Practitioner, Researcher & Government Official :
Do we speak the same language?

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Context/Background

- Maine has the lowest incarceration rates in the US, yet women have been incarcerated at increasingly alarming rates.

- The Women's Center has been a pioneer in introducing gender responsive programming to women in the prison system.

- The capacity of the Maine Women's Center is 70 women. In April of this 2007, we were overcrowded to 140 female prisoners.

- A 21% increase in Maine's prison population is projected between the years of 2006-2011.

New Collaborations

- Created new Women's Reentry Center serve 30-35 women who will be transitioning back to the community within 18 months

- Developed reentry teams to facilitate multi-level partnerships across facilities, field, communities, formal and natural supports

- Implemented cognitive behavioral programming through community corrections

Collaboration Roles

- Corrections:
  - sets agenda of EBP
  - provides safety and security
  - accountable for program
- Non-Profit:
  - provides direct services
  - develops program
  - facilitates transition and reentry
- University:
  - evaluates program fidelity
  - analyzes data
  - provides training and technical assistance

Influences of Successful Collaboration

1. Environment

2. Membership Characteristics

3. Process/Structure

4. Communication

5. Purpose

6. Resources

Mattesich, P & Monsey, B, (1994) Collaboration: What Makes It Work.

Practitioner Language

- Demystify the population
- Outcome measures
- Strengths based assessments
- Best practices
- Gender responsive
- Wraparound services
- Connections and resources

Academic Language

- Program fidelity & evaluation
- Technical assistance & training
- Capacity building & capacity transfer
- Data quality/data integrity
- Outcome measures
- Community engagement

Government Language

- Program justification

- Legislative advocacy

- Outcome measures

- Staff and contract supervision

- Resource development

- Accountability

Environment

- Political/social climate of Maine is favorable to collaborations

- Strong community ties

- Each organization is seen as a leader in the community in their respective domain

- Overcrowding of female facilities seen as crisis

Membership Characteristics

- Strong sense of mutual respect and trust between us that has developed over years

- View collaboration as in our best interest

- Recognition that accomplishments through the collaboration are greater than any of us could accomplish alone

- Project ownership (egos) and adaptability of process structure

Process/Structure

- Flexibility and adaptability
- Ongoing role clarification and policy guidelines
- Shared investment in both process and outcome
- Decisions negotiated at multiple levels
- Shared resources for the best interest of client(s)

Purpose

- Shared vision of implementing evidence based practices at all levels

- Commitment to integrate knowledge regarding principles of effective correctional intervention (Andrews, et. al.) and gender responsivity (Bloom & Covington, Owen) as a common paradigms to explore dialogue.

- Shared commitment to the woman, placing her at the center of all deliberations

Communication

Strengths

•Informal and formal linkages

•Open communication

•Ongoing

Challenges

• Communication sometimes too infrequent

• Email vs. face to face

• Defining priorities

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Resources

Strengths

- Interns and students enhance mutual outcomes
- Leveraged SVORI & NIC TA to support goals

Challenges

- Never enough funds or staff to accomplish optimal results
- Things we've wanted to do, but can't with existing resources
- Rural setting, vast geography
- Limited time

The 'Swamp' of Practice

Leadership and collaboration involves mobilizing people to tackle tough problems.

1. Take learning in 'the swamp' seriously
2. Develop new ways to investigate and frame theories of public management for 'the swamp'
3. Invent more ways to teach reflective practice and prepare people to learn systematically from their own experience

Schall, E. (1994). Learning to Love the Swamp: Reshaping Education for Public Service

Conclusions

- Benefits far outweigh the challenges
- Collaboration must occur and be supported formally and informally at multiple levels
- Requires a commitment to being 'multilingual'
- The reentry of Maine's incarcerated women is more dynamically and comprehensively informed because of the collaboration