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EDITORIAL

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We are a fortunate association in that our members are involved in so many interesting research endeavors that we never lack for great material to highlight. For the April Issue of the AEC/DEC newsletter, we therefore thought it would be interesting for several of our members to share some of their *unpublished* research studies with a larger audience. In reading over the material sent to us, I am sure that all will agree that there is a treasure trove of findings yet to be mined in this issue. (Perhaps some doctoral students looking for a dissertation might be interested.....)

Anthony Braga begins this section by recounting the work done by Dr. Hans Gruber, a Visiting Scholar at the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. Dr. Gruber was conducting a qualitative analysis of the hot spots experiment being completed by Drs. Braga, Weisburd, and Mazerolle. His findings were surprising and discomfoting but, no doubt, will provide a paradigm shift in the way in which we approach law enforcement and hot spot research in the future.

In an effort to round out this issue and provide both criminal justice and criminological studies, Lynette Feder was able to spend two days conversing with the world-renowned researcher, Dr. Sylvia Allbright. As Dr. Feder's focus is on early parenting practices and children's long term outcomes, their conversation ranged from discussions on Dr. Allbright's earlier influences, to her previous (successful and unsuccessful) research attempts, and ended in discussions on where her latest interests were taking her and her research team in their quest to understand the beginnings of aggression in humans. It is hard to imagine that anyone in criminology will be able to read this piece and not be changed.

Peter Greenwood then provides us with an amazing study that he and his research partner quite accidentally fell into when, from the bowels of the United States Department of Justice, they found data on prisoners who absconded from prison. Forty years later they were able to track these individuals' time in the community and their findings have given rise to an important reentry program which, their data indicates, may be more effective than any other reentry program studied to date. Undoubtedly, more research will have to be conducted on the Self-Initiated Reentry Program (SIRP), but for now it is sure to amass quite a good deal of attention.

Todd Armstrong provides us with another criminal justice piece that provides the do's and don't's for conducting research in a jail setting. Though his comments stem from his experimental research in this particular (jail) setting, there is no doubt that they are apropos to all experimental research conducted in institutions. And certainly many of us will feel like it is

déjà vu all over again when he discusses the host institution's reaction to his failing to find the experimental program effective. (Perhaps that bad chicken in the jail cafeteria was no mere accident!)

Finally, Faye Taxman's article rounds out our special issue by discussing the organizational principles behind much of the experimenting we do. As she so astutely notes, these evidence-based practices are only going to be useful to the extent that practitioners implement them faithfully. Dr. Taxman's seminal study looks at the outcomes of using "carrots" versus "sticks" when putting new policies and procedures into practice. Her findings, no doubt, should help us all realize our dream of conducting experiments with high fidelity.

Our Division is now barely more than one year old and we continue to grow in membership and ideas. We promote and support this growth and would like all to know who we are and what we are

about. Towards those ends, we encourage members to feel free to share this newsletter with others who might not currently be members but might be interested in learning more about the Division of Experimental Criminology and experimental research.

If you are interested in membership in our Division, please contact Lynette Feder (LFeder@pdx.edu) for further information about the Division of Experimental Criminology and the perks that come with membership.

As experimentalists, we feel privileged to be part of this wonderful network of scholars. As always, we thank our colleagues for challenging and inspiring us. And we welcome all who would like to join this community and build the knowledge base with us.

Lynette Feder & Anthony A. Braga
Co-Editors

FEATURE ARTICLES

Why Do Evaluations of Place-Based Policing Strategies Show Strong Crime Control Gains?

by Anthony A. Braga

The extant evaluation research seems to provide fairly robust evidence that hot spots policing is an effective crime prevention strategy. The research also suggests that focused police interventions in high-activity crime places do not inevitably lead to crime displacement and crime control benefits may diffuse into the areas immediately surrounding the targeted locations. The mechanisms through which police interventions generate these noteworthy crime control gains remain unclear. Common explanations include deterrence generated through increased police presence and the amelioration of criminogenic conditions through problem-oriented interventions.

