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PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP  
**JUVENILE  
DRUG  
TREATMENT  
COURT**  
TEAMS IMPLEMENT THE  
**JDTC GUIDELINES**

**OJJDP** Office of Juvenile Justice  
and Delinquency Prevention  
Office of Justice Programs ♦ U.S. Department of Justice



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*.

# Case Planning and Management

**CASE STUDY:** The Hope County JDTC has learned that the County Juvenile Probation Department is starting to use a standardized risk and needs assessment instrument to assess all youth placed on probation supervision. The instrument has been validated. However, the probation officers with caseloads for standard probation supervision and those officers assigned to the JDTC court team are not using the assessment to create individualized case plans. At present, the assessment is only being used to determine if youth meet the JDTC eligibility criteria of having moderate to high criminogenic risk and need (overall) and specifically having moderate to high risk/need in the area of substance abuse. The team doesn't create case plans for each youth. Rather, all youth in the JDTC are given a list of general probation conditions to follow plus information on the behavior requirements for each phase in the JDTC program. Hope County JDTC team members are aware that recommended practice calls for individualizing case plans for each youth in a JDTC program but they are not sure how to proceed to implement individualized case planning.

## Solution-focused Tips to help teams develop and use case plans:

**1 Tip No. 1:** Use risk needs assessment results as the bases for case planning and apply the principles of RNR (risk/need responsivity). (See also the *Solutions-Focused Tip on Comprehensive Treatment Planning*.)

- Use a validated risk/needs assessment tool to identify areas of need. The assessment will provide a score for several categories including risk factors (static and dynamic), the risk for recidivism (low, moderate, high), protective factors, and responsivity factors.
- Plan interventions for areas where a youth scores moderate to high risk.
- Target dynamic needs (i.e., needs that can change) such as poor school performance, substance use, peer associations, or poor parental management.
- Match each youth's assessed risk and needs to the type and level of treatment/supervision to be provided. For example, if assessment results indicate high need in substance abuse, provide appropriate substance abuse treatment.
- Bolster protective factors/strengths such as positive parental involvement or pro-social connections (protective factors reduce the effects of risk factors that cause harm).
- Tailor interventions and services that take into account the youth's responsivity factors such as IQ, motivation, personality characteristics, and demographic characteristics. (Responsivity factors are things that may affect a youth's ability to make progress in treatment and/or interventions.)

**2 Tip No. 2:** Create a case plan for each youth that lays out a road map for how behaviors identified in the risk/need assessment will be addressed. Set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for the youth in each area.

- The case plan should be driven by attainable goals and be outcome oriented. The case plan should set forth goals and action statements that directly align with dynamic risk factors identified in the risk assessment. The goals and action statements should lay out the activity/steps the youth will engage in to accomplish each goal of behavioral change.
  - Goals:
    - Address the youth's substance abuse disorder and reduce the youth's substance use.
    - Develop and practice pro-social skills for living productively in the community with gainful employment.
  - You can find examples of two SMART goals in Table A – one relates to reducing substance use; the other relates to increasing pro-social skills (specifically concerning employment):

**3 Tip No. 3:** Relate individual youth goals and action statements in the case plan to program structure (phase goals; advancement criteria, point system). (See also the *Solution-focused Tip on Program Structure*.)

- In the examples above, relate the behavior change goal and set of action statements in the case plan



## CASE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

to the program structure. The case plan should help the youth see how the goals and plan for his or her behavioral change fit with JDTC program advancement and completion criteria.

- If the program is organized in phases, the youth's case plan goals and time frame for action should identify the phase in which the youth's activities occur and the program goals or requirements to which they relate/satisfy.
- Similarly, if the program structure is based on point accumulation for advancement and completion, the case plan should outline how the youth's goal and course of action will help him or her earn points.
- Ensure that case management activities relate to JDTC phase benchmarks; e.g., 1) case plan development (usually in Phase One); 2) case plan review/assessment (usually in Phase Two and Three); and 3) final assessment and/or close out activities (Phase Three, graduation).

**Tip No. 4:** Involve youth and guardian/family members in developing goals in the case plan.

- Review with the youth and family the assessment results/areas of risk and the need to address these areas during the youth's participation in the JDTC.
- Talk with the youth and family about their goals for behavior change relating to the key assessment areas (e.g., school/education, peers, family interactions, attitudes, substance abuse). Incorporate into the case plan the youth and family's goals and interests.
  - Include specific supports or considerations (e.g., location, transportation, schedules) which the youth and family identified that would help make the case plan/steps achievable.
  - If the family history area of the assessment indicates substance use or mental health issues, ask guardians/parents or family members if they are interested in receiving additional assessments and services to address needs in these areas.
  - Include goals and action steps related to family behavioral health in the case plan.
- Incorporate considerations of the youth and family's sociocultural background.
  - Ask questions to learn about the family's cultural connections and supports.
  - Ask questions to learn if the youth is interested in gender-specific services or supports (including LGBTQI-GNC, Two Spirit).

- If none is indicated at this time, follow up at a later date to give the youth and family time to develop more trust in the program and the team to ask for services or supports on sensitive topics.

**Tip No. 5:** At case staffing, discuss each youth's needs and progress in the context of a time frame longer than the past week (i.e., in the past 2 or 4 weeks) with a focus on goals, progress, and needs.

- Take a broad view regarding progress on goals over a period of time. For example, look for an overall picture of the youth's efforts/activities and assess progress on a scale such as – "0-no progress"; "1-less than expected progress"; "2-expected progress"; and "3-completed goal".
- If the youth has "no progress" or "less than expected progress", revise the youth's goals and action steps in the case plan to include removing barriers; break larger goals/steps into smaller ones to make them more concrete and achievable.
- Review patterns of overall compliance from the past two, four, or six weeks regarding such behaviors as drug testing, treatment session attendance, school- or work-related attendance, and engaging in pro-social activities:
  - On balance, when a youth shows a pattern of progress, discuss the incentives/rewards the youth will receive.
  - On balance, when it appears the youth has stalled in making progress in most or all areas, discuss barriers or needs impeding progress and develop a plan with the youth/family to reduce the barriers or impediments.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What steps need to be taken to find a solution?*

**ANSWER:** The team should ask the probation manager responsible for implementing the new assessment instrument to give team members a training on the assessment tool, how it works, what it assesses (domains or areas), and how it can be used to plan services, supervision, and support to address the dynamic risks and needs of each JDTC youth. As part of the training, have the probation trainer; walk through some case examples with the team. Have a team discussion on the range of treatment services and other supports available to JDTC participants to understand the capacity of the program to provide interventions (services and supports) that meet the principles or risk/need/and responsibility. If the team identifies gaps, discuss outreach to treatment providers and/or community partners



for services and strategies to fill the gaps. Have the team set a date for implementing the use of assessments for case planning and the use of youth case plan goals and action statements as the basis for a case staffing discussion. To aid the team's holistic and goal-oriented review, create a template to be used for each youth as a staffing cover sheet. The cover sheet should highlight the youth's individualized goals and the youth's activities and progress in reaching each goal for the past 2-4 weeks. The cover sheet should also state any barriers to goal achievement needing problem solving by the team.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-4-conduct-comprehensive-needsassessments-inform-individualized-casemanagement>
- Addressing the Needs of Youth with Comprehensive Case Planning (Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%204%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- Reinforcing Behaviors that Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Teams Want to See in Youth (Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%205%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- "Making Sense of Incentives and Sanctions in working with the Substance-Abusing Youth" (NCJFCJ TODAY Magazine, 2012) - [https://www.hsvma.org/assets/pdfs/ncj\\_today\\_magazine\\_spring\\_2012.pdf](https://www.hsvma.org/assets/pdfs/ncj_today_magazine_spring_2012.pdf)
- Three Prong Approach to Incentives and Sanctions Series (recorded) webinar - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/first-prong-%E2%80%93-implementing-most-valued-privilege-mvp>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Review Vincent, G. et al. (2018) Studying Drivers of Risk Needs Assessment Instrument Implementation In Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/251809.pdf>
- Review Thomas, D., Torbet, D., and Deal, T. (2011) Implementing Effective Case Management Strategies: A Guide for Probation

Administrators. Technical Assistance for the Juvenile Court Bulletin, National Center for Juvenile Justice - <http://www.ncjj.org/pdf/casemanagementstrategies2011.pdf>

- SMART Goals (Mind Tools) - <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>





## Table A

<b>What does the team want to accomplish? Address and reduce the youth's substance use?</b>	
<b>What qualifies as successful achievement of the goal?</b>	Completion of the substance use treatment program and a clinical discharge by the provider
<b>Who and or what program(s)/ service(s) need to be involved?</b>	The youth; a program that constitutes an evidence-based treatment for adolescents; a service provider or clinician
<b>How does the youth need to do it?</b>	Attend sessions as determined by the provider/clinician
<b>When should the youth complete the program?</b>	With the help of the provider/clinician, determine the frequency of session and a date the youth should be discharged
<b>How can you measure the youth's progress?</b>	Track the youths attendance at sessions; review reports from the provider ( <i>discussing specific performance measures– e.g., attendance and participation in the treatment program</i> )
<b>Action statements</b>	<p>(Youth Name) will actively participate in (name the program that constitutes an evidence-based treatment for adolescents) and meet with the (name the provider) starting (specify date) based on (frequency determined by the provider/clinician) for at least (state number of sessions as determined by the provider/clinician).</p> <p>The provider will submit (state the frequency) reports to the JDTC team on the youth's (specify performance measures to be used – e.g., attendance/participation in the treatment program).</p> <p>Successful treatment participation will be evidenced (name of clinician and program).</p>
<b>What does the team want the youth to accomplish? Develop and practice pro-social skills for living productively in the community with gainful employment.</b>	
<b>What qualifies as successful achievement of the goal?</b>	The youth completes the job skills training program; The youth applies for and secures employment; The youth maintains employment
<b>Who and or what program(s)/ service(s) need to be involved?</b>	The youth; a job skills training program
<b>How does the youth need to do it?</b>	Attending sessions required for program; submitting and following up on job applications; securing and maintaining employment
<b>When should the youth complete the program?</b>	Determine a date the youth should complete the program and work with them to set deadlines for application submissions and employment
<b>How can you measure the youth's progress?</b>	Track the youths attendance at program sessions; track completion of employment applications per week and if they actively make follow up contacts with each potential employer until employment is secured; track the youths hours worked per week
<b>Action statements</b>	<p>(Youth Name) will actively participate in (name the program that constitutes an evidence-based treatment for adolescents) and meet with the (name the provider) starting (specify date) based on (frequency determined by the provider/clinician) for at least (state number of sessions as determined by the provider/clinician).</p> <p>The provider will submit (state the frequency) reports to the JDTC team on the youth's (specify performance measures to be used – e.g., attendance/participation in the treatment program).</p> <p>Successful treatment participation will be evidenced (name of clinician and program).</p>



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## Clearly Defined Target Population and Eligibility Criteria

**CASE STUDY:** The Lee County JDTC has been operational since 2004. During this time, the team has experienced a lot of turnover. Currently there is only one team member, the coordinator, who was part of the original planning team. The coordinator takes the lead on many of the program's procedures and expectations. The team trusts her abilities and allows her the freedom to do what's right for the program, mostly because other team members are too busy with their own responsibilities outside of JDTC. Recently, the judge read a publication that challenged the effectiveness of a JDTC compared to traditional juvenile probation. The judge also wanted to know why there were only six participants in the program, even though the program's capacity is set at 25. He asked the coordinator to provide the team with the success rate during the past nine years and an explanation as to why there were so few participants. The findings were eye-opening and alarming, and two areas are of particular concern: the team's success rate was less than 20%, and referrals were down 60%.

### **Solution-focused Tips to help teams define their target population and eligibility criteria:**

**1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should collect and analyze juvenile justice and social indicator data to determine need and alignment with the *JDTC Guidelines* recommended target population.

- Collecting and reviewing data is the key to success – collect data that the team will use to inform target population and eligibility criteria.
- Ask the questions: Does the data collected indicate a need to implement a JDTC? Is there a portion of the population that meets the criminogenic risk and the substance abuse/use treatment need recommended in the *JDTC Guidelines*?
- Draft (or revisit) a mission statement with the JDTC team that states who the program will serve.
- Regularly analyze data to monitor for shifts in culture of substance abuse/use by youth and codify this process in the policy and procedure manual. Data review takes place annually at the close of the fiscal year.
  - Keep community partners, JDTC stakeholders, and the JDTC team informed of any changes and/or recommendations derived from the yearly analysis.
- Keep in mind that the data may simply indicate that there is not a need for a JDTC. Planning or operating JDTC teams are cautioned not to widen the net, by taking low-risk offenders to boost numbers. Let the data drive the need for the program!

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should utilize validated screening and assessment tools to make well-informed decisions about program acceptance.

- Use timely screening/intake forms to filter youth, with the goal being to place youth into the right program the first time.
- Develop a matrix with indicators recommended in the *JDTC Guidelines* that can be used to match the youth's needs with an appropriate response, for example:
  - First indicator – youth who are 14 years old or older
  - Second indicator – youth who have a moderate to high risk of re-offending, identified using a validated instrument
  - Third indicator – youth with a substance use disorder, identified using a validated, culturally responsive screening assessment
- Each indicator will further filter youth from the total pool of youth coming in contact with the juvenile justice system to the youth appropriate for JDTC, for example:
  - First indicator – 2,524 youth meet the criteria
  - Second indicator – 414 youth meet the criteria
  - Third indicator – 132 youth meet the criteria (youth eligible for JDTC review and assessment)



**3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team’s eligibility criteria should stem from the data collected and analyzed.

- Define eligibility criteria based on the recommendations in the *JDTC Guidelines*. Keep in mind that JDTCs should serve youth who are moderate/high in both substance abuse/use need and criminogenic risk.
- For youth who do not meet the moderate/high risk criteria and do not have a substance use disorder but use substances, consider diverting them to early intervention programs if one is available in the community.
- Determine if the resources available in the community can address the needs of the target population; conduct a community mapping exercise with the target population in mind.

**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should determine, based on the target population, who can refer potential youth. Ask these questions:

- Who can refer potential youth?
  - Referral sources can be prosecutors (often the gatekeepers), defense attorneys, or probation/intake officers.
- How will referrals get to the court/team?
  - Draft a checklist, based on qualifiers and disqualifiers, for referral sources to use to quickly determine broad eligibility requirements – the checklist should reference specific JDTC team members to send referrals to.
- How will the team educate referral sources?
  - Host brown-bag lunches educating referral sources on JDTC philosophy, referral procedures, and success rates – codify this education process in the policy and procedure manual (i.e., brown-bag education lunch will be held on a quarterly basis; JDTC coordinator facilitates this process).
  - If there is “push-back” from referral sources regarding the program itself (i.e., too punitive or too lenient), invite them to articulate specific perceived issues – it may be something that just needs further clarification and/or consensus building to alleviate any fears.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What steps need to be taken to find a solution for Lee County’s lack of referrals and low success rate?*

**ANSWER:** The judge and the coordinator should hold a strategic planning meeting for the operational team members. The meeting will give

the team an opportunity to review juvenile justice and social indicator data. The team is encouraged to take a hard look at the need in their community. If there is a definite need, the next steps would be to adjust capacity and review eligibility criteria, based on data. Eligibility criteria should be defined and codified as a team and include concrete qualifiers and disqualifiers – defining this criteria decreases net-widening. The team should determine available resources – conducting a community resource reality check is a perfect team-building activity, where the team would work together to update their community map. A tip would be to assign reach-out duties to each member of the team, so the process isn’t heaped onto the JDTC coordinator. Finally, the team should review their referral process and identify any gaps. If it is simply a matter of educating natural referral sources, the JDTC team members should draft a brown-bag lunch schedule where each team member would participate in educating colleagues in their particular field.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ’s Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-2-ensure-equitable-treatment-all-youth-adhering-eligibility-criteria-and-conducting>
- The Right Youth for Your Juvenile Drug Treatment Court - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20JDC%20Right%20Youth%20Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20JDC%20Right%20Youth%20Final_0.pdf)
- Just Who Are the Right Youth for Juvenile Drug Court Anyway? (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-03>
- Reinforcing Behaviors that Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Teams Want to See in Youth (Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%205%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>



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## 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:**

**1** **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.

**2** **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).

**3** **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





(available for download on the NCJFCJ website <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Partnership%20Map.pdf>) every six months to assess available resources. This allows matching services to the current needs of clients while building other needed resources.

- 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.

**4 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.

- Courts that use their data in an ongoing manner to monitor for effectiveness and make necessary adjustments have stronger program outcomes and greater cost-savings (NPC Research, 2013).
- Review record/court data on a yearly basis:
- Review and open discussion allow for problem solving and strengthening of the program, and help to highlight the many successes of the program participants.
- Survey and/or interview youth and family members upon program completion to collect detailed information about program appropriateness and effectiveness.

