



Center for Correctional Nursing

Evidence in Action

Evidence Innovations & Research – Overview Toolkit for Correctional Nursing Metrics & Practice Improvement



Correctional nurses deliver complex care in secure environments where every decision carries risk. Yet the impact of nursing on safety, access, and equity is often hidden in fragmented systems and incomplete reports.

This toolkit offers an overview at how C4CN's Evidence Innovations & Research services & Library help you turn everyday data into practical insights. You will see the kinds of tools we use, the questions they answer, and the kinds of outcomes they support, so you can decide what might be most useful in your own system.

What You'll Learn in This Overview

- The role of nursing-focused analytics in correctional health.
- Five core tools C4CN uses to connect evidence, workforce, and practice.
- How these tools support safety, equity, and retention.
- Ways C4CN can partner with you to tailor these tools to your environment.

Who This Overview Is For

This resource is for correctional nurse leaders, healthcare vendors, state agencies, medical and behavioral health leaders, researchers, educators and quality teams who want a clearer,



Center for Correctional Nursing

more data-informed picture of correctional nursing practice. Whether you manage a single facility or a multi-site system, these concepts can be scaled to your context.

How to Use This Overview Toolkit

Think of this toolkit as a menu, not a manual. Scan the descriptions and identify which questions feel most urgent in your system- for example, understanding medication safety, making nursing's value visible to leaders, or linking workforce strain to patient outcomes.

When you see a tool that speaks to your current challenges, mark it as a priority for further exploration. C4CN can then work with you to adapt the underlying methods, templates, and analytics to your contracts, data sources, and staffing realities.

The Five Tools at a Glance

The Evidence in Action toolkit centers on five evidence-informed tools. Each one offers a different lens on correctional nursing practice:

1. Core Correctional Nursing KPI Snapshot
2. Medication Safety "Hot Spots" Map
3. Professional Identity & Workforce Risk Snapshot
4. Security-Nursing Collaboration Micro-Survey
5. 30-Day Evidence & Analytics Action Plan

In the following section a brief description of each tool, the kinds of questions it answers, and how organizations typically use it. Specific forms, survey items, or analytic steps are provided by C4CN in consulting engagements.

Tool 1: Core Correctional Nursing KPI Snapshot

The Core Correctional Nursing KPI Snapshot is a focused view of nursing-sensitive indicators that matter most in secure settings. Rather than tracking dozens of measures, the snapshot highlights a small set of metrics that reflect safety, access to care, and workforce stability.

Organizations use this snapshot to:

- Tell a concise story about nursing's impact to executives and custody partners.
- Align leaders around a shared view of risk and performance.
- Establish a baseline before launching new initiatives or contracts.
- Monitor trends over time without building a full enterprise dashboard from scratch.

C4CN works with you to identify which indicators best reflect your contracts, populations, and pain points, then designs simple but robust ways to visualize them for decision-makers.



Center for Correctional Nursing

Tool 2: Medication Safety “Hot Spots” Map

Medication administration in correctional settings is high-volume, high-risk, and heavily influenced by security processes. The Medication Safety “Hot Spots” Map is a structured way to see where and when risk clusters—by unit, time of day, process step, or contributing factor.

Leaders use this map to:

- Identify locations or workflows where errors and near misses are more likely.
- Prioritize where to focus safety efforts when resources are limited.
- Connect medication events to staffing, movement patterns, or environmental conditions.
- Communicate clearly with nurses and custody about shared risk areas.

C4CN provides the analytic frameworks and mapping approaches that make these patterns visible, while respecting the constraints of your electronic systems and incident-reporting processes.

Tool 3: Professional Identity & Workforce Risk Snapshot

Correctional nursing depends on a workforce that not only shows up, but believes in the specialty. The Professional Identity & Workforce Risk Snapshot offers a concise view of how nurses experience their role- including pride, clarity, respect, and intention to stay-and how those experiences relate to operational realities.

Organizations use this snapshot to:

- Detect early signs of burnout, disengagement, or moral distress at the unit or facility level.
- Link workforce experience to trends in safety, quality, or turnover.
- Target investments in orientation, preceptorship, and leadership support.
- Track whether professional-identity initiatives are making a difference over time.

C4CN draws on validated instruments and specialty-specific content to design professional-identity assessments that respect privacy, build trust, and generate actionable insights for leaders.

Tool 4: Security–Nursing Collaboration Micro-Survey

Safe, equitable care in custody depends on how well nursing and security collaborate. The Security–Nursing Collaboration Micro-Survey provides a rapid, low-burden way to take the pulse of that relationship from both perspectives.

Leaders use this micro-survey to:

- Identify friction points in nurse–custody communication.
- Understand how safety concerns move (or stall) across disciplines.
- Inform joint training, process redesign, or leadership conversations.



Center for Correctional Nursing

- Demonstrate to oversight bodies that collaboration is being measured and improved over time.

C4CN designs with you survey approaches, content, sampling approaches, and feedback processes that are realistic for secure environments and sensitive to your local culture.

Tool 5: 30-Day Evidence & Analytics Action Plan

Data only has value if it leads to better decisions. The 30-Day Evidence & Analytics Action Plan is a structured way to translate insights from the other tools into a focused, time-limited trial of change.

Rather than launching large, unwieldy projects, teams use this framework to:

- Choose one priority question or risk area.
- Define a clear, time-bound goal and a small set of indicators.
- Test a manageable change over about a month.
- Decide whether to spread, adapt, or retire that change based on what the data show.

C4CN supports teams in designing these action plans, interpreting results, and scaling successful practices across units or facilities.

Putting the Pieces Together

Taken together, these five tools give you multiple lenses on correctional nursing practice-performance, safety, workforce experience, interdisciplinary collaboration, and change over time. Start with a single tool that fits a pressing need as you develop a more comprehensive evidence supported view of risk and opportunity.

This overview has intentionally focused on what the tools are and how they help, not on the detailed “how-to.” Those methods, templates, and analytic approaches are customized in partnership with each organization.

An Added Feature to Support Your Innovations and Research

The Library – the living authoritative home for evidence

The **C4CN Library** is a powerful added resource for the Center, giving correctional nursing leaders and staff easy access to a carefully curated body of evidence they can trust. Because the collection is created and maintained by a professional reference librarian, every article is vetted for relevance, quality, and applicability to correctional health- not just general nursing. The library’s organization and search features are designed for ease of use, helping busy clinicians, researchers, educators and leaders quickly find what they need for practice, education, quality projects, and policy decisions. Fully specialty-focused and unique to the



Center for Correctional Nursing

Center, the library functions as a living, authoritative home for the evidence that underpins correctional nursing practice.

Partnering with C4CN

The Center for Correctional Nursing's Evidence Innovations & Research services are built for leaders who want to anchor decisions in evidence without losing sight of the realities of secure care.

C4CN can help you:

- Prioritize questions that matter most for safety, equity, and workforce stability.
- Adapt the tools in this overview to your data systems and contract requirements.
- Build sustainable routines for reviewing and acting on nursing-sensitive information.
- Connect frontline experience with academic and research partners when appropriate.

If you are ready to move forward, we would be honored to partner with you. To explore what a tailored Evidence Innovations & Research engagement could look like, visit center4correctionalnurse.edu.org and contact us for a conversation.