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Implementing Evidence-Based Principles in Community Corrections (2011)

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IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED PRINCIPLES IN COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS:

A CASE STUDY OF SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES IN MAINE

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PROJECT TECHNICAL REPORT FOR THE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2003, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) selected Maine as one of two pilot states¹ to demonstrate and test an integrated approach to the implementation of evidence-based principles in community corrections. The project model and conceptual framework developed by NIC emphasized the maintenance of an equal and integrated focus on three domains during implementation:

1. Evidence-based principles (EBP);
2. Organizational development; and
3. Collaboration.

The stated project goal was to build learning organizations that reduce recidivism through the systemic integration of evidence-based principles in collaboration with community and justice partners. NIC provided technical assistance to Maine during the course of the pilot phase (2004-2006). The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) assisted NIC by coordinating many aspects of the technical assistance award to Maine.

Figure 1 - NIC Project Integrated Model



¹ The other state was Illinois.

Evidence-Based Principles

Evidence-based principles (EBP) are a set of rehabilitation program components and characteristics that, when incorporated effectively into the corrections field, help to reduce the criminogenic attitudes, associations, and behaviors of offenders. According to Gendreau (Gendreau, 1996), community corrections programs that incorporate these principles into practice will experience recidivism reductions of 25% to 60% over time, which in turn reduces corrections costs and increases public safety.

Figure 2 – Evidence-Based Principles and Strategies

- 1. Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs**
- 2. Enhance Intrinsic Motivation**
- 3. Target Interventions**
 - a. *Risk Principle*: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
 - b. *Need Principle*: Target interventions to criminogenic needs.
 - c. *Responsivity Principle*: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs.
 - d. *Dosage*: Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months.
 - e. *Treatment*: Integrate treatment into the full sentence/sanction requirements.
- 4. Skill Train with Directed Practice (Use cognitive-behavioral treatment methods)**
- 5. Increase Positive Reinforcement**
- 6. Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities**
- 7. Measure Relevant Processes/Practices**
- 8. Provide Measurement Feedback (Immerse the offender in an environment where pro-social activities predominate.)**

Organizational Development

Organizational development in the integrated model enhances the evidence-based principles of effective offender supervision. Shifting to an evidence-based agency management approach typically requires significant changes in the way business is conducted.

Some changes may include how staff are recruited and hired; conduct their job duties; receive performance feedback; and interact with each other, offenders, and system stakeholders.

The organizational development principle is based on a series of strategies that guides how employees are trained and managed.

Figure 3 - Organizational Development Principles and Strategies

- 
- 1. Assess and Develop Leadership Capacity**
 - 2. Create and Communicate Vision**
 - a. Creating the Vision
 - b. Communicating the Vision
 - c. Identifying Internal and External Stakeholders
 - d. Developing Strategies for Achieving the Vision
 - e. Overcoming Resistance
 - 3. Manage Change**
 - a. Recognize History
 - b. Assess Current Conditions
 - c. Describe the Desired Future
 - d. Develop Strategies to Achieve the Desired Future
 - e. Implement, Monitor, and Provide Feedback
 - 4. Develop Infrastructure**

Collaboration

Collaboration is the final principle of the integrated model, and is an important component of implementing systemic change. The principle states that working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of systemic change in corrections can result in a more coherent continuum of care, one that uses evidence-based principles to reduce recidivism. The strategies in Figure 4 were highlighted by NIC as promoting systematic collaborative efforts more constructively focused on recidivism reduction.

Figure 4 - Collaboration Principles and Strategies

1. Include the Right People / Agencies
2. Develop Sufficient Structure
3. Invest the Right Amount of Resources and Effort to Sustain Collaboration

Review of the Literature

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the use of rehabilitation programs for offenders declined because of the belief that “nothing works” (Martinson et al., 1974). The general consensus among correctional practitioners and criminological researchers was that offenders could not be reformed (see Wilson, 1975). This led to an increasingly punitive criminal justice system, focused on retribution and incapacitation (Currie, 1985; MacKenzie, 2001). The early empirical research on probation tended to show that it was effective in reducing crime, especially among youth. Early work demonstrated that probation may be best reserved for those who are less serious delinquents (Scarpetti and Stevenson, 1968). However, recent research has questioned the usefulness of probation (Morgan, 1993; Petersilia et al., 1986; Whitehead, 1991), noting high rates of recidivism and technical violations. Cox (2008) notes that rigid, control-oriented styles of probation are associated with increased levels of recidivism.

In recent years, with improved research, better evidence has accumulated about the most effective correctional practices. Based on this research, correctional agencies have begun to focus on implementing “best practices,” or evidence-based practices. Evidence-based practices include programs and procedures that have been supported by empirical evidence with respect to reducing recidivism. This marks an increasing awareness that correctional programs can “work,” and can change offenders’ behavior (Cullen and Gendreau, 2000).

Variations of correctional supervisory programs have been implemented. For example, some programs have experimented with the extent of contact probationers have with their probation officers. In general, results are mixed regarding the impact of Intensive Supervision Programs (ISPs).²

² An *intensive supervision* program (ISP) is most often viewed as an alternative to incarceration. Persons who are sentenced to intensive probation supervision are supposed to be those offenders who, in the absence of intensive supervision, would have been sentenced to imprisonment. No two jurisdictions define intensive supervision in exactly the same way. However, one characteristic of all ISPs is that they provide for very strict terms of probation. This increased level of control is usually achieved through reduced case loads, increased number of contacts, and a range of required activities for participating offenders that can include victim restitution, community service, employment, random urine and alcohol testing, electronic monitoring, and payment of a probation supervision fee. Intensive supervision programs vary in terms of the number and type of contacts per month, case load size, type of surveillance conducted, and services offered. Read more: [Probation and Parole: Supervision - Intensive Supervision - Offenders, Programs, Isp, Offender, Rates, and Control](http://law.jrank.org/pages/1842/Probation-Parole-Supervision-Intensive-supervision.html#ixzz17jwMcFpa) <http://law.jrank.org/pages/1842/Probation-Parole-Supervision-Intensive-supervision.html#ixzz17jwMcFpa>

Petersilia and Turner (1993) found that an ISP reduced recidivism among a group of 168 probationers.

However, a RAND corporation review of ISPs across 14 U.S. jurisdictions showed that intensive supervision did not result in improved outcomes for probationers and actually increased technical violations (Petersilia, 1996).

Johnson (2000) noted that an ISP for a specialized population of domestic violence offenders was effective in reducing future crime. In a review of “shock” probation programs (e.g., those that attempt to combine probation with some form of incarceration, typically a boot camp facility), Sherman et al. (1997) reported that these programs fail to reduce recidivism. Sherman et al. did find that monitoring of gang members by probation officers can be effective in reducing gang violence.

Those in the “what works” camp argue that for probation to be effective, it must focus on evidence-based principles, including assessment and monitoring of substance abuse among other program characteristics (Raynor, 2003; Williams, 2007). Proponents of evidence-based principles argue that substantial reductions in recidivism are possible with the appropriate treatment (Dowden and Andrews, 2004), citing reductions as great as 60% (Cox, 2008; Gendreau, 1996).

Evidence-based principles are found in a vast array of practices across the correctional system, from the use of incarceration to intermediate sanctions. However, much of the evidence-based work has been conducted with regard to programs for offenders (e.g., probation, parole, home confinement). Thanks in part to a growing body of literature that has synthesized the findings across these areas (see, e.g., Sherman et al., 1997), we now know much more about which programs and program characteristics can be effective in reducing reoffending.

SECTION I: METHODOLOGY

Evidence-based principles (EBP) are only as good as the agencies and individuals who implement them. When implemented with fidelity, EBP can successfully reduce recidivism. In order to ensure that evidence-based principles are implemented with fidelity, an agency must have a way to collect, analyze, and act upon data that measures the processes of implementation.³ The University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service developed this case study report describing Maine's attempt to implement NIC's integrated model for the purpose of improving community corrections and reducing recidivism. The goal was to describe Maine's implementation of the model which was designed to create a correctional system directed by evidence-based principles, and incorporating organizational development and collaboration strategies to sustain impact. The report examines how strategies for each of the three domains of the model were implemented, and what results were achieved.

