

A STRATEGY FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

ONE LESS, Fourth Edition E-News

Summer 2013

What is EBDM?

"Evidence-based decision making" (EBDM) is the practice of using research findings to inform or guide decisions across the justice system

An Initiative of the National Institute of Corrections: A Collaborative Project Among the Center for Effective Public Policy, Pretrial Justice Institute, Justice Management Institute and the Carey Group.

YOUR LOCAL EBDM EXECUTIVE TEAM:

The Honorable David Bottger, Chief Judge, 21st Judicial District
Craig Henderson, County Court Judge, 21st Judicial District
Pete Hautzinger, District Attorney, 21st Judicial District
Stan Hilkey, Sheriff, Mesa County (Co-Chair)
Linda Robinson, Chief Probation Officer, 21st Judicial District
Dennis Berry, Director, Mesa County Criminal Justice Services Department
Trish Mahre, Chief Deputy District Attorney, 21st Judicial District
Bert Nieslanik (Co-Chair), Deputy Director, State of Colorado Alternate Defense Counsel,
Jennifer Sheetz, Criminal Justice Data Analyst, Mesa County Criminal Justice Services
Department/ DA's Office.
Contact: Sue Gormley, Local Initiative Coordinator, sgormley23@gmail.com

Mesa County Tapped for NACO AWARD

Mesa County officials were recently notified that Mesa County will receive a 2013 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACO) for its program titled Mesa County, Colorado Evidence-Based Pretrial Initiative in the category of Criminal Justice and Public Safety. The award will be presented at NACO's annual awards luncheon to be held July 21, 2013 in Tarrant County, Texas. County Commissioner John Justman will accept the award on behalf of Mesa County.

The application for NACO consideration was submitted in February of this year and highlights the transition of Mesa's 20 year pretrial program to an evidence-based decision making process. Through an ongoing collaborative network of system stakeholders, the group approved new processes and tools that have dramatically improved the pretrial justice process. Process and outcome measures are now being collected and will be used to guide future policy discussions and program improvements. Mesa County's pretrial program has become a model for Colorado as well as the nation.

For more information, contact dennis.berry@mesacounty.us

Why Not? Sheriff Stan Hilkey

Excerpts for this article were taken from an article titled "What's Next?" written by Sheriff Stan Hilkey for the County Sheriff's of Colorado quarterly publication. Written in 2012, Stan's thoughts are still a good reminder of EBDM principles.

Like nearly all professions, law enforcement/public safety has behind it a large academic and research world and responsible for many of the policing tactics we have deployed in our communities over the years.

Any Sheriff who has been in the business for any amount of time knows that when you have the benefit of applying our precious human resources, deputy sheriffs, to work on a specific problem proactively, the results are almost always favorable.

The academic community has been searching for a new answer—one that will re-energize our public safety community to build upon the good work of the previous decades. The new "thing" is called evidence-based decision-making. Specifically, this research focuses on reducing recidivism—preventing criminals from continuing to commit more crime in the future. For this author, this was epiphany territory: some of the things we do are causing HARM, creating more future crime or future victims. And when our system doesn't manage offenders correctly, we miss the opportunity to reduce future harm.

Research indicates that at each of the various "case" decision points, there are opportunities to make BETTER decisions based on research and evidence of what works, or in some cases what DOES NOT work.

The first hallmark of a highly functioning evidence-based system is risk assessment: the use of tried and tested instruments to determine someone's risk to commit future crime. The basic understanding is that low-risk individuals generally self-correct and move through, less likely to return. Medium-risk individuals respond more positively when methods proven to work are used to manage them correctly. However, our system often applies TOO MUCH action to low-risk offenders, which is counterproductive with low-risk people. Research shows that teaching people how to think better and handle their lives better, are successful. Boot camps do not produce results that demonstrate success at reducing future criminal behavior. The determination of someone's criminogenic needs managed the right way and applied consistently will make the difference over the long-term.

This is being SMART on crime when considering that these decisions can produce less crime, and therefore fewer victims in the future. With jail and prison overcrowding, we have to start truly considering that jail and prison is the place for the people we fear, not the people at whom we are mad. If that can be done—and the evidence of research says it can without compromising community safety and while reducing future crime—then WHY NOT?

Final Bond Document Perspective—Ed Nugent

Reprinted with permission from the author as he “retires” from the Pretrial Work Group. Ed is a long-time local defense attorney and an active member of the work group. We thank him for his service to our EBDM Project.

I want to take a second and express my appreciation for the tough work we have done so far. It is hard to imagine that we started 2 ½ years ago in Courtroom 6 with giant sticky notes all over the wall with goofy arrows, circles and other hieroglyphics. Over the years I have come to accept and appreciate the fact that there is a collective wisdom. It is the heart of our experiment in self-governance. It works only if all people affected have a voice in the process, that there is respect for the voices of others, that people speak openly and honestly, and there is a willingness to accept that the majority point of view is just another form of tyranny if it does not accommodate the minority point of view as well. We joke (or at least I hope we can joke) about the travails we had as our group worked on this project. Perhaps it’s hubris, but I sincerely believe that we could not have done what we did without the conflict. The idea that people advocating from different points of view will not by necessity result in rancorous debate is naïve. I am proud of our work, but it is only the start. The real test will be continuing the monitoring of what has been done so far, reassessing our goals and objectives and being willing to change. I have every confidence that will happen given the investment we all have made in this project. I urge you all to remain vigilant and wary of complacency. It has been very rewarding working with each and every one of you. I hope that time judges our work favorably.

PSIR PROGRESS REPORT—Rich Plunk

The PSIR work group began in November 2011 with the task of revising the PSIR to be more evidence based. The group looked at the current format and concluded the LSI results would be the best option to format a new report. Two new graphs were inserted into the report (one being the total LSI score and level of risk while the other graph gives a score to each section of the LSI) and a new cover page for the PSIR was created with these graphs as the focal point. The body of the report consists of the criminal history details and one or two paragraphs describing in detail each section of the LSI (ex: family/marital, attitude/orientation, etc.) and concluding with additional information and a recommendation. The new PSIR format was implemented in the 21st at the beginning of February 2013 and appears to be working well thus far. The group is now looking at the standard terms and conditions for adult probationers and seeking ways to make the conditions more brief and concise. Please feel free to contact ralph.plunk@judicial.state.co.us

EBDM

The Evidence-Based Decision Making
in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative



EBDM MEETING CALENDAR

PRETRIAL WORK GROUP—July 17, 2013, CJS BRIDGER BUILDING, 5:00 P.M.

PSIR—July 10, 2013, PROBATION CONFERENCE ROOM, NOON TO 1:00 P.M.
Future meetings, contact Bill Riebel, william.riebel@judicial.state.co.us

SENTENCING ALTERNATIVES GROUP—August 28, 2013 JUSTICE CENTER,
COURTROOM #6, Noon to 1:00 P.M.

EBDM EXECUTIVE MEETINGS—No July EXEC, August 1, 2013, JUSTICE CENTER,
COURTROOM #6, 7 A.M. TO 8:30 A.M.

EBDM LEADERSHIP GROUP—July 18, 2013, Sheriff's Office Training Room, Noon to 1
p.m. Lunch provided, please RSVP to Sue Gormley by July 16 at 5:00 p.m.

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