Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections, 2nd Edition

CHAPTER 5
LEADING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

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CHAPTER 5: LEADING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

In order to successfully move towards effective evidence-based supervision and service provision significant organizational change and development is required. Organizations must rethink their missions and values; gain new knowledge and skills; adjust their infrastructure to support new ways of doing business and transform their organizational culture. These are challenging tasks that require energetic, dynamic leadership with a willingness to place equal focus on evidence-based principles in organizational development as well as service delivery.

This chapter relies heavily on Peter Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline* (1990) and Mark Moore’s *Creating Public Value* (1995). Senge’s and Moore’s models provide a framework upon which organizations can begin their internal work and thereby apply evidence-based principles to achieving organizational change (see Appendix 2).

The organizational development concepts and strategies set out in the chapter mirror the evidence-based principles of effective intervention set out in previous chapters. Many behavior change principles apply to all people, offenders and non-offenders alike, so parallel approaches can be used to manage offender cases and change offender behavior as well as to manage organizations and change organizational behavior (Latessa, 2004). These principles include: assessment, intervention, and monitoring/measurement. The concepts are broad enough to fit most in-progress organizational development efforts and yet sufficiently simple and direct to allow for guided implementation in community corrections agencies.

Shifting to an evidence-based organization management approach may require significant changes in the way business is conducted. Some changes may include how employees are recruited and hired; conduct their job duties; receive performance feedback; and interact with each other, offenders, and system stakeholders. While the strategies that follow will help guide leaders toward the goal of implementing evidence-based practices both in offender supervision and organizational management, leaders must be prepared for the inherent challenges of conducting such a transition process.

This chapter is not intended to serve as a definitive treatise on organizational change, but rather as a starting point or refresher for jurisdictions working to implement evidence-based principles in community corrections. It will assist leaders to:

- develop the *highest productivity* climate for implementing evidence-based principles at the organizational level;
- provide a positive *learning environment* and a focus on improving organizational capacity; and
- focus on *systemic change* versus single events or pilot projects.
The goal is to stimulate questions and discussion about the change process and how it might play out in different organizations. Organizational leaders willing to undertake this level of systemic change should begin by asking themselves the questions outlined in the chapter.

1. Organizational Case Management: Assessment, Intervention, & Monitoring/Measurement

The three steps of assessment, intervention and monitoring/measurement are critical processes to follow to deliver successful organizational change and development in the same way they are integral to client intervention.

i) Assessment/Diagnosis
Assessment determines the existing status of an individual, organization, and/or practice by providing information on the potential and options for change. Assessment strategies include:
- Surveys (Gather information either through self-report or third party reporting. Survey designs can either be used off the shelf or customized to fit specific organizational needs.)
- Interviews
- Observation
- Data review and analysis

ii) Intervention
Intervention activities are designed to respond to the needs/issues identified in the assessment/diagnosis process. Intervention strategies include:
- Strategic planning
- Systems restructuring
- Change management
- Team building
- Coaching and mentoring
- Education/training
- Skill building activities & competency development
- Soliciting and using input from across the organization to create a sense of ownership
- Feedback activities, such as 360° assessments (assessments of leadership from multiple viewpoints) for individuals or groups
- Succession planning

iii) Monitoring and Measuring Performance
Monitoring and measuring performance on both a short- and long-term basis provide data on changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior. Types of measures include:
- Process measures provide feedback throughout change process.
- Outcome measures demonstrate impact at the individual and organizational level.
Individual: Measure actual change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behavior. Measurement tools include surveys, performance evaluation, and data analysis.

Organizational: Measure improvement in productivity as well as progress toward organizational goals. Measurement tools include surveys and data analysis.

The scale of these three steps varies across organizations, but implementing a process to assess and address key organizational issues is essential to creating an environment conducive to change.

2. Leading Organizational Change

Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to struggle for shared aspirations.
(Kouzes & Posner, 2007)

Certain qualities of leadership are essential to managing organizational change: ability for reflection; acknowledgement of personal strengths and weaknesses; willingness to take risks and receive feedback; the ability to motivate others; and demonstration of the fundamental principles of honesty, openness, respect and trust.

