

# BECOMING AN EVIDENCE-BASED ORGANIZATION

Demonstrating Leadership and Organizational Growth



David L. Myers, PhD

Joyfields Institute Professional Development

# Becoming an Evidence-Based Organization

DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

## About the Author: David L. Myers, PhD

David L. Myers is a Professor in the Department of Criminology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), where he first joined the faculty in 1998. He earned his PhD in 1999 from the University of Maryland, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and previously received a Master of Science in Administration of Justice and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Shippensburg University.

Dr. Myers has taught more than 20 different university courses at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels, specializing in classes on research methods and quantitative analysis, juvenile justice and delinquency, and criminal justice policy, planning, and evaluation. He has published 2 books and over 30 journal articles, book chapters, or other scholarly works. He also has presented more than 40 papers at national and regional conferences; currently is the Editor of *Criminal Justice Policy Review* (a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal published by Sage Publications); and provides training workshops and evaluation services through Joyfields Institute for Professional Development.

Dr. Myers has served as Interim Director of the IUP Murtha Institute for Homeland Security; Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies at IUP; and Interim Executive Director of the IUP Research Institute. He also has completed terms as the Dean's Associate in the IUP School of Graduate Studies and Research; IUP Graduate Director in Criminology; and Director of the IUP Center for Research in Criminology. In the community, he has served as Chairperson of Indiana Area Communities That Care; President of the Board of Directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Indiana County; and Advisor to Kids on Campus of Big Brothers Big Sisters.



This document was prepared by David L. Myers for Joyfields Institute for Professional Development. Points of view or opinions are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of Joyfields Institute for Professional Development.

Suggested citation: Myers, David L. (2013). *Becoming an Evidence-Based Organization: Demonstrating Leadership and Organizational Growth*. Johns Creek, GA: Joyfields Institute for Professional Development

Copyright © 2013  
David L. Myers

Joyfields Institute for Professional Development reserves the right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use (and authorize others to reproduce and otherwise use) this publication.

Joyfields Institute for Professional Development  
5805 State Bridge Road, Suite G255  
Johns Creek, GA 30097

Sobem Nwoko, President

<http://www.joyfields.org>

ISBN 9780-991398-102

# Preface

Increasingly, policy-makers, funding agencies, and the general public are demanding greater accountability from justice system agencies and social service providers. As the work of these agencies and organizations grows more complex and receives greater scrutiny, and strains on public resources continue to grow, stronger attention is being paid to methods and techniques for effective leadership, planning, and evaluation. Overall, it has become more and more important for justice system leaders to think, plan, and manage strategically, while being guided by evaluation strategies and data that facilitate organizational growth and sustainability. In addition, evidence-based policies, programs, and practices have emerged as expected (and sometimes required) approaches to processing and treating juvenile and adult offenders. The use of evidence-based interventions, however, must be incorporated effectively into justice system operations and services for successful outcomes to occur.

Most justice system agencies and organizations have been feeling the effects of these trends, and many struggle to implement and integrate evidence-based policies, programs, and practices as they manage their operations and services. Historically, justice system administrators and practitioners have relied greatly on intuition and personal experience to guide their work and decision-making. In recent times, however, strategic planning and evaluation have merged with the evidence-based movement to produce an environment where administrators are advised to lead through collaboration and performance management, and practitioners are asked to deliver services that are guided and supported by scientific research. Despite the promise of these techniques and strategies, it is apparent that many modern justice system expectations are not being met.

This monograph and subsequent expected publications are meant to aid those persons who work in and around the criminal and juvenile justice systems and are interested in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their individual agencies or court system. This initial offering focuses on demonstrating leadership and understanding organizational culture and growth as key initial aspects of becoming an evidence-based organization. Future publications will examine the topics of strategic planning and action planning; preparing for successful implementation and monitoring; and evaluating and sustaining organizational services and innovations over time. Essentially, this comprehensive strategy is based on the premise that current justice system operations are flawed, but they are redeemable through enhanced leadership, planning, and evaluation approaches that can be integrated effectively with evidence-based policies, programs, and practices.