Newly rediscovered research focused squarely on this question suggests a surprising insight: *the researchers themselves are unintentionally causing crime to go down in crime hot spots*. Dr. Hans Gruber, who was a Visiting Scholar at the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University when I was completing my dissertation research, authored a rich qualitative account of the perceptions of criminal offenders that populated violent crime hot spots in Jersey City, New Jersey. With the approval of study directors David Weisburd and Lorraine Mazerolle, I facilitated Gruber's access to the treatment violent crime hot spots. Gruber spent many hours interviewing offenders at these places during the post-test period of our hot spots policing experiment. He wrote his completed report in German and, to my knowledge, never published his findings. Since I was engrossed in completing my dissertation research during this time period, I never bothered to ask Gruber what he found before he returned to Germany.

I largely forgot about Gruber's work until I came across his unpublished report when moving my research files from Harvard to Rutgers. Intrigued by the rediscovery of this research, I immediately hired someone to translate the document. I was astonished to learn that the ongoing presence of researchers in executing the evaluation was linked to crime control gains in the treatment hot spots. Based on his interviews, Gruber identified three crime control mechanisms associated with the presence of academic researchers:

1. *Deterrence*. About one third of the interviewed offenders commented that researchers who visited the violent crime hot spots were such "obvious victims" that they were suspicious of a police decoy operation at work. The researchers were described as "soft, clueless targets" who "clearly didn't belong" in the area. The offenders felt that these potential victims were "too good

to be true" and, as such, the police had to be watching and waiting. Based on these comments, Gruber concluded that the researchers were actually deterring criminals from frequenting the hot spots.

2. *Removal of Rewards*. Roughly forty percent of the interviewed offenders suggested that the researchers were not "suitable targets" and decided to go to other venues to find people who were actually worth robbing. These offenders perceived very poorly-dressed professors and shabbily-attired graduate students as homeless individuals suffering from mental health issues. One career robber commented, "those people clearly didn't have any money... so I just moved on to greener pastures." Gruber interpreted these data as strong evidence that potential offenders frequented the treatment places in smaller numbers because the rewards associated with successful robberies were no longer perceived to be very lucrative.

3. *Discouragement*. Gruber also interviewed a small number of offenders who were repeatedly involved in bar fights in the violent crime places. These brawlers stopped frequenting their favorite bars for two reasons. First, they prided themselves in fighting with capable rival combatants. The researchers didn't look like much of a challenge to them. One commented, "it would be like hitting a small child or a defenseless animal." Second, beyond the possibility of a good fight, they enjoyed the general atmosphere of the bars and felt the researchers changed bar dynamics in a negative way. As one brawler reported, "this (bar) used to be a cool place... now it is nerd city." Gruber concluded that the presence of researchers in bars was a very discouraging experience for the brawlers.

Current crime control discourse has focused on whether it is wiser to invest scarce governmental resources on prisons or the police. I think Gruber's research adds a new policy-relevant dimension to this conversation. In addition to strengthening investments in focused police operations, the U.S. Department of Justice should be supporting robust academic-police partnerships that encourage researchers to study the places that cause recurring problems for the police very closely. The addition of "researcher presence in crime hot spots" to the police crime prevention tool kit has great promise in creating safer communities.

Anthony A. Braga is a Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and a Senior Research Fellow in the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at Harvard University.

New Frontiers in Criminology: Dr. Sylvia Allbright's Path to the True Beginnings of Aggression

by Lynette Feder

Dr. Sylvia Allbright has recently added fuel to the ongoing debate on whether individuals are born bad or made bad through environmental influences (nature versus nurture) by studying the beginnings of aggression in humans. Recently I caught up with her and asked that she speak with the AEC/DEC newsletter about factors influencing her work and the latest findings revealed by her research. What is reported below was a conversation that took place over the course of two days.

