

Mental Health Court: Reducing Recidivism

7th Circuit Court

Genesee County Probate Court – Genesee Health System

Presenters

- Brian Swiecicki
 - Vice President of Business Operations
- Diane Breckenridge
 - Mental Health Court Coordinator
- Sarah Zimmerman
 - Mental Health Court Assistant/ Support Group Coordinator

Objectives

- Learn specific methods that can be used to engage and support mental health court participants after graduation, which will reduce recidivism
- Learn how to develop a support group that utilizes alumni of mental health court programs to provide additional support to current participants
- Explore community options to structure participants time and cultivate meaningful relationships for participants that will extend past graduation

Goal Setting

- Engage participants in mental health treatment within 48-72 hours and set up initial goals to guide their time in the program
- Participants discuss long-term goals with Case Manager
- Set goals beyond their graduation date
 - Drivers license re-instated, job, personal transportation, independent living, paying off court fees, GED Program/College classes

Transitional Care

- Begin discussing transition six months into treatment
- Collaborative
- Options
 - Step-down, transferring to a new case manager, continuing medication only
- Case managers encourage them to discuss transitional care with their Substance abuse treatment providers as well

Open Courtroom

- Judge Barkey invites alumni to show up in her courtroom, on any day at any time, if they are in need of assistance
- Also invites alumni to return for graduations of participants
- Prison Talks – Scared Straight
 - Alumni with a history of serving prison time are asked to talk with newer participants and describe to them life in prison
 - First line of discipline, prior to meeting with the defense attorney

Meaningful Relationships

- Case Managers
- Court Staff
- Volunteer Agencies
- Churches
- Therapists
- Probation/Parole Officers
- Fellow participants
- Involving participants in the community during their time in the program provides them with continued structure and motivation beyond graduation
- Volunteer work can lead to employment opportunities
 - Food Bank of Eastern Michigan

Support Group

- Participants are invited to come to the Support Group following graduation
- Alumni mentors
 - One-on-One
 - Group Setting
- Alumni volunteer to assist with things the Case Managers cannot
 - Moving, transportation, peer support
- Provides alumni an avenue to reach out if they are struggling
- Gives the alumni a sense or purpose as well as shows participants graduation is attainable

Holiday Celebrations

- On major holidays the support group hosts parties for all participants in the program
 - Promotes socialization among participants as well as a safe, sober event to celebrate
- Support Group Coordinator reaches out to alumni and invites them back for these events
- Allows alumni to reconnect with former supports if they had been out of services for some time

Questions?

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