

MEASURING TEAM MEMBERS' SATISFACTION IN DRUG COURTS: AN INSTRUMENT TO GAUGE THE COMPONENT DISCIPLINES IN DRUG COURT

Gerald Melnick — Harry K. Wexler — Sonali Rajan

[8] Measuring Team Member Satisfaction in Drug Court—The Satisfaction of Component Disciplines within Drug Court (SCD-DC) Scale exhibited acceptable validity and reliability for measuring team member satisfaction in Drug Courts.

[9] Factors Influencing Team Member Satisfaction in Drug Court—Drug Court professionals were significantly more satisfied with their program when there was open communication and shared values among team members.

DRUG COURTS PLAY a crucial role, both in the judicial process and in the recovery of individuals struggling with drug addiction and related criminal activity. For the system to be successful, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, treatment professionals, and Drug Court administrators must cooperate and coordinate with one another to ensure the Drug Court functions smoothly and fosters greater collaboration among its constituents (Armstrong, 2008). To achieve this, these Drug Court team members must transition from adversarial relationships and reconcile their divergent responsibilities. For example, they must navigate criminal justice concerns for the safety of society while understanding the legal rights of the offender and emphasizing substance abuse treatment to foster individual growth and recovery. This means the prosecutor must find common ground with the public defender to ensure access to the Drug Court. Probation officers must find common ground with treatment counselors to ensure they both have the current information upon

which to base informed judicial recommendations. Given the differences in training and responsibilities among team members from disparate disciplines, one might expect breakdowns in communication and coordination among the constituencies that compose the Drug Court. Some members might feel their values and contributions are less respected within the Drug Court. How well team members interact and how well they promote the success of the Drug Court may be due in no small part to the level of satisfaction team members experience when performing their jobs.

Extensive literature supports the relationship between satisfaction and burnout within health care and social services (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012; Helewa et al., 2012; Rossi et al., 2012). Studies have shown in the other criminal justice settings how differences between staff values about substance abuse treatment and institutional policies can result in cynicism about the system and its ability to change (Melnick, Ulaszek, et al., 2009). Additional studies have established the relationship between high levels of satisfaction and an improved quality of professional life, an improved quality of work performance, and a higher level of engagement with clients and patients (e.g., Beder et al., 2012; Verhaeghe & Brack, 2012). Thus, fostering satisfaction among the team members representing the varied component disciplines within the Drug Court could prove particularly important, and yet little research has been reported in this area.

Although no studies show how satisfaction affects the interactions among all of the different Drug Court constituencies, prior studies have reported that participants are satisfied with their overall treatment in the Drug Court (Saum et al., 2002). Drug Court participants who have expressed satisfaction with such issues as procedural fairness and respectful, courteous, and empathic treatment (Tyler, 2003) are more likely to have successful outcomes (NADCP, 2013). Studies have also examined the effect of therapeutic jurisprudence as practiced in the Drug Courts and other problem-solving courts on judicial satisfaction. Indeed, these studies show that how satisfied the judge is in Drug Court correlates with Drug Court participant respect and gratitude (Chase & Hora, 2000, 2009).

The primary purpose of this study is to provide an instrument to measure the level of satisfaction of team members from *all* of the component constituencies to facilitate future research into causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the diverse Drug Court personnel. We developed the instrument *Satisfaction of Component Disciplines within Drug Court (SCD-DC)* to assess the level of satisfaction among the team members from the component disciplines and to provide an important metric in evaluating the functioning of the Drug Court. A secondary aim of the study was to begin to understand the factors contributing to the satisfaction of team members from the varied disciplines that compose a Drug Court.

METHODS

For this study, we developed two instruments, the *SCD-DC* and *Beliefs about Drug Court*, and modified a third instrument to create *Open Communication within the Drug Court*. Each of these instruments consisted of statements, or *items*, that respondents scored using Likert-type ratings on an anchored, 5-point scale:

- 1—Disagree Strongly
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Uncertain
- 4—Agree
- 5—Agree Strongly

Negative items were reversed scored. Additional items provided basic demographic information about respondents, and all responses were anonymous. Prior to data collection, the National Development and Research Institutes (NDRI) Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the project.