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Need for Evidence-Based Approaches	5
Why is This Book Needed?	6
Becoming an Evidence-Based Organization	14
Discussion Questions	16
Chapter 2: Demonstrating Leadership	17
Defining Leadership	18
Distinguishing Leadership from Management	21
Major Approaches to Leadership	22
The Importance of Communication and Collaboration	23
Developing Leadership	25
Articulating a Leadership Philosophy	26
Summary and Conclusions	27
Discussion Questions	28
Chapter 3: Organizational Culture and Evidence-Based Growth	30
Defining Organizational Culture	31
The Culture of Evidence-Based Organizations	32
Pursuing Evidence-Based Growth	34
Levels and Elements of Organizational Change	40
Summary and Conclusions	43
Discussion Questions	44
Notes	46
References	49

# Chapter 1

## The Need for Evidence-Based Approaches

There is no shortage of criminal and juvenile justice system policies, programs, and practices. Billions of dollars are spent each year on new and existing interventions thought to prevent, reduce, or control crime, yet we often know relatively little about the implementation and impact of these approaches. In some cases, what we do know is not good, as a number of popular and expensive strategies (e.g., juvenile transfer to adult court, D.A.R.E., gun buy-back campaigns, military-style boot camps) have been revealed through research to be ineffective in dealing with crime.<sup>1</sup> While various reasons might be suggested for why these efforts fail to live up to their expectations, poor planning, flawed implementation, and weak evaluation appear to be some common factors.

*Since 2006, the total number of adult offenders under some form of correctional supervision has topped 7 million. More than 2 million adults are confined in prisons and jails.*

During the past 40 years, at the same time that many new justice system initiatives emerged, our country has greatly increased its reliance on incarceration as a major response to criminal and juvenile offending. To illustrate, from 1973 to 2009, our nation's prison population grew by over 700%, resulting in more than 1 in 100 adults being placed behind bars.<sup>2</sup> The United States currently leads the world in incarceration rates, with more than 2.26 million adults confined in prisons and jails.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, nearly 100,000 juvenile delinquents (under the age of 18) are housed in some form of public or private custody at any point in time across

America today.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these incarceration figures, nearly 5 million criminal offenders are under some form of community corrections supervision in America.<sup>5</sup> About 500,000 of the 650,000 inmates released from prison each year are placed on parole, while the rest of the 5 million offenders who are under community supervision are serving sentences of probation. In combination with the 2 million-plus offenders who are incarcerated, the 7 million adults who form the total US correctional population represent a tripling of the size of this group since 1980.<sup>6</sup> On the juvenile side, juvenile courts handled nearly 1.7 million delinquency cases in 2008, as compared to just

over 1 million in 1985.<sup>7</sup> The number of female cases doubled during this time, while the number of male cases increased by 29%.

Not only have we incarcerated and supervised an ever-growing number of adult and juvenile offenders, but we also know that a substantial portion of these individuals will be rearrested and often sent back to prison as repeat offenders. Adult recidivism data from the past 20 years suggests that about two-thirds of all inmates released from prison are rearrested within 3 years for a new offense; almost half are reconvicted for a new crime; and about 45% are returned to prison.<sup>8</sup> Although national juvenile recidivism data is harder to come by, available research

*Despite the threat of reincarceration, about 66% of all inmates who are released from prison are rearrested within 3 years, and about 45% are returned to prison.*

indicates that over half of all youth released from state incarceration are rearrested within 1 year; one-third are reconvicted; and about 25% are returned to confinement.<sup>9</sup>

In sum, after several decades in which a variety of new, costly, and (in many cases) questionable policies and programs have emerged, and correctional populations have increased tremendously, the American system of justice stands at a crossroads.<sup>10</sup> On one hand, we can continue to spend billions of dollars on efforts and interventions that may not be needed and may not work. On the other hand, we could heed recent calls for improved justice system leadership, stronger strategic planning, more rigorous evaluation, and greater use of evidence-based policies, programs, and practices. The latter approach is based on the belief that what we truly need is not more programs and new interventions. Rather, we need better designed and implemented strategies that are managed by collaborative leaders who rely upon sound planning, data-driven evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making.