One cannot seriously begin this discussion without first paying homage to the seminal work of others upon which this research has been built. First was Dr. Farrington's Cambridge Study which studied boys from the age of 8 continuing through their adult years. Dr. Farrington found that one of the most important predictors of delinquency was a history of antisocial childhood behavior (Farrington, 1995). Moffitt and her colleagues made the next significant contribution to this literature. In their longitudinal study of a birth cohort where children were assessed from the time that they were age 2, this team of researchers found that the single best predictor of antisocial behavior at age 11 was the child having demonstrated preschool behavior problems (White, Moffitt, Earls, Robbins & Silva, 1990). Tremblay and his colleagues made a giant leap by beginning the study of aggression in infancy. In their landmark longitudinal study, they investigated aggressive behavior in infants from 5 months to 42 months. In line with the research above, they found continuity of aggression across time (Nagin & Tremblay, 2001). Just as important, they found that most children had initiated their physically aggressive behavior during infancy (Tremblay et al., 2004).

Based upon the above research literature, it became clear to my research team and I that the search for the initiation of aggression must look even earlier in the human lifespan if we are to find the point in time at which aggression and violence first become rooted in the human experience. And that is where I began my inquiries.

At first we began qualitatively by talking with mothers with grown children, some of whom had gone on to commit crime and others who had not. We conducted hundreds of focus groups with subjects from all walks of life for sixteen months trying to decipher significant differences in the prenatal experiences of those whose children would go on to become fiends, thugs and culprits in comparison to those who raised good and law abiding citizens.

The months spent running these groups gave us insights that would serve as the foundation for our longitudinal study. Those mothers whose children went astray (N=277) were significantly more likely than mothers of non-offending children (N=685) to note how aggressive their unborn children were while being carried to term ($\chi^2(3, N=962) = 89.12, p < .001$). We would hear horrible stories about how these women suffered the repeated kicks and elbowing of their yet unborn charges. One mother told us, nearly in tears, how she would have to hold on to a counter while her child would pummel her from inside. Many others noted similar incidents that occurred repeatedly throughout their pregnancies. We believed that we were getting closer to finding the beginnings of aggression in humans. But though we had narrowed down the time for the starting of aggression, we still had not been successful in pinpointing its exact time of inception.

As an aside, when we followed up with questions to the women who were experiencing these aggressive acts whether any of them reported these assaults to law enforcement, not one of these subjects answered affirmatively. In fact, their reaction to our question was one of disbelief. Perhaps they were trying to protect their unborn children from being labeled early on as troublemakers, but not one of these women said that they viewed these attacks as worthy of criminal justice involvement. The finding that one large (though temporary) segment of the population could be so repeatedly brutalized and yet not recognize this as a victimization could in itself provide material worthy of continued study. But our team believed that we were on to something even bigger.

When asked when the assaults began, most women agreed that they started feeling some movement somewhere between their fourth and sixth month of pregnancy. At some point after this initial period, the women said that they began experiencing the assaults. They further noted that typically there seemed to be no rhyme or reason for these aggressive acts. That the aggression could start when the subjects were quiet or loud, tired or well rested and that they were equally likely to occur in the daylight or evening hours, or in the privacy of their homes or on busy streets. But what they all had in common is that not one of these incidents was the result of provocation according to parental reports.

We started our first longitudinal study when women were beginning their second trimester of pregnancy. We asked all subjects to keep a log of the day, time and nature of aggressive behaviors that her unborn child was exhibiting. We then followed these women through to the end of their pregnancies.

We found that most all of these developing humans engaged in aggressive behavior during some point in their in utero experience. We therefore came to our first major finding. Fetal aggression should not be thought of as a dichotomous yes/no property but instead should be viewed on a continuum. It is something that most all developing humans engage in with some being higher

than others on both frequency and severity of this behavior. Our research also revealed a positive correlation between frequency and severity of fetal offending. That is, those who were the most frequent offenders were also more likely to be the more serious offenders. Finally, the aggressive behavior continued to increase as the fetus aged. In fact, there is no point at which we saw the aggression decreasing. In contradiction to maturational reform, these developing humans were *not* aging out of their bad behaviors. Obviously, the implications from this finding were frightening and reinforced the warnings of Dr. James Wolf about the coming wave of youth violence in America.