Case study research can increase understanding of a complex issue through a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. This study and report relied on four data collections to answer the basic research question: *How did Maine implement NIC's integrated model, and what contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model during the implementation period?*

The case study research employed document review, key informant interviews, quantitative analysis, and observations of current climate to develop research findings.

Figure 5- Case Study Research Methods

1. Document review, examining policy changes implemented by MDOC during the EBP project implementation period and up to the present date (between 2004-2009);
2. Key informant interviews with MDOC staff about the implementation process;
3. Observations of current climate, to determine how extensively the implementation model is being applied by probation officers and mid-level staff; and
4. Quantitative analysis of intermediate measures tracking the completion rate of specific evidence-based management practices.

³ Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice (2009). Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.

Document Review

Analysis of the document review is described in Section II. The document review primarily focused on changes to probation, especially in the areas of sentencing, administration, and training. The review process distinguished between changes initiated by the NIC and changes initiated independent of the pilot program. A draft of the document review and chronological inventory was provided to Associate Commissioner, Denise Lord and Bud Doughty. They provided feedback on the accuracy of documentation of policies and practices before implementation, and changes during the implementation period between 2004 and 2006.

Key Informant Interviews

A summary of findings from the key informant interviews is contained in Section III. The Muskie School conducted interviews of state and regional probation administrators to obtain their perceptions of changes in probation management between 2004 – 2009, with a special emphasis on the pilot project period. Individual administrators shared their perspectives on the challenges and facilitators of implementing various aspects of evidence-based policies and practices, along with their perceptions of successes and failures during implementation. Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) leaders also provided their perceptions and opinions regarding past practices, and provided an update (as of 2009) of probation management policies and procedures. The Muskie School also interviewed three Regional Correctional Administrators (RCAs), and four Assistant RCAs. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Observations of Staff (Current Climate)

Muskie School research staff observed a sample of randomly selected probation offices in each of the four regional offices to measure perceptions of fidelity to EBP principles and actual adherence to high quality contact standards. This included observing whether an officer used motivational interviewing techniques, provided a four-to-one ratio of rewards to punishments in their interactions with offenders, reviewed case plans, and used social learning/cognitive-behavioral strategies in working with clients. Muskie staff also focused on gauging the officers' general knowledge of EBP. A summary of findings of the observations appears in Section IV.

Quantitative Analysis of Intermediate Measures

To ensure that evidence-based practices were implemented with fidelity to the model, MDOC developed intermediate measures to capture the processes of EBP implementation. The Muskie School conducted quantitative analysis of the following intermediate measures to describe the scope and impact of EBP implementation by each successive cohort of new probation entrants between 2004 – 2008. Key analyses included the Department’s use of the Level of Service Inventory – Revised to measure risk level of probationers during the implementation period, and case planning changes. Tables illustrating the findings from the quantitative analysis can be found in Section V.

Figure 6- Intermediate Measures

- LSI-R assessments within 60 days of entering probation
- LSI-R re-assessments within one year
- Gain score increase
- High & max cases with case plans
- Case plans – 3 or more domains targeted

SECTION II: DOCUMENT REVIEW

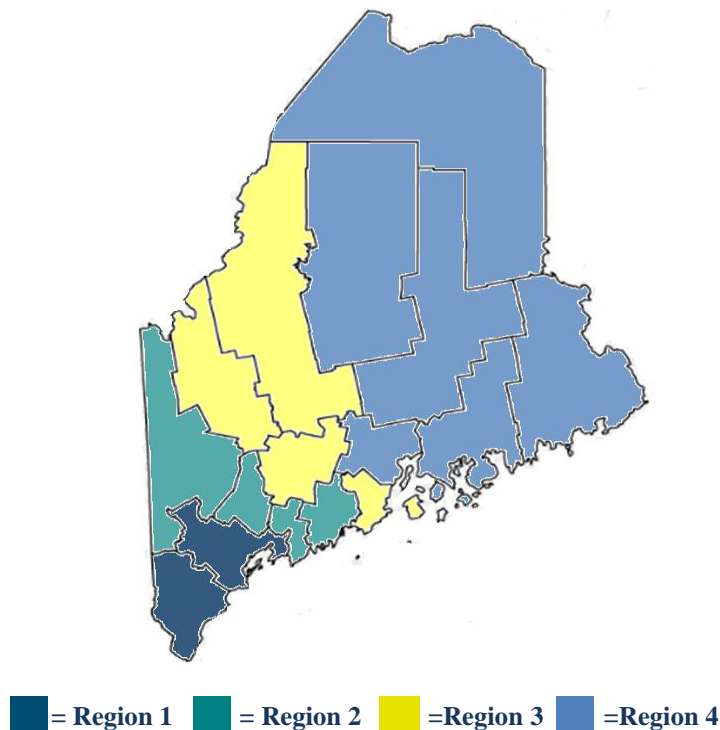
This section describes major law, policy, and practice changes undertaken during the pilot program implementation period of 2004-2006. Pre-NIC initiatives are also described to provide context for the changes in the law and policy environment leading up to corrections implementation. The section describes probation services in Maine, then moves on to an examination of changes guided by evidence-based principles and the integrated model.

The integrated model was initiated with a summit of Maine justice stakeholders in 2004. Shortly thereafter, Maine initiated a number of sentencing, administrative, and training activities to adopt and integrate evidence-based practices for recidivism reduction.

Probation Services in Maine

In Maine, probation is a court-ordered term of community supervision with specified conditions for a determinant period of time. Probation is administered statewide by the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) across four probation regions.¹

Figure 7 - Probation Regions



¹ Parole has not existed since 1976 when it was abolished by the state legislature. However, probation often acts as de-facto parole in Maine, as more than two-thirds of offenders enter probation from jail or prison.

Probation is imposed on a convicted offender who is placed under supervision in lieu of or subsequent to incarceration with a requirement to comply with certain standards of conduct. The probationer is required to abide by all court-ordered conditions. Violation of any of the conditions may result in revocation of probation by the court and imposition of the underlying sentence.

In Maine, prison sentences can be fully served while incarcerated, wholly suspended with probation, or split, with a portion of the sentence served in incarceration followed by a period of probation (17-A M.R.S.A. section 1152(2)). This latter form of sentence is referred to as a split sentence. Throughout the probation period, the probationer is subject to serving the entire suspended portion of the sentence, or any portion thereof, in incarceration as a result of a court-ordered violation of probation (17-A M.R.S.A. section 1206(7-A)). The probationer may also be required to pay the cost of supervision to the State of Maine, and may have additional conditions imposed requiring payment of restitution, court costs and fines, public service, and/or various types of treatment.

The probationer is usually required to report in to his or her supervising officer in the local field office at intervals related to their risk of re-offending as measured by the *Level of Service Inventory-Revised* (LSI-R) risk/needs assessment tool. If the probationer's assessment places him or her in a higher risk of re-offending classification, the officer will contact the offender at his or her home and place of employment, in addition to maintaining contact with service providers and other community members.

MDOC Implementation

The following is an examination of recent changes to Maine's probation process that have been guided by evidence-based principles. The changes that have taken place over the last six years can be grouped into categories: Sentencing, Administration, and Training. The report differentiates between those changes implemented by the NIC and those initiated independently of the pilot program.

New MDOC Mission

MDOC hosted a summit to introduce the NIC integrated model to Maine justice stakeholders in 2004. Approximately 85 participants attended the day-long meeting, including district attorneys, judges, sheriffs, and corrections officials.

NIC presented a number of expert panels sharing strategies used in Iowa and Oregon to implement various aspects of the emerging evidence-based principles and practices. One area of emphasis involved the management of lower risk versus higher risk offenders (i.e. the concept and practice of “banking”). Summit participants voted to adopt a recidivism reduction philosophy/strategy for Maine’s corrections system, after considering other models. Recidivism reduction as a strategy is closely aligned with evidence-based principles. The majority of participants agreed that adopting a recidivism reduction strategy would best position MDOC to adhere to the NIC model. Following the summit, one of the first things MDOC did was to change its mission statement to better align with EBP.

“The mission of the Department of Corrections is to reduce the likelihood that juvenile and adult offenders will re-offend, by providing practices, programs and services which are evidence-based and which hold the offender accountable.”

The biggest challenge of meeting this new mission was changing the existing system to provide an appropriate level of support for the new innovations.

