

# INTRODUCTION TO EVIDENCE- BASED PRACTICES (EBPs)



Prepared by the Justice Research  
and Statistics Association

# History of EBPs

- **Mid-1800s**: Use of scientific methods to establish the efficacy of medical treatments
- **1938**: Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FDC) Act required safety of new drugs be scientifically demonstrated
- **1962**: FDC Act amended in 1962 to require demonstrated efficacy as well as safety
- **1976**: Office of Information Technology report
  - ▣ few medical procedures supported by clinical trials
  - ▣ sparked the modern EBP movement in medicine

# History of EBPs in Criminal Justice

- **1975**: Robert Martinson and colleagues: “nothing works” in corrections
  - ▣ insufficient scientific evidence supporting correctional interventions
  - ▣ led to discussion/research on demonstrating effectiveness in criminal justice programming
- **1996**: Congress required a "comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness" of Department of Justice crime prevention grants
  - ▣ report by Dr. Lawrence Sherman and colleagues
  - ▣ early effort to identify EBPs in criminal justice by reviewing research and evaluation studies

# Where Does Evidence Come From?

- Two key elements of the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) definition of “evidence-based” programs and practices:
  - ▣ **Effectiveness** has been demonstrated by causal evidence, generally obtained through high quality outcome evaluations
  - ▣ **Causal evidence** depends on the use of scientific methods to rule out, to the extent possible, alternative explanations for the documented change.

# Why Focus on EBPs?

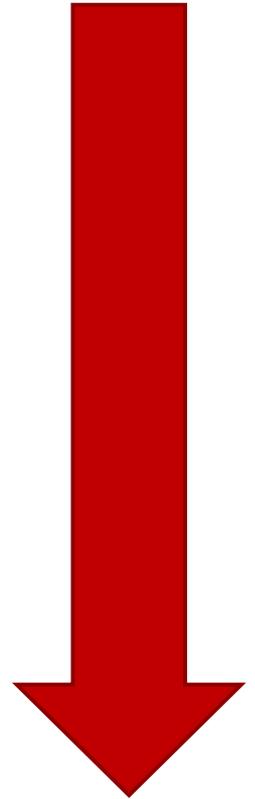
- Without evidence of effectiveness, cannot ensure that resources are being used properly:
  - ▣ Potential waste of money on ineffective interventions
  - ▣ Missed opportunity to change lives (victims, offenders)
- Some non evidence-based interventions may actually cause harm (e.g., increase recidivism)

# What About Innovation?

- An evidence-based approach still leaves room for new, untested programs, provided:
  - ▣ Programs are grounded in theory or evidence about “what works” in a particular area
  - ▣ Programs incorporate “logic models” that:
    - Identify program goals and objectives
    - Indicate how program activities will lead to goals and objectives
  - ▣ Resources are available to evaluate new programs

# What is Effectiveness?

- **Reducing crime**
  - ▣ Policing interventions
- **Reducing recidivism**
  - ▣ Correctional interventions
- **Reducing victimization/revictimization**
  - ▣ Prevention/victim-based interventions



# What are Scientific Methods?

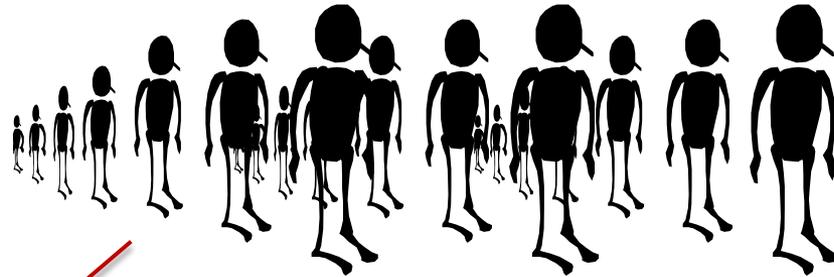
- Scientific evidence is:
  - **Objective:** observable by others, based on facts, free of bias or prejudice;
  - **Replicable:** can be observed by others using the same methods that were used to produce the original evidence;
  - **Generalizable:** applicable to individuals/circumstances beyond those used to produce the original evidence.



