

The Importance of Aftercare in Healing to Wellness Courts

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What we know about addiction.....

- Alcohol & Drug addiction is a chronic disease characterized by relapse
- Over half of our clients will relapse during their first year after discharge from treatment
- The longer we keep an individual engaged in treatment services; the better long term impact we have
- Signs of Relapse often occur before the actual return to the drinking or drug using behavior

Signs of Relapse

Behavior & Attitude

- Increased Arguing
- “Not Phase Behavior”
- Testing limits of curfew
- Making requests to be excused from phase requirements
- Not Caring about sobriety
- Becoming negative about life and/or Wellness Court

Feelings & Thoughts

- Urges, cravings & temptations
- Feelings of Anger
- Feelings of Moodiness or Depression
- Thinking that they are “cured”
- Alcohol & Drugs are seen as a reward for NOT using
- IF...they return to use; they can control it

Relapse in Healing to Wellness Court

- Not exhibiting phase appropriate behavior
- Disconnecting from other participants

SAMHSA 4 Major Dimensions....

That support a life in recovery

- Health
- Home
- Purpose
- Community

Aftercare Plans

- Individualized
- Should include the following:
 - Identification of Relapse Triggers
 - Building a Recovery Support System
 - Activities that contribute the physical health
 - Performing activities related to work/education/reengagement in the community
 - Building positive relationships
 - Developing one's spirituality

Alumni Groups/Support

- Can be initiated by the court or by alumni themselves
- Can involve participants from the start of Wellness Court
- Alumni serve as mentors
- Provide peer support
- Advocate for Wellness Court at local level

What else can HTWC do.... to support aftercare?

- Coordinator or Probation continuing monthly or bi-weekly calls to check in
- Having alumni return to Wellness Court & give presentations to new participants
- Organizing pro-social/sober events to include alumni
- Ensuring participants are eligible to remain in services after completion of Wellness Court
- Should aftercare be a requirement for Wellness Court completion?
- What strategies in your community would work?

Questions?