Changes in Sentencing

Pre-NIC Initiatives (Commission to Improve the Sentencing, Supervision, Management, and Incarceration of Prisoners)

Many of the recent changes to Maine’s probation services were made based on recommendations of the Commission to Improve the Sentencing, Supervision, Management, and Incarceration of Prisoners, which was tasked by former Governor Baldacci in 2003 to address the rapidly growing population in Maine’s prisons and jails. Major recommendations were to limit the use of probation, create new sentencing options, and reduce probation sentences, as detailed in the Commission’s January, 2004 report.⁵

First, Maine’s sentencing laws were revised to reduce the length of time an offender can be sentenced to probation:

- ◆ Class A – 4 years
- ◆ Class B – 3 years
- ◆ Class C – 2 years
- ◆ Class D & E – 1 year

⁵ <http://www.maine.gov/spo/legandgovreports/docs/2004correctionscommissionreport.pdf>

Based on the recommendations, the State of Maine also enacted two new sentencing alternatives in 2004 entitled “deferred disposition” and “administrative release.”⁶

Deferred disposition is a sentencing option that enables judges to order an alternative sentence to probation or incarceration in appropriate cases. Requirements for a deferred disposition sentence may include paying restitution, performing community service work, completing treatment plans, reaching educational goals, or finding employment. Procedurally, the defendant pleads guilty, and the judge continues the case without a final disposition. The defendant then provides proof of his or her compliance with the sentence to the district attorney, and on the date certain, the judge may impose an unconditional discharge, or the district attorney may dismiss without conviction. If the defendant is not in compliance, the judge proceeds to sentencing with incarceration and/or probation as available sanctions.

Administrative release allows the courts to order misdemeanor Class D & E offenders to an unsupervised, non-probation sentence where appropriate. Unlike a deferred disposition, administrative release may be imposed when a defendant has been found guilty by a judge or jury after trial, as well as after he or she has pled guilty.

MDOC Initiatives during NIC Project

In 2005, the state legislature passed the MDOC sponsored LD 1903⁷, which eliminated most misdemeanor offenses (Class D & E), except domestic violence and multiple OUI offenses, from eligibility for probation. As a result, the number of lower-risk offenders⁸ entering probation in Maine declined, resulting in a 25% drop in the state’s probation caseload between 2004 and 2005. Since 2005, probation entrant totals have continued to decline, falling to 3,508 in 2007. The change reduced the average case load for each probation officer in Maine from 153 probationers, to 94 probationers per average case load.

⁶ www.legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills_122nd/chapdocs/PUBLIC288.doc

⁷ http://www.legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills_121st/LD.asp?LD=1903

⁸ The administrative risk level category decreased from nearly one in five probationers (17.2%) in the 2004 cohort to 10.4% in the 2007 cohort.

Figure 8 - Revised Probation Contact and Testing Requirements

Level of Supervision	Selected Probation Contact and Testing Requirements
Maximum Risk (LSI-R: 32+)	<p>Contacts by the Probation Officer with an offender classified as Maximum Risk shall consist of five (5) contacts during a one (1) month period with at least one (1) contact per week. One (1) contact shall be in the person's home, two (2) shall be face to face contacts with the person and the remaining two (2) may be collateral contacts, to include at least one (1) employment check every two (2) months. In addition to the monthly contact in the home, when it is appropriate, officers shall incorporate home visits into their case plans for the purpose of monitoring identified risks.</p>
High Risk (LSI-R: 26-31)	<p>Contacts by the Probation Officer with an offender classified as High Risk shall consist of three (3) contacts during a one (1) month period including (1) face to face contact- and two (2) collateral contacts. At least one (1) face to face contact shall be made in the home per quarter. In addition to the quarterly home contact, when it is appropriate, officers shall incorporate home visits in to their case plans for the purpose of monitoring identified risks.</p>
Moderate Risk (LSI-R: 21-25)	<p>Contacts by the Probation Officer with an offender classified as Moderate Risk shall consist of at least two (2) monthly contacts by the Probation Officer, with one (1) face to face and one (1) collateral.</p>
Low Risk (LSI-R: 14-20)	<p>Contacts by the Probation Officer with an offender classified as Low Risk shall be at least one (1) every three (3) months. The contact may be satisfied either by an office contact in person or by telephone.</p>
Administrative (LSI-R: 0-13)	<p>A person classified as administrative is not required to report, except for the initial assessment and, if required by the supervising Probation Officer, sixty (6) days prior to termination of their supervision. In cases where there is a new criminal conviction or there is a citizen or law enforcement complaint involving an administrative case, the supervising Probation Officer shall take appropriate action.</p>

LD 1868⁹, an MDOC sponsored law change removed the burden of administrative preliminary hearings from probation officers, combining the role of this hearing with initial court appearances. The objective of this law change was, in large part, to reduce officer workload in preparation for expectations of increased time spent on case management of higher risk offenders. In 2006, additional law changes eliminated the requirement for a preliminary hearing in all probation violation matters.¹⁰ Implementation of this new legislation saved officers' time for more serious cases and also increased some efficiencies for county jails.

Before 2006, moderate risk probationers were assessed an LSI-R score anywhere between a broad range of 14 and 31. In order to continue to address the workload issues, MDOC in 2006 decided to substantially narrow the range of moderate risk to 21-25, which decreased the share of moderate risk level probationers from 57.1% in the 2004 cohort to 37.3% in the 2007 cohort.

As a result, the proportion of high risk level offenders increased from 8.4% in 2004 to 13.7% in 2007. The maximum risk level category also increased, from 0.8% of the 2004 cohort to 2.2% in 2007. This re-calibration of Maine's probationer risk levels was also intended to better identify the higher risk probationers for more intensive case management. MDOC revised policies on offender assessment to incorporate timelines based on the research for LSI-R assessment and re-assessments. Additionally, MDOC created a new LSI-R category of "Low" risk to provide a greater ability to manage clients according to their risk. Consequently, probation officers were able to avoid excessive contact with offenders that were less likely to reoffend, and instead could concentrate on providing increased case management and other direct contact with higher risk cases.

MDOC also developed policies requiring officers to transfer cases determined by the LSI-R to be of administrative risk to a newly developed administrative caseload. These very low to no risk clients are no longer actively supervised. On the other hand, most cases assessed at a Maximum or High risk are expected to have active case plans addressing and targeting identified risks and needs. MDOC re-wrote probation supervision contact standards to better align required supervision strategies with EBP. The nature and frequency of contacts is driven in large part by the risks and needs presented by the probationer.

⁹ http://www.legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills_122nd/billtexts/LD186801-1.asp

¹⁰ <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/17-A/title17-Asec1205.html>

Administrative Changes

Pre-NIC Initiatives

The 2003 Commission to Improve the Sentencing, Supervision, Management, and Incarceration of Prisoners also recommended creation of two resource coordinator positions to support a reentry network for high-risk offenders, and to support expansion of supervised community confinement statewide.¹¹ These resource coordinators worked with offenders who were being released, and provided assistance in a variety of ways, including assisting with locating housing, referrals for counseling appointments, and providing information on other community resources.

In 2003, MDOC launched the CORIS (Corrections Information System), a state of the art management information system. The implementation of CORIS automated state corrections data collection and improved the department's ability to manage information and measure its performance.

MDOC Initiatives during NIC Project

In 2005, the department decided to hire four Assistant Regional Correctional Administrators (ARCAs) whose primary focus was quality assurance. ARCAs worked with a consultant, to develop an adult community corrections quality assurance plan for implementation. The plan called for ongoing, quantifiable assessments of officers' case plan supervision and other benchmarks of performance. The ARCAs were also responsible for conducting caseload reviews, and providing training and coaching for officers.

In 2003, MDOC initiated an Internal Policy Committee, which consisted of both, correctional administrators and line staff. The purpose of the committee was to review all policies and procedures as well as identify possible implementation issues and solutions. The committee met very frequently during the initial preparation phase of the NIC initiative-often with NIC facilitators who helped develop the committee's buy-in of EBP principles and practices. The group set the course and pace in terms of policy and implementation of EBP with staff throughout the Department. For example, in 2006, the committee made the internal policy decision to place the lowest risk offenders on an administrative caseload that would not be actively supervised. This newly designated administrative caseload has not resulted in an increase in recidivism.

