Ensuring Fidelity to the Drug Court Model

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What is “Fidelity to the Model”?

► Following best practices (evidence-based practices)
  ▪ Only high-risk/high-need clients
  ▪ No subjective eligibility criteria
  ▪ Early referral and entry to treatment
  ▪ At least 2x/wk random drug testing
  ▪ Many, many more

► Keeping up with emerging research
► Evolving to keep up with new information
Follow the Best Practice Standards!

ADULT DRUG COURT
BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS
VOLUME I

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

ADULT DRUG COURT
BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS
VOLUME II

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
Unless you're using evidence-based procedures, I can't hear a word you're saying.
What is **NOT** Fidelity to the Model?

► Making changes to core components of the drug court model
  - Accepting low-risk clients
  - Requiring all clients to start in residential treatment
  - Using jail as an early sanction

► Substituting “professional judgment” for research
Why Does Fidelity Matter?

EBP... EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE?

OR... EXTREMELY BORING PAPERS?
Why Does Fidelity Matter?

► Most important reason: Do no harm
► Achieve best possible outcomes
► Prove the value of the program
► Secure ongoing/increased funding
► Earn stakeholder/community support
Fidelity Strategies

- Certification
- Peer Review
- Blended Learning
Drug Court Certification

- Certification is a process for assessing drug court programs according to a standard set of state or national criteria.
- Certification can be conducted by state court officials, an independent body, outside consultants, or others.
- The trend is for states to develop statewide certification programs that are run by state court officials.
Statewide Drug Court Certification

► Promotes fidelity to the drug court model, which results in better participant outcomes
► Ensures that courts meet legislative guidelines and funding requirements
► Facilitates continuous quality improvement
► Helps to engage interagency partners
How does certification work?

- Involves review by a state body in coordination with local programs (Administrative Office of the Courts, Problem-Solving Court Commissions, State Behavioral Health Agency, etc.)
- Some states use the NADCP Adult Best Practice standards
- Some states have developed state standards and utilize those for certification
How does certification work? (cont.)

► There is a range of possibilities:
  ▪ Review of policies and procedures
  ▪ Survey and document review
  ▪ Site visits with observation and interviews
► State agency reviews/scores the certification materials and provides feedback to the program
► Court improvement plan to address deficiencies
► Process is repeated at regular intervals
What resources are necessary to conduct state certification?

► State administrative staffing to conduct reviews
► Political support to generate and approve state standards or incorporate national standards
► Staff time to develop a state certification system, conduct reviews, and provide technical support for programs
► Local court support to participate in the certification and training process
Peer Review

► It’s run by “peers”
  ▪ Judges
  ▪ Coordinators
  ▪ Others?

► Peers are trained in best practices and how to conduct a court review
How does peer review work?

► Peers assess another program in their geographic area
► Provide feedback about that program’s alignment with best practices
► Compile the results of the court review into a simple report that includes suggestions for changes in practice
Elements of Peer Review

- Online Self Assessment
- Automated Assessment Report
- Site visit to observe court hearings and staffing with practice checklists
- Guides for interviews with team members
- Instructions on how to work with peers and conduct the visit
- Pre-populated report structure for ease of completion
What is the impact on peers?

- Evidence-based practice education impacts both those being reviewed, and those doing the reviewing.
- Collegial identification of practice deficiencies is less threatening.
- Peer courts can share creative approaches to resolving operational problems based upon local resource and political realities.
What is the impact for state administrators?

► Allows for fidelity reviews to be conducted using existing staff at a low administrative cost
► Helps to identify training needs, resource issues and the need for technical assistance
► Creates a learning community statewide amongst drug court teams
Blended Learning

- Comes after peer review
- Designed to address areas of deficiency
- Combines online training content with in-person facilitation
Elements of Blended Learning

► Court-specific learning plan based on peer review results
► Facilitator (usually one of the peers) leads court team through targeted online training content focusing on areas needing improvement
► Facilitator leads a discussion about the training materials and how they can be best implemented locally
► Team develops an action plan for improvement
The National Online Learning System
www.treatmentcourts.org

System Curricula:
► Adult Drug Court Course
► Veterans Treatment Court Course
► Juvenile Drug Court Course
► Tribal Healing to Wellness Course

Components:
► Taped Videos of Expert Presentations
► Virtual tours of operating Drug Courts
► Practitioner Interviews
► Quizzes and Surveys
► Resource Library/Web Links
Benefits of Blended Learning

- Utilizes trained local facilitators
- Provides team interaction
- Cost-effective
- Focuses on targeted needs of the drug court team
- Only use portions of the site, as needed
- Translate national standards into local practice
The Blended Learning Plan

- Identify **Learning Goals** for drug court improvement
- Describe the existing **Current Operational Status** regarding the issue
- Define preliminary **Strategies** for improvement or enhancement of operations or court structure
- Identify online and other drug court **Resources** that the team should review before discussion and development of a drug court improvement or enhancement plan.
- List the **Barriers** to achieving the targeted operational or structural improvements or enhancements
The Action Plan

- Identify program **Goals and Objectives** for drug court improvement or enhancement
- Define **Activities** that need to take place to accomplish the goals and objectives
- Identify **Persons Responsible** and **Time Frame** for completion
- Define **Measurable Outcomes** to confirm that the goals and objectives have been achieved
Training and Technical Assistance

► Center for Court Innovation
► American University
► National Association of Drug Court Professionals
► Tribal Law & Policy Institute
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