

HOW TO START AN ALUMNI GROUP

DEVELOPING ALUMNI PROGRAMS IN THERAPEUTIC COURTS

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TOOLKIT:

How to Start a Treatment Court Alumni Program



How to Start a Treatment Court Alumni Program Toolkit

Produced in collaboration with the
National Treatment Court Alumni Association

Authors: All Rise and the National Treatment Court Alumni
Association (NTCAA)

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AGENDA

- **Reasons to Start an Alumni Program**
- **Identifying the Need & Early Considerations**
- **Engaging the Alumni, Building the Alumni Group & Implementation**
- **Roles, Boundaries, Ethics and Other Important Considerations.**
- **Special Events**
- **Continued Growth and Group Autonomy**



WHAT ARE SOME REASONS
FOR STARTING A
THERAPEUTIC COURT ALUMNI
GROUP?

REASONS TO START AN ALUMNI GROUP

1. CREATES PEER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CURRENT AND FORMER PARTICIPANTS.
2. PROVIDES THE TEAM WITH ACCESS TO THE EXPERTISE OF THE ALUMNI'S LIVED EXPERIENCE
3. CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR FELLOWSHIP, ENGAGEMENT, AND/OR ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM
4. KEEPS ALUMNI ENGAGED FOLLOWING COMMENCEMENT, OFFERING CONNECTION AND EXTENDED RECOVERY SUPPORT
5. CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALUMNI TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE WHILE POSITIVELY INFLUENCING THEIR COMMUNITIES.

IDENTIFYING NEED AND EARLY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Is there interest within the treatment court to develop an alumni program?**
- **Can we get the judge's buy in or approval?**
- **Do we have the time and availability in our schedules to commit to this process?**
- **Can we support the planning and implementation phases of building this alumni group?**



IDENTIFYING NEED AND EARLY CONSIDERATIONS

- Will we have enough engaged alumni to sustain the program, and can we identify which alumni to target?
- How much time can the alumni commit to assist with kickoff and engagement events?
- Are there additional funds to assist with alumni events?
- Does the therapeutic court team understand the role of the alumni within the program?



ENGAGING THE ALUMNI

- **Start a list of treatment court alumni. Go back as many years possible. Develop a list of phone numbers, emails and utilize social media to broadcast your message.**
- **Prioritize alumni “champions” who are highly involved in the recovery community.**
- **Encourage current participants to join the alumni group at their graduation. Ensure graduates have the alumni group contact information.**



ENGAGING THE ALUMNI

- **Start directly connecting with your alumni. Create a kickoff event that alumni can sit down with the team members who are facilitating the alumni program. Let the alumni tell you their vision for the “Perfect Alumni Group.”**
- **At the kickoff event. Encourage the exploration of a vision, mission and purpose of the group. Encourage alumni ownership and empowerment from voice and choice.**



BUILDING THE ALUMNI GROUP

- **Finalize the dates, times and location the alumni group will be meeting at. Reach out to recovery organizations, alumni clubs, churches, for a partnership in hosting the meeting.**
- **Ensure judicial review of the alumni program plans. Make sure all appropriate county and government officials sign off on the plans. (e.g., Risk Management)**



BUILDING THE ALUMNI GROUP

- Plan for the first meeting between the alumni and therapeutic court participants.
- Alumni should create policy, procedures and operations manual. Include vision, mission and requirements for leading the group.
- Facilitate group agreements including confidentiality, ethics, equality.
- Develop group agenda guides for leaders.



SAMPLE OPERATIONS MANUAL & GUIDE

Alumni Group Guide for Engagement

The general guidance for engagement is to support and interact with each other and participants as a Recovery Court Alumni Group.

Introduction

Alumni support is crucial to Recovery Court participants finding the value in the lived experience that alumni members can provide. It is a circular process that allows for mutual support to foster long-term recovery practices, fellowship, a sense of giving back, and the effect of empowerment to change and show others it is possible.

These general guidelines are a road map to establish and maintain a meaningful engagement strategy in an alumni group to support participants in the program. The focus is on sobriety, recovery, and support. Depending on the recovery court program length, it is best to include alumni interaction while encouraging positive environments.

