



# JUVENILE DRUG TREATMENT COURT GUIDELINES

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## ENGAGING FAMILIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY



## DISCLAIMER

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# MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the importance of and strategies for engaging families
- Explain the research related to family engagement and outcomes in JDTC programs
- Discuss the importance of and strategies for involving schools and the community
- Consider related policy changes

# CORRESPONDING GUIDELINES: FAMILIES

## **Guideline 1.5**

JDTCs should be deliberate about engaging parents or guardians throughout the court process, which includes assessing the specific barriers to their full engagement.



# CORRESPONDING GUIDELINES: FAMILIES

## **Guideline 1.6**

JDTCS should provide court-certified or licensed onsite interpreters for parents or guardians with limited English proficiency and for those with hearing deficiency in addition all documents should be translated into the native language of non-English speaking youth and parents or guardians.

## **Guideline 3.1**

JDTCS should work collaboratively with parents and guardians throughout the court process to encourage active participation in (a) regular court hearings, (b) supervision of their children in the home and community and (c) treatment programs.

# CORRESPONDING GUIDELINES: SCHOOLS

## **Guideline 1.3**

The JDTC team should include participants from local school systems, with the goal of overcoming the educational barriers JDTC participants face.



# CORRESPONDING GUIDELINES:

## COMMUNITY

### **Guideline 1.1**

The JDTC team should be composed of stakeholders committed to the court's philosophy and practice, and to ongoing program and system improvement. The team should include collaborative relationships with community partners.





## RESEARCH FINDINGS: FAMILIES & JDTC

A common predictor of failure in the JDTC program is lack of parental support.

When parents/guardians do not support the court(s), there is a greater likelihood that youth in the JDTC will not succeed.

Research shows that youth's behavior and demeanor are directly linked to their parents' willingness to participate.





# RESEARCH FINDINGS: FAMILIES & JDTC

Research shows that if a family member attended the JDTC, there was a lower probability that the youth would be late or absent from treatment, late to school, or receive a sanction for non-compliance.

Programs that offer incentives to parents report stronger engagement of youth and families.

Offering incentives can facilitate parent collaboration in behavioral management, as they maintain their parental control.



A person is walking away from the camera on a set of train tracks. To the left, a large metal train car is visible. The right side of the image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter where the text is located.

# FAMILIES ENGAGEMENT IN THE COURT ROOM

Parental involvement is correlated with higher graduation rates in the JDTC program

Stronger outcomes occur when parents attend court hearings regularly and participate in the process.

Innovative approaches need to support parents

Provide materials in varied forms





## FOCUSING ON FAMILIES

- Support families before and after challenges arise
- Provide support/education when youth becomes systems involved.
- Ensure families involved in decision making processes at the individual, program, and system levels. This holds youth accountable and keeps the public safe
- Strengthen families through varied and individualized treatment options.





## **GUIDELINE 1.5: PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN JDTC**

To help youth succeed in program and achieve lasting behavior change:

- JDTC should have at least one parent or guardian present for court.
- JDTC team should communicate respect, value and fairness to the youth and family.
- The parents or guardians are included in all intake procedures and are part of initial treatment planning, and on-going case planning.
- When a parent/guardian is not able to be engaged, then the program should seek to engage another adult relative, mentor, recovery coach, other caring adult.

## **GUIDELINE 1.6:**

# **MAKING PROGRAM ACCESSIBLE TO ALL FAMILIES**

- The cultural and linguistic needs of families should be respected and addressed.
- Materials should be written in a simple, yet informative manner.
- Professional interpreters should be made available



# UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Fear being viewed as bad parents
- Feel their input is not valued in the decision making process
- Financial pressures and barriers
- Parental history with justice and/or child welfare system(s)
- Time pressures and barriers (especially for working parents)
- Transportation pressures and barriers
- Disengaged from the youth (i.e., youth has burned his or her bridges with parents)
- Need to focus on other children
- Family dysfunction
- Parental substance use or mental health disorder
- Other barriers?



# EXERCISE:

Discuss strategies for overcoming one of more of the barriers:

- Fear being viewed as bad parents
- Feel their input is not valued in the decision making process
- Financial pressures and barriers
- Time pressures and barriers (especially for working parents)
- Transportation pressures and barriers
- Disengaged from the youth (i.e., youth has burned his or her bridges with parents)
- Need to focus on other children
- Family dysfunction
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# TIPS FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Locate the single point of contact early in the JDTC process (intake or initial treatment session). Secure commitment and orient parent(s).
- Consider creating a family peer mentor or “parent partner” program.
- If feasible, develop a family support group.
- On quarterly basis, and utilizing data, address barriers to success for families.
- Conduct “mapping exercise” to determine if service and treatment needs are being properly addressed.
- Handbook for families
- Judges play active role from the bench – targeting engagement





A person is walking away from the camera on a set of train tracks. To the left, a freight train is visible. The scene is overlaid with a blue semi-transparent filter. The text is in yellow and white.

## GUIDELINE 1.3

### SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT ON JDTC TEAM

- School is an important protective factor. Poor academic performance is a risk factor that is linked to recidivism.
- Youth who do not attend school may have higher numbers of delinquency referrals than those who do attend.
- Recovery schools have been found to be effective in supporting recovery and enhancing academic performance.
- Finding education programs that support the JDTC youth important, as schools can be a barrier to success if they don't support and care for youth struggling with substance abuse issues.



# TIPS FOR SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

- In case planning with youth, make educational goals a priority
- Offer flexible strategies for communicating with school personnel – via email, skype, text in order to share updates
- Explore the full range of educational opportunities
- Consider holding some JDTC court sessions at the school or community center
- Ensure that school representative present for staffing/court if possible.
- Involve the school social worker and the IEP process





# GUIDELINE 1.1

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Courts that establish strong referral sources and community partnerships create additional safety nets.
- Participants need more prosocial activities and opportunities in order to be successful.
- A vast array of approaches are necessary to reduce or prevent involvement in problem behaviors.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Two major components:

1. Program collaborating with community partners to meet needs of youth and families.
  - Professional service providers
  - Faith-based and other non-traditional organizations
1. Youth engaging with the community for prosocial activities
  - Recovery communities
  - Sober support peer groups

Source: ( Green et al, (2015): SIROW, University of Arizona)





# TIPS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct and regularly update a community resource map
- Educate and leverage all members of the team for community outreach, however the process of CE should be managed by one specific staff member to reduce duplication, confusion and maximize outreach.
- Make “specific asks” when it comes to enrichment opportunities to open the door to further involvement
- Define the terms and expectations of the collaboration at the outset
- Identify those partners where there is a mutually beneficial relationship.

Source: ( Green et al, (2015): SIROW, University of Arizona)





# SUMMARY AND QUESTIONS

- These three areas are often challenging and overwhelming for JDTC programs, however, the research shows that addressing each can result in stronger outcomes for youth.
- Engagement in a variety of services and supports for both youth and family members is critical to success for JDTC programs.
- Varied techniques should and can be used to engage families, schools and community partners.
- Teams should review current policies and make necessary changes in order to strengthen family connections, school participation and deepen community engagement.





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