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Blending Practice and Research: A Potent Catalyst for Progress

As this issue of *Science & Practice Perspectives* goes to press, NIDA's third "Blending Clinical Practice and Research" conference is about to begin in Denver. Hundreds of producers of recovery and creators of new knowledge on drug abuse are gathering to share and combine their expertise in plenary sessions, topic discussions, and skills-building workshops on a wide range of critically important topics.

"Blending" is NIDA's short name for some of its most important work. By blending, we mean the integrated research-practice partnership so necessary to achieve our full potential to relieve the suffering and waste of human life caused by drug abuse and addiction. In "Blending" meetings, researchers, clinicians, other care providers, social workers, criminal justice officers, and community leaders bring their observations, insights, viewpoints, and priorities collectively to bear in advancing our understanding of drug abuse and addiction and our ability to treat and prevent it. Experience has shown that these collegial discussions are a potent catalyst for progress.

NIDA initiatives that focus directly on facilitating and improving research-practice dialogue take many forms. The fullest expression of blending in action is the Clinical Trials Network. In this nationwide consortium, researchers and providers work together to set research priorities and plan studies specifically to resolve issues that community treatment and prevention programs identify as top-priority. They conduct the studies together in community settings, ensuring that the results are readily adaptable for rapid implementation in a variety of treatment settings.

Science & Practice Perspectives brings the robust research-practice exchanges that are the essence of blending to the page (and the Web), and to research centers and treatment programs nationwide and around the world. We hope *S&PP* will stimulate and inspire you, and that you too join in the growing research-practice dialogue. Only in this way can we realize the full power of rapidly advancing science and current clinical experience to improve the health and well-being of everyone affected by substance abuse.



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