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"Town Hall" Strategies for Organizational Change *–

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THE PENDULUM OF corrections has been shifting over the last half century. Prior to the late 1960s, there was strong support for rehabilitation of offenders. Then there was a shift in corrections to a more punitive, punishment-oriented approach founded on the belief that rehabilitation did not work when dealing with offenders (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). With the resurgence of scientific studies that have demonstrated positive outcomes from specific programs based on using cognitive behavioral therapies (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Andrews, Hoge, & Bonta, 1990) and risk management strategies (Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrne, 2005), a model has emerged that integrates punishment and rehabilitation. This research builds on the knowledge about the social and financial costs that have arisen from incapacitating offenders through incarceration. Removing individuals from families and communities creates a loss of social supports, financial means, and communal identity (Clear, Rose, & Ryder, 2001). As of 2009, the Pew Foundation report estimates that 1 in 31 persons in the United States are under some form of control under the criminal justice system, and that the state cost of corrections has increased by 303 percent in the last 20 years (Pew Foundation, 2009). The drastic increase in cost of supervising and housing offenders, in addition to the social costs, have led many decision-makers to consider alternative effective measures to handle offenders.

The challenge now is to determine how best to transform correctional agencies to accommodate research findings. This transformation is twofold. First, agencies need to modify goals and missions to incorporate the use of evidence-based practices. Second, agencies need to adopt work processes that embrace the components of evidence-based practices. The concern for practitioners and researchers is the method through which new innovations and practices can be spread throughout correctional and associated agencies to advance the principles of evidence-based practices. This is the process of diffusion. Diffusion spreads the innovation, either as an ideology or technology, through the formal and informal social networks of an organization (Rogers, 2003).

The model of diffusion discussed in this paper, modified from the work of Everett Rogers (2003), provides a framework for transforming correctional practice. These elements include

innovation attributes, social communication networks, and adoption time (<u>Figure 1</u>). Innovation attributes encompass the characteristics of the innovation that affect diffusion processes (Rogers, 2003). Social communication networks refers to the aspects of the communication channels and social system that affect both how and what messages are passed through an organization (adapted from Rogers, 2003). Time for adoption reflects the decision-making process timeline that an innovation flows through (Rogers, 2003). The priority and importance of these concepts may vary based on the innovation being diffused, but they should be considered in organizational transformation.

This article presents a case study illustrating the diffusion concepts in a correctional agency that is in the process of adopting evidence-based practices. These diffusion concepts allow an organization to examine the desired spread of an innovation and address resistance (barriers) to its diffusion. Sometimes the aim of an innovation is to create more efficiency, while at other times the goal is to motivate members of the organization. Whatever the aim, there are certain considerations. First, it is important to determine the innovation being diffused. What are the attributes of the innovation? Can these attributes be modified to make diffusion more effective? Second, the social communication networks need to be taken into consideration. How does information normally flow through this environment? How will leadership promote or hinder diffusion? Finally, organizations need to consider the time for adoption of the innovation. How far along in the decision-making process for adoption is the organization? How can the organization respond when different levels are at different stages in adopting an innovation? The case study is of a prisonbased work release that is being converted into a Community Correction Center (CCC).

Attributes of Innovations that Support a Behavioral Management System

Innovations range from implementing specific programming technologies to changing ideologies. The corrections field has begun implementing the innovation of evidence-based practices. A first step in this implementation has been shifting agency goals from security (simply housing and maintaining offenders) to offender change. Next the processes of organizations have been examined and adjusted to follow principles of evidence-based practices. Guiding principles of evidence-based practices include assessment (assessing risk level and needs of offenders), responsivity (appropriately matching services to offender needs), deportment (improving interaction between offenders and staff), and compliance management (reinforcing positive offender behaviors). Together these enable a correctional organization to promote and pursue the goal of offender change. This is a multi-pronged intervention and therefore the diffusion requires knowledge and understanding of the innovation attributes, allowing agencies to adapt the innovation so that barriers to diffusion can be minimized. The innovation attributes of primary concern to diffusion are compatibility, relative advantage, complexity, observability, and trialability (Rogers, 2003). These innovation attributes should be adapted as much as possible to achieve the organization's desired change through diffusion.

