REDUCES CRIME AND VIOLENCE OVER 10 YEARS:
EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

Christopher Blattman
Sebastian Chaskel
Julian C. Jamison
Margaret Sheridan

Working Paper 30049
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w30049>

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
May 2022, Revised September 2022

The Network for Empowerment and Progressive Initiatives (NEPI) and Global Communities implemented the program, and NEPI provided ongoing support. Innovations for Poverty Action coordinated all research activities. For research assistance in this latest round, we thank G. Dackermue Dolo, Victor Gamarra, Sebastián Hernández, Walker Higgins, Andreas Holzinger, Bruno Aravena Maguila, Laura McCargo, Anna Myśliwiec, Albert Nyungar, and Newton Toe. We thank Sara Heller for comments. This round of the study was funded by the National Science Foundation (SES 1919399) and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. The contents of this study are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of their employers, funding agencies, or governments. The authors have no relevant or material financial interests that relate to the research described in this paper. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

NBER working papers are circulated for discussion and comment purposes. They have not been peer-reviewed or been subject to the review by the NBER Board of Directors that accompanies official NBER publications.

© 2022 by Christopher Blattman, Sebastian Chaskel, Julian C. Jamison, and Margaret Sheridan. All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit, including © notice, is given to the source.

2022 Working Paper

Cognitive Behavior Therapy Reduces Crime and Violence over 10 Years: Experimental Evidence

Several small, short-term, or non-experimental studies show that cognitive behavioral informed trainings reduce antisocial behaviors for 1–2 years. But there is no large-scale, long-term research on persistence. We follow 999 high-risk men in Liberia 10 years after randomization into: 8 weeks of low-cost therapy, \$200 cash, both, or a control group. A decade later, men receiving therapy or therapy with cash were about half as likely as the

control group to engage in various antisocial behaviors, including robbery, drug selling, and street fights—far exceeding expert predictions. Impacts are concentrated in the highest-risk men, and most robust from therapy with cash.

August 07, 2023