**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):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-1-focus-jdtk-philosophy-and-practice-effectively-addressing-substance-use-and-criminogenic>
- 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):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- NPC Research - [http://www.npcresearch.com/publications\\_drug\\_treatment\\_courts.php](http://www.npcresearch.com/publications_drug_treatment_courts.php)



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## Community Partnerships

**CASE STUDY:** The Smith County JDTC team has returned from a regional training where they learned about a number of community linkages the JDTCs in neighboring counties have been able to make, and the team thinks the linkages discussed would also work in their program. Creating more community linkages will allow them to access more incentives, pro-social activities, employment opportunities for the youth, resources for families, life-skills training, mentors, transportation services, tutors and other educational resources, vocational training, and many other beneficial services. The JDTC team decides to hosts a big open house for all of their potential community partners and is very excited about all the prospective partners the team connects with during the open house. However, six months later when the JDTC coordinator tries to set up a referral with one of their new partners she is surprised to learn that the partner really isn't ready to work with the JDTC and cannot accept the referral. Indeed, the JDTC team has failed to utilize any of the partners met during the open house.

### Solution-focused Tips to create strong, community linkages:

- 1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should decide why they want to engage the community.
  - Meet as a team and brainstorm a list of reasons to engage the community.
  - Take an inventory of needs. Ask JDTC team members, court staff, and youth and families what they'd like to see incorporated into practice or offered as additional services.
  - Once a list of needs and wants has been created, the team should work together to identify two or three primary goals.
- 2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should determine what type of agencies or organizations or who they want to engage within the community.
  - The community is a large undefined group of agencies, individuals, business, and service providers; when engaging the community it is important to determine what portion of the community to engage and when.
  - Use the Community Map (<http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Partnership%20Map.pdf>) exercise to brainstorm a list of available community resources then match the Community Map with the team's list of needs and wants.
  - Consider exploring existing partnerships to see if there are new ways to collaborate. Many teams find it useful to strengthen existing partnerships with associated systems (e.g., social services, probation) to share resources.
- 3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should make community engagement a priority.
  - Set aside at least six months to a year to form new community linkages.
  - Create a subcommittee designed to undertake the tasks necessary to create community linkages. The community engagement and resource development subcommittee should meet regularly (monthly or bi-weekly).
  - Include the JDTC judge on the community engagement and resource development subcommittee, as the judge can often serve as the leader and convener of community partners.
  - The community engagement and resource development subcommittee should set measurable, time bound goals to accomplish, based on the identified needs of the program. For assistance in creating goals and objectives, see NCJFCJ's 7 (*Easy Steps to Measuring Performance of Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts*).
- 4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should develop marketing tools team members can use when talking to potential partners.
  - Create an overview of the JDTC program that team members can bring with them when visiting potential partners.
  - Marketing materials should include the team's vision, an overview of the youth and families served by the program, and a brief overview of court users' unmet needs (e.g., housing, tutoring, and transportation assistance).
  - Develop a short elevator speech about the





JDTC program that JDTC team members and stakeholders can use when asked to describe the program.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should engage the community strategically.

Before approaching a new partner, decide three things – who will be making the connection; what the team wants from the partner; and why the agency or business would want to collaborate with the JDTC.

- Building a relationship with a new community linkage can take time. Try developing a relationship by:
  - Participating in their strategic planning meetings and offer any available support that the JDTC team is able to provide;
  - Inviting potential partners to court events that are open to the public so they can get a better understanding of the JDTC philosophy;
  - Hosting a roundtable with community leaders to discuss areas of mutual interest, gaps in the system, and innovative ideas; use follow-up meetings with individual leaders, agencies, or organizations to codify partnerships;
  - Being specific about what is expected from each partner and have a range of options for involvement. For example, a team looking for drug testing assistance could seek financial funding at a variety of levels – one month, six months, or a year of drug testing supplies; and
  - Creating community partnerships within the neighborhoods where the majority of youth and families in the JDTC reside.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should formalize community partnerships.

- Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for use with other agencies and organizations that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- Have detailed contracts that include services to be delivered, cost of the services, person(s) responsible and expected duration of the service.
- If one does not already exist, develop a non-profit agency to allow the JDTC to receive donations or other types of funding (e.g., local foundations).
- Formally acknowledge receipt of donations received from civic organizations and businesses. Include both a receipt and a letter

of thanks from the JDTC team and the youth being served by the program.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How would the Smith County JDTC team build necessary community linkages in order to serve better the youth and families participating in the JDTC?*

**ANSWER:** The JDTC team is encouraged to approach the creation of community linkages strategically. Meet formally as a team to determine gaps in services and subsequently identify potential partners that can fill those gaps. Work as a team to select a subcommittee (e.g., judge, coordinator, and prosecuting attorney) to develop these resources further. The subcommittee will create materials about the JDTC that can be shared with potential partners and spend several months courting agencies, businesses, and individuals, and then codify the partnerships with well-constructed MOUs that detail roles and responsibilities. The judge can serve as a convener of initial meetings with prospective partners and can be a great spokesperson for the JDTC, but the entire team should feel free to promote the program and create community linkages within their own spheres of influence by using a developed elevator speech to attract valuable community partners.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ’s Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-1-focus-jdtk-philosophy-and-practice-effectively-addressing-substance-use-and-criminogenic>
- Community Partnership Mapping - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Partnership%20Map.pdf>
- 7 (Easy) Steps to Measuring Performance of Juvenile Drug Courts - [https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps\\_Performance%20Measures\\_0.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps_Performance%20Measures_0.pdf)

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>



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*.

# Comprehensive Treatment Planning

**CASE STUDY:** The 2nd Chance JDTC has had difficulty in retaining youth in treatment. The JDTC retention rate is plummeting with no signs of success. The providers state they are all using an evidence-based practice; however, their success with family participation is limited. The court has temporarily stopped admitting youth until it can enhance the treatment component. It is seeking new ways to strengthen this area without any new funding. Currently the community has two providers that are working with youth; three providers focus on families. They have invited the treatment providers to explore enhancing services that are developmentally appropriate for youth and culturally appropriate for families in the community. The team met and learned that several of the services being provided, while evidence based, were not designed for youth and/or did not address the cultural needs of the youths' families. They also realized that the family component required parents to attend events twice a week in addition to home visits. Parents were overwhelmed with court requirements, treatment attendance for youth, and having to attend family night. Several of the identified youth required an inpatient level of care that was not available in the community. A three-month waiting list exists for programs in neighboring communities.

## Solution-focused Tips for comprehensive treatment planning:

- 1 Tip No. 1:** The team should consider the needs of the identified target population and whether the services are available in the community to respond to their needs.
- Evidence-based practices should take into account “socio-cultural and familial factors (e.g., gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, social class, religion, disability status, family structure, and sexual orientation) and environmental context (e.g., institutional racism, health care disparities),” in addition to developmental needs (American Psychological Association, 2006, Washington, DC).
  - If the JDTC determines that the services are not available within their community, the JDTC program should work with other leaders in the community to develop a continuum of care.

**2 Tip No. 2:** The team should utilize age and developmentally appropriate screening tools and a bio-psychosocial assessment to ensure the court is serving the intended population effectively.

- Screening is a process for evaluating the possible presence of a particular problem. The outcome is normally a yes or no as it relates to eligibility (SAMHSA).
- Assessment is a process for defining the nature of that problem, determining a diagnosis, and developing specific treatment recommendations for addressing the problems or diagnosis (SAMHSA).
  - Whenever possible, use instruments that have been normed, adapted, or tested on specific

cultural and linguistic groups (SAMHSA Tip # 51).

- The *JDTC Guidelines* recommend comprehensive assessment for use of alcohol and other drugs; history of abuse or other traumatic experiences; criminogenic needs; well-being needs and strengths; and mental health.

**3 Tip No. 3:** The treatment plan should be cognizant of the court requirements in order to develop a coordinated approach and decrease over burdening youth and families with required schedules and activities.

- Work together during per-court staffing and during each phase, to coordinate both treatment case plans and court requirements that present a unified front to the youth and families.

**4 Tip No. 4:** Evidence-based practices should be selected based on the characteristics of the population to be served.

- The selected intervention should be relevant to the level of care required: race/ethnicity/gender, rural, urban, suburban population, age, linguistically appropriate (e.g., if serving a Hispanic/Latino population, have assessments and materials available in Spanish). Below is a list of strategies to consider when selecting an evidence-based practice:
  - Identify your court’s eligibility requirements to determine the type of program that will be most appropriate.



## COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT PLANNING

- Assess your organizational capacity including financial resources, organizational commitment, and community buy-in to determine your ability to implement a program with fidelity.
- Search program registries to select a program that matches your community needs, your organization's available resources, and available programs.
- Understand program fidelity and program adaptation (modified SAMHSA, NREPP).
- Fidelity: adherence or integrity to the original design/approach is imperative to the success of the program.

**5** **Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should periodically assess what treatment programs youth and families respond well to.

- Have program participants complete a program report card indicating the strengths and challenges of the program. If possible, keep program report card to one page.
- Explore different types of customer satisfaction surveys that are user friendly.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** The treatment providers should explain, to the entire JDTC team, the practice they are utilizing and how the court can avoid enabling or not working in tandem with the provider.

- Provide cross training to explain the proposed practices that are being recommended and why.
- Have the treatment providers clarify terms and potential misconceptions of the recommended practice.

**7** **Tip No. 7:** The JDTC team should compare its target population with the level of services available to the youth and determine if the court is meeting youths' needs.

- Conduct community mapping exercises to determine resources and services available.
- Guard against accepting youth who meet a treatment need that the court cannot assist with.
- Use the American Society of Addiction Medicine's (ASAM) comprehensive set of guidelines for level of care, placement, continued stay, and transfer/discharge of individuals with substance use disorders.

**8** **Tip No. 8:** The team should coordinate responses.

- Work together during pre-court staffing to discuss the youth's behavior and discuss responses. Remember that incentives should

always be discussed and given!

- E.g., a youth attends treatment and participates, but does not adhere to the established curfew. Treatment wants to provide an incentive; court wants a consequence. Do both!
- Make sure the team understands the difference between an incentive, a sanction, and a treatment response.

**9** **Tip No. 9:** The service delivery should include trauma-informed treatment because system-involved youth tend to have a higher rate of exposure to physical and sexual abuse, witnessing violence, and other aspects of trauma.

- Trauma-informed services should be blended into family services.
- Trauma-informed services should be gender responsive and appropriate to the unique needs of the identified gender.

**10** **Tip No. 10:** The treatment court is a holistic approach to address the unique needs of the youth and families. Youth and families should be considered a part of the treatment team and not as a separate entity.

- Consumers of services should be invited to participate periodically to discuss what works and what doesn't.
- Invite youth and their families who have completed/graduated JDTC to serve as mentors and potential co-facilitators for new participants and families in family groups and educational activities or as graduation speakers.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What strategies should the 2nd Chance JDTC explore to meet the treatment needs of youth and their families?*

**ANSWER:** The 2nd Chance Court should implement a process to utilize existing resources to identify best practices and evidence-informed services to meet the needs of youth and families. Providers should be instructed to coordinate services being provided to youth and families to align with the required court attendance schedule, probation, and school requirements. The providers will determine criteria for youth and families that will be eligible for services and should help families explore available insurance options if no insurance is available. Since none of the programs is providing gender-responsive programs, the service providers will need to implement a plan to address the potential unique needs of youth and families (e.g., scheduling, childcare, bus passes etc.). Once a youth has been accepted, the full team will discuss best treatment options based on the recommendation of the providers for youth



and families that adhere to a phased system. The coordinator should arrange for a speaker to meet with the team at its upcoming retreat to address the court and treatment becoming more trauma responsive and informed. If a family opts out of a proposed treatment option, family members will continue to receive individual and group therapy. The team is also developing a plan to have better coordination of responses in order to avoid mixed messages to youth and the potential manipulation of court operations.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-4-conduct-comprehensive-needs-assessments-inform-individualized-case-management>
- Understanding and Using Brief Interventions in the Juvenile Justice System - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20JDC%20Understanding%20Brief%20Interventions%20Final.pdf>
- Thinking Outside the Box to Build a Comprehensive Approach to Successful Case Planning - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/thinking-outside-box-build-comprehensive-approach-successful-case-planning>
- NCJFCJ's Adolescent-Based Treatment Database - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/adolescent-based-treatment-interventions-and-assessment-instruments>
- 5 Constructive Ways for Courts to Address Underage Drinking - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/archived-blog-issues-juvenile-drug-court#>
- Advancing Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts: Policy and Program Brief Series (Co-occurring and providing effective treatment) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/providing-effective-treatment-youth-co-occurring-disorders>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Judges' Guide to Juvenile Mental Health Jargon: A Quick Reference for Juvenile Justice System Practitioners (Policy Research Associates) - <https://www.prainc.com/our-work/products/>
- Evidence-Based Practice Recommendations for Juvenile Drug Courts, Models for Change - <http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/235>



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# Confidentiality

**CASE STUDY:** The Granite County JDTC has experienced significant turnover of its team members. Organizational team members don't remain involved with the court for very long, and no prior operational team members are available for mentorship or guidance. The written policies and procedures are inadequate and have never been updated. Program providers are reluctant to provide treatment information to the team because participants complain that their confidential treatment information is not safeguarded by the JDTC. The team expects each participant's attorney to provide confidential client information. The new team members have agreed to re-evaluate the program. They know that confidential information is necessary to provide appropriate treatment and monitor program compliance, but they are uncertain of how to obtain and use it. They are committed to creating a written policy and procedures to govern these matters.

## Solution-focused Tips to safeguard confidentiality:

**1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should understand that substance abuse treatment and related records are confidential under federal and state law and regulations, 42 United State Code Section 290dd-2 and 42 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2.

- Federal confidentiality rules are broad enough to cover virtually all JDTCs.
- State statutes on confidentiality exist and are in addition to the federal requirements.
- Federal regulations control confidentiality unless state regulations are more restrictive.
- Confidentiality laws encourage and support treatment.

**2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should develop policies and procedures that protect the privacy of participants while giving treatment information to team members.

- Participants can consent to the use of their confidential information by the JDTC.
- Consent forms must be in writing and must contain the nine elements enumerated in Title 42, Section 2.31 (a) of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- Unless specifically stated in the written consent, re-disclosure of confidential information is prohibited.
- Parents or guardians may be required to consent for a minor under state law.

**3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should develop a consent form that is clear and self-explanatory, and consent must be voluntarily given.

- Participants must understand that they have a

right to confidentiality.

- Require disclosure of only that information needed to monitor program compliance.
- Allow participants to discuss the consent form with an attorney before signing.
- Review the consent form with participants after they have been in the program for a period of time. Require them to re-execute the consent when they more fully understand the JDTC program – mid phase two, after they have gone through a stabilization period.
- JDTC participants have the right to revoke their consent, so be sure that all team members are aware of this.

**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should develop written procedures that control how confidential information will be shared, managed, and stored.

- Care must be taken not to re-disclose confidential information.
- Determine who will have access to what confidential information.
- Confidential information must be securely stored in both written and electronic form.
- JDTC files should be marked confidential and stored separately.

**5** **Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should use Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to clarify how information will be accessed, shared, and used among the parties and programs of the JDTC.

- An MOU can identify the limits the JDTC places on the prosecutor's use of JDTC information.
- An MOU can specify how educational information





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will be shared among team members.

- An MOU can address matters of JDTC operation such as what confidentiality agreements must be signed to allow outsiders to attend meetings and court sessions.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should understand that defense attorneys have an ethical obligation to maintain a client's confidentiality.

- Confidentiality is fundamental to the attorney-client relationship and JDTC participants should not be required to waive that confidentiality.
- Defense attorneys should not be expected to provide confidential client information to the team without the specific consent of the participant.
- Attorneys may encourage participants to disclose confidential information to the court to further the JDTC purpose and to provide the best treatment possible.

**7** **Tip No. 7:** The JDTC team should understand that it is a crime to violate the provisions of Section 290dd-2, 42 USC and the accompanying regulations.

- Participants and team members should understand the penalties that may be imposed for the improper disclosure of JDTC information.
- Provide a grievance procedure for participants and families who feel their privacy rights have been violated.
- Re-execute consent forms when team members change.

