

Adoption and Implementation of “Best Practices” in Addiction Treatment

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Significant recent attention has been paid to the need to bring evidence-based treatment from the research arena into community-based treatment settings. Treatment programs and their clinical staff are essential links between research and practice. However, the structure and management of treatment organizations, and the training of clinical staff, represent important opportunities for, and barriers to, the utilization of novel treatment approaches and both management and clinical “best practices.” At the organizational level, funding sources place demands and constraints on the use of clinical techniques. Programs in the public sector may be mandated to adopt certain practices as a condition of eligibility for insurance reimbursements (e.g., Medicaid), or for receipt of block grant funds. Meanwhile, programs in the private sector may have more autonomy over the content and management of treatment, but are subject to additional constraints imposed by accrediting bodies and managed care. As a result, privately-funded and publicly-funded programs differ in more ways than just sources of funding, including services offered, staffing, patient characteristics, management style and the use of “best practices.” This session will present data from the University of Georgia’s National Treatment Center Study that includes nationally representative samples of 400 private and 400 public addiction treatment programs. These data will examine the use of current “best practices” in treatment delivery and the extent to which they are used in both the private and public sectors. The session will discuss some of the opportunities and barriers in the use of best practices and how these differ by program type. Examples of opportunities include monitoring of findings from NIDA’s Clinical Trials Network, and requests for information on new therapies from CSAT’s Addiction Technology Transfer Centers. Examples of barriers include lack of computer technology and access in treatment programs, lack of dissemination of current “best practices,” and the need for clinician training. The session will conclude with a discussion among attendees of ways in which program administrators can better take advantage of opportunities and overcome potential barriers to adopting “best practices.”

Learning Objective: This session is designed for administrators, clinical directors, and clinicians working in addiction treatment. Persons attending this session should be able to:

- 1) Identify some of the current “best practices” in addiction treatment.
- 2) Describe the differences in the use of best practices among private and public treatment programs.
- 3) Identify at least two opportunities and two barriers to adoption of “best practices”
- 4) Discuss ways for overcoming barriers to “best practices”