Data Collection 101: Making the Case for Your Program
Types of Program Evaluation

- Process Evaluation
  - Program Implementation and Operation
    - How many did you serve?
    - What services did they receive?
    - Did the program operate as designed?

- Outcome Evaluation
  - Program Effectiveness
    - Did you reduce recidivism?

- Cost-effectiveness
  - Program costs in relation to benefits
    - Did benefits exceed program costs?
Goal: Broad statement of what the program hopes to accomplish:
- Example: “reduce re-offending of mentally ill offenders”

Objective: Specific and measurable condition that must be attained to achieve program goal
- Example: “reduce the percent of mentally ill offenders incarcerated in prison two years after placement in program”
Data Elements for Outcome Evaluation

- **Criminal Justice Measures**
  - Arrests
  - Convictions
  - Incarceration

- **Mental Health Measures**
  - Hospitalizations
  - Medication monitoring
  - Emergency room visits
Where Do I Put My Data and How Do I Get It Out?

Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project: [www.consensusproject.org](http://www.consensusproject.org)

Data Collection Challenges

- Identify sources of data
  - Law enforcement for arrest data
  - Case record data from referral source
- Develop data collection protocols
  - Who gets what from where
  - Address privacy issues
- Acquire/format data for evaluation
  - Need research design
  - Need conceptualization of how you are going to measure outcomes
Recidivism as an Outcome Measure

- Most common outcome measure in criminal justice
- Arrest / Convictions / Incarceration most common measures
- “What is the recidivism rate?” is not a complete question
  - What is the recidivism measure
  - What is the period of time the measure is tracked
- Sources of recidivism data / capturing state identifier number
  - Local jail
  - Department of Corrections
  - Department of Public Safety
Keys to Outcome Evaluation

- **Comparison group: Apples to Apples**
  - A group of comparable offenders, not participating in the program, must be identified and tracked in the same way as the program group.

- **Uniform Follow-up Period**
  - Each offender in the program group and the comparison group must be tracked for the same time period.
    - Example: All offenders in the program and comparison group are tracked for two years.

- **Program Outcomes**
  - Measure program outcomes by tracking all offenders, program costs, and the recidivism of program completers, drop-outs, and comparison groups.
Alternatives to Comparison Group for Outcome Evaluation

- Developing a Comparison Group can be difficult. Some alternatives to consider for outcome evaluation can include:
  - Pre- and post-measures of treatment population
  - Looking at outcomes of waiting list offenders
  - Looking at outcomes of program drop-outs
  - Looking at outcomes of ineligible offenders
    - Out of service area
Mental Health Initiative placed mentally ill offenders on specialized caseloads and provided case management and medication resources.

Goal: Reduce re-offending / Objective: Reduce re-incarceration of offenders during 2 year follow-up period

Outcome Measure: Percent Incarcerated 2 years after placement on specialized caseload

Comparison group:
- Mentally ill offenders on specialized caseload but no case management or medication services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>MH Initiative</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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Do Benefits of Program Outweigh Cost of Treatment?

- **Cost-effectiveness** = **Incarceration Costs Avoided** – **Treatment Cost**
- **Incarceration Costs Avoided** = Number of recidivists avoided x Incarceration costs
  - Number of Recidivists avoided = Recidivism Change (Comparison Group – Treatment Group)
  - = Comparison Group 20% - Treatment Group 13% x Number in Treatment Group (100)
  - = 7 recidivists avoided
  - **Incarceration Costs Avoided** = 7 recidivists avoided x $25,000 (cost of incarceration) = $175,000
- **Treatment Cost** = Average cost of treatment services x Number of offenders receiving treatment = $1,000 per offender x 100 = $100,000
- **Cost-effectiveness** = $175,000 incarceration costs avoided – $100,000 treatment costs
  - +$75,000 net incarceration costs avoided