

A STRATEGY FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

ONE LESS, FIFTH Edition E-News

WINTER 2014

"Evidence-based decision making" (EBDM) is the practice of using research findings to inform or guide decisions across the justice system

An Initiative of the National Institute of Corrections: A Collaborative Project Among the Center for Effective Public Policy, Pretrial Justice Institute, Justice Management Institute and the Carey Group.

YOUR LOCAL EBDM EXECUTIVE TEAM:

The Honorable David Bottger, Chief Judge, 21st Judicial District
Craig Henderson, County Court Judge, 21st Judicial District
Pete Hautzinger, District Attorney, 21st Judicial District
Stan Hilkey, Sheriff, Mesa County (Co-Chair)
Linda Robinson, Chief Probation Officer, 21st Judicial District
Dennis Berry, Director, Mesa County Criminal Justice Services Department
Trish Mahre, Chief Deputy District Attorney, 21st Judicial District
Bert Nieslanik (Co-Chair), Deputy Director, State of Colorado Alternate Defense Counsel,
Jennifer Sheetz, Criminal Justice Data Analyst, Mesa County Criminal Justice Services
Department/ DA's Office.
Contact: Sue Gormley, Local Initiative Coordinator, sgormley23@gmail.com

Mesa County Team Leaders Develop Mesa's Key EBDM Messages

In late November 2013, members of Mesa County's local leadership met with NIC contractor, Potomac Communications Group, Inc. (PCG), to assist Mesa County develop their unique EBDM messages and "tell their story".

The group spent over half a day fine-tuning their message so that it was clear, concise and compelling to the various audiences that each member works with or responds to on a daily basis. It afforded all members a time to reflect on their success since inception and through implementation.

Message One (1) Use science for better decisions.

Message Two (2) Working together to share resources.

Message Three (3) Focus our limited resources on where they make the biggest difference.

With these important messages developed, team members were able to practice their skills in interviewing and review the best communication strategy based on the unique challenge. PCG also provided proven tactics for utilizing social media to our best advantage as well as risk communication strategies.

Sentencing Guide Update—Joel Bishop

The Sentencing Guide Committee has made significant progress in the past two months. Final drafts of matrices are beginning to emerge and the various criminal justice programs are developing their program chapters for the guide. Top national experts will be reviewing our progress in the near future and giving us some final feedback. We hope to have a full recommendation for the Executive Committee soon.

Future meetings with the committee will be scheduled in the near future. For more information, please contact Joel Bishop at joel.bishop@mesacounty.us

NIC Announces A Phase IV Statewide Launch of the Evidence-Based Decision-making (EBDM) Initiative

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has announced the launch of Phase IV of the EBDM Initiative, which broadens the application of the EBDM Framework to decision making at the **state** level and to select local jurisdictions within each state. This next Phase is expected to equip and build capacity with interested states that piloted the earlier phases. States include Colorado, Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana and Virginia.

The Launch will allow eligible states the opportunity to initiate in-state planning discussions and establish collaborative processes with state level teams, share the knowledge gained from each pilot project and build capacity. Planning meetings will be scheduled within each state with the assistance of the Center for Effective Public Policy and the Carey Group. After intense web link discussions with representatives of the original six states, those states interested in Phase IV will submit a letter of interest. The application process is expected to take many months with an announcement of the selections in December 2014. More information will be available spring of 2014. Sheriff Stan Hilkey and Bert Nieslanik, along with representatives of several state agencies will serve on the local exploratory team and attend several scheduled webinars.

Meet Allyce Lobdell

We are pleased to welcome Allyce Lobdell to our EBDM team this semester. Allyce is a senior at CMU studying sociology with an emphasis on research. She will be helping us with our 2014 Work/Sustainability Program, assisting in recording the history of our project (our story) and providing additional research and thought pieces for the team. She will continue to contribute to future newsletters. Allyce indicates she is excited about our project, given its research base and will be attending various meetings as her schedule allows. Welcome Allyce!

Does “Aging Out” Reduce the Risk?

Allyce Lobdell, Colorado Mesa University

My name is Allyce and I am excited to be involved in the **One Less** project as an intern from Colorado Mesa University. I am still learning the ins and outs, but from what I gather changes are being made out on the street as well as in the courtroom, and many carefully planned steps by many different groups have been diligently worked through in an effort to reduce recidivism and increase successful outcomes. All this is in an effort to benefit the Criminal Justice System, our community, and the offenders.

Many of us are familiar with “aging out,” also commonly referred to as desistance in the Criminal Justice field. Researchers have been examining the Age-Invariance Thesis, which posits that crime declines as age increases for all offenders. Young men, for instance, are the largest group of individuals who end up in the system. Raymond E. Collins says that the common thrill seeking behavior of young people is most common between 16-24 year olds and is due to *neurobiological processes*. However, as individuals age, changes in neurochemicals inhibit aggressive, dominant, and sensation seeking behavior, decreasing criminal activity. There is also a societal theory to desistance. Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub have produced many research articles on this subject (see end of article for reference material). They find that stability occurs when social bonds are made, resulting in mutual relationships and obligations to others, which then promotes social control and decreases involvement in criminal behavior as the individual ages.