Examining the compatibility of an innovation means looking at how well the innovation fits into the current values, practices, and needs of the organization (Rogers, 2003). This process involves examining multiple levels of the organization. For example, the written goals of an organization may reflect the value of offender change through the vision of reducing recidivism, but when the individual staff members' activities are examined, it may appear that security remains the practiced goal of the organization. A disconnect between written and actual practices may reflect that the organization's mission has changed based on external needs, but that the innovation has been incompatible with the current values and practices of the organization. This kind of incompatibility can create a barrier for change on the ground level of the organization. For diffusion that promotes change to occur in an effective manner on all levels, the innovation should be adapted to the organizational environment. In a transformation involving adoption of evidence-based practices, reaching compatibility between the current goal of security and the new goal of offender change presents many challenges. However, adapting the guiding principles of evidence-based practices to foster compatibility without compromising

the effectiveness of the practices is always the preferred method of implementation. For example, the assessment principle posits that risk and needs of offenders should be determined based on validated assessment tools. If the organization already uses a validated instrument (i.e., LSI-R) that could fill this assessment need, then that instrument should be used in the change process. Use of a tool that is part of the organization's current practices offers an ability to increase compatibility between evidence-based practices and current agency values. Then the focus can be placed on the process changes in using the tool, instead of implementation of the tool and process all at once.

> **INNOVATION ATTRIBUTES**
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> *Compatibility:* how well the innovation fits into the current values, practices, and needs of the organization
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> *Observability:* how visible the innovation's results are to individuals in the organization
>
> *Complexity:* how understandable and clear the innovation is to individuals in the organization
>
> *Relative Advantage:* how much the innovation is felt to be an improvement over current practices
>
> *Trialability:* how much the innovation lends itself to being piloted on a trial basis

An innovation should be observable and understandable to all levels of the organization to promote adoption through diffusion of the innovation (Rogers, 2003). While certain acts may appear to be observable, for example changing the mission statement of the organization, there may be no observable, day-to-day change in the way people perform their jobs. If a change in goals does not reach a point of actual change in behaviors or expectations, then the implementation of the innovation has failed. Beyond observability, the innovation must be understandable and clear (low complexity), so that the actions and goals of the innovation can be carried out (Rogers, 2003). If an innovation becomes too complex for staff, then there will be increased resistance. Members of the organization need to have clear directions (goals and objectives) to follow so that they understand their role in the change process. Problems arise if the organization begins to roll out an innovation without fully developing the goals and objectives. This leads to a disconnect between what leaders of the organization wish to be diffused about the innovation and what actually gets spread. Without clear and observable direction, staff members become more confused and resistant, even if the innovation is low in complexity.

Transitions that include work process changes, such as changes in expectations when providing services to offenders, offer an example of new practices that may be complex and difficult to observe from within the organization. The principle of responsivity (matching offenders to appropriate services based on their needs) in particular appears complex within a correctional setting because of its process-oriented approach. Staff are expected to pull information about the offender from any history, previous interactions, assessments, or any other relevant source, to provide the offender with all appropriate services necessary. Starting off the transition with enhanced trainings on the procedures of reviewing an assessment and matching offenders to appropriate services would decrease the apparent complexity. Depending on the organization, appropriate ways to make this new process visible could include booster sessions, weekly sessions to discuss issues with matching services to needs, or written reminders of using the skills. The important thing to remember in reducing complexity and increasing visibility is to focus on the goal of diffusing the innovation in a clear and understandable way throughout the organization.