Satisfaction of Component Disciplines within Drug Court Instrument

We developed the *SCD-DC* instrument drawing upon our experience with building consensus to effect changes in Drug Courts. The consensus building consisted of a one-day workshop and debriefing sessions that included judges, court administrators, probation officers,

treatment professionals, prosecutors, and public defenders. The workshops focused on resistance to change and reaching consensus among these component disciplines within the Drug Court. A morning session focused on facilitating the work of a change team and the afternoon session involved all members of the Drug Court. Follow-up coaching calls with the change team leaders addressed both the work of the change team and wider issues of communication within the Drug Court and staffing meetings (Melnick et al., 2014; Wexler, et al., 2012). Additional resources that we leveraged to develop the *SCD-DC* instrument included the Drug Court (Saum, 2002; Tyler, 2003) and literature supporting the inference that factors affecting a positive organizational climate would also be a determinant of satisfaction (Furnham & Gunter, 1993; James & James, 1989).

The *SCD-DC* instrument comprised fourteen items. Topics included the respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of the Drug Court culture:

- Cooperation between the various component disciplines within the Drug Court, such as the prosecutor's office, public defender's office, probation, and treatment
- Disposition of cases
- General professionalism of the Drug Court
- Respondent's role in the Drug Court
- Pride in being part of the Drug Court
- Leadership of the Drug Court
- Support from the criminal justice system and community

For example, the item *I am satisfied with the cooperation of the prosecutor's office with the court* tested satisfaction with the collaboration between the Drug Court and the prosecutor's office, a discipline important to access to the Drug Court. The item *I am satisfied with decisions that the court makes regarding individual offenders* tested satisfaction with the Drug Court's dispensation of cases.

Beliefs about Drug Court Instrument

Drawing upon Drug Court literature and our experience working with change teams in Drug Courts (Melnick et al., 2014; Wexler, et al., 2012), we developed a second instrument called *Beliefs about Drug Court*. We created and employed this instrument to gauge the perceived suitability of the Drug Court as an alternative to incarceration and to measure the degree of latitude offenders are permitted. We inferred that a Drug Court team member's agreement with, or belief in, the decisions and underlying values of the Drug Court would relate to satisfaction with the court and thereby provide convergent validity for the primary satisfaction instrument, the *SCD-DC*. The *Beliefs about Drug Court* instrument consisted of twenty items, such as *Deter future drug use by severely punishing drug users who are caught and convicted*, and *Only people who show steady progress should remain in Drug Court*.

Open Communication within the Drug Court Instrument

A secondary aim of this study was to explore the factors that influence satisfaction with the Drug Court among team members from the component disciplines. To accomplish this, we administered the *Open Communication within the Drug Court* instrument with nine items, such as *We have open and frank discussions about our differences* and *Disagreements are generally resolved fairly*. Again we drew from previous research to develop this instrument (Melnick, Wexler et al., 2009). Previous research links open communication to positive organizational climate (Furnham & Gunter, 1993; James & James, 1989; Lehman et al., 2002) and to the degree of staff consensus (Melnick, Wexler, et al., 2009). We included this instrument on the inference that factors affecting positive organizational climate and consensus among the staff could also determine satisfaction.

Data Collection

We gathered data in two groupings, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, from convenience samples comprising individuals available to the authors

rather than a scientifically chosen random sample. These were readily accessible individuals who fit our eligibility criteria of being members of one of the component disciplines of the Drug Court. Each respondent completed all three instruments addressed in this article.

Cohort 1 ($n = 85$) data were collected in two waves. The first wave used an online data collection Web service (SurveyMonkey) with a password-protected link. The survey was distributed to Drug Court personnel participating in a NIATx (formerly the Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment) change-team project involving ten Drug Courts (Wexler et al., 2012) and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). We collected twenty-four responses via this method. Because many respondents found using the computerized survey system awkward, we created a paper survey instrument for a second wave of data collection and distributed it at the conclusion of SAMSHA-sponsored workshops on consensus building described earlier. Sixty-one additional responses resulted.