**8** **Tip No. 8:** The JDTC team should decide whether JDTC sessions will be open or closed.

- Determine whether state law allows or prohibits open court sessions.
- Be sure that the participant's consent reflects the situation.
- Limit discussion in an open setting to program compliance. Do not reveal confidential information.
- Deal with sensitive medical, family, or other information in staffing or a closed setting.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How can a JDTC obtain and utilize confidential drug treatment information? What policies and procedures should be established to guard the privacy of this information?*

**ANSWER:** The release of confidential JDTC information is governed by Section 290dd-2, Title 42, United States Code and the regulations found in Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Some state laws and procedures may

also apply. Consent to the release of confidential information must be in writing and must include nine specific elements. The law and regulations also specify how the released information may be used and shared by team members and programs of the JDTC and how it is to be stored. A JDTC should develop written policies and procedures to address each specific federal and state confidentiality requirement.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-1-focus-jdtk-philosophy-and-practice-effectively-addressing-substance-use-and-criminogenic>
- 7 (Easy) Steps to Confidentiality and Information-Sharing in Juvenile Drug Courts - [https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps\\_Information%20Sharing\\_1.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps_Information%20Sharing_1.pdf)
- MOUs -- <http://www.linkingsystemsofcare.org/toolkit-topics/mous.html>

### EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>





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## Contingency Management: Goal-Oriented Responses

**CASE STUDY:** The Evergreen County JDTC launched in 1996 and proudly operates as one of the longest running JDTCs in the country. The team has seven core members who have worked together for five years. All team members have received local, state, and national training on the model, as well as topic-specific trainings. The program is built to serve 25 youth at any time, and the team has two active treatment providers who are both able to offer an array of evidence-based treatment modalities. The team, however, is increasingly frustrated with low graduation rates, high termination rates, and an inability to fill the program. Two years ago, team members began conducting exit interviews with youth and families so that they could collect information on what worked and what was not helpful to the JDTC client. The team quickly noticed a trend in responses from former clients regarding the use of responses. Youth and families repeatedly reported that they did not understand the purpose or use of incentives. Youth reported that they were generally uninterested in the gifts or incentives that they received, or didn't understand why they received a certain type of incentive. As one youth stated: "I think they just felt bad because they hadn't given me anything in a long time." In terms of responses, youth believed that the court was overly harsh and too quick to punish. One youth reported that after his first positive urine analysis (UA) he was placed into detention for seven days, and by his third positive UA he served 21 days. Youth and parents also reported that no one bothered to ask them what sort of incentives were important to them, or what they considered to be an effective consequence.

### Solution-focused Tips to create an effective response process:

**1** **Tip No. 1:** Team members need to embrace the philosophy that the use of contingency management (i.e., responses) is to *motivate for behavior change*.

- Read and understand the *JDTC Guidelines*
  - Objective Five: Implement contingency management, case management, and community supervision strategies effectively. This provides a better understanding regarding the research connected to responses and how they fit within the larger model and intended outcomes.
- Read and have a focused discussion about the guidance and information found in *Individualizing Responses to Motivate for Behavior Change in Youth: A Guidebook for Implementation* published by NCJFCJ. This resource will help team members shift from rewarding and punishing to engaging youth through calculated and thoughtful steps to move youth toward behavior change.
- Utilize on-line training opportunities available through the NCJFCJ, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Drug Court Institute to stay continually abreast of the latest research findings on contingency management (i.e., responses).

**2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should develop written responses procedures based on the concepts of proximal and distal goals.

- Research has shown that courts that have written guidelines for responses procedures experience stronger outcomes (NPC Research, 2013).
- Distinguish between proximal and distal goals when addressing behaviors:
  - Proximal goals are immediate. They are goals or directives that the youth can regularly address (e.g., school or counseling attendance) and should be rewarded immediately.
  - Distal goals are much more difficult for youth to address. These goals (e.g., obtain a GED) take greater time to address and accomplish given that youth are limited in their ability to see long-term solutions.
  - Teams should carefully craft responses to distal goals that are tied to the behavior (or program condition) that they are trying to address.



**3** **Tip No. 3:** After a period of sobriety and stability, the youth and a family representative should meet with the JDTC team (case manager, treatment provider, and coordinator) and generate a list of rewards and consequences.

- What is rewarding and/or consequential to one youth is not necessarily so for another youth in your program. Creating a level of individualization, while also building family-based incentives, leads to greater motivation for change.
- Teams can still utilize grid systems, but ensure enough flexibility in each section to meet the varied needs and interests of program youth.
- This list of responses should be updated every 60-90 days.

**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should match the use of responses to the current phase.

- Goals vary according to phase, and therefore so should responses. Phase one should be considered a brief, orientation phase with minimal requirements. This will allow for a period of stability and exposure to new structure and treatment. JDTC operations that focus on a long, requirement-heavy phase one often lead to excessive punishment based on too many stringent requirements.
- JDTC teams should expect more from youth as they move through phases.
  - Phase one is considered a period of stabilization, and youth should have minimal expectations and be rewarded for simple steps (e.g., showing up for treatment).
  - Phase two and three are focused on program engagement and completion, and team members should expect stronger behaviors; therefore, responses should be matched to greater expectations.
  - Phase four is a step down phase, and teams are cautioned to address responses carefully in this phase, as overly punitive responses (e.g., “they should have known better” and “we left off at seven days detention”) can cause greater setbacks.
- JDTC teams should monitor their data on a continual basis to ensure that treatment-related behaviors are being addressed through a therapeutic process. In addition, teams can ensure that a wide range of responses is used, that the responses are directly tied to the underlying behavior, and the responses are meaningful to the individual youth to whom they are applied.
- Extensive research shows that the least

effective way to bring about behavior change is through the use of detention. It is also the most costly. Teams are encouraged to use detention sparingly.

**5** **Tip No. 5:** Teams should employ a variety of methods in both treatment and in the courtroom to visualize the responses process, which allows for greater engagement and understanding of the process.

- Youth learn through various mediums, and are often visual and tactical learners.
- Teams are encouraged to use white boards, “checking accounts,” and other methods to track weekly progress. With the white board approach, youth step up to the board to check off or place stickers on the program goals that they have achieved for the week. For the checking account, youth are awarded points for positive behaviors and goal attainment each week and can “cash a check” for relevant incentive items when they so desire.
- JDTC teams are encouraged, if possible, to incentivize parents or caretakers as well, and to make them an active participant in the response process in the front of the courtroom.
- Team members are encouraged to read *Contingency Management for Adolescent Substance Abuse: A Practitioners Guide (2012)* by Henggeler, Cunningham, Rowland & Schoenwald for further practical tips and ideas on how to integrate contracts and point-reward systems into their JDTC program.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** Team members should use their data to review the effectiveness of the responses, and engage in open communication (among the team, youth, and family) about the changes in responses.

- Courts that use their data in an ongoing manner to monitor for effectiveness and make necessary adjustments have stronger program outcomes and greater cost savings (NPC Research, 2013).
- Teams should survey and/or interview youth and family upon program completion to collect detailed information about the appropriateness and effectiveness of their current response procedures.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How should the Evergreen County JDTC utilize proper methods and techniques to motivate youth for behavior change?*

**ANSWER:** The Evergreen County JDTC team should be encouraged to capitalize on all training opportunities, as well as assign several team members to review carefully the literature sources outlined in this tip sheet. This information should



then be presented at a policy meeting to discuss the array of information and to develop the new procedures. Once the method of engagement (e.g., point system, white board, etc.) is selected, then all necessary forms should be developed. The team should allow sufficient time for these changes to take place within the courtroom and at the treatment provider. Teams also need to develop the forms necessary to collect information from youth and families about what they perceive to be meaningful rewards and consequences. The judge should engage the youth and family member each court session via an integrated process of review (e.g., “Tell me what goals you have met for the week?” and “So, Mom, tell me what you both worked on this week and how it went.” “How many points did you earn this week and why?”), while ensuring that the time spent talking with the youth is short and targeted. Gone are the days of ordering a youth to complete community service work due to missing school. Instead, the team is focused on addressing the school truancy through school-based interventions such as a teacher signing an attendance card, tutoring, and/or after school sessions with teachers.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):

- NCJFCJ’s Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-7-monitor-and-track-program-completion-and-termination>
- Addressing the Needs of Youth with Comprehensive Case Planning (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%204%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- The Right Youth for Your Juvenile Drug Treatment Court - [https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20JDC%20Right%20Youth%20Final\\_0.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20JDC%20Right%20Youth%20Final_0.pdf)
- Reinforcing Behaviors that Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Teams Want to See in Youth (Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-05>
- Three-Prong Approach to Incentives and Sanctions (recorded) webinar series - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/first-prong-%E2%80%93-implementing-most-valued-privilege-mvp>
- Making Sense of Incentives and Sanctions in working with the Substance-Abusing Youth: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Today%20Magazine%20I%20&%20S%20Article%20Spring%202012.pdf>

#### EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- NPC Research - [http://www.npcresearch.com/publications\\_drug\\_treatment\\_courts.php](http://www.npcresearch.com/publications_drug_treatment_courts.php)
- Henggeler, S. W., Cunningham, Chapman, J.E., McCart, M.R. (2012). Enhancing the Effectiveness of Juvenile Drug Courts by Integrating Evidence-Based Practices. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22309470>
- Henggeler, S. W., Cunningham, P. B., Rowland, D., & Schoenwald, S. K. (2012). Contingency management for adolescent substance abuse: A practitioner’s guide. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- National Drug Court Resource Center - <https://ndcrc.org/content/list-incentives-and-sanctions/>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation - <https://www.aecf.org/>



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## Culture Competence

**CASE STUDY:** Jorge Rodríguez is a 15-year-old male of Mexican descent. His family has been in the United States for three generations, and Jorge does not speak or read Spanish. Jorge has been a participant in the ASPIRE JDTC for three months; however, engagement strategies have not worked so far. Indeed, when Jorge began the assessment and treatment process, the receptionist at the treatment center was busy, saw that he had a Hispanic surname and a brown complexion, and she immediately gave him material to read in Spanish. Understandably, Jorge felt stereotyped, misunderstood, and offended from the very beginning of the treatment process. Jorge has not engaged in the treatment process and has focused on the fact that other JDTC participants, JDTC team members, and treatment providers do not look like him – that they are all white or Caucasian.

### Solution-focused Tips to cultural competence:

**1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should work with juvenile justice staff, treatment providers, and support staff to increase cultural awareness and humility, with the first step being not to make assumptions regarding race and ethnicity.

- Allow participants to self-identify their ethnicity. If assumptions are made, and offense is taken, the engagement process may be slowed or never begin.
- Consider having youth and family complete self-administered forms to garner information on ethnicity and other personal information before dispersing any program-related material.
- Work with an expert trainer to increase cultural competency; this should be a system-wide effort and include support staff, as many youth are in contact with line staff first and often.

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should use culturally relevant treatment interventions to engage youth of color effectively.

- Consider the appropriateness of specific therapeutic models or interventions for youth of color. Treatment interventions and case plans should be individualized, which would include taking into consideration a youth's ethnicity.
- Consider the differences in values and culture among ethnic groups and how your own personal values influence interaction with the client, as well as the way challenges and goals for treatment are viewed.
- Ask – what is the value system for this particular client/family? The team should be sensitive to:
  - spiritual values
  - community values
  - extended family values

**3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should strive to be reflective of the population they serve.

- Ideally the JDTC team and treatment staff's race and ethnicity should be reflective of the population they serve.
- Consider reaching out to the community to engage volunteers who reflect the population the court is serving to help with JDTC pro-social activities, family nights, or support groups.
- Consider incorporating a mentoring component with a focus on engaging a reflective mix of the population the court is serving.
- The court can work with already established mentoring groups (Big Brothers Big Sisters) or develop and recruit using community engagement strategies.

**4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should strive to achieve equitable access. Do the research. If disparities exist, fix it!

- JDTCs have an affirmative legal and ethical obligation to provide equal access to their services and equivalent treatment to all citizens (Marlowe, 2013).
- Take the time to review the program structure (e.g., phases, length of program, carrots used) and determine if the program is attractive to youth and families of color.
- Keep in mind that your target population might become so narrow that it is exclusive rather than inclusive.
- The court is encouraged to review its data on youth and family demographics and make necessary adjustments to eligibility criteria, if needed.
- If disparities are discovered, develop a plan and



(if needed) new service delivery approaches based on the cultural needs of the youth in your jurisdiction.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What should the JDTC team do to engage Jorge and his family and help Jorge succeed in JDTC?*

**ANSWER:** The ASPIRE JDTC team should work with the juvenile justice system in the jurisdiction, as a whole and not just the JDTC team, but receptionists, court clerks, and volunteers to provide educational opportunities to address cultural competency. The team should incorporate ways to allow the youth and family to self-identify before making snap judgments regarding race or ethnicity. Allowing the family and youth to self-identify will assist the team in finding culturally appropriate treatment interventions, which include individualized treatment case planning. Team members should address and consider if they look like the population they are serving and seek to build a team through staff, mentors, or volunteers that is more reflective and diverse. Look for disparities in the program:

- Are youth of color opting not to participate in the JDTC?
- Do youth of color terminate out of the program more than other youth?
- Is the treatment intervention engaging youth of color?

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-4-conduct-comprehensive-needs-assessments-inform-individualized-case-management>
- Ensuring Equity and Access in the JDTC (A Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%20%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- Engage, Involve, Empower: Family Engagement in JDTCs - <https://www.ncmhji.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Engage-Involve-Empower-Family-Engagement-in-Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Courts.pdf>
- Racial Disparities and Implicit Bias (recorded) webinar - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/racial-disparities-and-implicit-bias>
- The Lens of Implicit Bias, 2009, [https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/The%20Lens%20of%20Implicit%20Bias\\_0.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/The%20Lens%20of%20Implicit%20Bias_0.pdf)

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>





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*.

## Developmentally Appropriate Services

**CASE STUDY:** The AGREE JDTC is currently considering admitting 15-year-old Isha. Isha is currently two years behind his same age peers in academic placement. Isha admits to some experimentation with alcohol and marijuana; his parents requested a urine analysis (UA). Based on results, Isha was placed in treatment. Upon discharge, he returned to substance use and began acting out in other risky behaviors such as curfew violations, school failure, and increased aggression. He returned to in-patient care and so began the revolving door of treatment and return to the home environment. Each time he returned, his risky behaviors increased. He is currently on probation and his probation officer has made a referral to the AGREE program. His risk/need scores, substance use, and age all meet the recommended *JDTC Guidelines* recommended target population but the team is concerned about whether Isha will be able to complete the program because of some developmental delays he is exhibiting.

### Solution-focused Tips for developmentally appropriate services:

**1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC should collect assessment information on each adolescent entering the JDTC program; all evaluative assessments should be completed by a competent clinician or specialist.

- Gather data on cognitive skills, current functioning level and capacity in reading, and writing and verbal skills.
- Include assessments on social and emotional maturity, along with the ability to access services and follow through on treatment recommendations.
- Periodic assessments should be completed to respond to developmental changes that occur during the course of JDTC involvement.
- The developmental information gathered via assessment should be seen as facilitating factors rather than disqualifiers.

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should hold service providers accountable for the individualized treatment of each participant.

- Use a broad-based interdisciplinary approach for developing treatment plans and provide cross training for all stakeholders.
- Ensure that providers have a continuum of treatment options available to match up with the various developmental levels of participants.
- Recognize that chronological age is not necessarily the same as psychological, emotional, or developmental age.
- Monitor treatment plans regularly and amend as necessary to meet the changing cognitive, social, and emotional needs of participants (note: the treatment providers will conduct this process).

**3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should develop strategies based on the interests and abilities of program participants.

- Monitor the potential negative impact of peer group and family members so that the participants' interests and abilities are encouraged, rather than discouraged.
- Conduct an interest and/or aptitude survey to find out what participants might want to do as a future vocation.
- Conduct an inventory or interest survey on what truly will motivate the youth's positive behavior change.
- Showcase, through any type of show and tell model, special abilities such as art, music, crafts, mechanics, cosmetology, fashion, woodworking, etc.

**4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should steer away from premature diagnoses or long-term labeling.

- Acknowledge that not all adolescents who use substances are or will be dependent; experimentation is a common behavior among adolescents.
- Distinguish among the terms used to define substance use: use, abuse, dependency, and addiction are not the same.
- Discuss any previous diagnoses given, especially from a personality, mental health, or academic perspective. Do not allow this label to become an excuse or a crutch for inappropriate behaviors.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should foster motivation to change through provision of developmentally appropriate services.





- Engage the youth in his/her treatment planning because participants are more likely to see the benefits of change if they understand and agree with the goals and objectives.
- When interviewing or interfacing with participants, use a motivational strategy in both what is said and how it is said; strict punitive measures do not work.
- Operate in the here and now, but with a definite, positive outlook on what the future may hold for each participant.
- Use self-help and treatment groups geared toward adolescents instead of placing participants in predominantly adult treatment groups where they may become overwhelmed.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should establish a plan to provide for developmentally appropriate continuing care once JDTC involvement has been completed.