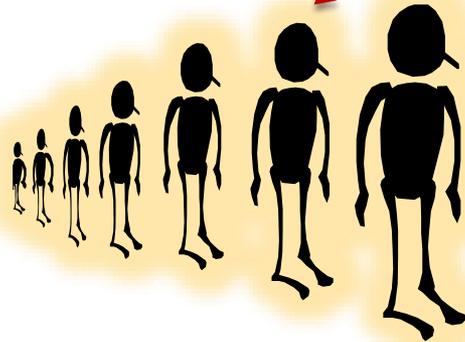
# Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

- Comparing a group that receives a treatment/intervention (**experimental group**) with a group that does not (**control group**)
- To attribute observed outcomes to the intervention, the two groups must be equivalent
- **The best way to ensure equivalency is to randomly assign individuals to the two groups.**  
This is a randomized controlled trial.

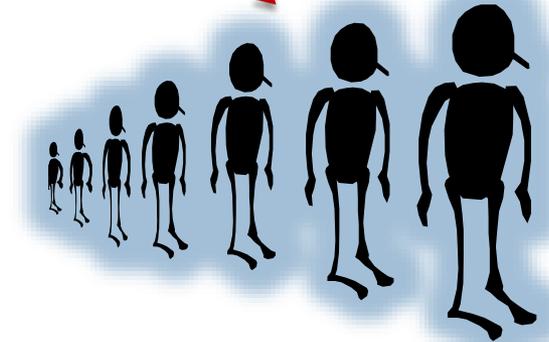
# RCT Example: Drug Court Assessment



All offenders eligible  
for drug treatment



**TREATMENT** group:  
Offenders randomly  
assigned to drug court



**CONTROL** group: Offenders  
randomly assigned to  
traditional criminal court

# Quasi-Experiments

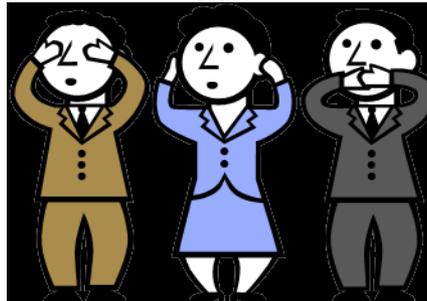
- **Quasi-experimental designs** can be used to control some group differences
- Example: using a “wait list” of eligible program participants to compare with the treatment group
- Because they do not involve random assignment, they are not as powerful as RCTs
  - ▣ Group differences other than intervention might affect outcomes

# Non-Experiments

- Do not involve comparisons between groups
- Example: assessing a rape awareness campaign by assessing knowledge of women in the community at the end of the campaign.
- Evidence of effectiveness is weak
  - ▣ Other factors might have produced women's knowledge aside from the campaign.

# What is Not Scientific Evidence?

- Scientific evidence does not include:
  - ▣ Opinions
  - ▣ Testimonials
  - ▣ Anecdotes
- Example: positive attitudes about a program by staff or participants  $\neq$  evidence of effectiveness.



# Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis



- **Systematic reviews:** experts look at a large number of studies using *standardized criteria* to assess effectiveness.
- **Meta-analysis:** a *statistical method* that combines the results of multiple evaluations to determine whether they show positive program outcomes.

# Key Resources for Identifying EBPs

- OJP's CrimeSolutions.gov
  - ▣ Rates 270 programs as “effective” “promising” or “no evidence”
- OJJDP's Model Programs Guide ([www.ojjdp.gov/mpg](http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg))
  - ▣ Rates over 200 juvenile justice programs as either “exemplary,” “effective,” or “promising”



## OJJDP Model Programs Guide

PREVENTION

IMMEDIATE SANCTIONS

INTERMEDIATE SANCTIONS

RESIDENTIAL

REENTRY

*Both based on expert reviews using standardized criteria*

# Key Resources (cont'd)

- What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse  
(<http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org>)
  - BJA-funded initiative maintained by the Council of State Governments
  - 56 reentry initiatives rated by experts using standardized coding instruments:
    - Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
    - Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
    - No statistically significant findings
    - Strong evidence of a harmful effect
    - Modest evidence of a harmful effect