Cohort 2 data were collected from a convenience sample of 201 participants at the 2011 National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) conference in Washington, DC. The NADCP facilitated data collection by announcing the study at meetings and setting up a centrally located table from which the investigators recruited attendees with NADCP convention tags into the study. Although the location was not private, no on-looking was evident nor was anyone observed influencing respondents. The high rate of volunteering necessitated reprinting a second batch of surveys for a total of 201 collected responses. Recruitment was terminated upon exhausting the second batch of instruments. We did not obtain the rate of refusal or offer remuneration for respondents.

Data Analysis

For this study, we tested the *SCD-DC* instrument with psychometric analyses, which are used to construct and validate instruments such as surveys and questionnaires. We calculated the mean score and standard deviation for the instrument across all participants and reverse coded items where necessary. We performed the following

psychometric analyses on Cohort 1 data, Cohort 2 data, and the merged data from both, except where noted.

One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA)—This technique compares the means of two or more groups to analyze the variances. We conducted one-way ANOVAs to explore the differences in the mean score for satisfaction by key demographic variables such as employment status, education, and job function.

Cronbach's Alpha Analysis—This technique tests for consistency within an instrument by comparing answers given for similar items, the higher the consistency, the more reliable the instrument. A measure greater than .70 confirms an acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978) and .90 confirms an excellent internal consistency (Kline, 1999).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)—This technique reveals the principal factor or factors that explain the variances in the data. We chose it over exploratory factor analysis because our variables correlated highly. We performed this analysis on only Cohort 1 to explain differences we observed in the Cohort 1 *SCD-DC* scores.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)—This technique determines whether an instrument supports a proposed hypothesis. We conducted this analysis on Cohort 2 data to validate the fit or relationship between the principal factors from Cohort 1 using these standard procedures:

- *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)*—.05 or less indicates a close fit and .10 or above indicates a poor fit.
- *Standard Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)*—.08 or less indicates a close fit.
- *Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)*—.90 or greater indicates an acceptable model fit.

Convergent Validity Analysis—This technique determines the degree to which a test measures what it claims to be measuring (Brown, 1996). To establish convergent validity for the *SCD-DC*, we analyzed the merged data and examined the relationship between the scores on the two instruments *Beliefs about Drug Court* and *Satisfaction with*

the Drug Court to determine if there was a statistically significant ($p < .05$) relationship between the instruments.

Correlation—The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient measures the relationship between two variables. It can be positive or negative ranging from zero to plus or minus one. In the social sciences .30 to .70 represents a moderate correlation.

RESULTS

SCD-DC Instrument

The demography of Cohorts 1 and 2 is shown in Table 1. In Cohort 1, the majority of the respondents were full-time employees (99%) representing a range of job functions and work settings within the Drug Court system. Nearly half of the study participants (49%) had formal graduate training at the master's or doctoral level, and 19% had bachelor's degrees. A substantial proportion (41%) of the respondents had positions as officers or counselors, 31% had a supervisory or facility director role, and the remaining respondents were either support staff (14%) or had another unspecified role (14%). A notable proportion of these participants worked in a community substance abuse treatment program (32%), and several of the participants worked directly in a Drug Court setting as a judge (6%), court officer (14%), probation officer (20%), or public defender (4%).

The demography of Cohort 2 was similar in that the vast majority were full-time employees (95%) representing a range of job functions and work settings within the Drug Court system. As was observed for Cohort 1, approximately half of Cohort 2 (51%) had formal graduate training at the master's or doctoral level, and 27% had bachelor's degrees. As compared with Cohort 1, a larger proportion of Cohort 2 respondents had a supervisory or facility director role (41%), whereas only 28% were officers or counselors, and 11% were support staff. A smaller proportion of Cohort 2 respondents (16%) worked in community substance abuse treatment programs, and just over half of the participants worked in a Drug Court setting as a judge (14%), court officer (10%), probation officer (18%), or public defender (9%).