Critics of our work noted that perhaps the younger embryos were being equally aggressive but, due to their size, their violent behaviors were going undetected and/or unreported by their mothers. We took these criticisms to heart. In our next series of studies we attempted to find a way of registering both the undetected and unreported aggressive behaviors of these developing humans.

We found this to be a challenging task. We spent several years attempting different tactics to get at the true incidence of unborn aggression. At one point we tried to engage in building awareness among maternal subjects that aggressive behavior is wrong regardless of whether it was done at the hands of someone they knew versus a stranger, from within or from outside the victim's body. We believed that with the growing awareness of unborn aggression, mothers-to-be might be more likely to report these incidences. When this failed, we tried to hook subjects up to fetal monitors starting in their second month of pregnancy and continuing to their child was born. We found that after six hours on the monitors most subjects objected strenuously to the study and withdrew their consent so that they would be able to leave the laboratory.

Having been unsuccessful in designing a prospective test, we began research that relied on retrospective accounts. For three years we spoke with convicted offenders so as to decipher the similarities and dissimilarities in their memories of their in utero experiences in comparison to those of their non-offending counterparts. We found that most offenders were angry with this line of questioning which told us that we were hitting a nerve and that we were on the right path.

Though we have not been able to pinpoint the exact beginnings of aggression, we have been successful in demonstrating that, even as they develop, humans are already engaged in aggressive behaviors. We have therefore shifted our focus to developing an effective prenatal intervention for the most aggressive embryos that is modeled on the work of Henggeler and his colleagues' multisystemic therapy, MST (Henggeler et al., 1998). This intervention takes a holistic approach by incorporating all the individuals in the many domains in which the fetus lives, works and plays. While work is

progressing slowly, we are continuing our efforts to find the right time and the right program that can effectively intervene preventively with aggressive unborns.

And in the interim, we are working with the federal government on a series of public service announcements to raise awareness that violence done at the hands (or elbows or feet) of non-strangers is still violence and needs to be treated as seriously as all other forms of violence.

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Dr. Lynette Feder is a Professor at Portland State University and the Principal Investigator of the Enhanced Nurse Family Partnership Study evaluating the effectiveness of an intimate partner violence prevention program.

Findings from the Self-Initiated Reentry Program (SIRP)

by Peter Greenwood

Unlike most research published in this journal, this work was not supported by any government grants or handouts. As active Tea Party members we want to make sure we are not part of bilking the taxpayers through government give-a-way programs.

When Rob and I first came across the incredible data resource, that became the basis for what we now call the Self-Initiated Reentry Program (SIRP), while working in the archives of the U.S. Justice Department, we were astounded. It is now more than 20 years since Rob and I first discovered that some lowly DOJ official had been collecting the names and prior contact information for every single prison inmate who went AWOL or missing for the past 40 years, in about 20 states. The others did not report. All that DOJ had done with the data is run a few summary reports.

For the first 5 years we did nothing but recode the data and publish descriptive data about who the escapees were. It was not until we got that enormous grant from the Gates Foundation that we were able to track down arrest and/or locational date for the first 2 years after their escape for 85 percent of the sample.

Of course many were captured and returned to custody shortly after their escape, about 35 percent. Another 8 percent became deceased as a consequence of their escape, killed by law enforcement or other causes (homicide, auto accident, etc). Seven percent were never heard from again and are considered missing. This leaves 50 percent who stayed on the lam for more than 30 days. Guess what? The recidivism rate for these absconders was significantly lower than that for other prison inmates. The longer they stayed free, the less likely they were to recidivate. Not only was this finding true of the entire population, but also true in 16 of the 20 states for which we had data.

As a result of this study several states are now actively considering implementing SIRP programs. Rob and I have formed a consulting firm, SIRP Partners, LLP, to provide training in those states that are interested. The basic principles, derived from our study and on which the model is based, are as follows:

- Make it easier for inmates to escape (by cutting holes in fences, turning off surveillance cameras, and leaving the keys in unattended vehicles).

