Blending Therapeutic Community Program Practices and Research

When Blending Succeeds:

*Phoenix House & RAND* -
Kevin McEneaney, Chief Operating Officer,
Phoenix House
Phoenix House & the TC Model

- Opened first Phoenix House program in 1967
- Now serve 5500 clients daily, at 90 programs in eight states
- Research integrated early
- Partnership with RAND began in 1995
Early Phoenix House Research

- Practice evolved from client needs
- Research first focused on understanding what we were doing
- Early descriptive and outcome studies, by George DeLeón and others
- Close relationships between clinical staff and staff researchers
Working with “Outside” Researchers

- Development of outside research partnerships
- A “strategic partnership” developed with RAND
Investment and Benefits

- **Investment**
  - Privately raised funds
  - Administration and staff time
  - Commitment to change/cultural shift

- **Benefits**
  - Validation
  - Recognition as a leader in research-based practices
  - Externally funded research projects
  - Systems and treatment improvement
Challenges of Partnering

- Little incentive for researchers to study the TC
- Question of ownership and freedom to publish
- Need for appropriate infrastructure
## The Clash of Cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Priorities</th>
<th>TC Priorities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data driven</td>
<td>Clinically driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure baseline data</td>
<td>Engage clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random assignment</td>
<td>Assignment by need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradition of IRB</td>
<td>IRB Challenge</td>
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Projects/Products

- Client Management Information Systems
- Barriers to Treatment studies
- Adolescent Trauma study
- Adolescent Outcomes/Phoenix Academy
- Dimensions of Change Research
- Practice Guidelines for Development of Effective TC Counselors
An assessment

- Increased knowledge & understanding
- Successful joint competitive proposals
- Reduced need for PH fundraising dollars
- Full partnership in dealing with the research community