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 DeLeon and others
- Close relationships between clinical staff and staff 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

Research Priorities	TC Priorities
Data driven	Clinically driven
Secure baseline data	Engage clients
Random assignment	Assignment by need
Tradition of IRB	IRB Challenge

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



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