- Make sure you catch about half. This can be facilitated by keeping lots of hound dogs in the surrounding area.
- Make sure tower guards shoot to kill. A wounded prisoner can be a considerable financial burden.
- Always instruct your guards to turn their backs for at least 10 minutes whenever they transport inmates to outside medical services. Inmates in need of medical care are good ones to lose.
- Don't pursue too vigorously. Cost benefit studies by WSIPP show that any overtime expenditure on searches is seldom justified.

In summary, longitudinal research on a long forgotten sample has once again provided new insights on a critical criminal justice issue. Call it Self-Initiated Reentry or Diversion, it works. And it is coming soon to a prison near you.

Dr. Peter Greenwood is Executive Director of Advancing Evidence Based Practice.

The Joys of Conducting Randomized Controlled Trials*

by *Todd A. Armstrong*

I like to start by saying that I appreciate the opportunity to address such an august body, and I'll do my best to treat this opportunity with the respect and dignity that it deserves. Much of what I have learned about randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in jail settings can be summarized in four simple statements: 1) avoid authority figures; 2) never eat the food in the jail cafeteria; 3) have competent legal counsel; and 4) do not do anything that might make you hallucinate before going to work. Those of you only tangentially involved in randomized trials may note that these statements generalize well to almost any vocation.

I will refer to the aforementioned statements as 'the principals of conducting randomized controlled trials'. The first principal stems from my first encounter with Warden Jenks. Upon being introduced, the Warden looked me up and down. If I had thought for an instant that it was possible, I might have assumed that he was undressing me with his eyes. It was only later upon reflection that I realized he was actually strip searching me with his eyes. Then, satisfied that I was not carrying contraband, the warden uttered the following proclamation "You know what they say – figures lie, and liars figure". The Warden then did a smart about face and marched off. As my principal function at the jail was to be as a 'figurer', this constituted a rollicking start to our working relationship. I then put into action my first principal, and made sure that my impact on the warden and the jail was as small as possible. This principal paid off, the warden eventually learned that I was respectful, sincere, and hard working, this was critical when I eventually authored the report that indicated that the program that I was evaluating was not having its intended effect.

The second principal of conducting randomized controlled trials-never eat the food in the jail cafeteria-may not generalize all that well, but when it does, it's vitally important. Unfortunately for me, I only learned this principal after I had violated it numerous times. I was eating lunch with Warden Jenks in the jail cafeteria one day (the Warden had softened on his stance vis-a-vie figures and figurers considerably), when he commented that all the food was prepared by the inmates. He also mysteriously suggested that I avoid the scalloped potatoes. That was my last meal in the jail cafeteria.

The third principal of conducting randomized controlled trials-have competent legal counsel-stems from inescapable conclusion drawn at the end of the RCT that I was conducting in the Warden's jail: that the 'Undoubtedly Lucrative Prevention Program' (ULPP)

was not having its intended effect. This conclusion eventually reached the progenitors of the program, one of whom responded with an email to yours truly. I've described the tone of this email in the past thusly, "imagine there is a guy screaming at you at the top of his voice, the veins on the side of his neck are sticking out, he's beat red, and spit is flying out of his mouth". Said email accused me of being anti-rehabilitation, questioned my integrity as a researcher, and suggested that my conclusions were unfounded, and threatened litigation. Now I may have done a bit to stir the pot. When I authored the article that described the RCT on the ULPP, I did mention that at the time the vast majority of studies supporting the project were conducted by the authors of the program itself (and they used inferior research designs). I may have also mentioned that it appeared like these same individuals may have/had a financial stake in the program. Thus, as the program was implemented in many states, and even statewide in a couple, there may have been a tidy sum of cash at stake. Maybe this influenced the tone of the email?