The artistry of leadership exists in choosing the manner by which one will influence people. Different situations require different leadership styles and strategies. Leaders are most effective when they create a shared desire by a group to attain a goal or to move in a particular direction.

In the public sector, leaders are expected to articulate the values that drive their beliefs about needed change. Reiterating those values throughout the change process helps to cement them.

Strong and flexible organizational leadership is key to the success or failure of any change effort. It is especially true when implementing evidence-based practices in community corrections due to the complexity of implementing change in the public safety system (Latessa, 2004).

The systemic nature of the public safety system requires that leaders identify, create, and show value to internal and external stakeholders. In Mark Moore’s Creating Public Value, (1995) he emphasizes a key assumption for any service provided by the public sector: the service or product provides value for a variety of constituents.
Leaders of community corrections organizations interested in building value through implementing this level of systemic change must evaluate their readiness to lead an intensive transition. This requires extensively evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of their organization. Developing and leading an organization that not only provides public value, but also functions as a learning organization, requires the capacity and willingness to practice outcome-oriented, data driven, collaborative leadership styles instead of more traditional, authoritarian styles of leadership.

Leaders must also be willing to accept the challenges of changing organizational culture in order to achieve the full benefits of increased public safety and reduced recidivism made possible by implementing evidence-based principles in community corrections.

**Leadership Style**
Traditionally, public safety agencies have relied on hierarchical and other highly stratified command and control management models. These models hinder the successful implementation of evidence-based practices, and require significant changes in organizational structure and leadership philosophy to determine when hierarchy is appropriate and when participatory decision making is needed. Changes are also required in practice, supervision, recruitment, hiring, training, work plans, and rewards systems.
The role of leadership in the implementation of this level of systemic change is key to its success. Leaders must be willing to commit to the following process steps:

- Create the vision
- Identify partnerships
- Develop strategies for achieving the vision
- Seek agreement with partners regarding vision and strategies
- Utilize process improvement strategies
- Identify and collect outcome data
- Review and refine processes and outcomes

Creating the Vision
Before the change process begins, there must be a clear vision of what the changed organization will look like. This vision should be articulated in a concise statement describing the changed organization and how it interacts with others, including service recipients, system partners, and employees. For example, the vision statement for the Maryland Department of Public Safety Division of Parole and Probation is as follows:

*It is the vision of the Division of Parole and Probation to become a comprehensive community corrections agency that works in collaboration with criminal justice agencies, communities and service providers to prevent and interrupt the criminal behavior of probationers, parolees and other supervisees. The Division will identify and implement evidence-based practices to facilitate the successful reintegration of supervisees into their families and communities. The Division will develop a safe and supportive work environment that encourages all employees to achieve their maximum professional potential.*

*Strong, visionary leadership is a must.* The vision for change can be formed in numerous ways by various groups, including the leadership of the organization, policymakers, or diagonal slice groups. No matter how the vision is formed, leadership must embrace it and take responsibility for charting the direction and change process for the organization.

Once the leadership has crystallized the direction of change, it needs to look broadly throughout the organization and consider the many layers of change that will occur as a result of the process. The most progressive public policy direction for an organization is meaningless at the line staff and client level.

**Questions to Ask:**
- Is there a story or a metaphor for what the organization is trying to become? Can you draw a picture of it?
- If the organization achieves its goals for change, what will a client say about their experience of this organization?
- What will a member of the public say?
- What will employees say?
- What facets of the organization will be affected by the change?
without leadership and strategic action to cultivate the change at all levels. True change happens at the top, at the bottom, and in between – it’s up to the leadership to consider each of those layers.

**Communicating the vision**

Once the leadership clarifies the organizational goals for change, the next step is communication of the vision. Involving employees in the development of the vision leads to greater commitment from and more effective communication with those employees. Effective communication is a critical ingredient to achieving successful and long-lasting change, and leadership must model openness and ongoing dialogue. Communication is the key! The clearer a leader communicates the goals of organizational change, the more helpful employees, community, clients, and policy makers can be. Once they understand what leadership seeks to accomplish, they can assist in reaching those goals.

