



# 5 Reinforcing Behaviors that Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Teams Want to See in Youth

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## **OBJECTIVE 5: Implement contingency management, case management, and community supervision strategies effectively.**

In practical terms, this objective points juvenile drug court treatment (JDTC) teams in a holistic direction – meaning that the phrases, words, and techniques listed in the Objective above are not single actions that the team utilizes in distinct segments of time. For example, contingency management (e.g., incentives and sanctions) should not be a list of rewards or consequences that the team arbitrarily selects from when they remember to do it. Contingency management must be systematic, comprehensive, and developed in concert with the youth and family when the team is developing case plan goals and supervision strategies.

JDTC teams should think of contingency management as an opportunity to create a positive atmosphere which attaches value to compliance sought by the team. It also increases the likelihood of reaching, at least, a one-to-one ratio of incentives to sanctions. All of this accomplishes the goal of reinforcing the behaviors the JDTC wants to see in youth.

### **SHORT-TERM ACTION**

JDTC teams should start where they are – look at the data!

- Count incentives and sanctions, figure out what the current ratio is to determine if the team needs to increase incentives.
- Review the types of incentives and sanctions the team uses to respond to positive/negative behaviors – how consistent and individualized are they?
- Review who receives incentives and sanctions in the court and check for disparities.
- Review and understand the JDTC’s use of detention, fines, and electronic monitoring – have an honest discussion about the misuse of this type of sanction (i.e., is the team using it for punishment?)
- If the team doesn’t have reliable data regarding the use of incentives and sanctions, begin collecting this data and set a date in the near future to review it.

### **LONG-TERM ACTION**

JDTC teams should use this data to set attainable goals related to Objective Five. For example, if the team determines their current ratio is three sanctions to every one incentive, set a goal to increase incentives during the next quarter by 10 percent. Once this goal is set, the team will then need to develop strategies to affect this goal. There are several activities to choose from. JDTC teams can implement one or more of the following (or develop their own unique system):

- a point-level reward system that focuses on compliance (i.e., school, court, treatment attendance);
- a system that rewards for specific, wanted behavior from the youth and families by allowing them to go first and leave early from court hearings (e.g., a Rocket Docket or 100% Club); or
- a system that observes youth doing something right by handing out tokens or cards for each incident and then adding to a raffle-type jar for a chance to receive a tangible incentive.

All of these actions can be counted as incentives and added to the team’s incentive/sanctions ratio. It’s a simple way to increase the number of incentives the team uses, as well as motivating for actions the team has deemed important.