The purpose of this monograph and subsequent expected publications is to help readers create justice system agencies and social service organizations that value strong leadership, collaborative learning, and proactive planning and evaluation in fulfilling their vision, mission, goals, and objectives. This initial offering is designed specifically for justice system administrators and practitioners who want to learn more about effective leadership and organizational growth as key aspects of becoming an evidence-based organization.

## Why is This Book Needed?

During the past 25 years, I have been fortunate to be a student, practitioner (a probation and parole officer), teacher, researcher, and consultant in the field of criminal and juvenile justice. I

have taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses; conducted a variety of research projects; and have interacted with hundreds of justice system administrators and practitioners who provide valuable work and services on a daily basis. Through my teaching, research, and consulting, one thing I have noticed (and have been told on a regular basis) is that few professional-oriented books exist that provide practical guidance to those who are responsible for leading and managing contemporary justice system agencies and organizations, particularly with regard to leading, planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based policies, programs, and practices.

Based on my experience, I also believe a number of reasons exist as to why the topics covered in this monograph and subsequent publications are not only important today, but will become increasingly important in the future. In general, we have not yet been successful in determining “what works” in preventing, reducing, and controlling crime.<sup>11</sup> Many policymakers, academics, practitioners, and citizens disagree profoundly about the desirability and effectiveness of justice system operations and services. Unfortunately, there often is little hard evidence available to help settle various policy and program debates. There are, however, signs that this situation is changing, and there are at least five major trends that have sharpened the emerging need for more effective leadership, planning, and evaluation throughout the American justice system.

### *Increasing Offender and Client Populations*

As discussed earlier, juvenile and adult offender populations surged dramatically in recent decades. Public policy reforms such as “zero tolerance” arrest and prosecution, the decline of discretionary release and diversionary programs, juvenile transfer to adult court, “get tough” sentencing, “three-strikes” and “truth-in-sentencing” laws, drug laws and associated mandatory sentencing, greater surveillance activities and enhanced offender supervision, and rising probation and parole revocation rates all have resulted in steady growth in the number of individuals coming into the criminal and juvenile justice systems, while simultaneously increasing offenders’ lengths of stay.<sup>12</sup>

*Around 95% of the 2 million-plus offenders who are incarcerated today eventually will be released back into society.*

The impact of these changes on corrections is most striking. In 1980, there were less than 2 million adults incarcerated or under some form of state or federal supervision; since 2006, this number has been above 7 million.<sup>13</sup> While our reliance on incarceration has fueled much of this growth, the probation population also has risen dramatically, from around 1 million in 1980 to over 4 million today. Large scale increases in incarceration also have resulted in growing numbers of ex-inmates returning to the community. Of the 2.26 million adults currently incarcerated, we can expect that around 95% eventually will be released back into society.<sup>14</sup> Most will be under some form of parole supervision, but up to perhaps 25% will not.

In short, America currently faces a situation where ever-growing numbers of offenders are being processed in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and they are requiring facilities and services



not only within the system, but outside the system as well. For example, most juvenile and adult offenders are in need of one or more of the following services: mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, job training, educational programming, and/or family counseling. Moreover, most social service providers have experienced similar types of increases in client populations as exhibited in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Based on the available recidivism data mentioned previously, we know that if the needs of these offenders and clients are not met, we can expect that a large majority of them will reoffend.