How an idea or goal is communicated can be as important as the goal or idea itself. *Leaders attend to both process and outcomes.* People will draw conclusions from how the message is communicated as well as from the content of the message. For example, if a leader directly and personally communicates an idea to the organization, the message has more impact and meaning than if it comes down to line staff through *channels*. If a leader convenes a focus group of employees to discuss an issue, the importance of the issue is heightened, simply by the fact that the leader cared enough to gather a group to address it.

Leadership must also tailor communication strategies to the groups they seek to reach. Leaders need to think about their audience in advance, consider how they receive information, and strategize about how to best reach them. Communication must occur continually throughout the organization – both horizontally and vertically.

Leaders also need to pay close attention to the collective impact of seemingly minor decisions during the change process. For example, if leadership determines that those employees who actively participate and cooperate with the change process will be rewarded, that strategy must be consistent throughout the organization, even in seemingly minor decisions. One act, in one part of the organization, such as the promotion of a line staff person who is still doing business the old way might not seem like it could affect the change process. However, if it happens several times in different parts of the organization,

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**Questions to Ask:**

- What is your personal communication style?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in this arena?
- How is information communicated in your organization?
- Are there more effective communication strategies for reaching multiple audiences?
- What are the greatest communication challenges for the organization?
- What leadership, management, and employee behavior supports the vision?
these independent, unrelated decisions can collectively send a message that contradicts and undermines the change process.

Trust and confidence in the organization’s vision and leadership is built through understanding and awareness of how decisions are made. Decisions and the process by which they are reached should be transparent to the members of the organization. Good leaders seek broad input into decision-making and encourage consideration of different perspectives. After all, employees also are members of the public and voters. *Diverse perspectives build strength.* Good leaders also ensure that decisions support the stated vision, values, and direction of the organization. This requires the leader to stay in touch with decision-making at many levels in the organization in order to ensure that the organization walks its talk.

**Identifying partnerships**

Leaders seeking change must work closely with organization employees, other government entities, and service providers. Collaboration with partners is critical and powerful. The partners, both internal and external, can be identified using several methods. Leaders can identify partners in consultation with others. Employees can conduct system mapping to identify unusual partners. The organization can hold planning circles where partners come and identify more partners, who identify more partners, etc. All of these strategies can be effective ways to identify important stakeholders in the change process.

**Internal Stakeholders:** Internal stakeholders will be affected by organizational change, some more than others. It is important that those groups most affected have a voice in the process. Broad participation creates commitment. Leaders should consider the multiple levels of authority in the formal chain of command and classifications of employees, and then ensure that all of these groups understand the vision of change, have a voice, and a means to communicate their opinions. Diagonal slice work groups can help to achieve this goal by providing representation from throughout the organization.

Leaders should also consider more informal networks as they identify internal partners. While the organizational chart of an organization may show a vertical hierarchy, organizations are rarely so cleanly defined. Instead, organizations are webs, with informal leaders and power brokers throughout the organization. Effective leaders think beyond the formal hierarchy to ensure they reach out to all key partners.

Diagonal slice work groups can serve a variety of roles -- as sounding boards, transition monitoring teams, steering committees with decision-making power, and implementation
teams. Leadership must clearly define the roles and authority of each group, and charters should be developed upon convening work groups.

Chartering will help guide the group’s efforts, provide structure, describe outcomes, clarify decision-making authority, and codify organizational and leadership support for the group’s work (see Chapter 6). Communication is a key function of these workgroups and should be highlighted in their charter. A large part of their responsibility is ongoing communication with the larger organization about the change process. To enhance productivity and efficiency, all groups should be provided with a trained facilitator or be trained in the basics of group process and facilitation prior to beginning work.

**External Stakeholders:** The changes an organization undergoes will also affect external partners. Community corrections agencies are intertwined with a host of other criminal justice, social service, and community organizations and systems. This means that any significant, long-lasting change in an organization requires the participation of and acceptance by external entities. These organizations will need to be collaborative participants in this process every step of the way.

Partner organizations need to understand the value that participation in this change process has for them. Their leaders should know how supporting change in community corrections aids them in accomplishing their organizational mission. The impact that specific changes will have on their service delivery must be completely clear. Leaders need to consider these issues and craft specific plans for engaging their partners.

