Evidence-Based Practices

Tracker was designed from the very beginning to support the research needed to implement Evidence-Based Practices in agencies that work with offenders. Simply put, Tracker was designed to provide the "evidence" behind Evidence-Based Practices, and to facilitate the overall process. This ability is *not* an add-on to Tracker. It is built-in.

Tracker's research capabilities are its very foundation. Our Founder's undergraduate and graduate education was deeply entrenched in Experimental Psychology, with a special focus on Applied Behavior Analysis, and encompassing research design and methodology. He had experience implementing evidence-based practices in inpatient and outpatient mental health settings, special education, forensic mental health, adult corrections, and probation and court services. This multi-disciplinary background led to the design and development of Tracker. In fact, Tracker was originally created to address the research and evaluation requirements for complex, research-oriented grants.

Our Founder was also a top level manager in a large justice agency in the Chicago metropolitan area, and had significant experience implementing research capabilities in large, complex environments. Practical considerations in environments like this (high workloads, understaffed) frequently interfere with the labor requirements of a research-specific information system. Tracker was designed with this in mind. Tracker allows employees to conduct their day-to-day work on the computer, with little regard for collecting research data, while the system quietly collects, organizes and stores data in formats that facilitate extraction for research purposes. At face value, Tracker is a case management tool, but underneath the surface, Tracker is an unusually capable research tool.

Tracker's research engine was built upon the scientific method, not around a particular intervention philosophy. Since it is philosophically agnostic, it is very versatile in its ability to facilitate research on any type of intervention.

... but don't take our word for it. Following our participation in a state-wide research effort in the State of Illinois, we received this response from the head of the research team:

> "I have had the opportunity to witness the work of many ... departments throughout the state ... Let me emphasize that the automated information system you have implemented is vastly superior to those standard in the field ... The attractiveness of your information system is enhanced because you have integrated it into the actual workings of the office ... From an evaluation perspective, your system is quite attractive because it provides ... direct and easy access to a wide variety of informational elements necessary to assess program effectiveness... "

Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections. SIU Carbondale, IL

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Research-Specific Features

Tracker's research specific features include, but are not limited to:

- Tracker understands dependent and independent variables and provides a clean separation of data elements that are commonly used when working to modify behavior and evaluate strategies.

- Tracker supports (but does not require) multiple baseline methodology. This is a research design that is especially well-suited for conducting research in a justice environment, where control groups are undesirable or impractical.

- Data may be extracted/exported for analysis without identifying the client, to preserve anonymity and help protect against research bias.

- Demographic information is stored in special data structures that allow you to determine client descriptive data at any point in time, and compare it to any other data element in the system.

- Built-in, justice-related, baseline & outcome measures, such as:
  - Crimes, arrests/allegations, prosecutions, convictions, sentences
  - Technical and non-technical incidents and violations
  - Quantity, frequency and severity measures are available for most areas

- Built-in social-service-related planning, intervention, outcome measures, such as:
  - Configurable mechanisms to assess risk, needs, and protective factors
  - Identification of targeted problems/assets, goals, objectives, & action steps
  - Assign/track specific programs, services, employees, agencies, providers
  - Record implementation measures like latency, attendance, duration & cost
  - Record social outcome measures like changes in targeted problem areas

- Compare and contrast just about anything, such as:
  - Demographic/descriptive data
  - Identified risk and protective factors
  - Implementation, involvement, completion, and cost of programs and services
  - Treatment impact of programs and services on client-specific goals and objectives
  - Technical incidents before, during, and after intervention
  - Criminal incidents before, during, and after intervention

- Analyze efforts from many perspectives:
  - Specific targeted problem areas
  - Specific internal programs, specialized units, or individual employees
  - Specific intervention agencies and/or service providers
  - Client characteristics, presenting offenses, etc.
  - Create your own calculated measures
  - Create reports, export data for analysis in multiple, user-defined formats