

Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics or The Numbers Don't Lie?

What's a Practitioner to Do?

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The Context

- High Numbers Under Correctional Supervision
- High Failure Rates
- Tight Budgets
- Limited Staff and Other Resources

The “Mantras”

- **Work Smarter not Harder**
- **Do More with Less**
- **Be Accountable for Results**
- **Exercise Good Stewardship**



The Tools

- Evidence-Based Practices
- Data-Driven Decision-making
- Being Informed by Research and Evaluation Findings (general and local)



The Dilemmas

- Research Quality and Quantity
- Contradictory or Inconclusive Findings
- More Research is Needed
- *The Blue Ribbon Commission*



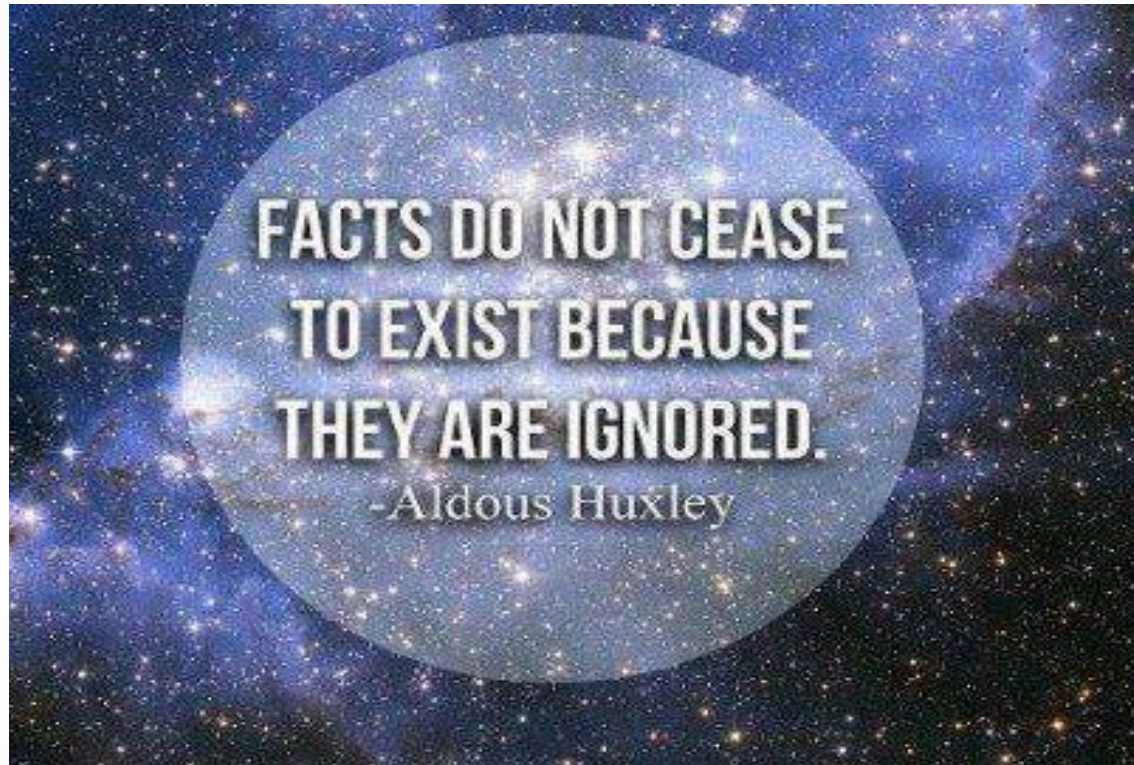
The Dilemmas

- Popular Initiatives Don't Always Work
- What About My Skills, Experience?
- Conclusions First; Always Find a Study to Support
- How Much Time Do Practitioners Spend Collecting Data?

The Abyss

- What Happens to All This Stuff we Collect?
- Only Good if Used to Inform Priorities, Policies, Practices, Resource Allocation
- No Feedback - FRUSTRATION

Strategies



Strategies

Look to Bodies of Evidence

Registries of Evidence-based Programs
and Practices in Criminal Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
[Crimesolutions.gov](https://www.crimesolutions.gov)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration
[Nrepp.samhsa.gov](https://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)

Strategies

Council of State Governments National
Reentry Resource Center

<http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/>

See the Campbell Collaboration website

www.campbellcollaboration.org for
systematic reviews.

Washington State Institute of Public
Policy www.wsipp.wa.gov

Strategies



Strategies

- Start with the big questions, NOT at the data element level
- Drill down create core set of local data elements that serve as descriptive statistics and foundation for future analysis

Collecting Data

- Granular, clearly defined, in one single format without ability to change
- Lock-down fields, make entry mandatory
- Always in automated system, export and retrieve

The Facts

- **Get Agreement on the core facts. E.g.**
 - Population
 - Admissions
 - Releases
 - Length of Stay

The Facts

- Everyone Operates from the Same Core Facts

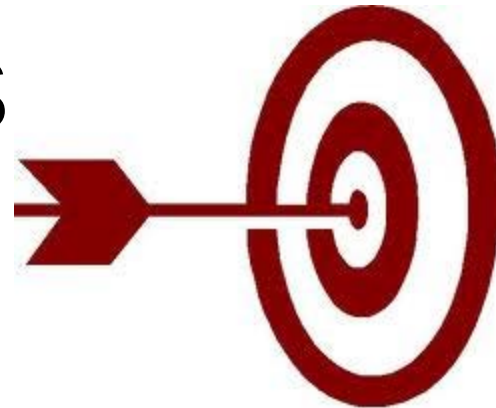


- Facts Inform Decisions

The Facts

- Beyond Descriptive Statistics

- CORE QUESTIONS



- *WHO TARGET?*

- *WHAT TARGET FOR CHANGE?*

Strategies

- **Avoid Extremes**



- **Seek Balance and Middle ground**
- **Collaborate. Create Practitioner Academic Partnerships**

AVOID Analysis/Paralysis

**DO WHAT
YOU CAN,
WHERE
YOU ARE,
WITH WHAT
YOU HAVE!**

(TEDDY ROOSEVELT)

Questions/Further Information

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