In addition to compatibility, observability, and complexity, an innovation should demonstrate a relative advantage for the organization to begin the adoption process. Relative advantage is the

idea that an innovation must be perceived as an improvement over the way things are being done currently (Rogers, 2003). Just because an innovation seems advantageous as a whole, does not mean the benefits will be clearly understood at all levels of an organization. Effort must be devoted to developing buy-in and ownership of the idea throughout the organization. For example, the emphasis on improving offender outcomes may not be seen as advantageous to the line staff, who may see reductions in offender populations as negatively impacting their jobs, potentially even resulting in loss of work. Further, the innovation may increase workload, require new work duties, and require skills and procedures that the staff may not be comfortable performing. Especially with a goal shift to offender change, the role changes of correctional staff from relying solely on power and control to a focusing on improved offender outcomes may carry more negative implications than positive for correctional staff. The principle of deportment can be adapted in a way that promotes relative advantage to the staff. An example of relative advantage can be improved communication with offenders, staff, and supervisors (deportment), which will, in turn, reduce incidents of violence and conflict, thereby improving the safety of correctional staff. Adaptation in this manner develops a social marketing plan to help others see the benefit of the innovation.

The next issue is trialability of an innovation. Trialability is the ability of the innovation to be piloted before full implementation (Rogers, 2003). The benefit of piloting an innovation is that the organization can discover barriers and strengths to implementation and diffusion. The agency can then adapt the innovation, using the piloted information, to effectively diffuse full implementation. For example, a trial allows the organization to develop such tools of compliance management as the sanctions and rewards offered to offenders for changing behaviors. Feedback from the pilot also allows the development of the outcome measures that will provide feedback necessary for the future growth of the evidence-based practices. Piloting an innovation can also have adverse effects that need to be weighed when determining trialability. If the structure of the organization is such that the piloting agency is one part of a larger organism, then the organization needs to consider the potential negative outcomes of piloting on future stakeholders in the change process. The environment of corrections tends to foster suspicion and doubt. Piloting the innovation in one agency can cause increased suspicion of and questions about the change for the remainder of the organization. Ultimately this can result in reactions of jealousy and bitterness that will hinder implementation when the innovation is diffused further. Reflecting back to the other attributes, the organization should consider ways to adapt the innovation so that future innovators will not feel neglected in the process.

The degree of importance for each attribute will vary depending on the innovation being diffused. All of these attributes need to be considered when deciding the best method to diffuse an innovation through an organization. For the correctional shift taking place, adapting the principles that will guide evidence-based practices is an excellent place to begin a successful diffusion process.

Social Communication Networks

The process of diffusion uses existing networks within the organization to gain acceptance in the organization. Social networks include organizational norms, communication channels, and types of leadership.

The organizational norms play a valuable role in knowing the limitations and strengths in diffusing an innovation (Rogers, 2003). Organizational norms include the socially acceptable way to address supervisors, behave in meetings, and talk to co-workers or offenders. These norms will incorporate a mix of informal and traditional ways of doing things that make up a large portion of the organizational culture. What makes this difficult for an organization, especially for executive-level administrators, is that while some norms are evident, many norms for lower-line staff are not easily recognizable from outside of the group. Even those who observe behaviors of the staff on a regular basis (i.e., front-line supervisors) may not be aware of all the norms of the lower-line staff. Understanding these norms is still very important to

using the communication channels within the organization to diffuse the innovation. Recognizing and understanding the organizational norms helps practitioners implementing change to identify how much resistance to expect and possible ways to counteract that resistance. The norms may determine the extent to which individuals in the organization are willing to support and diffuse an innovation.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Organizational Norms: the socially acceptable values, beliefs, and practices of the organization

Communication Channels: network pathways through which information flows in the organization

Boundary spanners: individuals who can pass information both externally and internally beyond the boundaries of one group

Opinion leaders: informal leaders who can influence others' behaviors

Change agents: individuals, either internal or external to the agency, who promote the innovation and its diffusion