¹¹The Maine Reentry Network was created by MDOC in 2004 as a comprehensive service delivery system consisting of collaborative partnerships with state and local government agencies and several community-based and faith-based organizations. The supervised community confinement program promotes the integration of prisoners in the community under supervision. Participants transferred to supervised community confinement are still considered prisoners, but the place of confinement is in the community, rather than in a correctional facility. This option is intended to help ensure a safe and successful return of the prisoner to the community.

Figure 9 – 1 Year Re-Arrest Rate for a New Crime (Recidivism Rate)

Risk Level	Implementation (2004-2006)	Post Implementation (2007-2008)
Administrative	10.0%	9.1%

Quality assurance as a focus of MDOC has been institutionalized through a number of initiatives including: ongoing caseload reviews and coaching by the ARCAs, solicitation of technical assistance to develop a quality assurance plan, and development of reports drawing from automated data in CORIS to measure performance and outcomes. An effort has also been made to improve officer awareness and implementation of EBP, and to expand case planning and other best practices skills while managing and balancing officer workloads. In response to higher expectations requiring officers to manage caseloads and clients in a more sophisticated manner, a re-classification of the position to a higher level in state government was requested and received in 2008 to adequately compensate officers.

New Training Programs

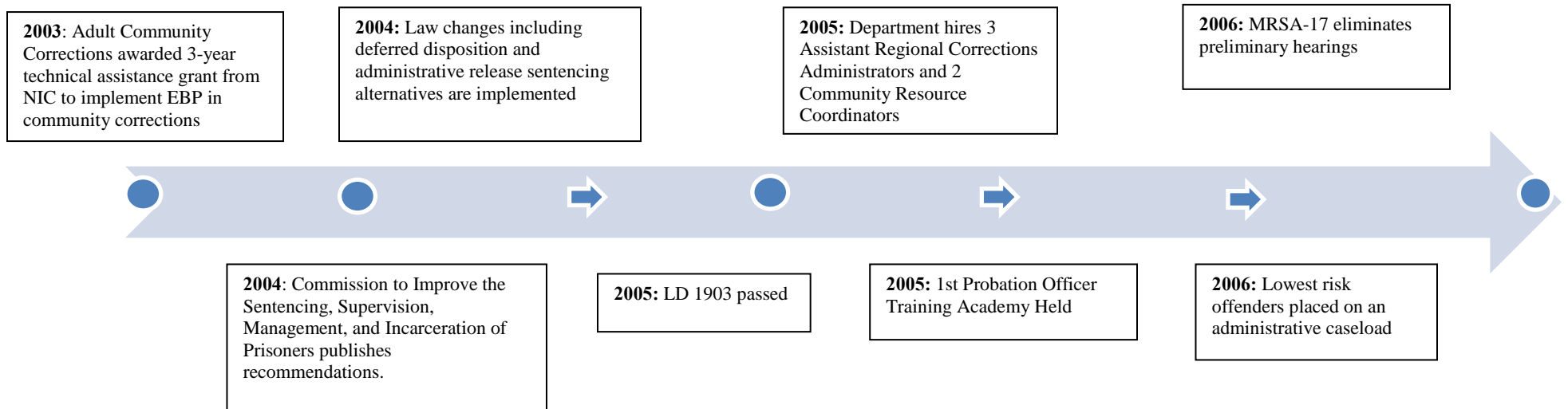
MDOC Initiatives during NIC Project

In 2005, MDOC also focused on providing EBP training to all officers. One of the key elements of evidence-based practices is appropriate assessment of offenders, which allows officers to target risks and needs on an individual basis. The LSI-R is a well-known third generation risk assessment tool that assesses both risks and needs. Twelve probation officers were trained by staff at the University of Cincinnati as trainers in the LSI-R. These staff members trained every other probation officer in the state.

In September 2005, MDOC hosted the first Probation Officer Training Academy. The Academy included classes on LSI-R, case planning, and motivational interviewing- a focused, directed interview technique designed to help move offenders forward in the change process. Additional training was also conducted for motivational interviewing (MI) and case planning. Several probation officers from each region were trained to become MI trainers by the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI). They trained the remainder of the probation officers and have since provided refresher training.

Iowa DOC also trained several of Maine's probation officers from each region in case planning. These officers developed a case planning training curriculum and trained all other officers in each region. Quality assurance teams held follow-up case planning coaching groups in the months following the initial case planning training to the regions.

Figure 10: Timeline of Initiatives during NIC initiative



SECTION III: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

This section describes the perceptions of corrections and probation leaders/administrators about the successes and challenges in implementing EBP during the project and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers conducted interviews with key informants to gauge their perceptions of the success of the program and to identify areas for improvement.

Overall, MDOC personnel, and NIC staff viewed the project positively in terms of improving community corrections outcomes. Interviewees from MDOC cited the quality of training provided by NIC, particularly on LSI-R risk assessment and motivational interviewing techniques. The project helped “define the mission” and enabled MDOC to improve quality assurance and supervision by maintaining fidelity to EBP. The quality of communication between NIC and MDOC, and the general collaborative spirit of the project were also singled out for positively contributing to the success of the program. Many at MDOC were impressed with the experience NIC had with real-world implementation.

“Overall, my feeling with NIC is that they gave us a lot of important, timely, and appropriate ideas, plans, and strategies of implementation. They also told us at the same time that the end is way, way down the road. Some of the people they brought in ‘from away’ were very good at explaining the implementation process. We haven’t completely gotten over the overlap period, but we are working at it. The people they brought in had real-world experience in implementation.” – MDOC Manager

During the course of the three-year pilot project, MDOC and NIC worked closely together and communication continues with NIC despite the formal end of the project. All interviewees agreed that although much progress has been accomplished, there is still much work to be done and “the end is way, way down the road.” The NIC project was also met with a degree of initial trepidation. Some managers indicated that they were concerned with making changes to their supervision and paperwork requirements, especially considering that the new initiatives had to be implemented with no additional staff or resources. Nonetheless, the managers were ultimately thankful to NIC for providing them with “new ideas to break the cycle of recidivism.”

Despite overall commitment to the project goal and tasks of implementation, general weaknesses of its implementation were frequently cited by the interviewees. Although the collaboration between NIC and MDOC was considered successful within MDOC, there was a general consensus among participants/stakeholders that the project failed to successfully reach out to

many in the judiciary and the district attorneys. There is a perception among MDOC managers, that the courts and lawyers still do not understand the purpose and importance of EBP. The project initiated implementation activities in 2004 with an external policy committee to foster external collaboration, but the committee fell apart after a year, “because it concentrated on excessive meetings as opposed to getting things done.” Engaging and educating the legislature has been more successful, but is perceived to warrant further efforts.

“One weakness was that we didn’t go in and deal with the judicial branch and the district attorneys. We should have better informed them about what were doing, because they are a critical piece to the work we do. NIC also did not do much with collaboration, in general. Although they helped us focus on the environment, attitude, and our approach, there are still some really negative cultural things that deserve more attention.”
– Key Informant

“The biggest challenge is changing culture. Staff adapts slowly to new initiatives, so it requires patience. Secondly, the organization must change to meet the research. We need to look at our outcomes, not just perform the assessments. If things aren’t working, we need to go back to the drawing board. We haven’t been doing this as much as we should. The third challenge is external collaboration – trying to get outside parties (i.e. the courts) to understand what we do.” – Key Informant

Furthermore, although coordinators at NIC and CJI viewed MDOC’s centralized system and small, collaborative leadership team as effective in moving forward with organizational change, many from within MDOC expressed concern about their overall perspective.

Some respondents believed that there was so much focus placed on getting very specific things accomplished that the broader objectives were often lost. MDOC’s internal capacity was also stretched thin at times due to the department’s small staff size. Respondents thought that there was a difficulty in confronting areas of weakness head on; “New people should have been brought in to tackle some of the issues. Reliance on old relationships both helped and hindered.”

Administrators and managers at MDOC also expressed concern with the lack of resources available in the community. Although MDOC’s probation case planning has markedly improved, the plans often cannot be executed properly, due to the limited availability of programs in Maine. Consequently, offenders are being re-incarcerated despite the best efforts of probation officers. NIC itself was also faced with its own financial limitations. One MDOC administrator noted that, “the only problem that happened with NIC is that once they committed to a three year project, they ended up running out of money halfway through.” Consequently, MDOC had to spend its own money to implement the quality assurance aspects of the project.