### *Increasing Costs and Declining Resources*

In addition to increasing offender and client populations, and the threat of recidivism posed by those individuals who are processed through the justice system and returned to their communities, another important trend is the rising economic costs associated with crime and delinquency. Given the growth of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, it should come as no surprise that associated costs and expenditures have surged dramatically as well. Furthermore, this has taken

*From 1982 to 2006, the United States increased its investment in police more than fivefold, from \$19 billion to more than \$99 billion. It increased its investment in corrections almost eightfold during the same time span, from \$9 billion to \$69 billion. And it increased its investment in the judiciary – which is required to process the large influx of new cases – from almost \$8 billion to \$47 billion. Adding all functions together, from 1982 to 2006, criminal justice expenditures rose by 500 percent, from \$36 billion to \$215 billion.<sup>15</sup>*

place in a larger overall environment of declining physical, human, and monetary resources, particularly within social service programs and organizations.

In the field of corrections, the average annual cost to incarcerate an adult offender is nearly \$24,000, and for juveniles it is \$43,000.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, aggregate correctional costs are projected to increase \$2.5–\$5 billion per year in the foreseeable future, due to continued prison expansion and rising operational costs. These high prices could be justified if they produced corresponding and proportionate improvements in public safety. In fact, crime and victimization rates have fallen since the early 1990s, and prison expansion and tougher sentencing policies have undoubtedly contributed to these trends.<sup>17</sup> During the past 10 years, however, all 19 states that cut their incarceration rates also experienced a decrease in their crime rates, and research shows that our tougher incarceration policies passed the point of diminishing returns long ago. Despite the fact

that prisons may have helped cut crime by around one-third in recent decades, they are also the most expensive option available. If other less expensive and more effective approaches to crime prevention and reduction exist, both our reliance on incarceration and overall justice system expenditures could be reduced substantially.

In addition to rising justice system expenditures, there are a variety of other costs to consider, along with cuts in social services spending and resources that have taken place outside of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Although nationwide crime victimization rates (as measured through the National Crime Victimization Survey) have decreased steadily since the mid-1990s, economic costs of crime for victims have been estimated at over \$15.5 billion per year.<sup>18</sup> This does not take into account the psychological and emotional costs of victimization, or the social costs of crime on future generations. A majority of all inmates, for example, have children under the age of 18. This is extremely important because having an incarcerated parent is a well established risk factor for delinquency and future criminal behavior.

Finally, “since 1980, there have been huge cuts in social services spending, especially programs affecting the poor and minorities (e.g., subsidized health care, welfare, daycare for working parents, school lunches, and after school programs).”<sup>19</sup> These cuts can be greatly explained by public concern over high taxes and the recent slashing of local, state, and federal budgets during tough economic times. Tax and budget reductions mean cuts in services somewhere, and declining social services spending likely has increased existing inequalities and magnified social problems experienced by those who are at the greatest risk for criminal and delinquent behavior. Moreover, social service workers are left to try to do more with less, as positions are eliminated, benefits are reduced, and demands on time and occupational stress both are increased.



### *Increasing Accountability*

In the aftermath of increasing offender and client populations, rising justice system expenditures, and declining social service resources, policymakers, funding agencies, and the general public have been calling for greater accountability by justice system agencies and organizations.<sup>20</sup> As demands on public resources continue to grow, and suspicion exists that public money is not always being well spent, these agencies and organizations are likely to experience even greater pressure to produce meaningful information about the work they do and the effectiveness of their services. Overall, many struggle to produce evidence about their actual performance, often due to inadequate planning and/or poor implementation and evaluation of their programs and practices.

In response to this situation, a number of authors have promoted the use of **performance measurement and monitoring** in criminal and juvenile justice, as a way to increase accountability in systems operations, improve implementation efforts, and assess outcomes expected from policies, programs, and practices.<sup>21</sup> Although definitions of performance measurement vary, most descriptions emphasize the use of mission-based outcome measures that can be used to assess an

Performance measurement is a process that is used to assess accomplishment of organizational strategic goals and objectives that support an agency's mission. It is a management tool for enhancing decision-making and accountability. Measuring performance is how agencies determine whether they are providing quality products at reasonable costs. Performance measures help policy makers and managers to assess mission-driven outcomes in relation to mission-driven expectations. In short, performance measures tell organizations how well they are doing.<sup>22</sup>

organization's ability to provide anticipated programs and services and achieve the expected results.