It seems, then, that aging can reduce an individual’s risk of recidivism. Indeed, one of Sampson and Laub’s studies found that although peak ages of offending vary by crime type, all offenses decline systematically in the middle adult years for all groups of offenders.

So, what does this all mean? How do we apply this information to our initiative in Mesa County? Judge Bottger found himself with one such opportunity this past year. Defendant A appeared in his courtroom on a drug related case. Defendant A is from Grand Junction and had family here. This appearance was not his first journey through the justice system, as he had prior drug convictions and had been to prison on prior cases. Defendant A was also slightly over 50 and continued to have a drug use problem.

Judge Bottger decided upon probation for Defendant A. Surely, this would not have been a typical sentence with Defendant A’s past criminal record and current drug use, but with our new EBDM

knowledge, training, and tools to implement, probation can now be a satisfactory, hopefully even preferable, option.

It is unknown if Defendant A is successfully completing probation yet, but assuming this decision was the most effective, take this into consideration: according to Office of Planning & Analysis, DCJ: Office of Community Corrections, Division of Probation Services the cost of a year in prison in Colorado in 2013 was \$34,956. Probation however costs just \$1,566 per year. This is a savings of \$33,390! Imagine the resources we can now apply to medium and high-risk individuals.

I look forward to meeting and working with all of you soon. Look for more articles by me in future newsletters!

Works cited in the article plus more you may be interested in:

[Blog: Desistance and the "aging out" phenomenon.](#)

[Click Here or go to](#)

<http://crimeisachoice.blogspot.com/2011/04/desistance-and-aging-out-phenomenon.html>

[Desistance: The Road from Crime](#)

[Journal of Community Corrections, Summer 2012](#)

[Self-Control, Social Bonds, and Desistance: A Test of Life-Course Interdependence](#)

[Elaine Eggleston Doherty](#)

[Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime](#)

[John H. Laub, Robert J. Sampson](#)

[Crime and Deviance in the Life Course](#)

[Robert J. Sampson, John H. Laub](#)

[Onset and Desistance in Criminal Careers: Neurobiology and the Age-Crime Relationship](#)

[Raymond E. Collins](#)

[Life-Course Desisters? Trajectories of Crime Among Delinquent Boys Followed to Age 70](#)

[Robert J. Sampson, John H. Laub](#)

Mesa County Representatives To Meet in Wisconsin

Local representatives Judge David Bottger, Bert Nieslanik, Stan Hilkey and Joel Bishop will travel to Wisconsin in late January to meet with other EBDM states and help plan for EBDM Phase IV highlighted above in this newsletter.

EBDM

The Evidence-Based Decision Making
in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative



The Wisconsin Summit is the first step in the further expansion of the Phase IV Initiative. NIC is supporting the costs of the travel to Madison, Wisconsin January 28th and 29th.

The Summit hopes to collectively (among the six states) define a united approach to system policy and practice, emphasize a shared vision among participants, present a roadmap for achieving statewide implementations and assist NIC in the design of the Phase IV process and selection. Our local team broadly represents implementation of Mesa’s EBDM and our challenges from various stakeholder perspectives. Bert Nieslanik, Co-Chair, notes, “The states will learn upfront the success and challenges we faced, which will result in valuable knowledge as we begin Phase IV at the state levels”.

EBDM RESEARCH LIBRARY

Pretrial Criminal Justice Research—Arnold Foundation

<http://www.arnoldfoundation.org/criminal-justice-research-summaries-and-reports>

EBDM MEETING CALENDAR

PRETRIAL WORK GROUP— March 5, 2014 5:00 p.m. at CJS BRIDGER BUILDING, Contact Joel Bishop at Joel.Bishop@mesacounty.us or Dennis Berry at dennis.berry@mesacounty.us

PSIR—PROBATION CONFERENCE ROOM, February 26, NOON TO 1:00 P.M. Contact Bert Nieslanik, bert@laddercanyonranch.com

SENTENCING ALTERNATIVES GROUP—JUSTICE CENTER, COURTROOM #6, Contact Joel Bishop at Joel.Bishop@mesacounty.us

EBDM EXECUTIVE MEETINGS—February 6, March 6 and April 3, 2014 JUSTICE CENTER, COURTROOM #6, 7 A.M. TO 8:30. Sgormley23@msn.com

EBDM LEADERSHIP GROUP—April 16, 2014, Sheriff’s Office Training Room, Noon to 1 p.m. sgormley23@gmail.com

FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO A COLLEAGUE!