The Latest Research:
Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts

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Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Enhancement Training
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Introduction

• Background about Juliette
• Background about NPC
• 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
48 Tribes participated
58% of active programs used a computer database
Programs include Tribal culture and tradition
Challenges with incentives and sanctions
- Concerns: funding, court record management, sustainability, court operation, collaboration/coordination
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

Average Number of Rearrests

Number of Years from Program Entry

1 Year
0.17
0.18

2 Years
0.29
0.46
0.59
0.87

Graduates

DUI Court

Comparison
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 by Number of Prior Arrests at 2 Years

Average Number of Rearrests

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

Average Number of Rearrests

Average Number of Prior Arrests

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

1 Year
- Graduates: $5,409
- DWI Court: $7,295
- Comparison: $16,385

2 Years
- Graduates: $8,526
- DWI Court: $17,306
- Comparison: $26,252
Questions?

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