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Communication channels encompass any pathway through which information flows, ranging from media outlets to people sharing information face-to-face (Rogers, 2003). The communication channels allow the flow of information both internally and externally to the organization. When considering how to use these channels to diffuse an innovation, one should examine the current channels through which most information passes within the organization. Perhaps there are certain people in the organization who always seem to hold all the information or people in the organization use social networking sites to pass information. While most organizations maintain both formal and informal channels, how useful these channels are in diffusing the innovation will vary with the individuals of the organization. Diffusion through communication channels depends on small groups who will initiate the use of an innovation. These small groups tend to contain individuals who share certain traits, such as religious beliefs or education level, making them capable of disseminating accepted information about the innovation. The people most influential in the diffusion process will be those in the group who are boundary spanners. Boundary spanners are individuals who work beyond the boundaries of organizations to accomplish any goal (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Taxman & Bouffard 2000). Those that are able to span the boundary of their smaller group will be essential to spreading the innovation to other groupings internally and potentially even spanning to external groups such as community organizations, who may have resources to support the innovation. Recognizing boundary spanners within the communication channels will help identify leadership that can further the innovation.

When considering social networks in diffusing an innovation, evaluating the different levels of leadership is especially important. There are several different types of leaders found within an organization. Opinion leaders are typically the most informal. These people influence the actions of others by performing actions or being first adopters (Rogers, 2003). Research has identified certain characteristics that opinion leaders appear to share, including being more exposed to external networks, of "higher socioeconomic status," more innovative, and central to the interpersonal interactions in the organization (Rogers, 2003, p.27). In a correctional agency, there could be differences in characteristics that define opinion leaders, depending on their position within the organization. Perhaps at headquarters an opinion leader is defined as someone who has access to confidential information or has the most pull with decision-makers. This opinion leader's influence would be derived from job skills or role in the organization. On the other hand, an opinion leader among correctional officers may be someone who is well liked and does not step out of the norms. This opinion leader is influential because of his or her position, not necessarily because of job skills.

Another leadership position is that of a change agent. The primary role of change agents is to influence diffusion of an innovation in the organization's desired way (Rogers, 2003). These individuals are typically outside the agency and seek to influence the opinion leaders in a positive way toward the innovation. Involving external change agents in the transition process provides outside expertise and a boundary spanner neutral to the organization. This person ideally would know both the organizational environment and evidence-based practices to incorporate into the transition. Additionally, the change agent would be able not only to use the communication channels in place but to build essential channels to other agencies and groups that could provide resources in the transition. Change agents may be internal, but only if they have the knowledge and expertise to work within the organization to influence others. Internal change agents selected may be opinion leaders, able to influence others to move change forward, or they may be individuals selected for outstanding job performance. When making this determination, an organization should select people willing to diffuse the innovation in the manner that the organization desires.

Still another aspect of leadership in the organization is the formal leadership. Successful diffusion of any innovation depends on leadership at all levels not only supporting the innovation but actually participating and modeling the innovation requirements. Supervisors that pass on orders of change without ever actually taking on any of that change for themselves present a problem in the diffusion process. It is important to any innovation that supervisors hold themselves and staff accountable for promoting and demonstrating the innovation. The organization may consider using more techniques to affect buy-in of supervisors rather than only passing directives. One example of this would be providing leadership training that focuses on the skill techniques being implemented. Building confidence and understanding of the skills can enable the formal leader to feel comfortable in modeling the desired changes.

Overall, in examining the social networks of an organization for the purpose of diffusing an innovation, special consideration needs to be given to the informal social networks. While formal communication channels such as newsletters and written directives serve a purpose in diffusing innovation, real diffusion comes from persuasion and spread of an innovation through interpersonal social networks.

Timeline for Innovation Adoption

In diffusion research, time is described as the amount of time it takes for people to go through the stages of decision-making about an innovation. These stages include knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 2003). Decisions through government systems tend to occur at different speeds, on different levels simultaneously. Whereas executive leadership levels may have already moved through knowledge about the innovation, persuasive arguments for and against the innovation, and the decision about an innovation, the lower levels of the organization have yet to gain basic knowledge. This means that as the higher levels of the organization are expecting delivery of implementation and confirmation fairly soon, the lower levels at different facilities have barely gotten to consider the beginning stages of the cycle. If enough time is not built in, then the implementation and ultimately results stand to be negatively impacted.

