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UNIVERSITY



Center for Advancing
Correctional Excellence!

Criminology, Law & Society
George Mason University
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Smart BJA Initiatives and the Role of the Research Partnership

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JUSTICE★CENTER
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome & Overview of Council of State Governments Justice Center:
 - Sheila Tillman, Policy Analyst, CSG Justice Center
- Today's Speakers:
 - Ed McGarrell, Ph.D., Professor, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University
 - Faye Taxman, Ph.D., Professor in the Criminology, Law and Society Department, and Director of the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence! at George Mason University

National **nonprofit, nonpartisan**
membership association of state
government officials

Represents **all three** branches
of state government

Provides **practical** advice informed by
the best available evidence



Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program Funding

- Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) Public Law 108-414 signed into law in 2004 with bipartisan support
- Authorized JMHCP: \$50 million for criminal justice-mental health initiatives
- The MIOTCRA amended and reauthorized JMHCP for five years in 2008 (Public Law 108-416)
- In 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act amended and reauthorized the JMHCP program first created by MIOTCRA

Overview of JMHCP

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) supports innovative cross-system collaboration to improve responses and outcomes for individuals with mental illnesses or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders who come into contact with the justice system.

National Reentry Resource Center



- Authorized by the passage of the Second Chance Act in April 2008
- Launched by the Council of State Governments in October 2009
- Administered in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice
- The NRRC has provided technical assistance to over 600 juvenile and adult reentry grantees since inception

Agenda

- Why Research Partnership?
 - Evidence-based Practice & Action Research
 - Evolution of the Action Research Model
 - The Role of the Research Partner
- How to Build an Effective Partnership
- Implementation
 - Lessons from Implementation Science
 - Applications
- Best Practices in Corrections
- Evaluation Challenges and Strategies

Smart Justice

Evidence-based practice – OJP includes two key dimensions*:

- Effectiveness – demonstrated by causal evidence, obtained through high quality evaluations
- Causal evidence – use of scientific methods to rule out, as much as possible, alternative explanations



Smart Justice

Action Research:


- Research that seeks to solve specific problems
- Typically conducted in a research-practice collaboration



Smart Justice

Implementation & Evaluation:

- Implementation – critical dimension of effectively addressing problem
- Evaluation
 - Are we implementing the EBP with fidelity to the model and appropriate intensity (process evaluation)
 - Are we having the desired impact on the problem/issue we are addressing? (outcome evaluation)



Implementation &
Evaluation

Smart Justice – Role of Research Partnership

Action Research

Evidence-Based
Practice

Implementation &
Evaluation

Basic Research

Smart Justice – Role of Research Partnership



Why the Research Partnership?

Researchers, working with their CJ partners, can:

- Assess the problem
- Identify evidence-based strategies
- Assist with strategic planning of strategies
- Assess implementation
- Evaluate impact

Traditional Research Model

- Researchers were outsiders in problem-solving process
 - Not involved in problem identification
 - Observers, not participants, in program development and implementation
 - Involved only as independent evaluators of impact

Action Research Model

- Active, ongoing partnership between researchers and practitioner agencies
- Use research process to help solve local problems
 - Data collection to identify and understand problems
 - Strategic analysis to develop targeted interventions
 - Program monitoring and feedback for refinement
 - Assessment of impact