**Developing Strategies for Achieving the Vision**

The development of strategies moves the vision from concept into action. While strategies must be broad enough to encompass the work of many parts of the organization, they must also be specific enough that objectives, outcomes, and work plans can be developed to achieve the strategies. Leaders can use many different processes to develop strategies. Tools for developing strategies must balance broad participation in decision-making with the creation of the most innovative strategies infused with best practice knowledge. The relative importance of these two issues in an organization’s change process will drive the selection of the tool for strategy development.

Engaging the broadest number of internal and external partners in the development of the strategy is essential, and a system- or organization-wide development conference can be a helpful tool. This type of conference is a day- or more-long meeting where the participants gain understanding of the vision and then in smaller groups develop the strategies to accomplish this vision. (see Appendix B, the Search Conference, for one approach). Conference techniques often result in maximum participation and buy-in, and
allow participants opportunities to understand best practices and expand their thinking in order to create an innovative new direction for the organization.

The diagonal slice group from the organization can also be charged with creating strategies. This method provides opportunities for input from a variety of levels and perspectives in a more controlled process. It also provides an opportunity for alternative perspectives to weigh more heavily in the process. In the conference model, minority voices may not be heard.

In another method, the management team can use stakeholder groups to review and refine strategies - including the diagonal slice group. This method does not allow for as much diverse input into the strategies. However, if the management team has been intensively schooled in innovative new practices, they can still create effective strategies that are informed by the literature. The strategies must be approved and supported by the policy makers in the jurisdiction, regardless of the method chosen.

**Questions to Ask**
- *How much participation is required to build maximum trust in the organization?*
- *How much do various stakeholders know about best practices in order to incorporate them into strategies?*
- *How can you best incorporate diverse perspectives into the strategies?*
- *How involved do policy makers wish to be in the strategy development process?*

**Overcoming Resistance**
Leadership and work teams need to plan strategies for overcoming resistance to change. Resistance of employees may stem from the organization’s failure to consider and eliminate barriers with changing work conditions, a lack of tools to do the new job, poor communication across the organization, or an inadequate understanding of the need for change. Employees may also lack the sense of safety needed to master new ways of doing business, and to ask for support when they are struggling. Leadership must assess worker needs in relation to the strategic implementation of change, structure the work, and provide the tools and the information required for success. For example, if leadership asks officers to spend more time out in the field and less time in the office, providing tools such as laptops, personal data assistants, and cell phones will facilitate that transition. Leadership must be empathetic, provide opportunities for employees to voice options and concerns, and create a climate for success for workers to do their job. Culture changes are difficult for workers to accommodate but can be made easier with responsive, responsible leaders.

**Seeking agreement with partners about vision and strategy**
Relationships among partners must be based on mutual respect and understanding of the opportunities and constraints each partner faces. One tool partners can use to work on their agreements is the Zone of Agreement model (Figure 5). Groups of internal and external partners can use this model to clarify their decision making process. Partners
must have a clear and common understanding of the decisions for which complete agreement is necessary; consultation with other partners is sufficient; and can be made solely by one organization, independent of their partners.

Sustaining collaboration and agreement between partners
The change process may be frustrating and slow and may alter direction mid-course. Given the importance of partnerships and the challenge of maintaining them, leadership must take specific steps to sustain collaborations. Some suggestions include:

- **Build upon and celebrate small victories**
  Identify steps that a collaborative can take together. Seemingly minor change can reward partners and solidify their commitment to the process. These wins can also persuade other partners to join and support the change process.

- **Create incentives for collaboration and change**
  Align rewards, including public recognition, with the collaboration. Take time to understand the needs of internal and external partners and develop ways to meet some of them. Recognize employees that bring new partners to the table.

- **Address leadership changes**
  Leadership will change during the change process. It is important to bring new leaders into the change process, share the vision and the history of the change with them, and invite and incorporate their fresh perspectives.

- **Maintain the momentum for change**
  Key players and/or groups may stall changes through diversions or suggesting far-fetched scenarios. If changes can be institutionalized quickly, with some details worked out later, the system change can maintain momentum.

**Using different leadership styles**
It is also important to recognize that different styles of leadership are required to achieve successful change. Goleman (2000) has identified six distinct leadership styles, each one
coming from different components of emotional intelligence. Each style has a distinct effect on the working atmosphere of an organization and its results.