Evidence-Based Principles

As a result of placing greater emphasis on evidence-based principles and practices, key informants have noticed substantial improvements in the methods probation officers now use to deal with offenders. Although some probation officers initially greeted the EBP pilot project with suspicion, the majority now buys into the principles, and is making use of EBP strategies. MDOC has built upon the successes of those probation officers who believed in the mission change early in the process, and perceive the rest have begun adopting the EBP vision on their own. Training officers on the importance of risk assessment has improved supervision results, and has helped make clear to supervisors what they should be looking for in performance from probation officers. The managers reported there has never been better supervision, and quality assurance is perceived to have significantly improved. Overall, management of offenders has also improved as they are now being monitored based on their relative risk.

“The biggest success I see is in the way our officers deal with the clientele now. It’s interesting that as much fun as they would poke at the term EBP, they now utilize the terminology and a lot of the principles. There isn’t 100% buy-in, but we have at least 60% and I’m happy with that. In terms of identifying the domains that we have to look at with our clients, that has really improved. The staff has more supervision and support. We should try to have even more supervision.” – MDOC Manager

Although the LSI-R risk assessment tool was used by MDOC prior to the NIC pilot project, most interviewees agreed that the increased LSI-R training opportunities had a profound effect on improving the supervision and management of probationers. One interviewee noted that, “the whole process is better because you actually have a game plan.” Another singled out the elimination of administrative-risk level offenders from the caseload as a major improvement to the system. At the same time, the increased attention on high- and maximum-risk offenders has resulted in more time spent with higher risk populations. Improved understanding of the LSI-R has also had a positive impact on supervision: “It’s a good tool for supervision, because if probation officers say they can’t manage their work, we might find that they are spending too much time with low-risk offenders. It allows probation officers to strategize their time better.” MDOC managers have recognized that caseload needs differ among risk levels, and they can now better assign a fair share of caseloads to each probation officer.

“Implementation of the proper use of LSI-R has had a profound effect on the agency. Before, the LSIs were not being used as intended- they were being performed, but the results were being ignored and offenders were being treated exactly the same. We have now changed our policies- there are different levels of management based on risk level. We also now acknowledge that caseload differs among risk levels, and we attempt to assign a fair share of caseloads to the probation officers.” – Key Informant

MDOC managers were also asked whether staff are held accountable for using assessment information to develop a case plan and then using that case plan to manage an offender. Although the interviewees generally agreed that there was a system of accountability, they felt it could stand improvement. Generally, case reviews are conducted on all aspects of a probationer's case, but they also felt that practices differ across regions. In one region, , reviews take place on a regular basis to ensure the probation officers are targeting the top three or four criminogenic needs. If they are not, the supervisors address this issue with the probation officer. However, it was noted that this review is only completed for those offenders warranting a case plan, and further suggested that administrative offenders should also have a case plan. Interviewees expressed concern that officers may drop the risk level score by a point or two to avoid conducting a case plan.

*“We set certain benchmarks that we expect to be met (for example, LSIs must be completed in a certain amount of time). We track these expectations with periodic caseload reviews. LSI audits are performed on notes, scoring, etc. I'll also meet with officers and deficiencies can be addressed during these review sessions. Overall, officers have received enough training that they are doing a thorough job; most caseload reviews are now a matter of fine tuning.”
– MDOC Manager*

Key informants perceive that managers and supervisors are more focused on quality assurance than punitive action in maintaining staff accountability, and perceive a higher level of competence in their staff. As one interviewee remarked, “At this point we are still in the process of learning, so we don't use disciplinary action beyond making sure any mistakes have been corrected.”

Holding staff accountable for using motivational interviewing techniques is also handled very informally across the state. Although probation officers are familiar with MI techniques and are encouraged to engage offenders using MI strategies, they are only occasionally observed. One supervisor concedes “this is a real weak area for us.” The large regions are also limited in their monitoring abilities due to geographic reasons.

“There is not enough time to visit all the various sub-offices and make sure that the techniques are being properly implemented. It is encouraged, but not monitored.”

“They are not being video-taped and nobody is sitting in on their interviews. However, once we started training, a lot of officers have started to elicit more information from offenders by employing MI techniques. However, it is difficult for either our peers or our bosses to monitor its use. But the conversational techniques between officers and offenders has improved over the last few years.” – MDOC Manager

Organizational Development & Collaboration

Interviewees reported what they have observed to be different in MDOC as a result of the NIC project. Many agree that the greater focus on evidenced-based principles and practices has resulted in a number of significant changes, and see decisions routinely being made with a focus on reducing recidivism. They also report an effort to minimize default reliance on jail, instead thinking through the appropriate level of risk and need of an offender, and often relying on graduated sanctions and treatment. Attitudes among probation officers have changed towards offenders; before the NIC pilot there were more instances of probationers treated in a derogatory manner, while now probation officers are treating them as human beings with issues and behaviors for which they need to be held accountable. “The offenders are no longer being pre-judged as sub-human characters.”

Discrepancies remain among the regions in commitment to EBP. However, most interviewees report that they are confident that any lingering resistance to EBP will be overcome with time. Staffing changes have already occurred in which supporters of EBP and recidivism reduction have gained increased stature within the organization, resulting in fewer instances of opposition to project goals. Still, they feel more work must be done to create consistency among the regions in case management and supervision practices.

Key informants reported that various levels of communication and collaboration characterize interactions about EBP with stakeholders outside of MDOC. Mental health and substance abuse treatment partners were frequently cited as groups that were open to incorporating EBP into their strategies. Interviewees felt that the state legislature was well-educated on the concept of EBP. However, as mentioned previously, many interviewees felt that more collaboration needs to take place with the district attorneys and judiciary. Key informants noted that there is more work to be done within MDOC, particularly regarding the disconnect between institutional corrections

and community corrections when it comes to EBP. “It is difficult to get the facilities to think more about risk reduction than security levels.”

“There is a rift between the institutions and the community. The transition process does not operate smoothly. Although there are individuals on both sides trying to correct that, there is no central authority between both groups to facilitate the transition and maintain accountability.” – Key Informant

A number of contextual factors influenced MDOC’s fidelity to the EBP model. The small population size of the state and relatively small staffing numbers in the department supported an environment for close collaboration.

Investment in the new CORIS data system was also cited as an essential tool in implementing the project. However, certain issues hindered the success of the project and will need to be addressed. For instance, limited staffing continues to result in burdensome caseloads. There is also a concern that fiscal realities will prevent MDOC from accessing the resources to fully implement all project goals.

“That is a hard question to answer given the current fiscal situation. The practical side of me is that we have made significant change and we need to secure that change and make sure there isn’t backsliding and we move forward incrementally and carefully because resources are very scarce. I don’t know what the future holds for resources, and the worse thing we can do is create expectations that we can’t meet. I think there are real opportunities for positive improvements, but I think we need to be more realistic about the resources available.” – Key Informant

As Maine moves to full implementation of NIC’s model, key informants agree that more emphasis must be placed on program monitoring and measurement. Suggestions include “360” assessments of probation officers every six months in order to make sure the organization is adhering to its mission to reduce recidivism, additional standards and expectations based on measurements (particularly recidivism rates), and a willingness to venture outside the state and engage with other jurisdictions. Finally, it is necessary for a common commitment to the evolving EBP research and best practices among the leadership. “The leadership should always be paying attention to the research and adjusting their practices accordingly.”

“I think it is difficult to determine our fidelity to the model, because no one is checking to see if we are implementing EBP. We’re not clearly measuring what we are doing. I wish there was somebody who had the job of being the quality assurance person. A lot of self-correction will happen if you get people the information they need on their performance.” – MDOC Manager

SECTION IV: INTERVIEWS WITH PROBATION OFFICERS (OBSERVATIONS OF CURRENT CLIMATE)

Muskie School researchers interviewed probation officers in the four regions and observed current practices. Although the interviews cannot reflect the perceptions and opinions of all officers, they do present a different and sometimes conflicting perspective on EBP compared with the “key informant” interviews. Overall, some tension existed between understanding the EBP model and mastering the many real world implementation challenges.