When organizations are considering timelines for implementing innovations, they need to make allowances for staggered pace at which different levels of the organization go through the same processes. If this time is considered and allowed, then innovations can be more thoroughly diffused and possible outcomes greatly enhanced with less resistance. The difficulty for this in the current state of resources is that top-level decision-makers need quick turnaround for their decisions about allocation of resources.

Case Study of a Prison-Based Work Release Center

Organizational Structure and Climate

The organization is structured so that the center reports directly to both the prison and probation and parole, which are housed within the same agencies. The Prison-Based Work Release Center (PWRC) serves the function of a work release facility enabling incarcerated offenders to go into the community for employment prior to release. The PWRC used to report only to the prison department. The goal of the dual reporting is to have the PWRC function as a prison environment in a community corrections center. The difference between the prison and probation/parole environment is that security underscores the prison environment and offender change drives the community correctional center. The transformation reflects a shift in the expected role of correctional staff in the facility. The traditional prison environment supports the role of control and power, whereas the mission of offender change is based on motivating offenders through the correctional officer serving as a role model and increasing offender access to services and programming.

The work release facility is located in an urban setting and houses pre-release male inmates who typically have less than 18 months on their sentence and are classified as minimum security to be able to work in the community. Staff consists primarily of security (n=35), and case management (n=5). Staff are an average age of 40, female (74 percent), have a minimum of a high school diploma/GED (68 percent), and an average of 9 years working for the division.

To assess the potential organizational issues, a survey on organizational readiness for change was administered to all staff at the PWRC (Taxman & Lerch, 2008). Overall, the staff showed a low level of identification with the organization and their work, viewed the organization as having insufficient funding and staffing, and perceived the department as not open to change or supportive of new ideas. All of these are indicators of low climate for change. Staff reported an average amount of cynicism for change and support by management and supervisors for case planning. While none of the measurements demonstrated a high readiness to change, custodial staff reported lower levels of organizational readiness to change than non-custodial staff members. The custodial staff had higher levels of cynicism about the organization's ability to change than non-custodial staff. Given this low level of readiness, the change process attended to these issues. The goal was to enhance an understanding of the vision of the organization, create an environment open to new ideas and innovations, increase the flow of information within the organization, and increase willingness of staff to take risks in performing their job duties. Attention to these would address staff cynicism.

Another climate issue was the intradepartmental communication. As in most correctional agencies, the prison and probation and parole agencies functioned separately from one another. There was limited sharing of information or resources, therefore limiting the capabilities of either agency to provide a positive environment, supportive of successful re-entry for offenders. Given the necessity of a joint partnership for the transition to a community corrections center, this culture of separation needed to be addressed to ensure sustainability of an environment focused on offender change.

Creating a culture of learning and change

Several mechanisms were put into place within the PWRC to facilitate the transition from a prison environment to a work release/ community correctional center: an external consultant to guide the change process, town hall meetings, PWRC staff workgroups, intradepartmental workgroups, internal change agents, and specialized training on communications skills. These various techniques were used to communicate directly with the employees and to begin the transition process. The focus of this multi-pronged strategy was to address the various cultural issues with the agency along with the issue of transforming from a security environment to an offender change environment.