After consulting with the chair of my department at the time, I referred said email to University legal counsel, who after some deliberation urged me to reply and clarify my position. I did. My clarification sought to articulate a couple of key points: 1) I don't hate rehabilitation, but I do hate it when we fake it; 2) it's not my fault that the treatment group did not recidivate less than the control group; 3) if you'd like to pursue this issue formally/legally, go ahead, it will bring considerable attention to my study; and 4) you might want to stop taking this personally and try to figure out how to modify your program so it doesn't happen again. Turns out University counsel was wise. I now think of her as my legal fairy godmother. The reply to my reply had a tone that was considerably different from the first. I describe this tone as "someone that is trying to say sorry while avoiding eye contact".

The fourth principal of conducting randomized controlled trials-do not do anything that might make you hallucinate before going to work-comes from a little experience I had after eating some undercooked chicken, at least I'm pretty sure it was the chicken. Having done some interviews, I was walking through the jail back to my office. The shortest path took me through a cell block. I was feeling pretty woozy (from the chicken) when I could have sworn I saw pre-face tattoo Mike Tyson. At the time, Iron Mike's head looked about five times too big for his body, a consequence of the chicken no doubt.

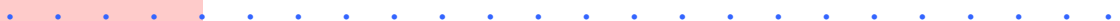
If you've made it this far, thanks for reading. The principals outlined above have served me well. If I might have a little more of your time, I'd light to call your attention to their subtext: 1) be humble and respectful; 2) persevere, one of the redeemable things about RCT's is that they are worthwhile; 3) deliver the results faithfully even when they might make stakeholders unhappy (null results are an opportunity);

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4) well, there really is no subtext for this one. Much to my relief I later learned that Mike Tyson was actually incarcerated at the facility I was conducting the RCT at, but there was no word on whether his head was unusually large at the time.

*This account is semi-autobiographical and wantonly embellished. Names and places have been changed to protect both the guilty and the innocent.

Todd A. Armstrong is an Associate Professor in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University.



Firing vs. Snazzy-Looking Staff: Getting Staff to Use a New Technology

by Faye S. Taxman

The problem is well known. New ideas generate new science that generates new findings that are relevant to improving practices in the field. The relevance of the science is only as useful as whether you can place it in the hands of those that can use, typically referred to as the “bench to bedside” approach. That is, the goal is for the front-line staff or first responders to consume these gems and use them in everyday work. These evidence-based practices are designed to improve society’s desired outcomes, and therefore the overriding logic is that they must be relevant to staff who do the daily business of justice and care. After all, the concept of evidence-based practices is that there is some scientific evidence that anoints the practice as being worthwhile.

Scientists lament that the practices are not used. Even more frustrating is that when agencies use the practices they often lack “oomph” (enough of the key components) to make them matter. Frequently the practices are done in such a way that is difficult to determine whether there is a difference between “old” way of doing things or the “evidence-based” practices model. The perennial problem is stated as “implementation” which can be encompassed by faulty interpretation of the science, failure to have enough of the key ingredients in place, or resistance to the concepts. Scholars have pointed to the need to examine the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003) in order to improve both the quality and the uptake of evidence-based practices.

Diffusion experiments are far and few between in criminology, and when they tend to concentrate around the initial training instead of examining how the EBP is impeded in the experiment. The lack of experiments can be attributable to the desire to test new interventions to create more evidence-based practices or the difficulty of designing interventions at the organizational level. Also, conducting experiments with resistant staff are complex. In fact, most scientists (and probably administrators) would rather have the organization fire the existing staff instead of trying to develop professional staff or test methods to reduce resistance. For many, it is clearly easier to implement evidence-based practices with new staff that is not wedded to their old ways.

Recent organizational change strategies (Backer, 1993; ATTC, 2004; Glisson, et al 2006 to name a few) offer up new ideas for experiments that are relevant in justice settings. A recent systematic review turns the attention away from trying to “train an old dog” to the focus on the transfer problem (Burke & Hawkins, 2007). The transfer problem considers the organization

as an organism that has many different parts where “transfer” can occur such as tools for key staff like supervisors, quality improvement processes, team work processes (Baer, et al 2007). Different uplifts or supports can be used to encourage staff to consider the relevance and value of this evidence-based practice. Such uplifts are defined as coaches, performance-minded supervisors, or other organizational beasts.