Remember that you are an expert in your lived experience; that is all you need to follow this guide effectively. Where you started, landed, and are at is the best message you can share to support others. You might find several pieces of training helpful, and some are required if you want to become an alumni leader. Either way, your presence and input are valuable!

Our Purpose

To improve the outcomes of recovery court participants by tapping into our greatest resource, human connection. To make sure participants have access to knowing support. Creating ongoing support ensures participants will have people to continue walking with them on their recovery journey.

Mission Statement

We cultivate leaders and peers who maintain a strong therapeutic community. We promote meaningful, purposeful, supportive connections through fellowship, meetings, and leadership. We strengthen and improve outcomes for all participants, past and present, by creating a peer-led group focused on long-term recovery.

Leadership Mission Statement

Support the recovery court process through role modeling recovery and being of service. Strengthen our recovery by giving back to our community. Share our experience and knowledge to improve participants' outcomes.

Alumni Program Policies, Procedures, and Processes

As you begin to work with the Recovery Support Coordinator, it will be an excellent time to familiarize yourself with the established policies, procedures, and processes for the alumni program. You may have to help establish and develop a draft for consideration by the recovery court team. Your input and expertise in engaging with participants and other alumni are vital to this process. Consider how you would want this to occur during your time in the program. Remember, these can ALWAYS be revised to meet new or changing criteria.

A. Ethics and Boundaries

Ethical behavior and healthy boundaries are critical when engaging with the program participants and, of course, with each other as alumni. Part of this consideration is to be aware that as alumni you are not a therapist, nor are you expected to be. This group is a self-help support group and not a therapy process group. Remember to be mindful of your personal boundaries and recovery path.

- Be fair and honest in all you do; no special treatment for anyone
- Do not monopolize the conversation with your experience or impose your path as the "only way" to recovery
- Respect all paths to recovery and all forms of recovery
- Acknowledge all participants for sharing their strengths and shortcomings
- Never require someone to share

B. Peer Engagement

When engaging with participants and other alumni, consider the following:

Sample Agenda for Alumni with Participants:

Greeting Alumni Member and/or Alumni Coordinator:

Show gratitude for time and willingness to share their recovery with others and each other

Introductions for Alumni Graduates:

Name, year of participation/graduation in recovery court, the most positive outcome so far of recovery, motivation to be a part of the alumni group

Check-In:

Go around the room and ask each participant to share the best part of recovery for them this week.

Topic:

Introduce the topic with personal experience

Close:

Ensure everyone is okay with the discussion and summarize the discussion with the positive takeaways. Remind them of the next meeting date, time, and location.

Sample Agenda for Alumni Only:

Greeting Alumni Member and/or Alumni Coordinator:

Gratitude for time and willingness to share their recovery with others and each other

Introductions New Alumni:

Graduates: Name, year of participation/graduation in recovery court, the most positive outcome so far of recovery, motivation to be a part of the alumni group

Check-In:

Go around the room and ask each alumni to share the best part of recovery.

Alumni Group Business:

Discussion of any upcoming or suggested events

Topic:

Introduce the topic with personal experience

Close:

Discuss any Follow-up Tasks

Ensure everyone is okay with the discussion and summarize the discussion with the positive takeaways. Remind them of the next meeting date, time, and location.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR ALUMNI GROUP

- Develop a meeting agenda for alumni to use in the meetings.
- Introduce a variety of topics throughout different meetings to keep engagement. (Events, Givebacks, etc.)
- Alumni only sessions are a good way to hold business and strategy meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION

- At the first meeting, the alumni should connect with the participants and cover reasons why they have developed this group.
- Schedule meetings with alumni members to review the group's progress. Quarterly or monthly meetings are encouraged at the beginning of implementation.



Lewis County Alumni Meeting- Held Bi-Monthly

IMPLEMENTATION

- Regularly review the operations manual to see if adjustments are needed. Encourage the alumni group to adjust or make changes when necessary.
- Allow all alumni members to provide feedback. This facilitates alumni volunteering for leadership roles within the group.
- Don't forget to cultivate current participants into future active alumni!