- Minimize the revolving door of treatment by giving the youth and his/her family a plan to move forward.
- Involve youth and family members in setting goals for continuation beyond JDTC in education, work, family planning, and other life decisions.
- Provide opportunities and encouragement for youth to get involved in community functions (e.g., faith-based community, Boys & Girls Club, school associations/clubs, community mentors) with caring adults who can serve as role models such as scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, or other mentoring programs.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How will the AGREE program provide for developmentally appropriate services for Isha, especially knowing that other options have failed?*

**ANSWER:** As soon as possible, the AGREE program should conduct a thorough assessment by a competent clinician or specialist trained in adolescent functioning to determine Isha's cognitive, social, and emotional functioning, as well as personality traits. This may involve collecting and reviewing information that already exists. If this information does not exist, be sure to have an assessment completed that is relevant to current functioning. Give assessment data to service providers so that they can develop an individualized treatment plan that takes Isha's needs and abilities into account. Ensure that providers frequently address changes in his developmental needs and cognitive, social, and emotional status and amend the treatment plan as indicated. Do not allow any diagnoses or label to be detrimental to his progress. Diagnoses are not excuses for inappropriate

behaviors! Stay positive and be sure to allow both Isha and his family to be active participants in his treatment. Remember that change may not be permanent without also including a plan for developmentally appropriate aftercare. Provide opportunities and encouragement for Isha to move forward and live up to his individual potential.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Welcoming Evidence-Based Treatments (EBTs) and Building Accountability for the JDTC Team, Youth, and Family (A Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-06>
- Just Who Are the Right Youth for JDC Anyway? (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%207%20Deadly%20Sins%20Final.pdf>
- Advancing Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts: Policy and Program Brief series - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/new-directions-effectively-address-co-occurring-mental-disorders>
- 7 (Easy) Steps to Individualizing Your JDCs (7 Series) - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ\\_7Series\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ_7Series_Final.pdf)
- NCJFCJ's Adolescent-Based Treatment Database - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/adolescent-based-treatment-interventions-and-assessment-instruments>

#### **EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Facts for Families: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry - <http://www.aacap.org>



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## Drug Testing

**CASE STUDY:** Lee County's JDTC judge attended a statewide JDTC conference. One of the breakout sessions was about drug testing. After the session, two questions formed in the judge's mind. When he returned to his court he wanted to know how urine collection was conducted by the JDTC and if the team was potentially abusing detention for positive urine screen results. The coordinator said that the procedure had changed once the program's grant had ended, and they were now following the same protocol as regular probation. The coordinator said they were no longer able to afford the previous phone system (that clients used daily to find out if they were required to drop) after the program's grant ended. She also indicated that participants received regular weekly urine drops either before or after group or individual sessions with treatment. The coordinator said she also had concerns about the number of days clients were spending in detention due to positive screens.

### Solution-focused Tips to developing a drug testing policy:

- 1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC should disseminate policies and procedures regarding drug testing among team members and participants.
- As the leader and convener of the JDTC, it is important for the judge to know and understand the JDTC's drug testing protocols. All team members need to know how collections occur.
  - Using detention or placements for positive urine screens is not recommended. The team is encouraged to develop alternative responses for positive UAs (responses from treatment and the court).
  - Making changes in drug testing protocol without informing the team and families may lead to confusion and negatively affect the family's willingness to support the treatment plan.
  - Procedures should always be in writing for the team and participants.
- 2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should have a clear understanding of random drug testing.
- Ask the question: Does our random urine collection procedure give substance-abusing youth the opportunity to be better prepared for a drop? If a client has treatment three times a week and he or she knows that treatment collects urine for a drug test before or after, is that really random?
  - Randomness offers fewer opportunities for youth to mask or alter a positive urine sample.
  - A drug testing protocol is not random just because the client doesn't know if he or she is being dropped before or after treatment. The fact that the youth knows there will be a drop that day indicates the drug test is not random.
- Youth should rely on the fact that there is a possibility of being tested every day of the week.
  - The team should not share with the youth and families that there is a certain number of times a week a youth will be tested (e.g., 2-3 times per week).
  - The following is an example of an affordable random process:
    - Use a wipe board to keep track of the day's urine samples that were collected.
    - Purchase a cheap bingo game. Every week assign a client to a number on a ball. Pull the number of balls to equal the drops you wish to do for each day.
    - Chart a week's worth.
    - Keep track for a month to ensure the court is not testing the same client on the same days each week.
  - Random also means the time of day isn't consistently the same. You may meet the standard of random in reference to different days. However, if the client knows you collect urine only in the morning, the court has failed to meet the standard of random once again.
  - To be truly random, the team should discuss ways in which collection can occur after 5:00 pm on weekdays and on the weekends, especially if the targeted youth have alcohol abuse or other substances that flush through the system within 72 hours.
  - Diversify drug testing (e.g., use of cotton swabs) – it doesn't always have to be urine collection.

**3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should understand that a treatment response is important for each positive sample.

- Patience when a youth uses again should be determined on an individual basis and based on what is known about each youth's goals and progress in treatment.
- Responses to positive test shouldn't always equal detention, if ever. If detention were the answer to recovery, would there be a need for JDTCs?
- The purpose of drug testing is to monitor and support the treatment plan; it shouldn't be about catching clients.
- Challenge the team to answer the following question: What if we didn't have detention available in our county?

**4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should analyze their drug testing policy and monitor responses closely.

- Ask: Are we testing enough? Do we have an accurate picture (through screening) as to the drug of choice for each client?
- Recommended practice for drug testing frequency is 2-3 times per week and keeping drug testing levels consistent throughout the entire length of the program.
- Is our testing really random? Considerations include: location of collection; days of the week; time of day; weekends; and the variety of testing instruments.
- Make it a goal to reduce detention days. If this isn't a goal, the team won't consider it important.
- Consider implementing a privilege reduction model (i.e., contingency management) to respond to positive and negative UAs.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should respond to a participant's failure to appear and/or tampering with a drug test with immediate and graduated responses.

- Research indicates that youth who fail to appear or miss drug tests are more likely to experience program failure.
- High percentages of missed drug tests should be considered a warning sign for the team that the youth is in danger of program failure.
- The team should have a distinctive plan in place to monitor and respond to both an initial missed drug test and tampering. This should look different from the team's response to a positive drug test.
- The team should concentrate on how to respond

in an immediate fashion (i.e., the same day or the next day), rather than waiting for the next court hearing.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should understand that drug testing is not a benign action and take steps to use developmentally-appropriate and trauma-informed drug testing practices.

- Staff who administer drug tests should be trained on trauma, cultural humility, and implicit/institutional bias.
- Staff who administer drug tests should look like the youth they serve (in terms of race/ethnicity/sexual identity).
- Drug testing processes and staff should emphasize respect in interactions with youth and families.
- Drug testing-related processes should give youth voice and choice.
- Drug testing-related processes should be transparent (i.e., state the why, how, what, and who).
- When youth have negative tests, they should receive meaningful and positive reinforcement.
- Drug testing is just one tool in the process for assessing and treating youth who have a substance use disorder.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What steps should the Lee County JDTC incorporate into the drug testing procedures?*

**ANSWER:** Lee County JDTC should make sure that all of the team members are educated about the team's drug testing protocol. Allow for feedback and discussion if necessary. A part of Lee County JDTC team's quality assurance plan should be reviewing these procedures, at a minimum, on an annual basis. Many counties don't have the finances to afford expensive highly technological sound devices to assure randomness for urine screens. The team shouldn't be discouraged from providing a random procedure for their JDTC. Having a system in place that allows those who collect samples to view how tests are taken is a good first step. It doesn't matter if Lee County JDTC has an expensive system or a creative innovation a team member has developed. The criterion is the same for being random: be unpredictable. Lee County JDTC can accomplish this by administering random drug tests at various times, days, and locations, and by using various testing instruments. Lastly, the team should place an importance on the role of treatment for long-term success for sobriety, and one of the best areas to utilize this approach is after a positive urine screen. Remember, drug testing is a tool to assist with the treatment plan. Treating positives



## DRUG TESTING

with court-only responses is drifting away from the JDTC model and closer to traditional probationary standards. Having the JDTC team buy into detention reduction could help with sustainability from stakeholders and community leaders.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-5-implement-contingency-management-case-management-and-community-supervision-strategies>
- Warning Signs of Adolescent Drug Use - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Warning-Signs-Adolescent-Drug-Use>
- Parental Support and Youth Substance Use Prevention - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Parental-Support-Youth-Substance-Prevention>
- Substance Use and the Adolescent Brain - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Substance-Use-Adolescent-Brain>
- Heavy Focus on Consecutive Clean Days (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-05>
- Lack of Consistent, Fair, and Immediate Responses to BOTH Dirty and Clean UAs (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-06>
- Using Sober Support Groups in Your Juvenile Drug Treatment Court - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/using%20sober%20support%20groups.pdf>

### EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Drug Testing Reference Tables for Drug Courts (July, 2019) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/drugtestingreferencetables.pdf>
- Random Drug Testing as a component of addiction treatment - <https://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement/view-policy-statement/public-policy-statements/2011/12/15/drug-testing-as-a-component-of-addiction-treatment-and-monitoring-programs-and-in-other-clinical-settings>
- Definition of Addiction (American Society of Addiction Medicine) - <https://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement/view-policy-statement/public-policy-statements/2011/12/15/the-definition-of-addiction>



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## Educational Linkages

**CASE STUDY:** Jimmy is a client in the Jefferson County JDTC. Jimmy's parents have virtually no faith in the educational system; both were high school drop-outs. At the age of six, Jimmy was tested and placed in special education classes for both intellectual and social adaptability deficits. As a special education student, he is eligible for educational services until age 22, but his attendance and efforts to learn are minimal. At age 17, he came before the court system for truancy. He was ordered to attend school regularly, but soon returned to court for violation of the school's zero tolerance policy for marijuana and alcohol found in his locker. It became clear that the school system did not want Jimmy in school, so he was recruited into the JDTC program.

### Solution-focused Tips for educational linkages:

- 1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should include a committed, experienced educational representative on the JDTC team.
- Include an educational representative on both the planning and operational teams to ensure that participants will be seamlessly served before, during, and after JDTC involvement.
  - The role of the educational representative on the team is to facilitate educational access and achievement for the youth in the JDTC. But the educational representative does not need to be a current member of the school district(s) in which the JDTC operates.
  - It may be useful to choose a school liaison from each of the educational facilities available to youth, whether public school, alternative school, or vocational preparatory centers. Liaisons should focus on educational advocacy.
  - The responsibilities for coordination and exchange of information about participants' grades, attendance, behavior, and assessment results can be the role of the educational representative, but it might not be. For many JDTC programs the probation staff continue the tasks necessary to monitor school compliance, and the educational representative focuses on achievement and attainment.
- 2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should focus on expanding current educational and vocational opportunities for all participants.
- Provide for cross training and professional development workshops so that the team is well informed of new technologies and educational opportunities.
  - Track and analyze school-based inquiries and data collection that document the perspectives, needs, and satisfaction of students and their families;
- this may help to increase family engagement and participation in education.
- Inform participants and family members about community activities that support learning skills and diverse talents, as well as health, recreational, cultural, and social activities (as these are wonderful learning opportunities).
  - Have participants and family members document lessons learned while involved with JDTC as information to be shared with a focus on continuous improvement.
- 3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should learn the language of education so that appropriate referrals and resources can be utilized.
- Recognize that the conventional school setting is not appropriate for everyone; therefore, linking with the system(s) can provide information on alternative schools, on-line learning programs, home schooling, vocational training, and GED programs.
  - Funding streams attached to education may be available for special needs; some of these terms include: IDEA, 504, gifted, various learning disabilities, specific behaviors, and many others. The JDTC's knowledge of educational terminology can be instrumental when trying to increase resources.
  - Get involved in the school's requirement to conduct multi-disciplinary team meetings (M-teams or S-teams) to accommodate students with special needs; coordinate the schools' recommendations with treatment plans of JDTC participants.
  - Know your state's standards and high need career options to advise youth on what they need to know and what education or skills they will need in order to become successful.





**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should participate in school-related activities.

- Attend PTA or school open houses to present JDTC as a viable resource and partner for those substance users in the schools.
- Present knowledge-based information on warning signs, symptoms, and effects of substance use to promote awareness in the schools.
- Know the schedule of school functions and activities to allow the JDTC team to attend and be represented; be sure schedules are widely disseminated to team members.

**5** **Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should respect the various structures that assist in continuous improvement of the educational system(s).

- Include parents, grandparents, and other extended family members that have nurturing and caretaking responsibilities in decisions about participants' education.
- Account for cultural differences in the roles of family in education, as well as making an effort to understand cultural expectations for school success.
- Foster expanding partnerships and collaboration between JDTC programs and educational providers.
- Include surveys, interviews, and open discussions to inform your JDTC about how to improve both the JDTC program and educational offerings.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should recognize the academic focus of schools, but work to form linkages that are especially relevant to at-risk adolescents.

- Ask educational representatives to include well-structured school-to-work programs for those students who do not plan to attend college.
- Work with schools to obtain funding that can support their ideas for expanding opportunities by leveraging existing funds.
- Match JDTC participants to mentors in employment or community service experiences, thus helping to nurture participants' interest in becoming successful. This may also help to reduce negative peer pressure.
- Instruct JDTC youth participants on modes of dress and behavior appropriate to public appearances, like school and work settings, to help build participants' self-confidence and self-esteem.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How can the JDTC help to provide a solid educational foundation for Jimmy and all other participants?*

**ANSWER:** Placement in special education can be confusing and overwhelming to parents, especially those who have children with limited education or undiagnosed learning disabilities. Discuss Jimmy's needs and different options available with the educational representative on the JDTC team. Review records of attendance, grades, behavior, and assessment results to check for patterns in the student's learning and academic progress. Discuss with the educational representative Jimmy's abilities to meet state standards. Ask the school site evaluator to perform current evaluations that will help to match Jimmy's abilities and interests with career options. Incorporate this information into treatment planning. Decide on the best-suited educational placement for Jimmy. Include Jimmy, his parents, and/or extended family in the decision-making process through surveys, interviews, and follow up discussions. Once Jimmy's educational placement has been decided, plan to partner with this educational entity to provide for mentoring in employment and community service settings. Monitor closely for those issues that were problematic in the traditional school setting, such as performance, attendance, behavior, and results of additional assessments so that any problems can be addressed immediately. Sometimes, one-on-one attention and meeting individualized needs cannot be addressed solely by an over-burdened school system. The JDTC team can make educational success a reality!

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Engage, Involve, Empower: Family Engagement in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/substance-abuse>
- Ensuring Equity and Access in the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (Guide to the Guidelines) - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines_Final.pdf)
- Engaging Schools in the Juvenile Court: Promising Strategies from the Field - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-6-refer-participants-evidence-based-substance-use-treatment-other-services-and-prosocial>
- Mentoring in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts: Strategies and Tips from On-Site Technical Assistance Visits and a Focus Group Report - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ\\_JDTC\\_Mentoring\\_TAB\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ_JDTC_Mentoring_TAB_Final_0.pdf)





**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Never Underestimate the Influence of a Court Run Daytime School Experience (LC Corner article) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/never-underestimate-influence-court-run-daytime-school-experience>
- Substance Use Prevention Awareness in Schools (article) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Substance-Prevention-Schools>
- Helping Disconnected Youth by Improving Linkages between High Schools and Careers - <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/helping-disconnected-youth-improving-linkages-between-high-schools-and-careers>



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## Family Engagement

**CASE STUDY:** Ms. Thomas has four children one of whom has been in and out of the juvenile justice system for shoplifting, possession of alcohol and marijuana (he has a daily smoking habit), fighting, and gang activity (not substantiated). Victor is well known within treatment and juvenile justice circles, and according to his records remains non-compliant. Victor is very close to his grandmother, Nona, who is 65 and lives with the family. At age 16, Victor has been accepted into Madison County JDTC, which is seen as a last ditch effort to get him through the juvenile justice system before he is sent to an out-of-home placement. Ms. Thomas recently received a letter to meet with the JDTC coordinator. But, Ms. Thomas is resistant and informs the JDTC coordinator, “I’m not wasting my time coming to meet with the court; I’m tired of Victor’s behavior, at this point, I don’t care what happens to my son!” You know that successfully engaging Ms. Thomas or another family member in the JDTC process will likely lead to a more positive outcome for Victor.

### Solution-focused Tips to engage families:

**1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should demonstrate respectful behavior to the family, even if the family members behave badly and/or are resistant to the process.

- Family members may appear to be resistant because of prior negative experiences with the court system. Take the time to identify what those experiences have been, which may help to open the door to improved communication.
- Utilize active-listening skills and provide family members an opportunity to express concerns.
- Ask open-ended questions to seek clarification and to increase knowledge about the youth and family.
- Remember that family members took time out of their very, very busy day to meet with the team, come to court, and come to treatment. Take the time to recognize this effort.
- Always thank family members for their time and cooperation!

