

Creating the NATSAP Research Community

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NATSAP-- Developing a Profession

A brief History

- Established in 1999
- Previously several alternatives for adolescents who failed in community based settings
 - Correctional facilities—bad kids
 - Behavioral/ military programs– Discipline/ structure to correct behavior
 - Hospital /medical treatment– treat the illness & therapies
 - Alternative boarding schools– Change the environment
 - Wilderness programs– reconnect with nature and gain confidence by achieving

Towards a Research Community

- Lack of evidence in support of residential care
- Concerns about lack of standards of care & safety
- Efforts to regulate and eliminate residential care in favor of wrap around service models
- The need for evidence based treatments
- OBHERC 1999— www.obhrc.org --7 programs
- NATSAP 2006— www.natsap.org -- more than 30
- Dr. Michael Gass University of New Hampshire
- Two models

The Process of creating the network

- Select a researcher & data base repository
- Agree on initial instruments & design
- Develop demographic questionnaire
- Select web based provider for survey management (Now Best Notes/Outcome Tools)---huge improvement
- IRB approval
- Train a Research coordinator for each program

Difficulties

- Setting up reliable procedures to get the data
- Original web server was difficult
- Missing data—especially for 1 year follow up
- Lack of control groups
- Many more subtle and interesting questions
 - Specific models of treatment
 - Subtypes of problems, e.g. depression, adoption, divorce, substances,
 - More measures—maturation, family dynamics

Resources and References

- www.obhrc.org
- www.natsap.org
- **The Evidence Base for Private Therapeutic Schools, Residential Programs, and Wilderness Therapy Programs,**
Ellen Behrens, Ph. D., John Santa, Ph. D., Michael Gass, Ph. D.
Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, Vol IV, No. 1,
2010 pp.106-117