TABLE 1	DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS		
Demographic	Cohort 1 (n = 85)	Cohort 2 (n = 201)	Combined Cohorts (n = 286)
Employment Status			
Full-time	99%	95%	96%
Part-time	1%	5%	4%
Education Level			
Master's degree or higher	49%	51%	51%
Bachelor's degree	19%	27%	25%
High School or some college	32%	22%	25%
Job Function			
Officer	12%	12%	12%
Counselor	29%	16%	20%
Supervisor or facility director	31%	41%	38%
Support staff	14%	11%	12%
Other	14%	20%	18%
Work Setting			
Substance Abuse Treatment Program	32%	16%	21%
Drug Court Setting			
Judge	6%	14%	12%
Court Officer	14%	10%	11%
Probation Officer	20%	18%	19%
Public Defender	4%	9%	7%
Other	25%	33%	31%

We conducted psychometric analyses of the *SCD-DC*. Cronbach's alpha analysis revealed high internal consistency for the instrument ($\alpha = .96$ and $\alpha = .95$ for Cohorts 1 and 2 respectively with a combined $\alpha = .96$ for all 286 respondents from both cohorts). A PCA for Cohort 1 revealed that the 14-item instrument consisted of a single factor, or dimension—satisfaction. This single factor accounted for 68% of the variances in data (producing an eigenvalue of 9.52 with no other factor attaining a value of 1). The correlation matrix showed the relationship between all items across both cohorts was extremely high, ranging from .70 to .90 and corroborating the PCA results.

Results tended to have a skewed distribution with mean scores between four and five for each item. To compensate, we performed a second PCA on a binary score by converting all responses of *five* to *one* and all other responses to *zero*. This analysis also showed all items with the highest correlation on a single factor, satisfaction (ranging from .59 to .78). A CFA conducted on Cohort 2 showed a value for RMSEA of .13, indicating statistical significance and a poor fit, an SRMR of .05, indicating a good fit, and a GFI of .89, indicating an acceptable model fit. The significant RMSEA may have been attributable to the skewness of the data, which may have persisted despite the attempt to compensate by using a binary scoring procedure.

Item scores were generally, but not universally, high (see Table 2). Respondents in Cohort 1 showed less satisfaction with the cooperation of the offices of the prosecutor and public defender, the suitability of offenders admitted to the Drug Court, and decisions regarding individual offenders. Both cohorts showed lower satisfaction scores for the cooperation of the criminal justice system and for community support. We conducted one-way ANOVAs to explore differences in mean satisfaction scores across groups for each of the key demographic variables: *work setting*, *job functions*, and *education level*. None of the comparisons were statistically significant ($p < .05$, work setting, $F = 0.79$; job functions, $F = 0.71$; and education level, $F = 0.37$). Details on category distinctions within each demographic variable are provided in Table 1. We used no more than five subgroups per variable in each one-way ANOVA, thereby meeting sample size requirements. The data met basic assumptions of homogeneity of variance.

Beliefs about Drug Court and Open Communication within the Drug Court Instruments

We used these two instruments to examine the relationship between satisfaction and the beliefs associated with how Drug Courts function as well as between satisfaction and open communication. We felt we could merge the results into one combined sample for each instrument because of the consistency of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability between cohorts for each instrument ($\alpha = .72$ and

TABLE 2		RESPONSE TO ITEMS BY COHORT					
Item	I am satisfied with...	Cohort 1 (n = 85)		Cohort 2 (n = 201)		Combined Cohorts (n = 286)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	The cooperation of the prosecutor's office to the court	3.43	(±1.46)	4.03	(±1.41)	3.86	(±1.45)
2	The cooperation of parole/probation to the court	4.05	(±1.19)	4.27	(±1.47)	4.20	(±1.39)
3	The cooperation of treatment counselors to the court	4.37	(±0.98)	4.39	(±1.16)	4.38	(±1.11)
4	The cooperation of the public defender's office to the court	3.87	(±1.28)	4.11	(±1.29)	4.04	(±1.38)
5	The suitability of offenders admitted to the court	3.77	(±1.21)	4.11	(±1.30)	4.01	(±1.30)
6	Decisions that the court makes regarding individual offenders	3.96	(±1.11)	4.10	(±1.23)	4.06	(±1.20)
7	The general functioning of the court	4.11	(±1.02)	4.18	(±1.19)	4.16	(±1.14)
8	The professionalism of the others that contribute to the quality of the court decisions	4.13	(±1.09)	4.22	(±1.24)	4.19	(±1.20)
9	My own role in the Drug Court	4.35	(±1.01)	4.38	(±1.10)	4.37	(±1.07)
10	Being part of this Drug Court	4.45	(±0.97)	4.52	(±1.10)	4.50	(±1.06)
11	The work that we are doing in the Drug Court	4.45	(±1.01)	4.59	(±1.10)	4.55	(±1.05)
12	The leadership of the court	4.39	(±0.10)	4.20	(±1.34)	4.25	(±1.24)
13	The support that the court receives within the criminal justice system	3.72	(±1.20)	3.79	(±1.40)	3.77	(±1.35)
14	The support that the court receives from the community	3.65	(±1.29)	3.72	(±1.44)	3.70	(±1.40)
	Overall Mean Score (Range: 29–70)	53.2	(±11.91)	54.56	(±13.15)	54.18	(±12.77)