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should develop a professional relationship built upon honesty and trust.

- Build rapport by doing what you say you’re going to do (e.g., begin and end court or other appointments on time; their time is just as important as yours).
- Be honest about what you can and cannot do (e.g., do not promise to provide transportation when the program doesn’t have adequate funds to support this).
- If you don’t have an answer to a specific question or concern, indicate that you will get back to them with the answer. The key is to follow through with a response via phone or email.

- To alleviate miscommunication, have a parent/responsible adult repeat the instructions you have provided to clarify.

**3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should determine who the decision-maker is within each family unit.

- Ask family members and/or the youth who the decision-maker is in the family/household (this might not be mom or dad).
- If the immediate parent is not available, inquire who may be able to serve as an active family participant in the program.
- Ask about extended non-traditional family members (in some cultures, an individual can be considered family even if there is no blood relation).
- In some cases, the team will be working with an elderly grandparent/family member.
- It may be difficult for him/her to interact with younger team members, as there may be a perception that the younger person will not understand the elder’s life experiences strictly because of age. In some cases, the team may want to identify a team member who will be able to relate to an older generation.
- If a youth is a part of a group home or in foster care, connect with a case worker to discuss the value and support a JDTC can provide.

**4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should define expectations and roles for the team and the youth and family.

- Be clear about the JDTC’s expectations – what is it that you want the youth and family members to do, how often, and at what times?



- Explain the roles of the JDTC team members and indicate points of contact for specific questions or concerns.
- Explain what each family member's role is on the team. Help each family member understand that he or she is a JDTC team member, too. The court is looking to family members for guidance in the decision-making process.
- Work with the youth and families to identify any potential conflicts (e.g., childcare, work, transportation) and help them find solutions to those barriers.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC should engage family members between court appearances and appointments by keeping them informed and updated on the youth's progress.

- Share positive and negative feedback on grades, timeliness, and attitude (e.g., "Victor was going to be late today, but he called to let me know and I really appreciate that").
- Make contact with the family to ask how things are going at home. Ask what kind of support the JDTC can give (e.g., if Ms. Thomas reports that "Victor is having trouble waking up in the morning for school, and he won't listen to me," the judge may be able to address this in court; the family then feels as though the court is backing them).
- Encourage family members to participate in the JDTC program by asking for their advice on responses. Keep in mind that these are their children; the court is there to offer guidance and support.
- Consider maintaining a contact/communication log to refer back to.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should implement a written guide or JDTC binder for youth and families.

- Consider the population the JDTC team is serving. Does the information need to be provided in another language (e.g., Spanish; Chinese)?
- Keep readability at a fifth grade level, which is the recommended level of understanding for court users.
- Some information to include would be:
  - Expectation/roles of JDTC team members and youth/families
  - Detailed schedules for court and treatment
  - Contact information for JDTC team members (e.g., a calling tree)
  - Maps/addresses for important locations (e.g., drug testing centers)

- Sections for case plan/goals (e.g., treatment goals, court goals, school goals)
- Include blank sheets for questions or notes

**7 Tip No. 7:** Most importantly, when working with families JDTC teams should have patience.

- Be prepared for resistance from the youth and families.
- Be prepared for manipulation from the youth and families.
- Always keep in mind that these families and significant others may have several things going on at one time!
- If families and youth are struggling with time management issues, the JDTC team should work to remove any barriers (e.g., set up reminder texts, calls, or emails or implement easy-to-read, simplified schedules).

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How should the Madison County team engage the Thomas family using some of the Tips discussed above?*

**ANSWER:** The team should listen respectfully and attentively to Ms. Thomas's concerns and periodically ask if there are any questions. The team should respond to those concerns that they are able to and seek clarification regarding any issues that are not clear. Ask Ms. Thomas if another family/extended family member, such as Nona, would be available to attend and actively participate with Victor. Permit Ms. Thomas to suggest someone else. Determine, additional conflicts, if any, to either of them attending. Give the family hope. The JDTC team is there to help and support Victor and the Thomas family. Indicate that you will keep her informed regarding Victor's progress and follow through with this promise. Provide her with contact information where you or another team member can be reached if there are additional questions. Provide the family with a participant guide or a JDTC binder loaded with all of the information the youth and family need to know. The team should thank Ms. Thomas for taking the time to meet with them to share her concerns.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-3-provide-jdtk-process-engages-full-jdtk-team-and-follows-procedures-fairly>
- Working Together as a Team to Build Family Engagement (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-03>
- Engage, Involve, Empower: Family Engagement in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts - <https://www.ncmhji.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/>



[Engage-Involve-Empower-Family-Engagement-in-Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Courts.pdf](#)

- The Sin of the Missed Opportunity to Engage Participants – The Court Hearing (7 Deadly Sins) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-04>
- Parental Support and Youth Substance Use Prevention (NCJFCJ article) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Parental-Support-Youth-Substance-Prevention>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Family Engagement in Juvenile Justice (OJJDP.gov, Feb 2018) – <https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family-Engagement-in-Juvenile-Justice.pdf>
- Engaging and Strengthening Families (Search Institute) - <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/current-projects/engaging-strengthening-families/>
- Family Comes First: A Workbook to Transform the Justice System - <http://campaignforyouthjustice.org/news/blog/item/comes-first-transforming-justice-system-4>
- Family Resource Centers (Child Welfare Information Gateway) - <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/prevention-programs/familyresource/>
- Safety, Fairness, Stability: Repositioning Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare to Engage Families and Communities - [https://www.juvenilecouncil.gov/materials/2011\\_5/Center%20for%20Juvenile%20Justice%20Reform%20paper%20web.pdf](https://www.juvenilecouncil.gov/materials/2011_5/Center%20for%20Juvenile%20Justice%20Reform%20paper%20web.pdf)



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## Focus on Strengths

**CASE STUDY:** Dwayne Scott is 15 years old and has lived in more than four foster care homes; he currently resides in a group home. Dwayne has two brothers and an older sister who are also in foster care. He sees one of his brothers periodically but has not seen his sister for two years and is worried about her. He has tried to keep his family together by staying in touch with his siblings. Dwayne's mother and father are both incarcerated, and he has been to see his mother twice in the past six months. Dwayne has been in and out of the juvenile justice system for minor offenses. Last year he was charged with breaking and entering, and theft at a grocery store with some of his friends. Two months later while on probation he was caught at a school activity smoking marijuana and he had ecstasy in his pocket. He has been in the STYLE JDTC for two months and shows up late to sessions. The group home manager, Paul, says Dwayne is cocky, always has an attitude, and avoids his social worker. He says he does chores around the house but has an attitude when he is doing them. Paul told the JDTC coordinator that Dwayne had borrowed the lawn mower to cut peoples' grass in the neighborhood so he could have money to catch the bus and visit his siblings and mom. Paul said he was going to report him to the probation officer for stealing the lawn mower but changed his mind because he always brought the lawn mower back. The house manager said he put a stop to Dwayne borrowing the lawn mower by putting a lock on the shed where it was stored. Dwayne's last two drug screens were negative, but the house manager thinks he has been drinking beer with some of the other kids. Dwayne continues to be resistant to JDTC, and the team has had difficulty in engaging him in treatment and community service.

### Solution-focused Tips to apply a strengths-based approach:

An individualized, strengths-based approach refers to policies, practice methods, and strategies that identify and draw upon the strengths of children, families, and communities. Strength-based practice involves a shift from a deficit approach, which emphasizes problems and pathology, to a positive partnership with the youth and their families. (Find out more at [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).)

- 1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should understand that all children have strengths. All people have strengths!
  - Being involved in the juvenile justice system does not negate the fact that all youth and their families have strengths.
  - Seek out training on a strength-based approach for all JDTC team members (see resources below).
  - Motivate youth and families by looking for what is right (strength-based approach) versus what is wrong (deficit approach).
  - A strengths-based approach should encompass asset development, social development, youth engagement, cultural values, resiliency, restorative justice, community development, and focus on a therapeutic response.
- 2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should make a concerted effort to address strengths strategically across systems when youth are involved in multiple systems (child welfare, juvenile justice, and school).
  - Work collaboratively with other agencies so youth are not overburdened with multiple expectations

from those systems, which may result in conflict of required court expectations such as:

- The youth needs to meet with his or her social worker but has been called in for a drug test at the same time.
- 3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should prioritize identifying a responsible, caring adult (mentor, coach, and/or teacher) to provide support and encouragement if a traditional parent is not available to engage in the program.
    - If a mentor or a responsible adult is not available, invite and encourage the youth to identify someone from his or her own community or a member of the JDTC team to receive support from.
    - Help youth identify a caring adult by having them discuss what they respect about that person or how that caring adult shows respect for the youth.
  - 4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should consider beginning each JDTC hearing by focusing on the positive behaviors or activities (achievements) that took place since the last court appearance.
    - Keep in mind that behind each achievement are strengths that make the achievement possible



– persistence is a strength; commitment is as strength; the ability to plan and follow through are strengths that make certain kinds of achievements like completing 20 hours of community service or going to school four days a week possible.

- It's important to help youths identify what strengths/abilities are that make achievements possible and to have achievements be a separate concept from strengths.
- Ask the youth to identify his or her greatest strengths and ask for clarification about what that means and how those strengths helped the youth accomplish goals or tasks since the last court appearance.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC assessment process should include a strength-based assessment.

- A strength-based assessment for JDTC courts can be defined as identifying or building on those emotional and behavioral skills, competencies, and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment for the youth and contribute to satisfying relationships with family members, peers, and other adults.
- Building upon a person's strengths can enhance one's ability to deal with adversity and stress, and promote one's personal, social, and academic development to support a lifestyle free of delinquency and substance abuse and/or use.
- This assessment can be conducted as a component of the youth's orientation to JDTC and can be formal or informal.
- Families should also have an assessment of their strengths and should be encouraged to nurture relationships, establish routines, maintain expectations, adapt to challenges, and connect to the community.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC should keep the following questions in mind when assessing a youth's strengths:

- Pose open-ended questions, such as:
  - Where do you go to have fun that is crime and drug free?
  - What skills do you use to avoid being in a bad situation?
- If a youth cannot identify strengths or responds with "I don't have any strengths," identify something positive about the youth's behavior (e.g., has done well in school, helped out at home; tested negative for drugs, completed community service hours, or showed up in court. The strength in these examples is that the youth

is following rules, being compliant, etc.).

- Ask youth what is important to him or her and why. This will provide team members the ability to focus on what's important to the youth from his or her perspective.
- Ask youth, what do you like best about yourself? What would you like to change about yourself?
  - Some youth may say they don't like anything. At that point the person conducting the assessment can acknowledge what they see as positive about the person they are assessing.
- Always be honest. Don't identify something as a strength if it does not exist. Youth who are system-involved need to build trust with the team; so honesty is critical especially because they will model the behaviors they see.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What are Dwayne's strengths and how should the STYLE team respond using a strength-based approach?*

**ANSWER:** Dwayne demonstrates numerous strengths. He is focused on unifying his family, making efforts to stay in touch with his siblings and mother. He has an entrepreneurial spirit and works at cutting grass so he can have money for transportation. Despite his cocky attitude, Dwayne completes his chores and shows up for JDTC (even if he is late). He is able to follow through on commitments and legal requirements and he is able to plan to make things happen. The team is encouraged to highlight these strengths during contact with Dwayne and during staffing.

The probation officer or treatment provider should work closely with the house manager to determine if Dwayne can continue to use the lawnmower if he pays for gas. The team may also want to explore independent living skills (to build upon his assets) with Dwayne and encourage him to begin thinking of ways he can continue to utilize his skills. The team (which should include the social worker) should explore ways for Dwayne, his brothers, and sister to get together for a meal or some activity.

The team should explore why Dwayne is having difficulty arriving at court on time and inspire him to develop solutions if indicated or have the team check bus schedules or transportation issues he may be experiencing.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-4-conduct-comprehensive-needs-assessments-inform-individualized-case-management>
- Reinforcing Behaviors that Juvenile Drug



Treatment Court Teams Want to See in Youth (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-05>

- Welcoming Evidence-Based Treatments (EBTs) and Building Accountability for the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Team, Youth, and Family (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-06>
- Substance Use and the Adolescent Brain - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Substance-Use-Adolescent-Brain>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway - <https://www.childwelfare.gov/>
- Youth Development Research: Learning for Understanding and Impact (Search Institute) - <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/>
- The American Family Assets Study (Search Institute) - [https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Study\\_Overview\\_Family\\_Assets.pdf](https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Study_Overview_Family_Assets.pdf)



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## Gender-Appropriate Services: Focus on Boys

**CASE STUDY:** Robbie Woodbine is a 15-year-old white male. Robbie is a cannabis user and has been in the Adams County JDTC for three months. Robbie lives with his mother and three older female siblings, and his father died when he was only four years old. The lack of a male role model is concerning for the JDTC team, as well as his mother. Robbie's mother often refers to him as "the man of the house," which has placed quite a bit of pressure on Robbie's shoulders. Robbie has been violating curfew and cutting school. When confronted by the JDTC team about his behavior, Robbie's family members, especially his mother, do not hold Robbie accountable and instead provide a variety of excuses for his actions. Robbie has a 19-year-old girlfriend and is sexually active. The team (as well as the mom) is concerned that an unplanned pregnancy is in the future.

### Solution-focused Tips to working with boys:



**Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should implement a mentoring component within the JDTC and engage adult male role models for young men who may need additional support.

- Mentoring can be a strong component of the JDTC. A mentor is a caring adult who provides a child with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement, and a constructive example to support the efforts of the parents.
- Male mentors for young men can focus on strengthening relationships with parents, family, caring adults, and responsible friends.
- Match youth with mentors who have the same interests and background whenever possible.
- Consider having the youth initiate the mentoring relationship by identifying a caring (appropriate) adult in his life.



**Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should consider using an evidence-based program specifically designed to address the needs of young men.

- Use evidence-based programs. The JDTC team is encouraged to review any research connected to individual programs (or the practice at large). If the research seems daunting, seek out experts in the field for additional guidance.
- Make referrals and/or decisions to use a program based on a valid assessment of the youth's risk and need, as well as a comprehensive component of the youth's case plan.
- Court and treatment staff should work closely together to determine need, with a focus on

keeping the youth connected to his community as much as possible.



**Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should consider utilizing a family-based therapy to address rescuing and enabling behavior that may be holding the youth back rather than moving him forward.

- Often, when family members attempt to help a loved one with his substance abuse/use or engagement in delinquent behaviors (e.g., providing excuses for truancy when a valid excuse may not exist), they are making it easier for the youth to continue to engage in such behaviors.
- Families may need the power of the court for a short period of time to help them address unwanted behaviors and to motivate for change. The JDTC team can utilize individualized responses to accomplish this task.
- Work with the families and seek out their help in this process while keeping in mind that mandating parenting or other skill-building classes may be perceived as extremely offensive. Engage rather than mandate!



**Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should consider engaging the local health and human services agency to provide sex education classes for the young men participating in your court.

- Address unplanned pregnancies and provide information on birth control strategies. This may include information on where youth can get birth control. It is important to impart that birth control is his responsibility, as well as his partner's.



- Address sexually transmitted diseases and how to protect against them as well as providing information on how to get tested.
- Consider bringing in an expert to discuss consent with the male youth in your court.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How should the Adams County team and family engage Robbie and respond to any undesirable behaviors?*

**ANSWER:** The JDTC team decides to approach Robbie's cutting school and violating curfew in a different way. John, the team member he seems to respect most, approaches him one-on-one and discusses with him why he is behaving this way. Robbie responds better to this approach, sharing that he is cutting school because he has to leave early for work and is violating curfew to spend more time with his girlfriend. The team uses this information to provide guidance to Robbie to navigate discussing start times for his shifts with his manager at work as a start to mediate the problem. They also help Robbie inform his mother of the reason and work with them to get services that may help lessen the burden he feels to work so often. Additionally, the team works with Robbie's mother to set expectations and work with her son to identify appropriate incentives for adhering to curfew. John acknowledges that Robbie is dealing with the trauma of losing his father at such a young age and helps identify individual and family counseling to help address these concerns. The team believes that incorporating family-based treatment will likely improve family functioning, as well as engage the family as a whole, rather than focusing only on Robbie. To address concerns about the team, they scheduled a meeting for all of their JDTC youth with teen parents who discussed the reality of having a child at a young age. They also provided educational resources to help the youth understand all of the potential outcomes of participating in a romantic relationship and tips for how to do so safely.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-6-refer-participants-evidence-based-substance-use-treatment-other-services-and-prosocial#overlay-context=objective-5-implement-contingency-management-case-management-and-community-supervision-strategies>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Rite of Passage: Improving the Lives of Youth - <https://riteofpassage.com/>
- Bravehearts MOVE (Motivating Other through Voices of Experience) New York - <http://www.braveheartsmoveny.org/>
- The Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring - <https://www.rhodeslab.org/center-for-evidence-based-mentoring/>
- The National Guard Youth Foundation - <http://www.ngyf.org/>
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies - <https://powertodecide.org/>



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## Gender-Appropriate Services: Focus on Girls

**CASE STUDY:** Jennifer Lewis (Jen) is 16 and has been in the Lincoln County JDTC for three months. The entire team is frustrated because she is always rolling her eyes and her favorite word is “whatever!” Jen comes to court in Goth makeup and is always wearing black. Her probation officer told her to dress more appropriately for court, but Jen continues not to comply. She has not missed JDTC and has been late only once. Every time the judge admonishes her, she cries. The team is exasperated and feels as if Jen is trying to seek attention as well as manipulate the judge through her dress and behavior.

