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National Criminal Justice Treatment Practices Survey (NCJTPS): Organizational Factors

CJ-DATS researchers are conducting studies to examine the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices and substance abuse treatment for drug-involved offenders. Using the first survey of the correctional landscape of prisons, jails, and community corrections (the National Criminal Justice Treatment Practices Survey [NCJTP]), 12 articles have been written that examine the relationships between organizational context and the quality and types of service delivery.

The NCJTP survey is a multilevel survey of substance abuse treatment in the corrections system consisting of: 1) *Directors of state correctional agencies* in all 50 states (n=240; 71% response rate); and, 2) *Administrators of Prisons, Jails, and Community Correctional Agencies* in both the adult and juvenile justice system (n=663; 65% response rate). The survey included a number of organizational measures.

The 12 studies referenced above have demonstrated the following general findings about organizations, leaders, and systems:

- Evidence-based practice (EBP) adoption is influenced by similar characteristics in adult corrections and juvenile justice systems
- Size of the correctional population does not influence EBP adoption
- Use of some EBPs leverages use of other EBPs, such as drug testing and systems integration
- Administrator opinions on the importance of substance abuse treatment is significantly associated with EBP adoption
- Administrator education and experience in human service delivery is associated with EBP adoption
- Use of sound service delivery practices –such as use of a standardized substance abuse screening instrument, specialized programs and facilities, and the use of wraparound service provision- are important levers for EBP adoption
- Improved capacity is associated with organizations that facilitate learning and interagency relationships

Organizational functioning is a key to EBP adoption and other service innovations. Several patterns emerged from the studies referenced above that appear to assist with EBP adoption.

Organizational learning. The degree to which the correctional and/or substance abuse agencies create an environment where acquiring and applying new ideas is encouraged. The learning environment focuses on building teams to try new processes and to achieve better service performance, as well as ensuring that staff can learn and grow from the experience.

Interagency working relationships. The degree to which the organization builds relationships with other agencies that sustain innovative service delivery. The focus of the relationships is on creating intertwined partnerships to support the general goals of the agency, including programs that support evidence-based practices. The relationships should be functional and focus on integrating service delivery (e.g., shared assessment tools and information, shared funding, etc.).

Clarity of mission regarding treatment. Treatment is a secondary goal of correctional agencies. The fit with public safety is an issue that often requires the leadership to ensure the innovation is aligned with the primary goal of ensuring public safety.