NOTES: (A) Response range 1–5: 1=Disagree Strongly, 2=Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Agree, and 5=Agree Strongly. (B) A higher score on each item indicates greater satisfaction.

.73 for *Beliefs about Drug Court* and $\alpha = .80$ and .82 for *Open Communication with the Drug Court*). Merging provided the most stable basis on which to assess the relationships. This left us with one sample ($n = 286$) for the *Beliefs about Drug Court* instrument and one sample ($n = 286$) for the *Open Communication within the Drug Court* instrument.

Mean scores, standard deviations, and alpha coefficient reliability scores for these instruments were as follows: *Beliefs about Drug Court* ($\bar{x} = 2.45$, $SD = 0.84$; $\alpha = .73$) and *Open Communication within the Drug Court* ($\bar{x} = 3.83$, $SD = 1.01$, $\alpha = .81$). Thus both instruments demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha > .70$; Nunnally, 1978). We calculated a statistically significant correlation ($r = .15$, $p < .05$) between the *SCD-DC* and the *Beliefs about Drug Court* instruments, demonstrating an expected relationship between respondents' values and beliefs concerning the Drug Court and their level of satisfaction. We also calculated a robust correlation ($r = .44$, $p < .05$) between the instruments *SCD-DC* and *Open Communication within the Drug Court*, demonstrating the relationship between communication and satisfaction among the component disciplines of the Drug Court.

DISCUSSION

This study augments previous research on the role satisfaction plays in the Drug Court and provides an instrument, the *SCD-DC*, to measure satisfaction among team members from the various disciplines contributing to the Drug Court. The *SCD-DC* demonstrated good psychometric characteristics, including a single factor structure. This single factor structure was supported by several of the analyses: a PCA (Cohort 1), a CFA (Cohort 2) and a convergent validity analysis. The convergent validity values (.07 to .09) showed high correlations between the items and the instrument score. To compensate for the skewed distribution of item scores, many of which had a mean score of 4 or more on the 5-point scale, we performed a PCA using a binary score. This factor analysis and a subsequent CFA also provided additional evidence of the single factor structure of the instrument on two of the three criteria.

The *SCD-DC* demonstrated good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .96, .95, and .96 for Cohort 1, Cohort 2, and the combined sample respectively. Convergent validity was also demonstrated by the relationship between the *SCD-DC* instrument and respondents' beliefs in the values of Drug Court as assessed in the *Beliefs about Drug Court* instrument. However, although statistically significant, the correlation was relatively weak and accounted for only 2% of the variance in the *SCD-DC*. We interpret this relatively weak effect as a result of other factors that might influence satisfaction with the Drug Court aside from the perceived value of the court.

Although not the primary purpose, the study explored one of the possible factors that may influence the level of satisfaction: open communication. The *Open Communication within the Drug Court* instrument supported a moderate correlation between satisfaction with the Drug Court and open communication ($r = .44$). This correlation represents 19% of the variation in the satisfaction score, a meaningful relationship. The strength of the relationship between open communication and satisfaction with the Drug Court may speak to an underlying climate of psychological safety among Drug Court personnel. The diversity of the disciplines represented by the Drug Court team members with varying agendas could result in an adversarial environment. Psychological safety has proved key in turning task conflict into high performance (Bradley et al., 2012). Thus, that the members of the Drug Court feel they can find a common language and communicate freely appears important in their relationships to the Drug Court and to their ability to work together as a truly integrated team.