### Solution-focused Tips to respond to girls:

**1 Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should become trauma-informed and responsive.

- Girls tend to experience childhood victimization at much higher rates than boys.
- Many enter the system with serious mental health issues often resulting from experiencing trauma.
- Girls may act out in court as a survival mechanism. They may also withdraw and shut down.
- Staff are encouraged to seek additional training in this area to serve a female population better (<https://www.courtinnovation.org/areas-of-focus/justice-involved-women>).

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC teams should understand that girls communicate and respond to frustrations differently.

- Non-verbal communication in girls can include deep sighs, rolling their eyes, shutting down by closing eyes, and staring at you.
- Don't personalize it! Find out what is going on by asking open-ended questions, and clarify when indicated.
- For many girls, rolling their eyes, pouting, and folding their arms are common behaviors.
- Allow girls time to come up with an answer beyond “I don't know.”
- Allow teen girls to express themselves and communicate in ways that are comfortable for them.
- Encourage girls to clear their minds or get their thoughts together and off their chests.
- Identify a team member who appears to have a positive relationship with the youth. Ask the team member to explore what she is trying to communicate with her non-verbal communication.

It may be generational or it could be that she doesn't understand what is being said.

**3 Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should recognize the art and benefit of tears.

- Crying can be healthy! It's a way to express sadness, relief, happiness, or to get rid of pain.
- Allow time for girls to cry – if the youth is trying to be manipulative, she might stop crying quickly. If there is something else going on, it may take some time.
- Provide an area where the youth can step out of court for a period time to get herself together.
- After crying for a period of time the youth may fall asleep. This is not unusual.

**4 Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should empower young women to engage in the process – let them be a member of the team too!

- If the youth is frustrated with the JDTC, ask her how it can improve.
- Provide her the opportunity to make a list of things she thinks may help her succeed. Allow her time to think about it and don't be surprised if she indicates that “it's not her problem.”
- Sometimes it's the little things that count! Look for what girls do right by focusing on the positive – just showing up on time can be considered a success.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should provide gender-appropriate responses.

- Individualize responses. Don't take for granted that a young woman is interested in getting a manicure just because she is a girl.
- Take the time to complete interests surveys to discover what motivates a particular girl. This may





surprise the team.

- Make sure responses are beneficial and tied to a behavior the youth needs to change.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should allow the girls to express themselves through individual style.

- Girls tend to portray their personality through fashion and style. They may choose a particular style to gain attention or it may be their way of expressing themselves.
- Seek out training on Girl Culture (or youth culture). Fashion trends (hairstyles, clothing, and perfume) are a driving force for youth, especially young women.
- Explore trends to understand better where the youth are coming from. Focus on culture because some trends for girls may vary based on race, ethnicity, faith, or location (urban/rural), while others may remain constant regardless of where they reside.
- When girls dress in a certain way, try to find out what their thinking is. Ask what they like about certain clothing and how does it relate to their personal expression.
- Have the teen write a short history of the type of clothing she likes and share with the team or her peers about why she likes to express herself in this way. It will require her to be proactive and her responses may surprise you!

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How should the Lincoln County team respond to Jennifer Lewis and the issues she is presenting to the court?*

**ANSWER:** The JDTC coordinator takes the time to educate herself and her team on Goth clothing and accessories and talks with Jen about different styles. She learns that Jen has been helping her peers with makeup and outfits to prepare for the new vampire movie coming out. Her counselor informs the team that the next time she begins rolling her eyes to ignore it. It is something that most girls at her age do to demonstrate boredom rather than a sign of disrespect. She also encourages the team that when Jen begins crying in court to give her a few minutes to get herself together rather than responding immediately. She acknowledges that Jen is dealing with some very personal issues in treatment. The team notes Jen's attendance at the last meeting and rewards her with Goth makeup and a lace umbrella (as an incentive for future attendance), which surprises Jen especially because she thought the team hated her makeup. The judge arranges for the team to have a brown bag lunch in order to receive training on being trauma informed. This training will increase awareness of participants who may

be experiencing unresolved trauma and assist staff with being trauma responsive to behaviors exhibited in court. The case manager empowers Jen to identify ways she thinks the JDTC can be enhanced to be more responsive to girls.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-7-monitor-and-track-program-completion-and-termination>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- ROSES (Resilience, Opportunity, Safety, Education, Strength) - <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/center/roses?ga=2.152010043.361693781.1550799460.637025769.1546446613>
- NYS Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children – New York State Girls' Justice Initiative (GJI) - <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/justiceforchildren/gji.shtml#nyu>
- Bravehearts MOVE (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) New York - <http://www.braveheartsmoveny.org/>
- Specialized Responses for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System (OJJDP, June 2018) - <https://www.flcourts.org/content/download/402743/3454090/Girls-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf>
- Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/principles/contents.html>
- Gender and Juvenile Justice: New Courts, Programs Address Needs of Girls (National Center for Youth Law) – <https://youthlaw.org/publication/gender-and-juvenile-justice-new-courts-programs-address-needs-of-girls/>
- National Crittenton: Social & Systems Change for Girls - <http://nationalcrittenton.org/gender-injustice/>
- Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: The Case for Girls' Courts (ABA, Jan 2012) - <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/articles/2012/girls-juvenile-justice-system-case-for-girls-courts/>
- Girls and Opioids: Vulnerabilities & Opportunities (Reclaiming Futures, Sep 2017) - <https://www.reclaimingfutures.org/news/juvenile-treatment-drug-court>



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## Gender-Appropriate Services: Focus on LGBTQI-GNC Youth

**CASE STUDY:** Corey Wilson has been in the Bryant County JDTC for the past six months. He has remained drug free for 120 consecutive days, improved his schoolwork, is participating in the school orchestra, and had not re-offended until three weeks ago when he was suspended for fighting in school after another youth called him rude names and was taunting him. Last month Corey told the JDTC team that he was gay and asked for support while he told his parents. His mother cried and his father refused to talk about it. Judge Bennett told Corey that his parents really had nothing to do with his decision to come out. The judge further indicated that Corey needed to focus on his sobriety and staying out of trouble. His probation officer, according to Corey, has been treating Corey as if he had a disease and suggested that Corey might do better with a female officer. Corey told the coordinator that he feels as if everyone is against him, and he just wants to get high or even end his life because no one understands him!

### Solution-focused practical Tips for working with LGBTQI-GNC youth:

*Note: The acronym LGBTQI-GNC is intended to represent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, gender nonconforming (LGBTQI-GNC) and Two-Spirit youth as inclusively as possible. As always when working with a diverse community, ask individuals how they identify themselves in order to maintain respect.*

- 1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should seek out training on national statistics on behaviors and issues that impact LGBTQI-GNC youth.
  - Hold a brown bag lunch to provide training on substance use, crime, mental health problems, and homelessness as they affect LGBTQI-GNC youth.
    - Suicide is the leading cause of death among gay and lesbian youth;
    - 50% of all gay and lesbian youth report that their parents reject them due to their sexual orientation;
    - Gays and lesbians are at a much higher risk than the heterosexual population for alcohol and drug abuse;
    - It is estimated that gay, lesbian and bisexual youth make up 20-40% of homeless youth in urban areas; and
    - An estimated 28% of gay and lesbian youth drop out of high school due to verbal and physical abuse in the school environment.
- 2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should become familiar with terminology, sensitive language, culture, and expressions used by the LGBTQI-GNC participant.
  - Develop a glossary of terms to assist in clarifying misconceptions and stereotypes associated with language pertinent to the LGBTQI-GNC community.
- 3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should develop a resource list of local support services that are developmentally appropriate and relevant to LGBTQI-GNC youth and families.
  - Consider working with the LGBTQI-GNC community to help develop and define terms in the glossary.
    - The team may need to conduct a community mapping exercise to determine which groups within their own community would be appropriate.
  - Include sober support groups and specific treatment providers specializing in gender responsive services.
  - Expand resource lists to include national and regional support (e.g., hot lines for youth to call or online support groups).
  - Seek out mentoring groups that provide mentors to LGBTQI-GNC youth.
  - The team can also assist youth in identifying appropriate role models or mentors that may aid in providing additional support to assist in reducing bias.
- 4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should identify a local and/or state network that focuses on parents,



families, allies, and friends of gays and lesbians.

- Empower youth and families to explore these networks so they can identify with others who may be experiencing similar concerns and questions.
- Determine if there is a Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in your jurisdiction – if not, contact the national organization.
- Consider including a representative from PFLAG on the JDTC’s advisory group/stakeholder committee.
- Be prepared to implement a support system for family members who may have difficulty accepting their child’s orientation/gender.

**Tip No. 5:** The JDTC school representative should identify what support services are available at the youth’s school and what is available in their county.

- Explore whether or not the school has internal LGBTQI-GNC support groups.
- Identify if non-discrimination policies exist at the school or county.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What strategies should the Bryant County JDTC employ to provide services to Corey? What strategies can be offered to his family?*

**ANSWER:** Mark, the coordinator, contacts the mental health clinic to set up an appointment for Corey since he is very concerned that Corey appears to be depressed and wants to rule out any suicidal ideations. Because of his positive relationship with Corey, Mark encourages him to come to the team meeting to tell them how they could provide support. While Corey declines Mark’s invitation, he provides Mark with a list of things that he wants help with, especially regarding his family. The team asks the family therapist to work with Corey and his family to address concerns, to identify ways that they can support him, and to provide a forum to express any concerns, issues, or lack of understanding his parents may have regarding Corey’s identifying that he is gay. Mark also distributes a glossary of terms often used in the LGBTQI-GNC community. He arranges for a parent from PFLAG to educate the team to address how the court can best provide support and identify community resources. Lastly, Corey’s probation officer admits that he is not comfortable with Corey and that he needs to meet with his supervisor to address his situation and proceed in a way that benefits Corey the most.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ’s Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-7-monitor-and-track-program-completion-and-termination>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- LGBTQ Terminology - <https://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/Resources/LGBTQ-Terminology#284251050-a>
- Is It LGBT or LGBTQ? Acronyms Explained (True Colors Fund) - <https://truecolorsfund.org/2018/02/22/lgbt-lgbtq-acronyms-explained/>
- Access to Juvenile Justice Irrespective of Sexual Orientation, Gender, Identity, and Gender Expression (SOGIE) (State Justice Institute) - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/SOGIE\\_Benchcard%20-%20%207%2015%2017.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/SOGIE_Benchcard%20-%20%207%2015%2017.pdf)
- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Behavioral Health Publications - <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/lgbtq-resources-national.pdf>
- National LGBTQ Task Force - <http://www.thetaskforce.org/>
- Human Rights Campaign Working for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Human Rights - <https://www.hrc.org/youth-report>
- Parents Families Friends and Allies of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG) - <https://pflag.org/>
- National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) - <http://www.nclrights.org/>
- 2017 Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, Gender Nonconforming and Transgender (LGBQ/GNCT) Youth Involved with Juvenile Justice (Reclaiming Futures article) - <https://www.reclaimingfutures.org/news/2017-report-lesbian-gay-bisexual-questioning-gender-nonconforming-and-transgender-lgbqgnct>
- LGBTQ Youths in the Juvenile Justice System (OJJDP, Aug 2014) - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/LGBTQYouthsIntheJuvenileJusticeSystem.pdf>
- Hidden Injustice: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in Juvenile Courts (The Equity Project, Fall 2009) - [http://www.equityproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/hidden\\_injustice.pdf](http://www.equityproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/hidden_injustice.pdf)



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## Judicial Involvement and Supervision

**CASE STUDY:** Newly elected Judge Adams has been assigned by the senior judge in her jurisdiction to preside over the ELITE JDTC for two years. There is no assigned substitute. She has no prior training in the specifics of juvenile justice or treatment and wonders if she has the right training and philosophy to preside over this specialty court. Judge Adams has scheduled JDTC case staffing for 1:30 p.m. and open hearings for 2:30 p.m. every other Wednesday for all participants. Participants are often late or absent from court and frequently do not return to school following court. Youth complain that they can't get to court on time. The JDTC requires a parent to attend court with the youth but finds that parental participation is sporadic. Judge Adams is challenged by the behaviors and attitudes of the participants and their parents and frustrated that they continue to break the program rules. Youth and their families complain that they are not treated fairly and state that the judge favors some participants and does not understand the special needs of others.

### Solution-focused Tips to judicial involvement and supervision:

- 1 Tip No. 1:** Whenever possible, seek or assign judges who support the drug court philosophy and are willing to serve for a significant period of time.
  - Select a judge who supports the philosophy of treatment courts and who is comfortable working with challenging youth and families.
  - Select an alternate judge to step in during times of absences by the sitting judge who believes in the JDTC philosophy.
  - Select a judge who will be a leader and convener, as the collaborative process will depend on strong leadership skills.
  - Select a judge who will build a personal relationship with participants, which is fundamental to the JDTC process. This provides structure for participants that they may not receive elsewhere.
  - Select a judge who can provide structure and consistency – program continuity is enhanced when judges serve for significant periods of time (two years in recommended practice).
- 2 Tip No. 2:** The judge and team should conduct court sessions at times that accommodate the needs of the participants and their parents.
  - Hold court sessions at times that least interfere with the daily lives of youth and families.
    - School, work, and treatment schedules of youth and families must be taken into account. Consider holding court in late afternoon or in the evening.
    - Be flexible in scheduling hearings. Situations may arise that require attention between regular court appearances (e.g., dispensing immediate responses).
- 3 Tip No. 3:** The judge should attend and participate in frequent pre-court staffing and court appearances.
  - Hold court sessions on a bi-weekly basis. Frequent interaction with the judge improves outcomes for youth and families.
    - Participate and facilitate pre-court staffing with the JDTC team to discuss successes, challenges, and case planning for the youth.
    - Provide an opportunity for other team members to voice opinions and concerns regarding case planning and individual decisions about the youth.
    - Avoid voting, as this continues the adversarial process.
    - Work on building a consensus with the team, with the judge having the final decision.
    - Follow the agreed-upon recommendations of the team once on the bench.
- 4 Tip No. 4:** The judge should hold open hearings for most JDTC cases (note: state statutes may apply).
  - Require youth and families to attend court for the entire docket:
    - Youth benefit from seeing how their peers are performing in the program.
    - Youth are able to observe fair and consistent treatment by the court.
  - Care must be taken not to shame or embarrass youth.





- Sensitive medical, family, or other information should be dealt with in pre-court staffing. Client confidentiality must be upheld.
- Maintain the integrity of the court by providing a respectful and calm environment that is conducive to learning from the process. Youth should dress appropriately (provide clothing, if necessary). Keep disruptions to a minimum; incorporate family as much as possible.

**5 Tip No. 5:** The judge and the JDTC team should be knowledgeable about the culture of youth, their language, and attitudes.

- Locate opportunities to provide training on adolescent development and youth culture – youth are different from adults!
- Keep in mind that youth may be at different places developmentally and may respond differently to JDTC requirements. Individualize responses from the bench rather than focusing on broad program goals. Focus on the strengths of the youth and families.
- Understand the difference between adolescent-based substance abuse/use treatment and adult treatment models. Take the time to find out what type of treatment model is utilized.
- Understand the difference between substance abuse/use of drugs and alcohol by adolescents and adults. The issues are different.