ROLES, BOUNDARIES, ETHICS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **The alumni role is different than the certified peer role on the treatment team.**
- **Alumni are not therapist, attorneys, doctors, or faith-based leaders.**
- **Alumni DO NOT have legal privilege with confidentiality.**
- **Alumni may need to navigate ethical challenges, so it is highly suggested that ethics training is provided and or an agreement is developed.**
- **Clear boundaries must be established to grow a healthy relationship between the court, alumni and the participants.**

ROLES, BOUNDARIES, ETHICS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Prioritize safety, respect, privacy and setting clear expectations.**
- **Remember that Alumni are the mentors and role models for program participants and others in recovery.**
- **Alumni operate on an informal capacity but can go on to require additional training as a Peer. Typically, 2 years of recovery, and one-year post-treatment court recovery is required to become a treatment court peer.**

ALUMNI

- Do not require professional certification or state agency licensing.
- Therapeutic Court program graduate.
- Relationships with participants can continue after program completion.
- Are not paid, employed or supervised by the therapeutic court team or outside agency.
- Follows group confidentiality and other ethical agreements developed by the alumni group.

PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

- Requires professional certification through training and testing.
- Are not required to be Therapeutic Court graduates.
- Relationships with participants are professional and are meant to be temporary.
- Peers have direct supervision by their employer and are paid.
- Follows employers' policy and procedures on confidentiality, mandatory reporting and ethics.

Code of Conduct

The principles in the following Code of Conduct will guide the Board of Directors and members of the NTCAA in their various roles, relationships, and levels of responsibility in which they function to represent the organization. All members of the Board of Directors of NTCAA will at all times preserve an objective and professional relationship with peers and professionals that they serve. Individuals who participate in the representation of NTCAA on any level will be required to sign a form acknowledging the receipt of the Code of Conduct.

Any Director or member of NTCAA while representing the organization will adhere to the following:

1. Will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery and will maintain personal standards that are respectful to self and community.
2. Will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues.
3. Will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force, or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits or funding to any recipients of NTCAA support.
4. Will not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.
5. Will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of NTCAA or their affiliates.
6. Will not accept gifts of significant value from entities working with or engaging in collaborative efforts with NTCAA or their affiliates.
7. Will at all times, respect the rights, dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all engagements based on the dynamic of the relationship in reference to NTCAA and their affinities.
8. If a return to use has occurred, it is the responsibility of the individual to self-disclose in order to protect the integrity of NTCAA and its mission to serve the recovery communities across the nation.

SAMPLE CODE OF CONDUCT/ETHICS AGREEMENT

- Code of conduct prioritizes safety, respect, equality, and confidentiality.
- Sets basic expectations of alumni group members including relationships with each other and participants.
- Gives direction on conflict of interests.

SAMSHA PRINCIPLES OF CORE COMPETENCIES FOR PEER WORKERS

- **Recovery-oriented:** Peer workers/alumni hold out hope to those they serve, partnering with them to envision and achieve a meaningful and purposeful life. Peer workers help those they serve identify and build on strengths and empower them to choose for themselves, recognizing that there are multiple pathways to recovery.
- **Person-centered:** Peer recovery support/ alumni services are always directed by the person participating in services. Peer recovery support is personalized to align with the specific hopes, goals, and preferences of the people served and to respond to specific needs the people has identified to the peer worker.
- **Voluntary:** Peer workers/partners are partners or consultants to those they serve. They do not dictate the types of services provided or the elements of recovery plans that will guide their work with peers. Participation in peer recovery support services is always contingent on peer choice.

SAMSHA PRINCIPLES OF CORE COMPETENCIES FOR PEER WORKERS

- **Relationship-focused:** The relationship between the peer worker/alumni and the peer is the foundation on which peer recovery support/alumni services and support are provided. The relationship between the peer worker and peer is respectful, trusting, empathetic, collaborative, and mutual.
- **Trauma-informed:** Peer recovery/alumni support utilizes a strength-based framework that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

WHAT SPECIAL
RECOVERY EVENTS OR
ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU
USED TO BRING
PARTICIPANTS OR
ALUMNI TOGETHER?