*Coercive leaders* demand immediate compliance. *Authoritative leaders* mobilize people toward a vision. *Affiliative leaders* create emotional bonds and harmony. *Democratic leaders* build consensus through participation. *Pacesetting leaders* expect excellence and self-direction. And *coaching leaders* develop people for the future.

The research indicates that leaders who get the best results do not rely on just one leadership style; they use most of the styles regularly. Goleman details the types of business situations for which each style is best suited, and explains how leaders who lack one or more of these styles can expand their repertoires. He maintains that with practice leaders can draw upon all leadership styles to produce powerful results.

### 3. The Importance of a Healthy Organization

A healthy organization forms the foundation for an effective change process. One of the first steps in the change process – and one that must be maintained throughout the process – is ensuring the health of the organization.

Mark Carey (2002) defines the characteristics of communities that are ready for significant change and community building. The components he describes are the same characteristics that mark a healthy organization and are critical to the success of any change effort. Leadership must foster these characteristics within the organization at all times.

- Trust among diverse groups
- Shared meaning
- Meaningful work for members of the organization
- Respect
- Commitment to the change process
- Clear communication
- Social cohesion
- Leadership and continually emerging new leadership
- Widespread participation
- Simultaneous focus on the purpose, process, and product
- Building organizational development skills
- Appropriate decision making
In addition to these characteristics, all employees must be empowered participants in the change process, and everyone must understand the mission and vision of the organization, and make decisions that support the mission and vision.

As is the case with individuals, organizations require regular checkups to diagnose any issues and develop a plan for recovery. The assessment process provides the opportunity to take an organization’s temperature and prescribe appropriate remedies. Hopefully, this avoids more serious issues later in the process.

4. Aligning Business Practices

Advancing the implementation of evidence-based principles in the supervision of offenders requires contemporaneous changes in the structure of human resource management systems, policies and procedures, and operational standards.

Combining this fundamental organizational change with the philosophy and policy shift of evidence-based principles enhances the opportunity to more effectively institutionalize changes. Managing this type of transition involves relentless attention to detail to advance implementation and prevent individuals and entire systems from backsliding into the comfort zone of the old ways.

Achieving and sustaining organizational change requires the realignment of organizational infrastructure. All systems and policies, particularly those pertaining to the workforce, must be consistent with and supportive of the new way of doing business. Changes in hiring, training, and performance measurement will, over time, produce a critical mass of employees well-versed in the tenets of a non-traditional mindset, which will signal the change from the old dispensation to the new. Policies for recruitment and hiring, training, job descriptions, performance measurement, promotional decisions, and reward systems must be aligned with evidence-based approaches, and this alignment must be circulated throughout the organization in written documents and practice. Aligning the organization’s human resource system and other infrastructure systems clarifies the commitment to organizational change and facilitates implementation of evidence-based principles.

The subsequent transformation of organizational culture relies upon the alignment of tasks, mission, and goals, and a clear nexus throughout the organization’s practices (Baron and Kreps, 1999). Failure to create this alignment can have a detrimental impact on the implementation of new operational philosophies.

This alignment must also be promulgated throughout the organization in written documents and practice, and county or state support must be garnered when needed. Alignment in policy and practice must occur in the following areas:
Recruitment and Hiring – Organizations must rethink and revise recruitment efforts, candidate screening processes, minimum criteria, and other standards. All new employees must be knowledgeable about the new vision and have appropriate competencies for a changed work environment.

Training – The importance of investing in training at all staff and management levels cannot be overestimated. Failure to provide comprehensive training can undermine even the most well-conceived implementation plan. Throughout the implementation process, internal and external stakeholders should be apprised of the principles of evidence-based practices. New employee academies, orientations, and ongoing training curricula must be restructured and infused with the philosophies of evidence-based practices. Training supports the notion that change is warranted and desirable. Training on evidence-based practices, their efficacy, philosophy, and work expectations must be part of any ongoing training curriculum. Learning should become a daily expectation.

Job descriptions – Workers’ tasks, required competencies, and responsibilities should be clearly linked with evidence-based practices and the organizational mission and goals.