In general, probation officers found the LSI-R to be a helpful tool in providing guidelines to manage offenders. However, some officers reported that the decision to shift administrative caseloads to passive supervision had not decreased their workloads, as they faced a new requirement to case plan for high/maximum cases. Moderates (LSI-R Scores of 21-25) remain the majority of cases, and some officers also supervise diverse offender populations (such as sex offenders or domestic violence cases), which is typical in the more rural areas of the state.

“I have had more successes from the moderate [risk offenders]. People with more to lose tend to do better. More resources should be placed toward helping moderates to low rather than maximum to highs.”– Probation Officer

Assistant Regional Administrators review randomly selected case plans on an annual basis as part of officers’ performance appraisals. The review consists of identifying whether the goals of the case plan match the criminogenic needs identified through the LSI-R assessment. Officers felt the CORIS computer system was not user-friendly for reviewing case plan information. Notes would often have to be typed in once and then copied to another form in the system to insure that the information was captured in the case plan. MDOC is working on upgrading their computer system to allow for easier case planning functions. These upgrades took effect in 2011.

Two of the issues raised in implementing EBP as a probation officer were the lack of support staff (clerical) and the high caseload totals. For example, because one sub office has no clerical staff, officers have to spend more time performing non-supervisory tasks (copying, filing, filling out reports), taking away time from working with clients. High caseloads (some officers have over 130 active cases) create pressure to speed up reporting time, and do not allow officers the time to connect with probationers on changing behavior. The officers believed adding more probation officer positions were the best way to handle the current caseload size.

During their interactions with probationers, officers reported using motivational interviewing (MI) techniques such as open-ended questions and affirmations to create a welcoming

atmosphere. However, during the observations, officers often did not reflect back what they heard from the probationers and instead spent time on instructing them of their responsibilities, which decreased the amount of time spent on exploring change-focused conversation. MI training takes place annually at staff meetings, but officers have never been audited for MI proficiency.

Officers felt that EBP was well established in MDOC, but was not well known by the judiciary or the legal community which they routinely encounter. Often conditions imposed by the court were in conflict with probation guidelines, leading to unclear expectations for the probationer. For example, depending on the court, officers have varying and inconsistent amounts of input in the revocation decision. Some courts wanted to hear from the officer and expected a discussion of the officer's assessment of the offender. In other courts, the officer was not heard, and revocations were based on judicial discretion or reached after a plea agreement between the assistant district attorney and defense counsel. Another area where EBP was not as well understood was among staff in MDOC facilities. Officers complained that facility staff did not use the LSI-R and often MDOC clients were transitioned to the facility with little preparation or a clear assessment of their needs entering the community. Probation officers noted that LSI-R began to be completed in the facilities in the last six months, but the transition from facility to community was not as efficient as it could be.

*"I can't make a difference with a theory. I need something tangible."
(i.e. housing, treatment, psych evaluation)*

While some probation officers felt they had sufficient substance abuse and sex offender counseling resources, all admitted they didn't know which ones were producing improved outcomes for probationers. The officers reported that they informally decide where a probationer should go to treatment based on past experiences with the counseling agency, and where they felt the probationer would best fit with the counseling approach (responsivity factor). Officers also noted that there were few secure facilities to which they could send clients for substance abuse counseling outside of a jail or prison. One officer summed up his view this way:

"Unless you have the services to go with the case plan, it is all useless."

SECTION V: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERMEDIATE MEASURES

Because program integrity clearly matters during implementation of a model, it is important that leaders ensure it is monitored and measured and informs further development and implementation. Assessing program integrity can facilitate change in the management and delivery of correctional programs. Assessment data can be used to identify areas of success and areas of improvement so that service delivery can be enhanced. Continuous quality improvement is a key element of becoming an evidence-based organization.¹²

MDOC selected five intermediate measures to track over the implementation and post-implementation period. In all five categories, post-implementation (2007-2008) measures exceeded results during the implementation phase (2004-2006), and in four categories by statistically significant differences.

Figure 11 – Implementation and Post Implementation Measures

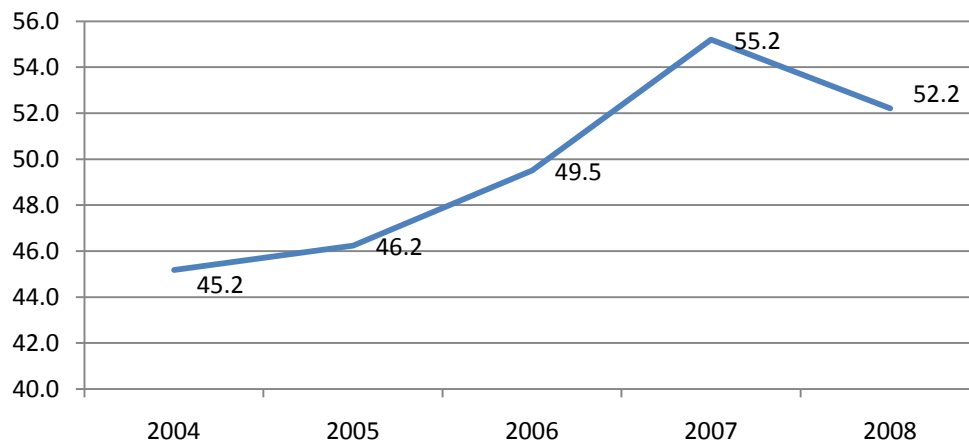
Intermediate Measure	Implementation (2004-2006)	Post Implementation (2007-2008)
LSI-R assessments within 60 days of entering probation*	46.7	53.7
LSI-R re-assessments current*	75.5	81.2
Gain score change*	1.44	1.73
Percent of high and maximum cases receiving case plans*	58.3	68.8
Percent of case plans with 3 or more domains targeted	71.4	72.3

*=p<.05

The first intermediate measure assesses the completion rate of LSI-R within the first 60 days of an offender entering probation. From 2004 to 2008, assessments within the first 60 days increased from 45.2% to 52.2%. This measure is a sign that probation officers are using the LSI-R risk assessment to help identify targeted needs relatively early in the probation sentence. Overall, LSI-R completion rates have improved. LSI-R scores were missing for 16.4% of probationers in the 2004 cohort, and missing scores were down to 10.5% in the 2008 cohort.

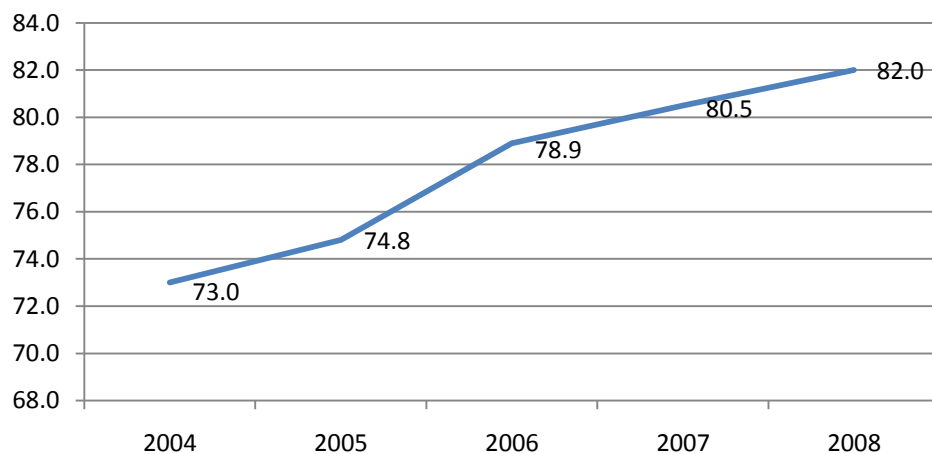
¹² Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice (2009). Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.

Figure 12- LSI-R Assessments within 60 Days of Entering Probation



The second intermediate measure assesses whether an LSI-R has been completed in the last year, and is current. Moderate and higher risk probationers should be reassessed via the LSI-R on an annual basis, and every six months for high risk probationers. Once again, from 2004 to 2008, current assessment rates have increased from 73.0% to 82.0%. This measure reflects the work of the four Assistant Regional Correctional Administrators (ARCAs), who are responsible for conducting caseload reviews, identifying LSI-R that are not current, and communicating with staff to improve in this area.