The Experiment: Recreating Norms vs. Social Networks

Since the administrators of a juvenile justice agency were mandated to implement evidence based practices by the Governor, the administrators sought assistance from researchers as to the best option to improve the implementation of evidence-based practices. The researchers developed a study to examine the “technology transfer” problem. The transfer problem is one that is linked to the theory about transfer:

- 1) Normative and reductive theory suggests that building the clinical and decision-making skills of the staff will most likely occur when the administrators fire the staff that are unwilling to improve their use of the evidence-based practices. It is believed that the staff that lack of knowledge and technical skills creates too much resistance to new procedures and therefore need to go. The managers use their “stick” and fire the resistant staff.
- 2) Organizational learning theory suggest that the organizational culture can support utilization of evidence-based practices by providing uplifts in the sense of fancy clothes for the staff and glitzy office decorations. The model creates staff that look good and therefore are willing to take risks since they are “cool”. Everyone feels good and are willing to take a risk in trying the new procedures.
- 3) Directors or management protocols are written declarations of what management wants. Staff will follow-through because they want a paycheck.

The research team focused on the thorniest of EBPs in the world of interventions—how to select the most appropriate youth to participate in various interventions. That is, the agency has a number of prized interventions (either anointed by Blueprints (<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/background.html>) or the National Registry of Evidence based Program and Practices (NREPP (<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/Search.aspx>)). The agency used the prized risk and needs assessment tools; staff use the tools as required by the agency but they do not use the tools to assign youth to programs or services, a common problem in the field. The staff tend to practice “correctional quackery” (Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002) by not making case management or service referral decisions based on the available tools.

The study focused on the two different theories about how to transfer knowledge and skills within an organization through the “stick” of firing the staff and therefore resetting the norms of the agency as compared to the “carrots” of good looking clothes and fancy offices. Coaches were assigned to each experimental arm to make sure the messages were clear. Coaches used a toolkit to ensure that similar dosage units were given to each arm. The toolkit consisted of:

- 1) All staff in the experiment receiving one day of a refresher course in interviewing skills with a focus on motivational strategies (to motivate the youth and their families, not directed at the staff). That is, each staff had to relearn to “talk nicely” to the youth.
- 2) Staff received a 3-day intensive skill building training on the risk and need instruments focusing on “utilization”. Roleplaying, practice sessions, and case studies were the main tools used in the training—these tools were to see whether the staff should be fired (in the stick group) or the size of the clothing (in the carrot group).
- 3) Staff in the experimental arms received 3 additional post-training sessions and monthly phone calls. For the sticks group, at each booster the coaches selected staff to fire. In the carrots group, coaches provided new fancy clothing for the staff and gave them incentives like happy faces, stickers, and vouchers.

The control group got memos from management. The experiment then randomly assigned 12 offices to one of three conditions: 1) memos (no coaching just paper); 2) carrots (cool new clothes and office glitz to cheer everyone up); and 3) sticks (shape up or be fired!).coaching.

Style of Coaching Matters, but More Importantly the Organizational Culture Matters

Staff surveys were distributed throughout the study (baseline and then 6 and 12 months post original training) to assess the staff’s commitment to the organization, cynicism of change, perception of organizational functionality, attitudes towards use of risk and need assessment tools, and attitudes towards working with youth in a motivational framework (engagement strategies). Staff that did not complete the surveys were notified that they will lose a paycheck. Staff that completed the surveys are sent emails that the management knows who they are so they better say good things.

Youth outcomes were measured. The concern was which experimental arm locked up more kids since the goal is to ensure that staff did their jobs, and that the youth knew who were in charge.

Which group did better? Actually the sticks group did great—more kids were locked up and more staff (those

that were not fired) loved their job. The carrots group loved working in the organization but they did not have an impact on the youth outcomes. The “memo” group essentially had the same outcomes as the “carrot” group.