**6 Tip No. 6:** The judge should strive to build a personal connection with the youth and families.

- Take the time to understand the youth's unique challenges. Comprehensive case planning and participation in pre-court staffing will assist the judge with this.
- Impartiality is key. Show the same level of concern with each youth.
- Draw attention to weekly accomplishments in court. Praise from the bench is often an incentive that the youth and families most value.
- Comment on individual program expectations/goals and tie these to phase movement and graduation every time the youth appear before the judge.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How should the ELITE program structure a JDTC using some of the Tips discussed above?*

**ANSWER:** Selection of a judge is often difficult; however, whenever possible select a judge who believes in treatment courts and who is broadly competent in the areas of adolescent development, adolescent-based treatment, and who is willing to work with a challenging population. Judge Adams

should seek out training on JDTCs and adolescent development. In addition, Judge Adams should work with the JDTC team to individualize responses from the bench, which are discussed (and agreed upon) during pre-court staffing. Judge Adams should work with the juvenile justice system to find a time on the court docket that will accommodate the youth and families' schedules. The team should begin operating open court sessions that highlight a consistent and fair process.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-3-provide-jdtk-process-engages-full-jdtk-team-and-follows-procedures-fairly>
- The Unique Role of the Judge in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts: Advice from the Field - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Role%20of%20the%20JDC%20Judge\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Role%20of%20the%20JDC%20Judge_Final.pdf)
- Greater Than the Sum of Their Parts: Clarifying Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Juvenile Drug Court Teams - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities\\_Web-Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities_Web-Final_0.pdf)
- The Sin of the Missed Opportunity to Engage Participants – The Court Hearing (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-04>
- 5 Ways Juvenile Court Judges Can Use Data - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ\\_5\\_Ways\\_Data\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ_5_Ways_Data_Final.pdf)
- NCTSN Bench Card for the Trauma-Informed Judge - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JudgeBenchCards\\_final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JudgeBenchCards_final.pdf)
- NCTSN Bench Card for Court-Ordered Trauma-Informed Mental Health Evaluation of Child: Sample Addendum - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JudgeBenchCards\\_final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JudgeBenchCards_final.pdf)

#### EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Ethical Considerations for Judges and Attorneys in Drug Court, NDCl, 2001. [www.ndci.org](http://www.ndci.org)
- Judges' Guide to Juvenile Mental Health Jargon: A Quick Reference for Juvenile Justice System Practitioners (Policy Research Associates) - <https://www.prainc.com/our-work/products/>





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## Monitoring and Evaluation

**CASE STUDY:** The Zee County court system has experienced a sharp increase in the number of youths referred for various charges related to substance use activity. For example, the docket is filled with charges of violation of probation, possession of drug paraphernalia, underage drinking, violation of school system's zero tolerance policy (mostly related to tobacco products on campus), and distribution of illegal substances including prescription drugs. In addition, and suspected to be an ancillary correlation, is a rise in the number of various status offenses, such as: runaway, curfew violations, disobeying rules of household, and academic failure due to violation of compulsory attendance regulations.

### Solution-focused Tips to monitor and evaluate:

- 1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should compile baseline data from a multi-disciplinary approach and focus on the identified issues.
  - Compile information from the larger juvenile justice system, including, but not limited to: arrests, charges, detention, imprisonment, educational progress, employment rates, family stability, job skills and/or training opportunities, teen pregnancy rates, UA results, types of responses used, and various other information specific to geographic location.
  - Acknowledge that the JDTC team is undertaking a research project, which will require a commitment to participate in this social experiment.
- 2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC planning team should incorporate monitoring and evaluation components before implementing the program.
  - Discuss program expectations as a response to identified community issues.
  - Identify everyone's role in the ongoing process with clear expectations of the tasks and responsibilities.
  - Define how things will be different and how community issues will be changed with the implementation of an operational JDTC.
  - Have stakeholders and team members document their own individual strengths and weaknesses (i.e., is evaluation a part of their skill set), as well as areas of interest in the evaluation process. Prepare a timeline for identifying a target population to be served, the services to be provided, an evaluator to be hired, and all other expectations of what the program will look like.
  - Address the following questions when looking at data and building an evaluation component:
    - What data is needed to show change?
    - Where will the data come from?
    - Is working with the court's IT/MIS people to determine IT capacity a possibility?
    - Will the team hire an independent evaluator?
    - Will funding be necessary to utilize an independent evaluator?
    - Is there a local university the team can partner with to bring expertise or provide services?
    - What instruments are available for data collection?
- 3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should develop a mission statement that encapsulates expectations for success.
  - Because no one program can fix all community problems, decide what the limits of the JDTC should be.
  - Determine wants/needs and how to achieve them so that the mission statement clearly defines what the program will do and what it will not do.
  - Be realistic about expectations; consider what team members are willing to do, what services can be provided, what level of support is already in place, and what else is needed to be successful.
  - Define terms of evaluation processes so that everyone is speaking the same language.



**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC team should devise a system for documentation of the program's process and procedure.

- Document team meetings with reports on what is discussed and what actions will be taken; follow up at the next meeting to determine whether the work is getting done.
- Foster the team approach by assigning specific tasks of monitoring and evaluation to all team members. For example, there will be team members well suited to develop participant surveys, to serve as resource monitors, and/or to interface with service providers.
- Develop and maintain signed letters of agreement between the program and the named evaluator outlining the program's purpose, scope, method, providers, workplan, and schedule.
- Continue regular team meetings with periodic updates from the evaluator and stakeholders so that there are no surprises.
- Establish a management information system (MIS) where all JDTC program-specific documentation is placed and can be retrieved for reports.

**5** **Tip No. 5:** The JDTC team should collect and manage data to answer programmatic evaluation questions.

- Conduct process evaluations (which are different from outcome evaluations) and ask programmatic questions:
  - Are youth moving through phases in the anticipated timeframe?
  - Are the procedures set in place to refer youth to treatment working? Are the procedures getting youth assessed faster/better?
  - Is having a school liaison doing what the team wants – increasing school connectedness?
  - How are the processes tested? Are there validated pre- and post-scales?
- Implement a monitoring process that accurately reflects the day-to-day operations of the program; a well-defined process helps to identify needs for improvement and to provide for in-the-moment continuous improvement strategies.
- Refer back to the initial questions relevant to the identified issues; for example, are provided services working (e.g., family support groups, adolescent-based treatment, case planning)?
- Demonstrate the impact of both process and outcome evaluation goals. For example, family connectedness is increased because the JDTC

team implemented a family support group. How do we know this?

- Process evaluation is data collected on the number of family support groups held and attendance levels.
  - Outcome evaluation is data collected from pre- and post-scales that shows an increase in family connectedness.
- Collect data along the way to avoid some of the common pitfalls in the long run, such as failure to document, mission creep, expecting a too-quick fix, and communication difficulties among all involved parties.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** The JDTC team should acknowledge that a JDTC program is research in its most basic form.

- As a research endeavor, the JDTC contributes to knowledge in the field by maintaining program integrity.
- Comparison among programs can provide the field with information from which to draw conclusions and provide for continuous improvement.
- Documentation of what works enables you to provide the field with evidence-based practice strategies.
- Maximize the contributions of all stakeholders rather than relying solely on one evaluator to determine success; remember to express gratitude for the contributions of all stakeholders.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How can the Zee JDTC monitor and evaluate its effectiveness using some of the Tips discussed above?*

**ANSWER:** Begin collecting data from a variety of sources prior to implementing a JDTC. Be sure to include a needs assessment, which will help to provide baseline data. Get everyone on the team, including all stakeholders, involved in developing expectations for success and a plan for meeting those expectations. Keep all this information available to all stakeholders. Once expectations for the program are set, identify the primary evaluator and give him/her access to program information. Develop the letters of agreement so that everyone knows his/her role in the program. Continue to look back at the initial questions asked making any corrections as the program evolves. Maintain the momentum! Recognize that there will be a difference in evaluation goals for all stakeholders. For example, clients (youth and his/her family) want help for a problem, sponsors want to know that their funds are being used appropriately, community members want to know that issues



are being addressed, service providers will want confirmation that their services meet the program's needs, and researchers and data collection experts want assurance that they are adequately capturing the program's successes and areas for improvement, giving recommendations for the future and providing the field with evidence-based practice models. Results and final reports should be widely disseminated so that replication and/or continuation is likely to occur.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-7-monitor-and-track-program-completion-and-termination>
- Achieving Confidence with Data Collection: How to Monitor and Manage your Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts Progress (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%207%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- Addressing the Needs of Youth with Comprehensive Case Planning (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Objective%204%20NCJFCJ%20Guide%20to%20JDTC%20Guidelines.pdf>
- 5 Ways Juvenile Court Judges Can Use Data - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ\\_5\\_Ways\\_Data\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ_5_Ways_Data_Final.pdf)
- Supplemental Data Collection Tools (Starting a Juvenile Drug Court Planning Guide) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/starting-juvenile-drug-court-planning-guide>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Case Management for Substance Abuse Treatment: A Guide for Administrators - [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- Hatry, H.P., Newcomer, K.E., & Wholey, J.S. *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. 4th ed., Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint, 2015.
- PPCD Technical Issues Snapshot 2011 Creating Judicial Academic Partnerships: An Efficient Way to Leverage Resources for Evaluation - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Judiciary-Academic%20TAB\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Judiciary-Academic%20TAB_Final_0.pdf)



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## Program Structure and Management: Using Phases Effectively

**CASE STUDY:** The Blanken County JDTC program has been operational for 14 years. Only two of the team members are original to the team (the prosecutor and the defense attorney). Both of the original team members attended the national Drug Court Planning Initiative trainings in 2005 where they helped develop the current program phase structure. The prosecutor and defense attorney point out that the current phase structure, modeled after the adult drug court in Blanken County, has not been revised or updated since the JDTC became operational. Fourteen years later, the entire team can plainly see that the current structure doesn't meet the needs of the youth being served. Indeed, there are many other issues, including: 1) high expectations and heavy requirements in phase one; 2) very little differentiation among phases regarding supervision requirements, treatment, services, and expectations; 3) pre-determined requirements that lack individualized case plan goals and objectives; 4) lack of clear criteria for moving from one phase to the next; and 5) lack of quality assurance strategies to assure adherence to the phase structure. The data reveal that the challenges listed above have led to youth spending longer than designed periods in each phase of the program (e.g., the average time in phase one is 90 days, compared to the design of 30 days) and high termination rates (likely due to program fatigue and failure caused by phase immobility).

### Solution-focused Tips to help teams develop and manage a program structure that uses phases effectively:

- 1 **Tip No. 1:** JDTC teams should collect, organize, and review data connected to the phases of the JDTC.
  - Analyze data for each phase in the program by aggregating data to determine the average, maximum, and minimum amount of time it takes a youth to complete each phase.
    - *Data can easily be aggregated using an Excel spreadsheet. Analyze one-to-two years' prior phase advancement data for youth who graduated and who were terminated from the program.*
  - Compare the findings to the program design and use the following questions and discussion points to guide the conversation:
    - *Is it taking longer than the original design to progress through the phases?*
      - It is important to note that reaching benchmarks set in the design of the program are important for maintaining the legitimacy of the court.
    - *Why is extended time in each phase problematic?*
      - Again, this is problematic because it reduces the legitimacy of the court; however, more importantly, it inadvertently uses up precious resources and creates a feeling among youth and families that there is no end in sight.
  - *What parts of the team's process may be contributing to longer periods of time in each phase?*
    - Many things contribute to longer stays, so the team should discuss the following possibilities – 1) high expectations in phase one before the youth has learned any new skills or received a significant amount of treatment; 2) mandating a set amount of consecutive negative drug tests; and 3) erasing days earned after a single return to use.
  - As a team, list the processes discussed that might directly affect a youth's ability to progress through the program and determine if the process is supported by the *JDTC Guidelines*.
    - *If the process isn't directly supported by the JDTC Guidelines (e.g., mandating a set amount of consecutive negative drug tests), then discuss how the team can make changes to the process that will ultimately increase the youth's ability to progress.*



- 2 **Tip No. 2:** JDTC teams should revise current phase structures based on the analysis and findings from completing Tip No. 1.
- Use Objective Four in the *JDTC Guidelines* to ensure that the revised phases are connected to recommended case planning and management practices.
- Avoid setting pre-determined requirements that youth and families must meet, rather create objectives and activities that:
  - Use validated risk/need/responsivity and substance use assessments to determine priorities or domains (school, peer associations, attitudes, and substance use) to develop attainable goals for youth and families.
  - These assessments should collect information on the following:
    - Use of alcohol or other drugs;
    - Criminogenic needs;
    - Mental health needs;
    - History of abuse or other traumatic experiences;
    - Well-being needs and strengths; and
    - Parental drug use, parental mental health needs, and parenting skills.
  - Use American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria and a substance use assessment to determine the appropriate level of care.
- Create a phase structure that is driven by individualized and culturally appropriate case plans.
- 3 **Tip No. 3:** JDTC teams should use phase one as a time of orientation for the team, as well as youth and families.
- Avoid mandating treatment sessions, other than sessions used for assessments and information gathering, during this phase.
  - *The information gathered during phase one is ultimately used to develop an individualized case plan (i.e., what the youth will do in phase two, three, and four).*
- Avoid sanctioning for alcohol and other drug use or mandating a number of negative drug screens during phase one.
- Phase one activities and measures of accomplishment should be the responsibility of the team, not on the youth and family, meaning that it is the team's responsibility to conduct needed assessments, provide information to the youth and families, and develop individualized

case plans that include 1) the level of care identified, 2) attainable goals and objectives, and 3) supervision needs.

- 4 **Tip No. 4:** JDTC teams should develop phases that have internal overarching *program* goals, objectives, processes, internal benchmarks, and measures that lead to individualized case plan development and management.
- Each phase should have a primary *programmatic* goal, meaning a goal the *team* hopes to accomplish with the youth during any one phase. For example, “the goal of the orientation phase (phase one) is to assess youth/families and to familiarize youth/families with the JDTC processes/procedures.”
- Develop *programmatic* objectives to help reach the goals of the *program*. For example:
  - Assess all youth/families through structured intake procedures;
  - Develop comprehensive case plans and goals; and
  - Build relationships and orient youth and families through initial supervision meetings and court appearances.
- The programmatic objectives should connect to the process (activities), benchmarks, and measures that make up the actual framework of each phase. For example, internal structures for phase one should look similar to the information found in Table B.
- 5 **Tip No. 5:** JDTC teams should create similar internal structures for additional phases, which include overarching *programmatic* goals, objectives, processes, internal benchmarks, and measures.
- Use additional phases to engage youth in services and reassessment activities to determine objective progress on individualized case plan goals and objectives.
- Avoid an overreliance on compliance and supervision during additional phases, as it can create an atmosphere of mistrust by the team and youth/families.
- Avoid continuing the same level supervision after graduation. Consider ceasing court appearances and drug testing youth.
  - JDTC teams should shift to ensuring that connections to community and services are firmly in place. Consider implementing brief telephone continuing care therapy for adolescents for aftercare activities.
- Use performance measures to monitor multiple levels of progress for the youth as well as your





team’s adherence to program design.

- Use developmental considerations, gender, and cultural experiences that are revealed during the assessment process.
  - Assessments are a wealth of information that can and should inform individual case plans for youth (e.g., understanding specific skills the youth has, the team can identify pro-social activities to connect the youth to).
- Connect to the process (activities), benchmarks, and measures that make up the actual framework of each phase. For example, internal structures for additional phases should look similar to the information found in Table C.

**6** **Tip No. 6:** JDTC teams should create external, family/youth friendly checklists that correspond with the process and structure recommended in Tips 4 and 5.

- Develop checklists that help youth understand what is objectively required to move from phase to phase.
  - Checklists should be derived from the process and activities developed for each phase. For example, if an assessment or a case plan must be completed in phase one, a corresponding item should be on the youth checklist.
  - Use first person language to develop checklists. For example, “I met with my case manager on BLANK date to finish my case plan. One of the goals I am working on is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Avoid restricting phase progress, due to a single event or unwanted behavior, if all of the checklist items have been accomplished. Rather, refer to a simple rule – if the youth did it they get it.
- Encourage youth and families to monitor their own progress actively on each checklist; however, be sure to provide many ways to keep track/keep/copy checklists. It is more important that the youth is actively accomplishing items on the checklist, NOT that the youth keep a copy of the checklist or bring it to every meeting/court hearing.

**7** **Tip No. 7:** JDTC teams should implement the new phase structure all at once with all youth in the program.

- Be honest with the youth and families regarding the changes the team is making connected to the phases, i.e., clearly state the reason for the changes and what the team hopes the outcomes of the changes will be.
- Build in opportunities to review data after

revisions are made early and often. For example, aggregate data on youth who are currently in the program on a monthly basis based on the measures identified in the phase structures. This process will hold the team accountable, as well as help the team understand if the changes are working.

