Program Evaluation, Alcohol and Drug Policy, and Breaking the Drugs-Crime Cycle

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Evaluation of Projects

- At some point funding agencies and the public want to know if your prevention/intervention project worked.

- It is crucial to incorporate evaluation at every stage of program development, implementation, and operation.

- It is important to understand and utilize the various types of evaluation.
Types of Evaluation

Formative Evaluation

- Developing clearly defined goals & and objectives based on need
- Developing base line measures of participants
- Developing program elements based on:
  - Scientific evaluation literature
  - Clinical practice
  - Feasibility
Process Evaluation

- Documenting the procedures of implementation
- Focusing on changes & modifications
- Documenting the reasons for modifications – feasibility, participant response, goal clarification
- Importance of close cooperation between program developers and evaluators
- Modifications based on interaction with evaluators
Impact Evaluation

- Impact should be related to objectives

- Measure immediate, short term & long term impact

- Measurement should include:
  - Objective indicators
  - Subjective input from clients
  - Some type of cost/benefit analysis
The Development of Alcohol and Drug Policy

Duane McBride & Yvonne Terry-McElrath
Alcohol/Drug Policy Options

- Why worry about policy?
  - Can prevent
  - Can change
  - Can reduce consequences

- Policy development horizontally and vertically

- Inclusion in policy development

- Small steps – not giving up
Policy cont’d

- **Prohibition/deterrence**
  - Use of severity of punishment to deter use
  - Severity may deter, but civil rights issues
  - Demand likely funds organized crime/terrorism?

- **Treatment/public health**
  - Use of prevention education
  - Treatment for non-violent drug using offenders
  - Treatment instead of incarceration or under CJS supervision
Drug Policy Options Cont’d

- **Legalization**
  - Product is legal
    - Free market
    - Regulated in terms of: who can provide, age, advertisement, amount -- still issue of what to do about violators of regulations – prison or treatment

- **De-criminalization**
  - Simply disengage the criminal law from a particular substance
Possible Best Practices for Breaking the Drugs-Crime Cycle

Duane McBride, Curt VanderWaal, Yvonne Terry-McElrath prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice and the State of Illinois

- **Initial screening**
  Identifying substance abuse, co-morbidity and other problems.

- **Comprehensive assessment**
  Determining issues/problems that need to be addressed – this would include substance problems as well as a broader range of mental health, medical, educational, occupational, family and other life needs.
Treatment Planning

- Integrated treatment planning

  ✓ Program referral (including all needed direct and auxiliary services) based on assessment

  ✓ In a seamless system of care, this means bringing the service providers into the system.
Comprehensive Case Management

This ensures:

- Implementation of treatment plan and cross-system integration
- The client receives all needed services and moves between control/supervision systems (criminal justice to community) without interruption of services
- This might involve bringing community program services into a criminal justice facility
- Tracking and recordkeeping are maintained via a well-designed management information system (MIS).
Client Monitoring

- Routine and random drug testing

- Graduated sanctions to protect the public if there is no/limited progress and to reward progress

- Rewards are given not just for abstinence, but also for good behavior, active involvement in auxiliary services, and progress toward self-management.
Interventions

- **Evidence-based drug treatment**
  interventions that:
  
  ✓ Utilize scientific evidence of effectiveness for alcohol and drugs as other needs
  
  ✓ Recognize goal of abstinence
  
  ✓ Recognize that substance abuse a chronically relapsing disease and set backs can be a part of progress
  
  ✓ Active inter-agency collaboration between all systems - criminal justice, treatment providers, and all auxiliary service providers.
Follow-up Services

- Wrap-around and follow-up services

- This element recognizes that the problems identified are chronic and easily reoccur

- Move toward client being own case manager

- Some type of follow-up is needed such as:
  - Booster sessions
  - Self-help groups
Challenges of Evaluation Research

- It is difficult to maintain the therapeutic program design across systems and time.

- In a seamless system, many programs with many divergent viewpoints regarding program philosophy, elements, and practices have to accept the basic program design and operate within that framework.

- Maintaining cross-system cooperation and long-term enthusiasm in the face of programmatic and administrative changes can be difficult.
Scientific Challenges in Evaluation

- With so many systems involved, maintaining the scientific design over time is difficult.
- Definitions of success are complex.
- Closely watched populations are generally more likely to get in trouble than less intensely watched population.
- There is general skepticism among researchers that there have been solid random assignment designs carried out throughout the entire length of a program.