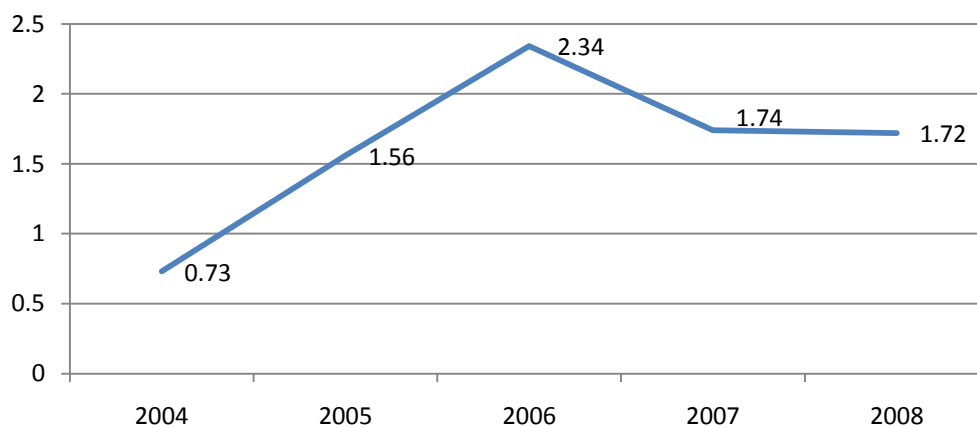
Figure 13 - LSI-R Assessments within 1 Year



An important intermediate measure for MDOC was to determine whether probation increases offenders' protective factors that reduce recidivism. The LSI-R contains 13 questions that measure protective factors. Each question is scaled from 0 to 3 points. The higher the score on each question, the higher the protective factor.

Out of a possible 39 points (13 questions * 3 points per question), the gain score measures the numeric difference in protective factors between the last LSI-R and the first LSI-R of each offender. A negative gain score indicates the offender's protective factors have worsened and they are more likely to reoffend. A positive gain score indicates the opposite, that the offender has increased protective factors and is less likely to offend. As shown in the chart below, the average gain score has increased from 0.73 in 2004 to 1.72 in 2008. While the average gain score dipped after 2006, the overall trend is a positive gain since inception of the EBP pilot project.

Figure 14 - Average Gain Score



The last two intermediate measures assess whether high and maximum risk level probationers are receiving a case plan, and whether probation officers are targeting at least three of probationers' domains (or areas) that contribute to their recidivist behavior. In both measures, improvements have occurred over the three year period, with nearly three-quarters of high/maximum risk offenders receiving a case plan in 2008, an increase from the initial 52.1% in 2004. The data on both measures reflects the efforts of the four Assistant Regional Correctional Administrators (ARCAs), who are auditing all community corrections case plans for timeliness and completeness.

Figure 15 - Percent of High/Maximum Cases Receiving Case Plans

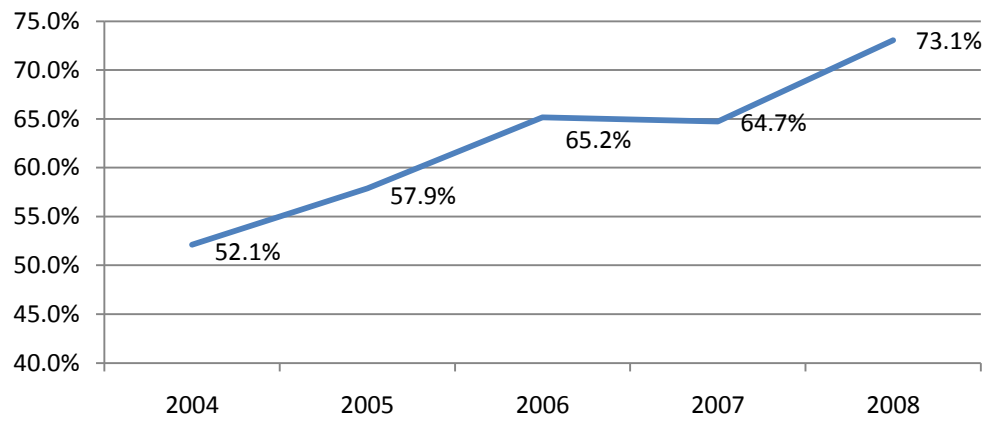
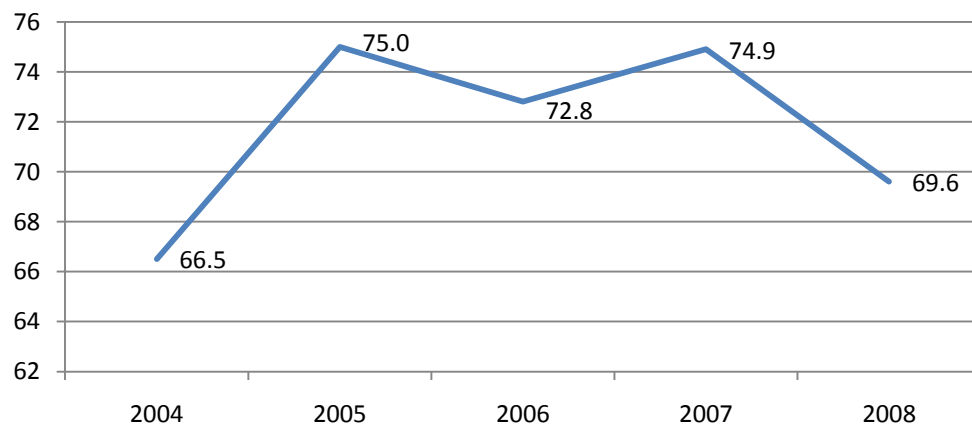


Figure 16 - Percent of Case Plans with Three or More Domains Targeted



SECTION VI: FINDINGS

The project's integrated model is based on the premise that successful implementation of evidence-based principles in community corrections can only be achieved when integrated with corresponding organizational development and collaboration. The project was designed to provide a series of needs assessment-based interventions focused on these three components; implementation of these components using an integrated model (Figure 6) will assist jurisdictions to better reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Figure 17 - Integrated Model



Many organizations are beginning to use or want to use evidence-based principles in their supervision practices and program design to better achieve reductions in recidivism. Most organizations have spent time on organizational development initiatives and collaborations. Few organizations have focused their attention concurrently on these three areas. This project aims at merging the three separate areas of focus into one integrated model.

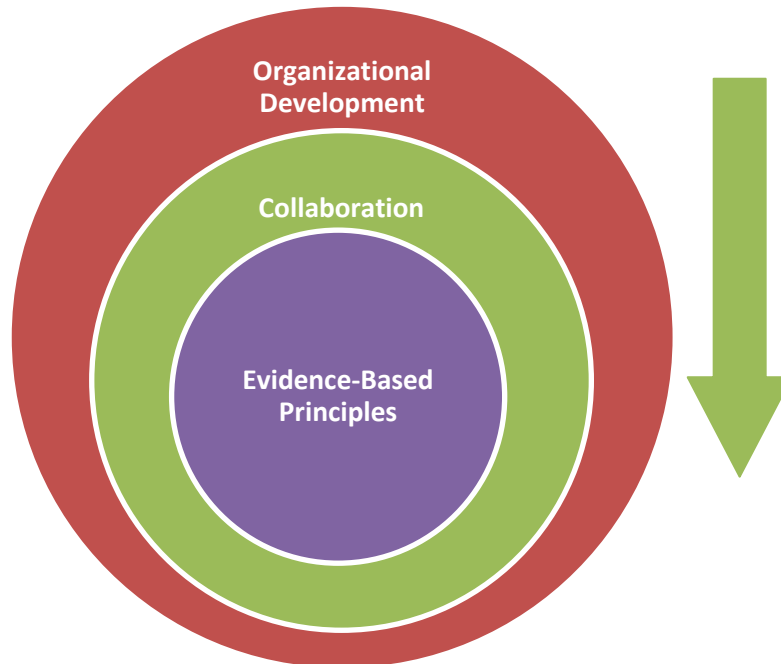
The research on evidence-based principles in Maine, however, suggests that this concurrent model may not be a realistic strategy given its insistence on an integrated focus on evidence-based principles, organizational development, and collaboration.