# Key Resources (cont'd)

- National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)

*<http://nrepp.samhsa.gov>*

- Developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Rates almost 300 mental health and substance abuse interventions based on expert reviews of quality and dissemination readiness





# Illinois:

## Smarter Solutions for Crime Reduction

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- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)
- An online resource for policymakers and practitioners
  - ▣ Definition of EBP
  - ▣ List of effective strategies/program components
  - ▣ Reports and resources

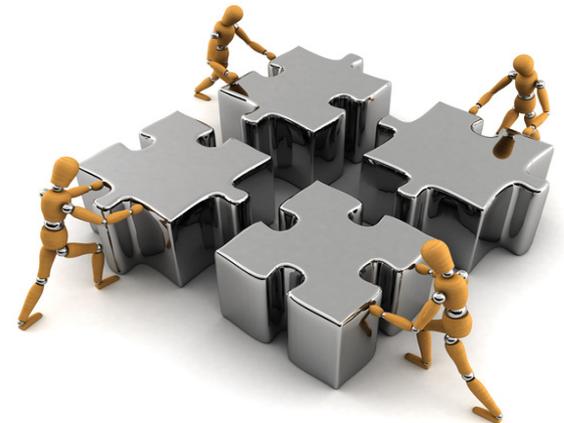
*[www.icjia.org/public/index.cfm?metaSection=Publications&metaPage=EBPInfo](http://www.icjia.org/public/index.cfm?metaSection=Publications&metaPage=EBPInfo)*

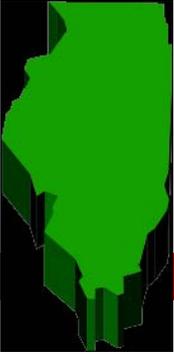


# Smarter Solutions for Crime Reduction

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- *Many definitions of “evidence-based” and multiple strategies for assessing effectiveness.*
- *Challenges and limitations posed by implementing evidence-based strategies under the exact conditions necessary for program fidelity.*
- *The Authority endorses incorporating specific evidence-based principles within programs.*

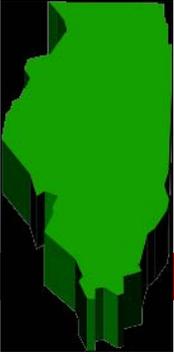




# ICJIA Effective Planning Activities/Processes

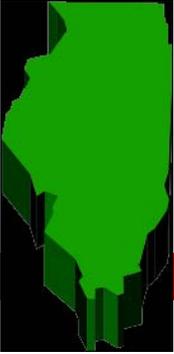
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- **Assessment** of existing services and gaps using available data
- **Community engagement** in planning new initiatives and supporting existing strategies
- **Strategic planning** to assess agency or system capacity and to identify appropriate interventions
- **Adoption** of promising or evidence-based practices or programs wherever possible
- Creation of **logic models** to guide the direction of the practice/program
- Development of programmatic and **performance measures** to assess implementation and effectiveness



# ICJIA Effective Components/Strategies\*

- Principle 1: Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs
- Principle 2: Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
- Principle 3: Target Interventions
  - Risk Principle: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders
  - Need Principle: Target interventions to criminogenic needs
  - Responsivity Principle: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs
  - Dosage: Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months
  - Treatment Principle: Integrate treatment into the full sentence/sanction requirements



## ICJIA Effective Components/Strategies\*

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- Principle 4: Skill Train with Directed Practice (use Cognitive Behavioral Treatment methods)
- Principle 5: Increase Positive Reinforcement
- Principle 6: Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities
- Principle 7: Measure Relevant Processes/Practices
- Principle 8: Provide Measurement Feedback

\* These are taken from the National Institute of Corrections' *Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention* (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/019342.pdf>).