Limitations

Because we recruited as respondents individuals who were readily available to the authors rather than using a scientifically chosen random sample of Drug Court personnel from each of the component disciplines, we were not able to generalize the high degree of satisfaction across Drug Courts. For example, the convenience sampling may have oversampled individuals more predisposed to look favorably on the Drug Court. The respondents in Cohort 1 were from Drug Courts that had volunteered to participate in a SAMSHA-sponsored change

team project and might not be representative of all Drug Courts. Further, a small proportion of Cohort 1 ($n = 24$) completed the survey online, whereas the remaining participants in Cohort 1 ($n = 61$) completed the survey on paper. Therefore, we acknowledge some of the variance observed in Cohort 1 may be due to this difference in survey administration. However, we compared the online responses with the paper responses and found no meaningful differences. Also, the consistency of results (as validated by Cohort 2) reinforces the expectation that this limitation had minimal impact on the overall findings.

Cohort 2 also represented a convenience sample comprising individuals attending an NADCP conference, who may have been more involved and committed to the Drug Court than nonattendees. These circumstances could have produced higher scores than would ordinarily be expected. Furthermore, the method of administration in Cohort 2 did not guarantee privacy (although the similarity in responses in Cohorts 1 and 2 reinforces the impression that the method of administration did not unduly influence respondents in Cohort 2). The *SCD-DC* instrument produced generally good psychometric properties, although the significant RMSEA in the CFA was problematical and may have been the result of the skewness of the data. Additional data representing a less skewed sample of Drug Court personnel may produce an RMSEA more consistent with the other measures of good fit to the model.

Conclusion

We set out to create and validate an instrument to measure satisfaction in Drug Court. Toward that end, we administered instruments for validating the primary *SCD-DC* instrument and for examining the role open communication among staff might play in satisfaction. The *SCD-DC* proved promising as an instrument to measure the level of satisfaction among the personnel from the varied disciplines that compose the Drug Court. Already research has demonstrated the importance of satisfaction with organizations in regard to combatting burnout (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012; Helewa et al., 2012; Rossi et al., 2012), improving work performance, and increasing engagement with clients (Beder et al., 2012; Verhaeghe & Brack, 2012). Positive

work climates have been associated with cohesion and cooperation among personnel. (Furnham & Gunter, 1993; James & James, 1989). This is particularly true in the instance of Drug Court, where the cooperation between disciplines underlies the successful functioning of the court.

The next step for this instrument is to apply it in research studies to determine what satisfaction contributes to a successful Drug Court, which is fundamentally dependent on the cooperation among the team members and their different background disciplines. On a practical level, the *SCD-DC* is a single instrument for use across all of the constituencies composing the Drug Court, making it easier to administer and to contrast data. The instrument should prove useful in evaluating satisfaction among staff members and thus gauging the working climate within Drug Courts. In revealing areas of diminished satisfaction, the instrument may be valuable for determining areas of weakness in staff meeting process and communication, thus affording an opportunity to target improvements.

All three of the instruments in this study are free upon request. Please email Dr. Gerald Melnick at either of these emails: melnick@ndri.org_melnick@yahoo.com.

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Gerald Melnick, PhD, is a senior principal investigator at the Center for the Integration of Research & Practice (CIRP) at National Development and Research Institutes (NDRI). His research activities include the effect of organizational characteristics on the success of substance abuse treatment programs, the use of change teams to promote improved services in criminal justice settings, and matching substance abusers to the appropriate level of treatment.

Harry K. Wexler, PhD, is a senior principal investigator emeritus at NDRI and has acquired a national reputation in the areas of substance abuse policy, treatment, and research during the last forty years. His current work focuses on the effect of open communication and consensus on treatment effectiveness and organizational change. He has written numerous articles and has served as editor of special issues of the Prison Journal.

Sonali Rajan, EdD, MS, is an assistant professor of health education in the Department of Health and Behavior Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Rajan's research includes identifying patterns of engagement in risk behaviors among vulnerable youth; developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based health education programs; and applying bioinformatic methods to large public health data sets to provide evidence for the relationship between health and academic outcomes among youth.

Direct correspondence to Gerald Melnick, PhD, Center for the Integration of Research & Practice (CIRP), National Development & Research Institutes, Inc. (NDRI), 71 W. 23 Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010. (212) 845-4426. melnick@NDRI.org