Performance appraisals – Individual performance plans, appraisals, and reviews should be informed by outcome data and connected to the mission, job description, competencies, and training. The use of technology to create automatic feedback systems facilitates this process by providing staff and supervisors with accurate performance measurement data.

Promotional decisions – The promotional system must be structured to value organizational goals and reward desired performance. Promotion should occur when behavior is consistent with organizational goals; individual goals are achieved; and when evidence-based practices are embraced.

Reward systems – Rewards can be separate or linked with promotions and appraisal systems. Publicly recognize and celebrate behavior that is desirable and refrain from the reverse.

This alignment of HR systems with evidence-based practices will ease implementation, minimize pitfalls, and create a climate that supports the new philosophy and changes in worker behavior. Failure to create this alignment can have a detrimental impact on the implementation of new operational philosophies.

5. Managing Transitions

Changing an organization is complicated business, and understanding how transition occurs is critical to effectively implementing change. Leaders must understand the emotional process of change and must be comfortable with working through the various stages, including the end of the old, the chaos of transition, and the new beginnings. Moving through these stages often does not occur in a linear progression, and different
individuals may be at different stages at any given time. Guiding an organization through this process takes patience and perseverance.

In *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, William Bridges (1991) offers an excellent analysis of organizational change and provides concrete suggestions for helping people and the organization cope with change. Bridges describes the opportunities and challenges inherent in the change process and describes three zones of transition: endings; the neutral zone; and the new beginning. He offers the following strategies for moving through each zone.

**Endings:** This stage is characterized by loss: loss of comfort and security in operations; loss of practices; and possibly loss of history. Leaders can effectively manage this transitional state by addressing the following issues:

- Identify who is experiencing loss and what they are losing;
- Accept the reality and importance of subjective losses;
- Do not be surprised at overreaction;
- Acknowledge the losses openly and sympathetically;
- Expect and accept the signs of grieving;
- Compensate for the losses;
- Give people information, and do it again and again;
- Define what is over and what is not over;
- Mark the endings; and
- Treat the past with respect; acknowledge the contribution of past efforts, and let people take a piece of the old way with them.

**The Neutral Zone:** This stage follows the ending stage prior to the new beginning stage. It is in this stage when workers can slip back to the old ways or veer off the path of change. Relentless attention to details and ongoing feedback of data to management and those closest to the work can help prevent this tendency. Leaders can creatively manage the neutral zone by strengthening group connections, redefining the zone as a creative period, and focusing on the following issues:

- “Normalize” the neutral zone;
- Redefine the neutral zone;
- Create temporary systems for the neutral zone;
- Strengthen intra-group connections;
- Implement a transition monitoring team; and
- Support creativity in the neutral zone.

**New Beginnings:** Finally, re-visiting the purpose, providing a clear vision of the outcome, and making sure all players have a role consistent with the vision can ease the
transition to the new beginning. During this period of new beginning, leaders must focus on the following:

- Clarify and communicate the purpose;
- Provide a picture of the outcome;
- Create a transition plan with specifics (a transition plan is different from a change plan – the transition plan focuses on the process of change, rather than the change itself);
- Give people a part to play;
- Reinforce the new beginning; and
- Be consistent, ensure quick successes, symbolize the new identity, and celebrate success.

6. Program Fidelity

Successful organizational change also depends on effectively implementing evidence-based programs and working models to reduce the likelihood of implementation failure. It is critical to ensure that every effort is made to provide for program fidelity as research shows that only then will positive results be delivered. In fact studies have found that there is a relatively strong correlation between program integrity, i.e., quality implementation of program design, and reductions in recidivism (Lowenkamp at al, 2006; Landenberger and Lipsey, 2005).

Achieving quality implementation of program design depends upon achieving a successful organizational transition as well as implementing reforms in accordance with their design and principles. It is not just a case of ‘cherry picking’ an empirically tested method. There needs to be an organization-wide approach to reform that is evidence driven. Programs are more likely to fail if they are delivered within organizational cultures that fail to embody the principles of evidence-based change and effective correctional interventions (Gendreau, 1996).

Furthermore, given that program integrity clearly matters, 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.
Further Reading