It turns out that firing the resistant staff creates a strong social network that loves the agency and feels they are the “cats meow”. Logistical and HLM models illustrated that the organizational culture was an important factor in the adoption of evidence-based practices given that all study site reported favorable perceptions of their agency and reported low cynicism. The organizational culture of fear contributed to more youth being locked up.

Next Steps

Do agencies need to fire staff to implement evidence-based practices? It does appear that this is a necessary step. Office uniforms that are bright, have pizzazz, and are encouraging are more likely to make the staff feel good but they do little else. Of course, some managers may feel bad about “firing staff”. They desired to create an “old boys’ network” designating their favorite staff to ensure that their friends are not fired. And, this way they can decide what science based findings they like and want to promote. This behavior is of interest since it reflects another organizational variable to study—leadership style. After all, some leaders are just not interested in being fair or honest, and this may create an “in” crowd. This environment could have a good outcome for the organization. But that is the next experiment to conduct.

Note: This study was funded by the National Institute on Bad Research. For more information about the real study and findings, contact Faye Taxman at ftaxman@gmu.edu.

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

◆ **INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SCIENTIFIC EXISTENTIALISM**
April 9 - 13, 2011
Boulder, CO

The International Society for Scientific Existentialism (ISSE) will hold their annual conference this year in Boulder, Colorado. Our theme is *How Subjective Measures Lead to Better Outcomes in Randomized Controlled Trials*. Our guest speaker, Dr. Nahir Bimboom will present ideas from his award winning book *Don't Like the Results: Change the Measures*.

For more information go to <http://www.whycan'twechooseourownmeasures.com>

◆ **BRITISH SOCIETY FOR EVIDENCE-FREE POLICING**
August 23 - 25, 2011
London, United Kingdom

The BSEFP seeks paper submissions for this year's conference. This year's theme is *Evidence is Not Helpful in Guiding Police Strategy nor Necessary to Arrest Offenders*. Please note that experimentalists are not welcome to attend.

For more information visit <http://www.BSEFP2011/> .

◆ **THE NEW JERSEY DEVIANCE TRAINING CONFERENCE**
June 29 - July 1, 2011
University of Lexington,NJ

From 29th June 2011 until 1st July 2011 the University of Lexington will host the first of its annual conferences in deviance training. The theme for this first conference is *Why Be Normal?* Paper submissions are now being accepted and the rules for paper presentations can be found at our website <http://www.whynormal1stannualconference.com>.

Naturally we do not expect anyone to follow the rules for paper submissions.

◆ **22nd ANNUAL EUROPEAN NON-CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY CONFERENCE**
November 2 - 5, 2011
Madrid, Spain

The premier European Non-Critical Criminology Conference is accepting paper submissions for its 22nd annual conference to be held in Madrid, Spain. This year's theme is *Not Thinking Critically about the World We Live In* and is intended to provide all non-critical criminologists with the opportunity to get up and present a paper on something. The paper submission deadline is April 11, 2011.

For more information visit <http://www.areureallyserious.com>

◆ **MURDER IN MIND**
April 28 – 30, 2011
Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Organized by the International Association for Forensic Psychotherapy. In its 20th anniversary year the IAFP Conference will focus on understanding murder and its meaning. We will explore both murderous fantasies that are not enacted, and those that are, as well as the many other aspects of killing

Website:
<http://www.forensicpsychotherapy.com/activities/conference2011/index.htm>

ANNOUNCEMENT

IF YOU ENJOYED OUR APRIL FOOLS ISSUE OF THE AEC/DEC NEWSLETTER, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE IT WITH COLLEAGUES.

News About Our Upcoming Newsletter...

Our intent for the October 2011 issue of the AEC/DEC newsletter is to highlight those programs within university settings that are currently building evidence-based or experimental criminology courses or concentrations. If your department is currently engaged in this endeavor, you can share it with our membership so that they can share it with those of their students who might be interested in pursuing a graduate degree. If you are interested in your program appearing in our October newsletter, please contact Lynette Feder (LFeder@pdx.edu) or Anthony Braga (Anthony_Braga@harvard.edu) for more information.