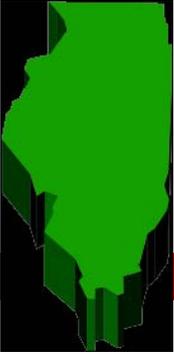


# ICJIA Program Goals, Objectives and Performance Indicators

- Why focus on goals, objectives and performance measures?
  - ▣ Strengthen grant proposals
  - ▣ Strengthen a program, regardless of funding source

For more information:

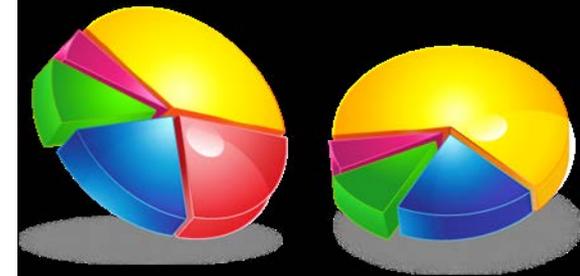
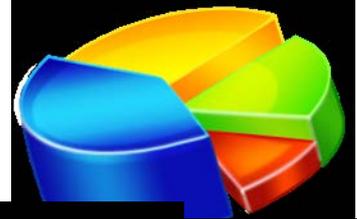
[www.icjia.org/public/pdf/FSGU/Goals\\_Objectives\\_and\\_Performance\\_Measures\\_2012.pdf](http://www.icjia.org/public/pdf/FSGU/Goals_Objectives_and_Performance_Measures_2012.pdf)

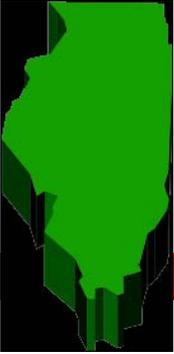


# ICJIA Grantee Data Reports

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- Collect standard performance metrics required by the federal funding source
- Collect project-specific performance measures drawn from the program description
- Templates for program description structured to capture program logic model



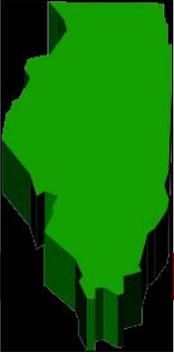


# ICJIA Grantee Narrative Information

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- Highlights program achievements
- Describes barriers to program implementation
- Describes efforts to address barriers
- Gives context to the data
- Provides examples of program activities
- Documents challenges





# How ICJIA Uses Data Reports

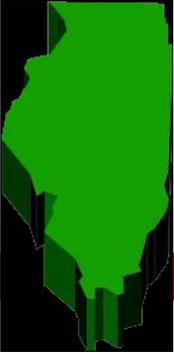
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- ICJIA uses data reports to:
  - Document the work of the program
  - Assure the project is being implemented as intended
  - Provide feedback on program impact to the Authority Budget Committee and Board
  - Become aware of needs and barriers to implementation
  - Compile information required for ICJIA's reports to federal funders

# Federal Technical Assistance Resources

- BJA NTTAC ([www.bjattraining.org](http://www.bjattraining.org))
- OJJDP NTTAC ([www.nttac.org](http://www.nttac.org))
- OVC TTAC ([www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov))

All provide web-based training and resources and broker one-on-one technical assistance



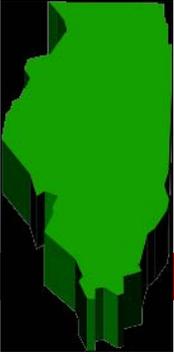
# Grant Technical Assistance

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- Authority Website

([www.icjia.org/public/index.cfm?metasection=grants](http://www.icjia.org/public/index.cfm?metasection=grants))

- *Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Federal & State Grants Unit: A guide for grantees*
- *Program Goals, Objectives, and Performance Indicators: A guide for grant and program development*
- *How to Successfully Obtain Grant Funding -- And Be Glad You Did: Keys to successful grant applications*
- *Neighborhood Recovery Initiative Grant Materials and Reporting Training Webinar*
- *A Grant Proposal Guidebook: Planning, Writing and Submitting a Grant Proposal*



# Authority Contacts

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