"If the integrated model was to be redone, it should take the OD (organizational development) circle and make it slightly bigger and move it to the left. Agencies need to be healthy and strong first by paying attention to basic OD issues. In order to collaborate effectively they need to be strong, which isn't possible if they are plagued by internal issues. The OD circle is the hardest of the three. The principle (EBP) circle needs to be in the background of everything we do, but people have to know how to implement." – Key Informant

While MDOC leadership believes the organization is making better use of the LSI-R risk assessment tool, leading to increased attention on high and maximum risk offenders, consistency has yet to be created between regions in implementing EBP. Supervision of motivational interviewing techniques is only done informally by regional supervisors leading to inconsistent approaches to clients.

Given the challenges of implementing an integrated model in Maine, one potential restructuring of the model would be to move away from an integrated, concurrent approach to a stacked model of implementation that focuses first on organizational development, then collaboration before burrowing down to the actual core of evidence-based principles.

Figure 18 - Stacked Model of Implementation



This model builds heavily on work already being done by community corrections systems, but focuses more on creating a culture of change and innovation that can lead to easier implementation of new practices. While the research is clear about which interventions result in reduced recidivism, new techniques and strategies may emerge that will require the agency to adjust practices quickly. Organizations that do not foster a culture of innovation and practice will fail to embrace these principles quickly.

In addition, these new practices cannot be delivered in one agency alone. The experience in Maine demonstrates that outside agencies, such as the judicial branch and nonprofit service providers, have enormous impact on recidivism outcomes.

“We really want service providers to be using EBP. I think there should be a statewide meeting with service providers about where we intend to end up. We also need to talk to judges and district attorneys and let them know where this is going and how it still holds the offender accountable. We also need to work with the institutions and exchange information.”
– MDOC Manager

Developing a strong collaboration with these agencies, by building a greater understanding of EBP, will allow the actual practices and strategies found at the heart of the model to yield significant outcomes in the form of recidivism reduction. With either model, implementation requires strong leaders who are willing to challenge the status quo, advocate for better service provision, and strive for better outcomes. These leaders must be developed as part of the organizational development work that ultimately enables proper implementation of those interventions which can lead to those improved outcomes.

University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service
and National Institute of Corrections

Retrospective Case Study Research Protocol

Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices
in Maine Department of Corrections

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- **INTERVIEW GUIDE: MIDDLE MANAGEMENT**
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INTERVIEW GUIDE: ADMINISTRATORS

Project Overview/Introduction

As you know, Maine was selected as one of two pilot sites to demonstrate and test an integrated approach to the implementation of evidence-based principles in community corrections. The framework emphasized an equal and integrated focus on three domains during implementation: evidence-based practices, organizational development, and collaboration.

At NIC's request, we are conducting retrospective case study research to examine the process of an organization's attempt to bring EBP to scale. Similar projects are taking place in Kansas and Michigan. We'd like your help today in exploring two primary research questions: *(1) how did Maine implement NIC's integrated model? and (2) what contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?*

General/Opening Questions:

- What was your role in the project?
- What resources have helped you most to implement the model? What resources have been most lacking?
 - From NIC?
 - From CJI?
 - From Muskie?
- In your opinion, what are the three biggest successes that have come about as a result of this project?
- In your opinion, what have been the three biggest challenges that you've faced in attempting to implement NIC's integrated model?

Model Specific Questions: Now let's look at each of three components of the model, starting with EBP.

Evidence-Based Practices

- From your observation, how has the use of EBP changed the management of probationers?
- What will a client say about their experience of Maine Department of Corrections based on your implementation of this model?
 - What will a member of the public say?
 - What will staff say?

Organizational Development

- What have you observed to be different in the organization, as a result of this project?
- What organizational practices have impeded your ability to implement the model?
- What organizational practices have enhanced your ability to implement the model?

Collaboration

- Who do you consider as stakeholders on this project?
- How much do various stakeholders know about evidence-based practices in order to incorporate them into strategies?
- Where do new partnerships need to be forged?

Concluding Questions:

- Do staff at all levels understand and buy in to the EBP vision?
- What do you want your organizational future to look like?
- What contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

Project Overview/Introduction

As you know, Maine was selected as one of two pilot sites to demonstrate and test an integrated approach to the implementation of evidence-based principles in community corrections. The framework emphasized an equal and integrated focus on three domains during implementation: evidence-based practices, organizational development, and collaboration.

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General/Opening Questions:

- What was your role in the project?
- Tell me about your experience with NIC working on improving community corrections outcomes?
- In your opinion, what are the three biggest successes that have come about as a result of this project?
- In your opinion, what are the three biggest challenges that you've faced in attempting to implement NIC's integrated model?

Model Specific Questions: Now let's look at each of three components of the model, starting with EBP.

Evidence-Based Practices

- How has the use of the LSI-R changed the management of probationers?
- Are staff held accountable for using assessment information to develop a case plan and then using that case plan to manage an offender?
 - How? What supports are in place to help them to do so?
- How do you measure staff performance?
 - What data do you use? How is that data collected?
- Are staff held accountable for using motivational interviewing techniques in their day-to-day interactions with offenders?

Organizational Development

- What are the greatest challenges for MDOC in regards to organizational development?
- What have you observed to be different in the organization, as a result of this project?

Collaboration

- How much do various stakeholders know about evidence-based practices so that they can incorporate them into strategies?
- Where do new partnerships need to be forged?

Concluding Questions:

- Do staff at all levels understand and buy in to the EBP vision?
- What do you want your organizational future to look like?
- What contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: LINE STAFF

Project Overview/Introduction

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General/Opening Questions:

- What was your role in the project?
- Tell me about your experience with NIC working on improving community corrections outcomes?
- What do you see as the overarching strengths and weaknesses of Maine's probation system?

Model Specific Questions: Now let's look at each of three components of the model, starting with EBP.

Evidence-Based Practices

- How has the use of the LSI-R changed your management of probationers?
- Are you and other staff that you know of held accountable for using assessment information to develop a case plan and then using that case plan to manage an offender?
 - How? What supports are in place to help you do so?
- Do you engage community supports for offenders as a regular part of case planning?
- Are you and other staff that you know of held accountable for using motivational interviewing techniques in your day-to-day interactions with offenders?
- Does your supervisor use data in your performance evaluation process?
- What other data would help you to make decisions to improve your caseload?

Organizational Development

- What are the greatest challenges for MDOC in regards to organizational development?
- What have you observed to be different in the organization, as a result of this project?

Collaboration

- How much do various stakeholders know about evidence-based practices so that they can incorporate them into strategies?
- Where do new partnerships need to be forged?

Concluding Questions:

- What do you want your organizational future to look like?
- Do you think staff at all levels understand and buy in to the EBP vision?
- What contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: STAKEHOLDERS

Project Overview/Introduction

As you know, Maine was selected as one of two pilot sites to demonstrate and test an integrated approach to the implementation of evidence-based principles in community corrections. The framework emphasized an equal and integrated focus on three domains during implementation: evidence-based practices, organizational development, and collaboration.

At NIC's request, we are conducting retrospective case study research to examine the process of an organization's attempt to bring EBP to scale. Similar projects are taking place in Kansas and Michigan. We'd like your help today in exploring two primary research questions: *(1) how did Maine implement NIC's integrated model? and (2) what contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?*

General/Opening Questions:

- Tell me about your experience with MDOC working on improving community corrections outcomes?
- What do you see as the overarching strengths and weakness of Maine's probation system?

Model Specific Questions: Now let's look at each of three components of the model, starting with EBP.

Evidence-Based Practices

- From your observation, how has the use of EBP changed the management of probationers in Maine?

Organizational Development

- What have you observed to be different in the organization, as a result of this project?
- What leadership, management, and staff behavior supports the NIC model vision?
What behavior does not support the vision?

Collaboration

- How much do various stakeholders in Maine know about evidence-based practices in order to incorporate them into strategies?
- Where do new partnerships need to be forged?

Concluding Questions:

- What are the specific activities needed to ensure an equal focus on evidence-based practices, organizational development and capacity building, and collaborative relationships?
- What recommendations do you have as Maine moves toward fully implementing NIC's integrated model?
- What contextual factors influenced fidelity to the model?

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