The In-Practice Tip Sheets are resources for Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (JDTC) teams and are meant to provide operational steps to implementing the JDTC Guidelines. This is not an exhaustive list of practice tips. Juvenile drug treatment court teams are encouraged to use these Tip Sheets as a starting point as they strive to make program enhancements or operationalize the Guidelines.

Collaborative Planning

CASE STUDY: The JDTC in Washington County began accepting clients just six months after an initial exploratory planning meeting in 2008. While there was much passion among the team members, the team operated without approved policies and procedures, as well as without a designated prosecutor. The defense attorney had such a large workload (outside of the JDTC) that she had a difficult time attending staffing and court sessions. It is now 2013, and the judge and coordinator are concerned about the lack of referrals and low graduation rates of the program. The prosecutor and defense attorney are still not active team members, and the positions have turned over numerous times. The judge and coordinator both understand that they likely began operating the JDTC too soon and failed to get the necessary buy-in from all administrative levels in order to solidify the drug treatment court.

Solution-focused Tips to create a strong, collaborative approach with varied levels of support:

Tip No. 1: The JDTC team should form an oversight or steering committee composed of elected officials, managers, and agency representatives to assist in developing policies and procedures.

- As leaders and conveners, judges assigned to the JDTC will meet directly with elected officials and agency managers to gauge interest, educate about the philosophy of JDTCs, and discuss professional commitments as well as intended outcomes.
- Read the OJJDP’s Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines (2016) in order to understand the philosophical and structural mandates of the JDTC framework. Comprehension of the JDTC Guidelines should exist for both operational team members and committee stakeholders.
- Build a mission, goals, and objectives for the program that are based on a careful review of data and currently available community resources.
- It is important that all JDTC operational team members, as well as committee members, believe that their voices are heard in policy meetings and that there is a balance of power across the groups.
- Meet on a quarterly basis (stakeholder committee and JDTC team) to engage in continual program development and to establish strong and continual lines of communication.
- Use online training opportunities available through the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Drug Court Institute so that all committee members are fully trained on the complexity of the model and steps that are needed to launch and/or maintain the JDTC.

Tip No. 2: The JDTC team should ensure that all active team members are fully trained on their assigned roles and responsibilities and attend all staffing and court sessions.

- Research has shown that courts have better outcomes when all team members are present and attend case staffing and court (NPC Research, 2012).
- Committee members who are responsible for assigning members to the JDTC team should carefully consider the placement – team members should serve a two-year minimum assignment, but more importantly, express an interest in and a passion for the program.
- The JDTC Guidelines recommend that each team role have a written description that includes the areas of responsibility for that team member and that the description is signed by the assigned team member.
- Research has also shown that team members that receive greater levels of training (varied training across local, state, and national venues) express greater personal and agency satisfaction from JDTC collaborative experience and believe that they are having a greater impact on youth than through the traditional court process (van Wormer, 2010).

Tip No. 3: The Steering/Oversight committee and JDTC team should work together in joint planning or review sessions to assess community resources and needed supports continually.

- Complete a community resource mapping exercise
In-Practice Tip Sheets

Collaborative Planning

Tip No. 4: The committee and JDTC Team members should use their data to review the effectiveness of the program and engage in open and honest dialogue about JDTC outcomes.

- Equally, divide necessary outreach to new or needed services so that one individual (e.g., a coordinator) does not become overwhelmed and the program continues to match clients to needed services and supports.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: How would the JDTC build necessary stakeholder involvement and support in order to increase referrals and develop a stronger operational model?

ANSWER: The JDTC judge and coordinator are encouraged to follow up with all elected officials (e.g., prosecutor, other members of the bench) and agency directors (e.g., juvenile court administration, treatment) to discuss the current program structure and outcomes. The judge and coordinator should work with these individuals to create a steering/oversight committee that can meet on a regular basis to develop further the needed policies and procedures. Team members should be allowed to participate in the committee meetings to ensure that policies and practices that are being developed are realistic given resource and time limitations of the JDTC team. These meetings should occur quarterly and should begin with developing a comprehensive mission statement, as well as realistic goals and measurable objectives. Data should be pulled (from numerous sources) and reviewed to assess types and numbers of crimes, as well as potential eligibility pools. The steering committee and JDTC team should also consistently monitor needed resources and complete necessary outreach in a timely fashion. More importantly, outcome data from the program should be used in a yearly retreat setting between the steering committee and JDTC team to evaluate for program strengths and challenges. This allows both groups to engage in a coordinated problem-solving procedure, while also educating other agencies and the general community about the successes of the program.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):


- Greater Than the Sum of Their Parts: Clarifying Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Juvenile Drug Court Teams - http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/greater-sum-their-parts-clarifying-roles-responsibilities-and

EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):