Evolution of Research Partnerships

RSAT, Drug Courts, and Specialty Courts

Supervision

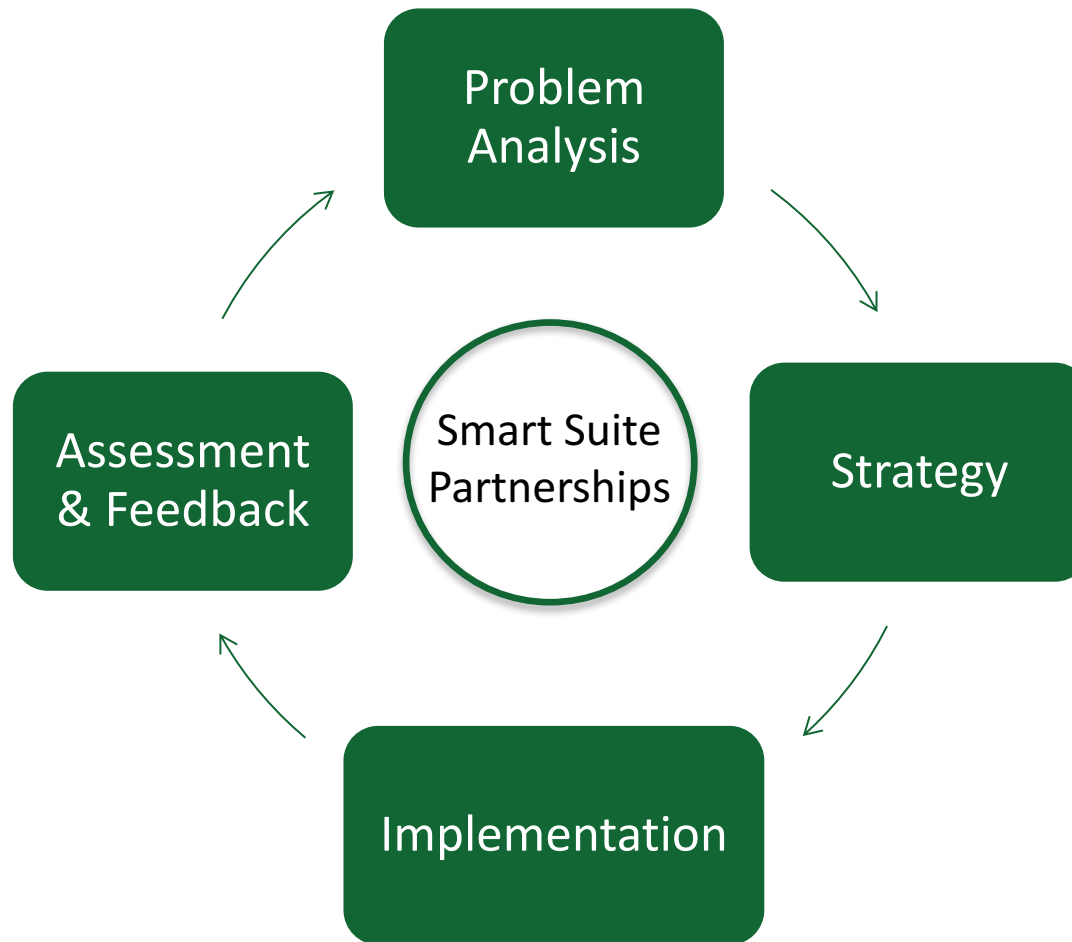
Reentry

Co-Occurring Disorders

Common Ingredients

- Focused strategies/interventions
- Systematic problem solving process
 - Multi-agency working group
 - Problem solving model
 - CJ Agency - Researcher Partnership

Strategic Problem-Solving Model



Support Highly Focused Interventions

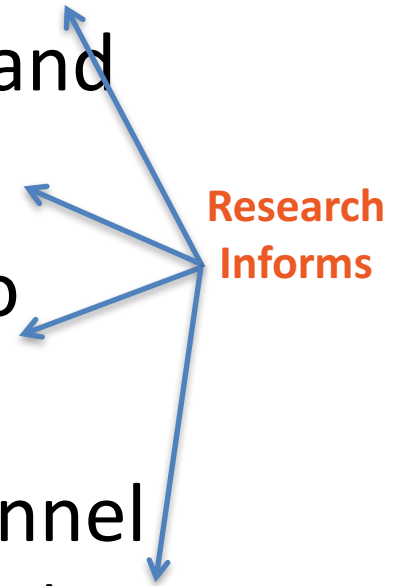
“There is strong research evidence that *the more focused and specific* the strategies of the police, the more they are tailored to the problems they seek to address, *the more effective* the [police] will be in controlling crime and disorder.”

Smart Supervision & Focused Interventions

- Effectively assess criminogenic risk & need
- Employ smart, tailored case planning and supervision strategies
- Use incentives, graduated sanctions to influence behavior
- Implement performance-driven personnel practices to reward reduced recidivism*

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The Research Partner

- Assists the team in gathering data, synthesizing information and evaluating strategies
- Is an extra set of eyes
- Is a neutral partner with unbiased perspectives
- Offers expertise in areas that are not necessarily available

Research Partner = Added value

Problem analysis

**Identification of
evidence-based
strategies**

**Ongoing monitoring
and feedback**

Evaluation

Ongoing Assessment

- Component of Action Research
- Form of process evaluation
 - Are we doing what we said we would do?
 - Do we need to make mid-course corrections?
 - Provides a mechanism for holding our partnership accountable
- Critical for achieving desired outcomes

Researcher Responsibilities

- Answer questions raised by the department/agency/partnership
- Problem identification that is operationally relevant
- Initial inquiry, key questions that move to informed analysis
- Intervention development support
- Analysis, monitoring, and feedback

Researcher Skills

- Commitment to project and problem solving
- Knowledge of criminal justice system
- Ability to communicate and advise
- Ability to look at a problem creatively
- Familiarity with and valuing a broad array of research methodologies- qualitative and quantitative
- Willingness to work with unique characteristics of criminal justice data and non-traditional, creative research methodologies
- Ability to meet short timelines

Expectations of the Researcher

- Listen first, then talk
 - Especially when the partnership is starting
 - Know his/her role
 - Listen and value
- Start where the practitioners are, not where the academics are
 - Problem solving as a group may be new
 - Usefulness to all involved

Expectations of the Researcher

- Help practitioners stop and think
 - Ready, shoot, aim
 - Dealing with problems instead of responding to incidents
 - Validate and explain new ideas
- Understand the data phobia
 - Awareness of experience history

Expectations of the Researcher

- Put something good in your hands
 - Timely research findings
 - Audience
 - Brief from the bottom up
- Find a buddy
 - Informal and candid
 - Transparency in process and review

Expectations of the Agency

- Be active participants
- Make decisions informed by data
- Work together in true collaboration
- Educate and be an advocate for your department
- Include the RP in meetings

Expectations of the Agency

- Bring department concerns and perspectives to the team
- Share data and information
- Listen, respond, be flexible and creative

Obstacles

- History of data use and abuse
- History of difficult relationships
- Difficulty in measuring outcomes directly related to crime and criminal justice
- Capacity of agencies
 - Records not data
 - Data systems that are not integrated

Obstacles

- Money
 - Funding considerations usually shape the nature of the research that can be undertaken
- What is being investigated
 - May take time to clarify issues
- Time to design research

Obstacles

- Time to collect data
- Time to analyze
- What and how to report
 - Something good in my hand
 - Academic outlets

Questions to ask

- Are both parties being satisfied?
- Is the communications process open?
- Is the relationship capable of adapting to changing circumstances
- How long will (or can) the relationship endure?

Suggestions for Successful Evaluation

- Plan early
- Jointly develop logic model, outputs, outcomes
- Ongoing assessment and feedback



Question & Answer Session

Thank You

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For more information, contact Olivia Randi, orandi@csg.org.



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