



Methodological Considerations for conducting Research in Correctional Settings

DRR 2

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Purpose

- Report on experiences and challenges of conducting a research study in community and residential correctional settings.
- Propose strategies for dealing with these challenges without compromise to the fidelity of study protocol.



Study Sites

Community (C)

SITE 1

- Single building with one floor
- Court mandated outpatient substance abuse treatment

SITE 2

- Large multi-story building with programs on each floor
- Meetings with POs and services delivered on different floors

Residential (R)

SITE 3

- Male & female residents in separate secure facilities
- Court mandated substance abuse treatment

SITE 4

- Male & female residents housed in different buildings
- Open Campus



Logistical Challenges

Issues

Study Response

Building layouts impacted recruiting efforts (C)

Doubled up staffing to deal with multiple floors

Waiting rooms raised privacy concerns (C & R)

Arrange for private rooms;
converted consent forms into tablet based consent

Advance the concept of voluntariness (C & R)

Comprehension survey on tablet

Scheduling Challenges & Attrition

Issues

Study Response

Communication disruption:
disconnected phone
service/number change (**C**)



Varied communication methods
(text message, phone calls,
emails, and face-to-face)

Study activity schedules &
probation requirements (**C** &
R)



RAs provided participants with
reminders & options to finish
session after meetings

Program service schedules
frequently changed (**C** & **R**)



Agency staff support

Revocation of parole (**C** & **R**)
Absconding from site (**R**)



Procedures to rejoin the study

Competing Priorities

Issues

- Participants coming out of correctional facilities had
 - Family schedules
 - New jobs
 - Probation requirements
 - Transportation schedule
- Challenging to adhere to multiple data collection meetings 15 (Exp) condition compared to 3 meetings in the Control

Study Responses

- Modified schedule from bi-weekly to weekly Staysafe sessions.
- Modified schedule for follow-up surveys from 6 & 12 month to 3 & 6 month
- Increased compensation in Community setting for follow-up surveys



Things to consider

- **Walkthrough**
 - **Understand the perspective of the individual on probation before finalizing the intervention**
- **Advisory group**
 - **Establish an advisory group with representation of various agency roles early in the study**
- **Contingency Plan**
 - **Alternate site, Ability to follow-up on participant attrition**
- **Checklists**
 - **Tailored for sites differences ; with space to document any deviations from the study protocol; supports fidelity to the intervention**



Questions?