The external consultant played several crucial roles in the change process for the PWRC. This

consultant provided expertise that did not exist in the agency, such as motivational interviewing, organizational change and development, and project management. First, the consultant trained the staff on key procedures to change the way they interacted with the inmates/offenders in the facility. This training, described below, provided staff with an informed, objective perspective of the communication skills that were now being expected of them. Also, the consultant provided one-on-one skill-building sessions with administrators and supervisors to cultivate their ability to model the expected work processes of those they supervised. Second, the consultant gave expert advice on how this type of organizational change could be developed successfully. It was important for the consultant to see beyond the barriers present in the organization by using experience and knowledge of how change had been achieved in other systems. Such experience enabled the consultant to guide development of a model truly reflecting an environment that promotes offender change. Third, the consultant provided project management to a process that can become rather chaotic, as is the nature of change. In this transition, the consultant assisted in setting timelines and action plans that moved the change forward. In addition, the external consultant helped facilitate the working relationship between the agencies of prisons and probation and parole by building communication channels and providing an external, neutral source of information.

TOOLS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS IN PWRC

Internal Town Hall Meetings: addressed concerns and questions from staff about the change process; opened communication networks within the organization

PWRC staff workgroups: allowed staff to provide input by identifying current practices and potential barriers to change; familiarized staff with the change process being implemented

Intra-departmental workgroups: created an environment where leadership of prisons and probation and parole could share resources, develop the change model, and receive feedback about concerns relating to the change process

External Consultant: provided expertise to the organization in the areas of evidence-based practices, project management, and organizational change processes

Internal change agents: developed peer leaders who were role models of the communication skills

Communications Training: improved staff capability to interact with offenders in a manner that promotes behavioral change

Internal town hall meetings were held as a way to create awareness among staff about the transition taking place, while also addressing the staff's apprehensions. The transition required transferring the staff from the prison division of the organization to community corrections, which required fundamental issues to be addressed such as whether the correctional officers would maintain their retirement benefits, whether uniforms would be required, and what new roles would be expected. In preparation, the staff were queried as to their concerns, and answers to frequently-asked questions were developed. In addition to these broader town hall meetings, PWRC staff workgroups were developed to focus on specific topics related to the change process. These focused topics included policy and procedure, sanctions and incentives, work release, operations, community partnership-service, staffing, and training. Each of these workgroups had the task of identifying the practices currently carried out and potential barriers to the transition within each topic area. The aims of both the town hall meetings and the staff workgroups were to increase the staff's familiarity with the transition, open up communication about concerns, give staff a voice in developing the transition, and provide information about the facility to those administering change activities. Such a strategy supports a learning environment where staff gain knowledge about the transition and become part of the change as opposed to a target of the change. Gaining investment of staff was essential to overcoming the barriers of a low, cynical climate.

Beyond the PWRC staff workgroups, an intra-departmental workgroup was put into place. This workgroup involved the leadership from prisons, probation and parole, and the work release center. This workgroup served several purposes. First, the meetings provided an environment among leaders of these agencies to learn about the capabilities and limitations that each brought to the transition. For example, this workgroup provided an environment for each agency to learn about the policies of the other agencies, so that decisions could be made about where changes were needed. This group was especially important in creating a network of people who had the ability to influence the changes necessary for the transition to a community correction center. Partnerships created by the intra-departmental workgroup provided new avenues to policy changes that were previously unavailable to a single agency within the department. Second, the meetings served as a pooling of resources (e.g., availability of programming) to support the change process. For example, probation and parole had community service connections that were previously unavailable to prisons, but through this partnership, some services could now be utilized in the community correction center. Third, the meetings were a forum where agency leaders could voice concerns about the transition to the external consultant and receive feedback for potential solutions. One such concern was whether staff members of the facility would report to prisons or probation and parole, and what role each agency would have in the hierarchical structure of the shared facility. The external consultant was able to provide guidance based on examples of how other states are addressing management of a community corrections center that falls under the auspices of both corrections and probation.

An important part of the change process was developing champions of the system. This is best achieved by identifying the natural leaders within the organization and building on their skills. Internal change agents were identified and participated in a series of trainings to develop their leadership and communication skills. These internal change agents acted as catalysts to promoting change by modeling skills and becoming peer experts. The internal change agents were selected based on leadership qualities, respect of their peers, and openness to change by the PWRC Facility Administrator. As peer trainers, these staff members received more intense training than other staff so they could facilitate a learning environment for communication skills. Using these respected individuals within the organization made possible continuous expert advice for members of the organization. This access to experts created an opportunity for cynical members of the organization to be influenced. The peer-level coaching motivated an environment of learning the new skills that could not be achieved by an outsider to the organization.