When done well, the use of performance measurement for monitoring purposes is built into an agency's ongoing operations and is used for management activities and decision-making. It also can show that an organization is operating and providing programs as intended, and that desired changes or reforms are being implemented as expected. In addition, performance monitoring can help identify problems as they arise and allow for corrective actions to be taken, and it even can be used to determine if policies or programs under consideration are likely to be effective. Finally, performance measurement and monitoring can be used to assess whether specified goals, objectives, and outcomes are being achieved, along with facilitating more scientifically rigorous process evaluations and impact assessments.

Using performance measurement for planning and monitoring policy and program implementation is a particularly useful function, as most strategies and services are likely to be ineffective if they are poorly planned and implemented. Furthermore, utilizing performance measurement in combination with sound strategic planning allows for policy and program goals and objectives to be both specified and assessed. Subsequently, results can be used to improve agency operations, evaluate staff, inform stakeholders, and enhance the sustainability of the organization. In sum, performance measurement and monitoring have the potential to produce critical information for improving the operations, efficiency, and effectiveness of justice system agencies and organizations.

Despite the promise and potential benefits of performance measurement and monitoring, most criminal and juvenile justice system agencies and organizations tend not to measure performance.<sup>23</sup> Rather, case-processing data typically is produced that describes and summarizes work being done, but in a backward-looking manner that reveals little about the quality of program implementation or the effectiveness of services being provided. Given the growing demands for justice system accountability, along with the substantial economic and social costs associated with rising offender and client populations, systematic implementation of more effective performance measurement and monitoring appears essential for 21<sup>st</sup> century justice system agencies and organizations.

### *Enhanced Technology*

At the same time that calls for greater justice system accountability and stronger evidence of performance have increased, technological advancements also have exploded. Enhanced technology has created both new opportunities and new problems, however.<sup>24</sup> Improvements in computing technology, for example, have dramatically increased our capabilities to collect, store, retrieve, and analyze data. This can mean that our ability to study specific problems, needs, and solutions has improved, but this is no easy process that is guaranteed to produce beneficial results.

Many justice system agencies and organizations have automated at least some of their data collection, but it often exists in multiple locations (e.g., different offices or divisions) and formats (e.g., different databases, spreadsheets, or software packages). This makes retrieving and analyzing the data more difficult, and employees within the same organization may not even know what data are available, where it is, and how to access it. Furthermore, there may be issues with the reliability and validity of the data, in terms of how consistently and accurately data are collected and processed. Finally, increased data collection and wider access to this data brings about greater concerns over confidentiality, particularly when dealing with criminal and juvenile justice data that may include information on such topics as prison sentences, substance abuse history, and mental health treatment.

The potential problems associated with greater use of technology and justice system data point to the need for staff training on when and how data are to be collected and utilized; supervisory review of data collection processes and procedures; and an organizational investment (in terms of time, money, and other resources) in developing an effective Management Information System (MIS). An effective MIS is one in which reliable and valid data are entered only once and can be efficiently retrieved and analyzed to assess problems, needs, and solutions. Potentially, this type of MIS also can enable data to be linked



across agencies within the same system. When running well, an efficient MIS facilitates data-driven decision-making and immediate feedback being given to staff and other stakeholders. It also is useful for generating organizational reports, funding applications, and fact sheets or “report cards” that summarize the productivity and performance of an agency or larger system.

In addition to improvements in computing technology, other technological changes have enhanced our ability to detect crime and monitor offenders.<sup>25</sup> Examples here include computerized fingerprint identification systems, DNA testing and analysis, electronic monitoring, and drug testing. Although these types of technological advancements have assisted with solving crimes and convicting offenders, they also have made it possible to more often uncover minor or technical violations of probation or parole and detect smaller amounts of drugs and alcohol in an individual’s body. These latter results have contributed to large increases in the number of probationers and parolees who fail to complete their supervision periods successfully and subsequently are placed in or returned to prison.

