Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts: National Survey and Latest Research

Judge Charlene Jackson
Juliette Mackin
Chad Rodi
Lauren van Schilfgaarde

National Association of Drug Court Professionals
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Introduction

• Background about panelists
• Background about NPC and TLPI
• What this session will cover
What do we know so far?

• What are the practices and procedures in Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts?
• How do different cultures impact policies and procedures?
• Do Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts reduce recidivism?
• What are the cost impacts?
Gottlieb Process/Outcome Study, 2005

➢ Successes: Started with committed and caring teams, training, holistic approach, spiritual component, structure for participants – increased self-esteem and accountability, some participants turned lives around
Gottlieb Process/Outcome Study, 2005

- Challenges: maintaining participation by non-court team members, communication with treatment, clarity with participants about program requirements, inconsistent sanction application, non-intensive monitoring/supervision
Gottlieb Study: Lessons Learned

➢ Develop a strong structure for your wellness court – build team based on roles
➢ Use informed consent process with participants
➢ Integrate cultural tradition into treatment but be careful to be sensitive to different religions
Gottlieb Study: Lessons Learned

- Monitor participants during peak hours and conduct testing frequently/at unexpected times
- Reward compliant behaviors with incentives
- Minimize use of non-therapeutic sanctions
- Choose judge who understands and practices wellness court philosophy
Gottlieb Study: Lessons Learned

➢ Begin systematic and automated data collection from Day 1
➢ Develop wellness court handbook for the staff
➢ Emphasize early outreach with the community
NPC 10 Key Component Review, 2010

• Conducted assessment, site visit, interviews, observations, and consultation with experts

• THWCs can align with 10 KC of drug courts & best practices, as well as be culturally specific

• Tribes face some of the same challenges as other collaborations; they also have their own
NPC Process, Outcome, and Cost Study, 2014

• Process evaluation
  ➢ MOU between Tribal Court and County
  ➢ Good communication between team members
  ➢ Coordination of treatment within 2 primary agencies
NPC Process, Outcome, and Cost Study, 2014

- Process evaluation
  - Specialized drug testing with rapid turnaround time
  - Written guidelines
  - Good coordination of team response to behavior
  - Focus on positive participant behaviors
NPC Process, Outcome, and Cost Study, 2014

• Process evaluation
  ➢ Judges spend more than 3 minutes per participant
  ➢ Culturally specific groups and activities
  ➢ Culturally specific treatment (on reservation)
Outcome Study

• Comparison group
• Program group had significantly fewer arrests both 1 year (65% fewer) and 2 years (33% fewer) after program entry
• Program group had significantly longer time before being rearrested (21 months compared to 18 months)
Program Participants Had Fewer Rearrests over 2 Years

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number of Years from Program Entry</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>DWI Court</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
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<td>0.59</td>
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Outcomes

• High-risk/high-need participants benefitted the most – they had better outcomes compared to the comparison group
• Low-risk people had slightly worse outcomes compared to the comparison group
• Graduation rate was 65%
Average Number of Rearrests by Number of Prior Arrests at 2 Years

Average Number of Rearrests

Average Number of Prior Arrests

DWI Court (n=48)  Comparison (n=81)

$p<.01$
Cost Study

• Program investment was $19,710 per participant
• Cost benefit due to reduced recidivism: $8,946
• Projected for 3 more years, savings would be $22,365 per participant
Program Participants Cost the System Less Over 2 Years

Number of Years from Program Entry

- Graduates
- DWI Court
- Comparison

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<th>Graduates</th>
<th>DWI Court</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
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For further information

Juliette Mackin
Mackin@npcresearch.com
503-243-2436 x114

Chad Rodi
Rodi@npcresearch.com
503-314-7517