Furthermore, the internal change agents were encouraged to identify concerns and areas of resistance in a confidential manner, as well as contribute their ideas during the implementation of change. Part of the process was empowering the internal organizational change agents to tell their stories through case studies utilized throughout the training. Incorporating work behaviors and scenarios from the organization made changing role expectations more realistic and understandable for the staff. All of these strategies were aimed at initiating a shift in the culture of the organization to be supportive of offender change.

Imperative to the success of the community correction center transition was training the staff to be role models for the offenders. The traditional correctional officer training does not include any communication training or helping correctional officers learn how to use their verbal and body language to motivate offenders to be interested in change. The core communications training was a fundamental part of the process of changing the culture. The aim of the intensive two-day training was to empower the staff to embrace the change and claim it as their own by developing their communication skills to motivate offender change. Communication skills were adapted from the Motivational Interviewing tools of open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summarization (see Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrne, 2005). The training became an atmosphere to address the negative perceptions and fears that came with changing officers' communication with offenders by offering an external expert's validation of the change process and having staff take ownership of the change. One such prominent fear addressed was that of fraternization. The perception by staff was that increased communication with offenders could lead to accusations of fraternization. Role plays were used to enable the participants to

experience a situation modeling the difference between communication aimed at offender change and fraternization. The distinction between proper communication based on the skills and fraternization was further supported by the wardens and assistant wardens speaking on this issue. Another approach taken to reduce negative perceptions about the change was encouraging the staff to identify how the change would benefit them personally and professionally in the work environment. Having the staff place the change in advantageous terms for themselves was intended to promote positive affiliations with the change process.

After the intensive two-day training, refresher or booster sessions were conducted on-site to each shift addressing issues with using the communication skills. This type of continuous training model is based on evidence that one-time training models are not as effective in creating changed work processes as those that continue training into the work environment (Sholomskas et al., 2005). Boosters provided an opportunity for staff to receive immediate feedback on their use of the skills. The goal of this continuous training model was to create a more open environment of team learning and improve communication, thus increasing safety and improving offender outcomes. Both the two-day training and booster sessions allowed the staff to confront their perceptions on the shifting roles, so they could experience how the roles of security and offender change can be intertwined.

Challenges External to the Change Process

An external issue addressed was the difficulty in meeting political pressures for progression in the change process. The directive for this transition came down from the executive level of the state legislature. Prior to this decision, the executives had gained knowledge about evidence-based practices, been persuaded to use them, and decided to implement them. After these processes, the change was directed to the agencies and then the PWRC. The process to determine how to achieve buy-in from line staff and create lasting change on the ground level took considerable time. The knowledge stage for the line staff of the organization came rather late in the change process timeline of the original executive-level decision-makers, who were already expecting implementation and results from the organization. This opened up the question of how to address this gap in adoption time by either speeding up the line-staff's processing or slowing the expectations of the higher-level executives. For the PWRC, middle executive leadership extended the time that lower staff had to move through the process by continually presenting levels of progress and explaining the longevity and difficulty in such a large-scale transformation. This middle executive leadership was informed and guided by the intra-departmental workgroup, with focus on ensuring the sustainability of this change.