Finally, as various technological advancements have been made, a whole new field of “cybercrime” has emerged, with computers and cell phones specifically being targeted by individuals seeking to illegally obtain classified or personal information, money, or both. Securing individual and corporate computer systems, and detecting, investigating, and prosecuting cybercrime, presents a unique set of challenges for agencies and organizations both within and outside the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Some may not only be involved with preventing and responding to cybercrime, but they also may be victimized themselves.

### *Expanding Evidence-Based Knowledge*

During the past 15 years, there has been a growing belief that the criminal and juvenile justice systems should implement policies, programs, and practices that are supported by rigorous scientific research findings.<sup>26</sup> In general, the evidence-based approach stresses the use of sound research and evaluation to analyze problems and needs; assess ways and methods to address them; and establish the probable impact of available prevention and intervention efforts. Anecdotal evidence and political ideology, which traditionally have driven crime policy agendas, lie outside the scope of evidence-based methods and solutions. Instead, emphasis is placed on careful data collection, strong research design, appropriate data analysis, and the utilization of both quantitative and qualitative findings to form conclusions about what “works” to prevent and

*Evidence-Based Knowledge: Conclusions drawn from rigorous research studies that have been replicated numerous times with defined, measurable outcomes about the effectiveness of an intervention or process.<sup>27</sup>*

reduce crime.

Definitions of the term **policy** vary, but a simple one states that a policy is “a rule or set of rules or guidelines for how to make a decision.”<sup>28</sup> In general, both administrative and legislative policies are common throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and they vary in their complexity and the amount of discretion afforded to those who apply the policies. Requiring police to read *Miranda* warnings to suspects they have arrested; providing judges with sentencing guidelines or requiring mandatory sentencing; transferring juveniles to adult court through waiver laws; regulating and controlling guns; and requiring sex offenders to be registered are all examples of justice system policy initiatives.

In comparison to a policy, a **program** is “a set of services aimed at achieving specific goals and objectives within specified individuals, groups, organizations, or communities.”<sup>29</sup> Examples of programs thought to prevent, reduce, or control crime include neighborhood watch, mentoring, job training, drug and alcohol treatment, prison-based therapeutic communities, intensive correctional supervision, and “hot spots” policing. Contemporary support for evidence-based policies and programs in criminal and juvenile justice can be traced to 1996, when Congress required the U.S. Attorney General to provide an independent review of the effectiveness of state and local crime prevention assistance efforts funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>30</sup> The resulting report, produced by researchers at the University of Maryland’s Department of Criminology and Criminal

Justice, was entitled *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising*.

*The effectiveness of most crime prevention strategies will remain unknown until the nation invests more in evaluating them.... By scientific standards, there are very few “programs of proven effectiveness.”<sup>31</sup>*

Evaluation research on over 500 crime programs and policies was reviewed, covering the seven specified institutions of families, schools, communities, labor markets, places, police, and the criminal justice system. Although a number of interventions were determined to work, and others were found to be promising, many were not supported based on the research examined. Perhaps most importantly, the authors pointed out that the number and scientific rigor of available evaluations generally was insufficient for providing

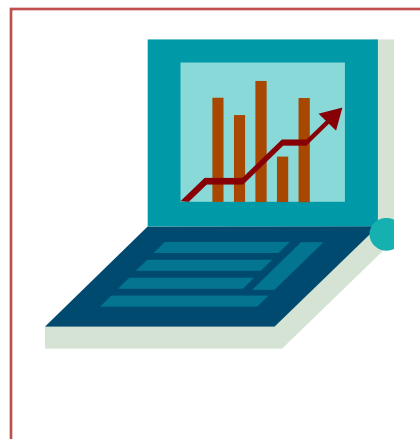
adequate guidance to the national effort to prevent and reduce serious crime.

