

Example: Charlottesville-Albemarle County, Virginia, “What One Less Means to Me” Marketing Tool

**One Less seat-of-the-pants judgment,
One More judgment informed by data**

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We are moving our community criminal justice system forward toward a model in which the discretionary judgments made by criminal justice professionals are better informed by data and more likely to contribute measurably to improved outcomes. We will improve public health and safety by utilizing evidence-based decision making at each critical stage at which we make choices about policies, practices, and, in individual cases, about people. These objectives can be accomplished without compromising our values or undermining the important principle of holding people accountable for their behavior.

As well-trained, motivated, and experienced as we might consider ourselves to be in our criminal justice-related capacities, we should not as individuals, nor should the community as a whole, assume that our decisions contribute as much to public health and safety

as we believe they do. A traditional or typical approach to a type of offense, even one that derives from an important principle such as holding people equally accountable for the same behavior, may not be the most effective one. There may be other approaches that not only uphold the principle of equal justice to the same degree, but also improve outcomes measurably in terms of the contributions they actually make to public health and safety.

There is reason to believe that we can improve outcomes in criminal cases by utilizing evidence-based decision making at each stage of the process where discretion is exercised by officials who work in the justice system. This is true at the system level when choosing among alternative policies, practices, and programs. It is also true at the individual level in the context of sentencing decisions or the consideration of appropriate alternatives to traditional prosecution. We can improve the justice system by keeping better data, by studying it regularly and rigorously, and by making intelligent choices that are supported by evidence.



Our transition to increased reliance on evidence-based practices is a collaborative process in which the experiences and good judgment of veteran criminal justice professionals are utilized to identify and implement an improved set of policies, practices, and programs that meet the needs of the community. This process is not taking place in a vacuum. Participants in this effort include a diverse cross section of professionals from every corner of the criminal justice system who are highly motivated to improve our local justice system while preserving overall confidence that the system is fair at its core and achieves outcomes that enhance public health and safety. We share a common desire to pursue data-driven policies and decisions while maintaining fidelity to the important principles of accountability and proportionality.