Lessons Learned on Diffusion in Community Corrections

The adoption of evidence-based practices requires attention to the security-minded culture of a correctional agency. It does not mean that security is not important, but rather that both security and offender change need to be equally important. More important, given the 30-year history of a focus on punishment, correctional agencies have incorporated the security and enforcement models in all facets of their programming with offenders. It is these aspects that need attention if the movement to re-shift focus on offender change is to be successful. As shown by recent evidence, attention to the working alliance between correctional staff and offenders in an environment that supports offender change is an important component of successful implementation of evidence-based practices (Taxman & Ainsworth, forthcoming).
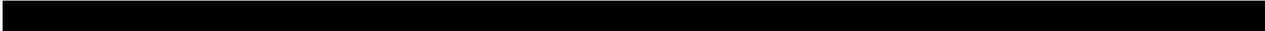
This case study has illustrated the techniques to bring about change in the organizational culture within a correctional agency to marry the security and offender change goals. Among the lessons from the efforts to diffuse evidence-based practices within correctional agencies are the following:

- *Leaders must work closely together on a renewed vision and the importance of the organizational goals.* Staff respond to the leadership of any agency. Leaders need to be

aware of the key components of the new innovation (evidence-based practices) and the process of change in order to support the efforts. Staff are sensitive to what is being asked of them, and therefore the leaders need to reinforc

- *Staff must be motivated through positive reinforcement as they go through a change process.* One effective diffusion technique is to acknowledge the staff throughout the process. Motivating the staff through acknowledgement reduces anxiety and reinforces that the staff are responding as expected. There is often a level of uncertainty when an innovation occurs. Resistance may come from peers and supervisors. It is therefore essential to support the innovation. Motivating staff through brief interactions of encouragement or providing affirmations builds their confidence while fostering positive relationships with administrators.

- *Consultants and change agents can be used effectively as neutral arbitrators.* The benefits of using external change agents/ consultants are numerous. Staff at all levels have a forum to express both positive and negative concerns about the innovation, without being worried about repercussions if they do not agree with the process. The "neutral" party then can provide feedback and foster agenda items to address these concerns. This process aids in creating an environment of open dialogue and sustainability once the change agent is no longer with the organization.

- *The organization should identify how and where the external consultant can be most effective to the change process.* Variations in use of an external consultant will arise based on the type of change being implemented, the organization implementing, and the level of involvement expected. Despite these differences, some general guidelines can be taken from this case study on how an external consultant can be used most effectively. First, the external consultant is foremost an expert resource on how effective practices are being implemented elsewhere. He or she should be used to provide the most up-to-date approaches to the issues that the organization is facing during the change process. Second, the consultant provides a point of view from outside of the constraints placed on the organization. Often actors within the organization are overwhelmed by the constraints they feel on a daily basis (e.g., fear of repercussions for raising issues). An external consultant can pose the difficult questions that internal agents cannot, therefore addressing problems arising within the social network not visible to more executive leadership.

- *At an early point staff should be educated on why the change is occurring.* A natural question for most people when implementing anything new is "what's in it for me." Agencies should take the time to address this basic survival need. In an environment focused on security, the safety of the facility, the individual, and the offender is paramount; therefore this is the most likely area to begin with. Interventions that address personnel desires such as less stress and a better work environment will also benefit the process. Without learning and addressing these norms of the agency, staff find it difficult to perceive the relative advantage of the innovation for them, thereby hindering diffusion of the innovation.

- *Change is a process, not an event, but needs a victory lane.* When implementing any type of innovation, often there are unrealistic expectations that change will occur because it has been directed to happen. However, if there is no level of commitment, then the innovation will not be sustained. Implementing a process of inclusion and creating an environment of open communication will help decrease resistance and provide support for the innovation. Time must be allowed for staff to learn about the change and come to an acceptance without simply doing what they are told.

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Endnotes

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Federal Criminal Filings and Postconviction Supervision

1. Unlike many state criminal systems, virtually all persons convicted in federal court are sentenced to some form of postconviction supervision, usually after a period of imprisonment.

2. The U.S. Government's fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.

3. This is no longer the case. The FPSIS system was retired on September 30, 2005, and is now a legacy system. A new system is now in place, the National PACTS Reporting Database (NPR). Data are still submitted by the district probation offices, but now the database is maintained and administered by the AO's Office of Probation and Pretrial Services.

4. The number of individuals reported as received into the postconviction supervision system in 2004, was 59,437. However, this number includes 7,218 cases in the Bureau of Prisons

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