Since that time, increasing emphasis has been placed on conducting evaluations and utilizing the findings of experimental and quasi-experimental research in the pursuit of evidence-based crime policies and programs.<sup>32</sup> In addition, evidence-based **practices** increasingly have been advocated in both criminal and juvenile justice, with an emphasis on improving the chances of offender success by applying empirical research findings during the processing, treating, and sanctioning of offenders.<sup>33</sup> Focusing on successful offender outcomes has brought greater attention to such evidence-based practices as offender risk and needs assessment, inmate classification, enhancing intrinsic motivation, targeting effective interventions to appropriate offenders, improving inter-

agency collaboration, and using the findings of research and evaluation to guide program selection and implementation, as well as improving agency operations and staff performance.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of these modern evidence-based advancements, the quest for determining “what works” in criminal and juvenile justice has not yet been fulfilled, as too little evidence still exists to support many (of not most) of the policies, programs, and practices that constitute the American justice system.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the evidence-based approach is not without its limitations. Evidence gained through scientifically rigorous research and evaluation takes time to produce, and the findings can be complex or difficult to interpret. In some cases, enough of a body of research exists to enable meta-analyses and systematic reviews that can be used by policy-makers to guide legislative and funding decisions.<sup>36</sup> In many other cases, much more research needs to be done to establish which “promising” approaches actually “work,” and to identify which policies, programs, and practices should be abandoned.

Despite these limitations, when compared to the traditional alternatives of political ideology, anecdotal evidence, and untested hunches, evidence-based strategies are the best option available. Unprecedented growth in offender and client populations, corresponding surges in justice system expenditures, and unacceptable recidivism rates all point to the need for basing our policies, programs, and practices on stronger scientific evidence. Moreover, greater demands on public resources, increasing accountability, and expanding technology further support the use of evidence-based approaches, while we continue to build a larger and more diverse body of scientific research that can be used to guide criminal and juvenile justice system operations and services.



## Becoming an Evidence-Based Organization

In order to deal with the challenges and issues (as well as the opportunities and potential benefits) presented by the five trends discussed above, this book considers effective leadership and understanding of organizational culture and growth as key initial steps for becoming an evidence-based organization. Future anticipated publications will examine strategic planning and action planning; preparing for successful implementation and monitoring; and evaluating and sustaining organizational services and innovations as additional key components of the evidence-based movement. Other publications exist on these individual topics, but few sources are available that are directed at a professional audience, seek to integrate the various areas, and apply the information specifically to the field of criminal and juvenile justice.

A word of warning – if you are looking for a quick fix to improving your agency or larger system, this approach is not for you. However, if you want to challenge yourself and others you work with to be better leaders; to understand and improve organizational culture and

collaboration; to think and plan strategically; to build effective policies, programs, and practices; and to monitor, evaluate, and sustain successful interventions and innovations, then I believe this book will set the stage for what you want to accomplish.

Chapter 2 begins with a focus on what constitutes effective leadership and how it can be demonstrated. The basic premise of this chapter is that strong leadership is necessary (but not sufficient) for justice system agencies and organizations to excel. Chapter 3 then examines organizational culture and how it can be assessed and prepared for growth. Characteristics of effective organizations also are discussed, with an eye toward what it takes to become an Evidence-Based Organization. Both chapters (as well as the current chapter) conclude with a set of discussion questions that I hope you and your organization find useful in reflecting on and applying the covered material.



## Discussion Questions

1. Have you or your agency been involved with a policy, program, or practice that failed to live up to its promise or expectations? If so, why do you think this occurred?

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Review the five justice system trends discussed in this chapter. Which of these trends have had the greatest impact on your work or the work of your agency, and why? Have any of them not had an impact?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. What are the risks associated with adopting unnecessary or ineffective criminal and juvenile justice policies, programs, and practices? How can these risks be reduced?

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **To purchase the eBook or hard copy from our online store, please click on this link.**  
<http://www.joyfields.org/store/2-uncategorised/88-books-ebos>