- Use data to assist in reducing gaps in services and referrals to services.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What steps should Blanken County take to revise its current phase structure to improve outcomes for youth and families?*

**ANSWER:** The coordinator should first gather and organize data for the team to review and discuss and deliver the data in an easy to read/understand format. The coordinator should use the resources listed below to understand how to gather and organize the data – “How to collect and analyze your phase level data.” Once this task is accomplished, the judge and the coordinator should gather the entire team to discuss the findings and needed revisions/changes during a strategic planning meeting. The judge, coordinator, or neutral facilitator should facilitate this meeting. All of the team members should be involved in developing goals, objectives, processes (activities), benchmarks, and measures for each phase of the program. It is important that the team develop a comprehensive action plan with reasonable timelines to complete the revision process fully. The action plan should include target completion times for team meetings, creation and review of draft processes, and activities/deadlines for implementation.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/juvenile-drug-treatment-court-guidelines.html>
- Review NCJFCJ’s JDTC Newsletter – How to collect and analyze your phase level data featuring guest Rosie Medina, Director of Special Programs, El Paso County Juvenile Probation (TX) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/archived-newsletters-juvenile-drug-court>
- Review Brief Telephone Continuing Care Therapy for Adolescents by Yifrah Kaminer, M.D., M.B.A. and Chris Napolitano, M.S, L.M.F.T. – <https://www.hazelden.org/store/item/11516?Brief-Telephone-Continuing-Care-Therapy-for-Adolescents>



## Table B

<b>PROCESS:</b> <i>What activities need to be done to accomplish the above objectives?</i>	<b>BENCHMARK:</b> <i>What is the internal timeframe the team will meet to accomplish each activity?</i>	<b>MEASURE:</b> <i>How will the team know that the activity has been completed?</i>
Complete comprehensive youth assessment	Assessment completed ___ days after acceptance in the JDTC	Number/percentage of youth assessments completed by target completion date
Develop an integrated case plan with attainable goals in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment</li> <li>• Education/Vocational</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Probation</li> </ul> Involve youth and family members in developing the case plan	Integrated case plan developed ___ days after assessment is completed	Number of case plans developed by target completion date
Refer to services to assist in goal completion	Referral to services takes place ___ days after case plan is developed ( <i>note: a triage approach to service delivery should be used; additional services can be added to the case plan after goal attainment and/or reassessment</i> )	Number/percentage of youth referred to services based on case plan by target completion date
Orient youth and family members to JDTC team members and processes (e.g., court session, drug testing court, progress reports)	Orientation Session (meet JDTC team members, observe court, learn about program processes and expectations) takes place _____ days after case plan is developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First drug test takes place _____ days after orientation session occurs</li> </ul>	Number/percentage of orientation sessions provided to youth and family members to meet JDTC team members, observe court session, and learn about program processes and expectations by target completion date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/percentage of drug tests administered by target initiation date</li> </ul>



## Table C

<b>PROCESS:</b> <i>What activities need to be done to accomplish the above objectives?</i>	<b>BENCHMARK:</b> <i>What is the internal timeframe the team will meet to accomplish each activity?</i>	<b>MEASURE:</b> <i>How will the team know that the activity has been completed?</i>
<b>Judicial:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• court appearances</li> <li>• report on goals and progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bi-weekly or determined by the individual needs</li> </ul>	Percentage attendance rate  Percentage engagement w/judge on weekly reports
<b>Supervision (internal minimum, requirement):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• case manager/probation officer contacts</li> <li>• drug screens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of contacts mandated in your jurisdiction</li> <li>• 2-3/week (random)</li> </ul>	Percentage/number of contacts made  Percentage/number drug screens provided and collected  Percentage/number positive/negative UAs  Percentage/number court response to positive/negative UAs
<b>Treatment/Case Management</b>  Engage in case plan and make progress on attainable goals	Reassess and update case plan within ___ days of initial assessment; or reassess and update case plan in ___Phase II ___Phase III ___Both; or reassess and update every ___60 days ___90 days. <i>(The main point here is that the team should reassess on a regular basis. There may even be specific rules or regulations in your jurisdiction that you will need to adhere to.)</i>	Percentage progress made on attainable goals, based on a developed Likert Scale (1. no progress; 2. initial progress; 3. marked progress; and 4. goal attained - <i>more detailed definitions added to this scale will likely be needed and developed by the team</i> )  Number of re-assessments completed  Number of case plans updated  Number of youth showing improvement on dynamic assessments
<b>Treatment / Case Management related to graduation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of case plan and goal attainment</li> <li>• Relapse prevention plan</li> <li>• Transition Planning</li> <li>• Re-Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of case plan and goal attainment ___ days after acceptance in the 4th Phase</li> <li>• Relapse prevention plan developed ___ days after case plan review is completed</li> <li>• Transition plan developed ___ days after relapse prevention plan is developed</li> <li>• Re-assessment is completed ___ days before youth exits the program</li> </ul>	Number of case plan reviews  Number of prevention plans in place  Number of transition plans in place  Number of re-assessments completed  Number of youth showing improvement on re-assessments



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## Teamwork

**CASE STUDY:** The Brigham County JDTC has been operational since 2005. The initial seven members of the operating team, who were formally trained in 2004 during the Drug Court Planning Initiative, have moved on and have slowly been replaced by new team members. Some of these new team members don't understand the philosophy behind JDTC; many have not been trained on the *JDTC Guidelines* and do not understand their unique role on the team or what their responsibilities are. Pre-court staffing have become a nightmare and can last three to four hours, and nothing appears to get settled. The team members frequently revert to bickering and rarely come to a consensus on how to respond to a youth's behavior. The Brigham County JDTC team needs to address many challenges if they are to become a high-functioning team and a well-run JDTC.

### Solution-focused Tips to increase teamwork on a JDTC team:

**1 Tip No. 1:** Team members should share in the philosophy of the JDTC model.

- Use the *JDTC Guidelines* to create JDTC learning packets to relay information on program components (e.g., responses).
- Introduce new team members to stakeholder committees before they begin working with the court, and allow the committee members to talk about why they believe in the benefit or positive impact of the JDTC.

**2 Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should work toward having a core team that includes a judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, probation/case manager, treatment provider, and coordinator.

- Create buy-in from parent agencies to allow for participation on the team by promoting the JDTC program (e.g., have a brown-bag lunch to discuss the many ways the program is helping the community).
- Don't be afraid to use the power of the judge as a leader and convener in the community.

**3 Tip No. 3:** Team members should understand their roles and responsibilities.

- Clarify the roles of new team members – plan a meet and greet event for new team members to introduce themselves and describe what they think their role is; allow current team members to provide feedback.
- Have team members shadow other/existing team members to help them understand each of the unique roles on the team.
- Codify roles and responsibilities within the policy and procedure manuals, stating what each JDTC role does. Sample roles can be found at: [http://](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities_Web-Final_0.pdf)

[www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities\\_Web-Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities_Web-Final_0.pdf)

**4 Tip No. 4:** Give new team members an opportunity to gain ownership in the JDTC program.

- Certain components of the JDTC program (e.g., community mapping, resource development) frequently need to be revisited; place new team members in charge of this project to create buy-in or ownership.

**5 Tip No. 5:** Team members should actively find training opportunities to train the entire team on a regular basis.

- Attend face-to-face trainings, as a team, on a yearly basis whenever possible and feasible.
- Sign up for newsletters, listservs, or email updates with national training organizations (e.g., NCJFCJ, National Association of Drug Court Professionals) to keep informed of possible training opportunities.
- Look for out-of-the-box training opportunities that can be done on-site (e.g., webinars, new publications).
- Leverage the value and expertise of the current JDTC team members who likely have a wealth of information to offer. Incorporate mini-training sessions at the beginning of pre-court staffing by allowing all team members to discuss new and important information from their fields.

**6 Tip No. 6:** Team members should work to incorporate a high level of trust and open communication.

- Create ground rules for pre-court case staffing and ensure that all team members are allowed an opportunity to voice concerns and provide feedback.



- Incorporate a standard processing system in pre-court case staffing. Cover hard cases first so team members don't feel rushed and perhaps not communicate all that is necessary to make a decision.
- Practice active listening skills and learn about ways to communicate effectively in a team environment (e.g., visit websites that have tools and resources on how to communicate and listen).
- Teams should work toward a consensus regarding decisions on youth suitability, responses, and program enhancements, rather than relying on a voting process.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *How would you increase teamwork for the Brigham County JDTC team using some of the Tips discussed above?*

**ANSWER:** The Brigham County JDTC team should designate a particular role for someone on the team to create learning packets for incoming team members, so information, program structure, and other JDTC-related topics (e.g., adolescent treatment, responses) will be easily accessible. The team should codify team members' roles and responsibilities within their policy and procedure manual to alleviate any confusion among the group. The team should work together to find training and technical assistance and implement new and innovative ideas so the program continues to grow. Finally, the team should concentrate on learning and utilizing communication and listening skills in pre-court case staffing and court hearings so that the group will work collaboratively and effectively together to respond to the needs of the youth and family in their program.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-1-focus-jdtk-philosophy-and-practice-effectively-addressing-substance-use-and-criminogenic>
- The Role of the Judge in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts: Advice from the Field - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Role%20of%20the%20JDC%20Judge\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/NCJFCJ%20Role%20of%20the%20JDC%20Judge_Final.pdf)
- Greater Than the Sum of Their Parts: Clarifying Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Teams - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities\\_Web-Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JDC%20Roles%20Responsibilities_Web-Final_0.pdf)
- Connecting the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Philosophy to Practice (Guide to the Guidelines) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-01>

- The Sin of the Missed Opportunity to Engage Participants – The Court Hearing (7 Deadly Sins) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/7-Deadly-Sins-04>
- Learning from your Peers: Training through a Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Cross-Site Visit (Learning Collaborative Corner) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/learning-your-peers-training-through-juvenile-drug-treatment-court-cross-site-visit>
- Orienting New Team Members (Q&A) - <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/qzy2fj/7d7a6a2cf81d6dce6e147f74fb4f65a0>
- Training as a Team (Q&A) - <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/qbkrm/f153a51d782b0f5f829ec90eece503eb>
- 7 (Easy) Steps to Collaborative Planning (7 Series) - [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps\\_Collaborative%20Planning\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps_Collaborative%20Planning_0.pdf)
- 7 (Easy) Steps to Creating a Transition Policy for Juvenile Drug Court Team Members (7 Series) - [https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps\\_Transition%20Policy\\_0.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/7%20Steps_Transition%20Policy_0.pdf)
- Using Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to Create Your Perfect Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (recorded) Webinar - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/using-continuous-quality-improvement-cqi-create-your-perfect-juvenile-drug-treatment-court>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>
- Mind Tools - [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)





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# Terminations

**CASE STUDY:** The ROCKET JDTC has been operating since 2008. The program had a 50% graduation rate, but after a presentation on the *JDTC Guidelines* in 2018 they changed their target population and their graduation rate has increased to 62%. The team has determined that the next step to increasing their graduation rate is to increase their retention rate for youth in the program. However, even though they want to retain youth, the team has been debating about the termination of three clients: Hunter, who started in the program just before the new target population was introduced and who does not meet the current *JDTC Guidelines* recommended targeted population; Tyler, who has been in the program for only four months, but has possibly picked up a new charge; and Skyla, who ran away and is rejoining the program after being gone for two months. While discussing these three cases, the team realized that their current termination criteria are too broad and that they are not consistent about terminations across all of the youth.

## Solution-focused Tips for developing a policy and procedures for terminations from the JDTC:

**1** **Tip No. 1:** The JDTC team should review their historical data to find patterns in previous terminations. Many JDTCs struggle with termination criteria, and in practice - even if there is a policy- it can sometimes feel like decisions are still made on a case-by-case basis. But, termination is also one of the program events that JDTCs will have data on. Teams can use data from past terminations to determine why youth have been terminated from the program.

- The JDTC team should gather as much information as possible about youth who have been terminated in the past including the reason for termination, phase in the program, age, risk/need assessment score, recommended level of substance abuse treatment, etc. This information can help the team pinpoint characteristics that have led youth to being terminated in the past and can help the team determine if their decision-making process is objective or subjective.
- The JDTC team should look for patterns in the data and compare the youth who were terminated to their current target population criteria. Youth who do not meet the *JDTC Guidelines* recommended criteria are less likely to be successful in the JDTC. The team should also look for any patterns of disparities – Are youth of color less likely to graduate than their white peers? Are LGBTQI-GNC youth having trouble completing the program?
- After the team identifies a pattern, they should take a closer look at the actual cases and discuss what led to the termination. If a lot of youth are being terminated at about the same point in the program, the team might discuss if the program

requirements are contributing to termination.

- As part of this investigation the team should talk about whether or not these terminations meet the standard set in the *JDTC Guidelines* – Has the team fully implemented the program’s behavioral contingency plan? Why or why not?
- After reviewing data, the JDTC can compile a list of reasons that youth have been terminated and divide them into objective and subjective categories. Objective criteria include things like a new charge that is incompatible with the JDTC, moving out of the jurisdiction, etc. Subjective criteria include things like the youth has been in the program a long time and team didn’t feel like he was progressing, the youth’s attitude was not the right fit for the program, etc.
- The team can incorporate the objective criteria into their termination policy and should consider the subjective criteria to be factors to be addressed through case planning.

**2** **Tip No. 2:** The JDTC team should conduct regular case file reviews every 3 – 4 months to determine if a youth is progressing through the program as expected and intervene as appropriate. These case file reviews are separate from the regular staffing and should be focused on the long-term completion plan for the youth.

- Teams should focus on retaining youth in the program and adjust interventions as necessary. The *JDTC Guidelines* indicate that youth who graduated from the JDTC are less likely to recidivate than youth who are terminated from the program.
- During the case file review, the team should



determine if the youth has been meeting case plan goals as expected. If not, the team should discuss what additional supports can be offered to assist the youth in completing the goals.

- The JDTC team should also be looking for any changes that may have occurred in the youth's life that could affect his or her completion of the program like a break-up or changes in family dynamics. By being pro-active rather than reactive, the team can wrap services around the youth.

**3** **Tip No. 3:** The JDTC team should determine how they will deal with continued or intermittent use by youth.

- One of the driving factors for termination considerations within JDTCs is a youth's continued use or multiple episodes of return to use, even after completing treatment. The team should have a robust discussion, led by the treatment provider, to determine how to address this cycle within their termination policy.
- The entire JDTC should be well trained on the issues of both adolescent development and substance abuse treatment to understand 1) the dynamics of how youth use drugs, and 2) the role that return to use plays in recovery.
- In each instance of return to use, the JDTC should first address the return to use via treatment. The JDTC treatment provider has the appropriate information and training to understand if the return use requires additional treatment interventions or if a higher level of care is required.

**4** **Tip No. 4:** The JDTC should discuss what happens to youth who are terminated and determine how this information can inform their termination criteria.

- Understanding what happens to youth who are terminated from the program can be useful in building termination criteria. The JDTC program should have a clear idea of where it fits within the continuum of responses available in its jurisdiction. For example, if the JDTC is the last stop before commitment, the JDTC might be less inclined to terminate. On the other hand, if a youth who is terminated from the JDTC is placed on traditional probation, the team might feel like there is no consequence to the youth for the termination.
- The JDTC should also discuss how to handle youth who complete most of the requirements of the program. For example, if a youth has completed all of the probation requirements for the program but continues to struggle with occasional substance abuse, how will the team

handle it? In some cases, if a youth has been on probation for a lengthy period of time and has incurred no charges, the team should consider discharging the youth from the program rather than terminating or graduating the youth.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** *What should the ROCKET program do with Hunter, Tyler, and Skyla?*

**ANSWER:** After revising their termination criteria, the ROCKET team can revisit the cases of Hunter, Tyler, and Skyla. For Hunter, who doesn't meet the recommended eligibility criteria, the team works with the probation department to find a program that is a better match and transition him to that program. For Tyler, the team determines that his new charges, which include petty theft and vandalism, can be addressed within the JDTC. As for Skyla, the ROCKET team requests a new assessment and determines that residential treatment is warranted. By having clear termination criteria that take into account the various challenges that youth in the JDTC face, the ROCKET team can feel comfortable making objective termination decisions.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE(S):**

- NCJFCJ's Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Information Center - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/objective-7-monitor-and-track-program-completion-and-termination>
- Are the Phases/Levels in Your Program Meeting the Expected Metrics? (Learning Collaborative Corner) - <http://www.ncjfcj.org/are-phaseslevels-your-program-meeting-expected-metrics>
- Achieving Confidence with Data Collection: How to Monitor and Manage Your Juvenile Drug Treatment Court's Progress (Guide to the Guidelines) - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/Guide-to-the-Guidelines-07>
- Creating Judicial – Academic Partnerships: An Efficient Way to Leverage Resources for Evaluation - <https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/JudicialAcademciBrief-R.pdf>

**EXTERNAL RESOURCE(S):**

- Review the *Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines* on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's website - <https://www.ojjdp.gov/Juvenile-Drug-Treatment-Court-Guidelines.html>



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National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges  
P.O. Box 8970  
Reno, NV 89507