ALUMNI AND SPECIAL RECOVERY EVENTS

- **No costs or affordable for all. Provide financial assistance when able.**
- **All ages and family friendly.**
- **Locations that do not promote alcohol or drug use.**
- **Therapeutic Court approval.**



ALUMNI AND SPECIAL RECOVERY EVENTS

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

- **Be mindful of holiday triggers.**
- **Respect and honor different beliefs, customs, holidays.**
- **Include and invite all equally.**



KITSAP COUNTY DRUG COURT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

HALLOWEEN BINGO PARTY

SATURDAY OCT. 14TH

DINNER 5 PM & GAMES 6 PM

\$10 CHILI & CORNBREAD DINNER

10 BINGO GAMES

PRIZE RAFFLE

50/50 \$\$ RAFFLE

FREE KIDS RAFFLE & KIDS ONLY BINGO GAME

COSTUME CONTESTS
BEST INDIVIDUAL
BEST CHILD
BEST COUPLE

GRAND PRIZES
2 TICKETS SEAHAWKS VS. CARDINALS
55" SMART TV
\$200 TATTOO GIFT CERT.

PORT ORCHARD MASONIC CENTER
1025 SIDNEY AVE, PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366

Lucky Bingo

A ST. PATRICK'S DAY FUNDRAISER CELEBRATION

19 | MARCH | 2022

PORT ORCHARD MASONIC CENTER
 1025 SIDNEY AVE, PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366
DINNER STARTS AT 6:00PM
GUEST SPEAKER JUDGE ROOF
GAMES BEGIN AT 7:00 PM
\$10 TACO DINNER | BINGO | RAFFLE
LEPRECHAUN COSTUME CONTEST
50/50 CASH RAFFLE | PHOTOS
BLACKOUT PRIZE
2 TICKETS FOR TANDEM SKYDIVING

ALUMNI AND SPECIAL RECOVERY EVENTS

Special Recovery Community Events

- **Recovery Month**
- **Therapeutic Court Month**
- **Recovery Advocacy Day**

RECOVERY DAY TICKET SPECIAL

MARINERS-THEMED T-SHIRT



The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, amidst a rising fentanyl epidemic, increasing fatal overdose rates, and an ongoing mental health crisis, drug courts and other therapeutic courts are an important part of an effective statewide continuum of care for individuals with behavioral health disorders; and

WHEREAS, Washington state is a national leader in creating meaningful pathways out of the legal system and towards recovery and family reunification, having supported some of the earliest therapeutic courts in the country, and these innovative courts are now operating in nearly every county and level of court statewide; and

WHEREAS, therapeutic courts work, with annual Department of Social and Health Services' analyses showing that Washington's adult drug courts can reduce recidivism and increase employment among program participants; and

WHEREAS, therapeutic courts have an upstream impact, helping to interrupt what is often a generational cycle of substance use and legal involvement and prevent adverse childhood experiences associated with parental substance use, incarceration, and foster care; and

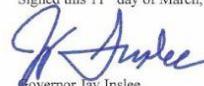
WHEREAS, therapeutic courts prove that compassionate public policy can result in cost savings and significantly improved personal health status, with studies by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Washington Institute for Public Policy, and the University of Washington showing a return on investment related to therapeutic courts in Washington state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

Therapeutic Court Month

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 11th day of March, 2024



Governor Jay Inslee



ALUMNI AND SPECIAL RECOVERY EVENTS



JOIN THE LEWIS COUNTY DRUG COURT & FAMILY RECOVERY COURT ALUMNI & PROGRAM IN CELEBRATING NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH!

MAY 13TH, 2024
5:30P
408 W. MAIN ST.
(GATHER CAFE)

WALK FOR RECOVERY

WALKING AWAY FROM ADDICTION ONE STEP AT A TIME...

2024!

WALK WITH US TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY AND DRUG COURT PROGRAMS!



night of illumination

August 31st, 2023
8pm
@ Washington Park
(Centralia Library)

Walk with us in support of Overdose Awareness Day. To remember those we have loved and lost to addiction, and for the addict who still suffers.

\$5 minimum donation for purchase of candle, walk with us for free!

Battery operated candles will be available for purchase at these locations:

- The Chevron on South Tower Ave.
- The Drug Court Office
- The Gather
- Overdose Awareness Day 8/31 at Washington Park

If you would like a map, please email caitlin.rogers@lewiscountywa.gov.

Sponsored by

LEWIS COUNTY DRUG COURT
FAMILY RECOVERY COURT

Breaking the Chains of Addiction

COMMUNITY & ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT



INVOLVE ALUMNI IN PROGRAM EVENTS & SPEAKER POSITIONS



CREATE COMMUNITY & FOSTER FELLOWSHIP

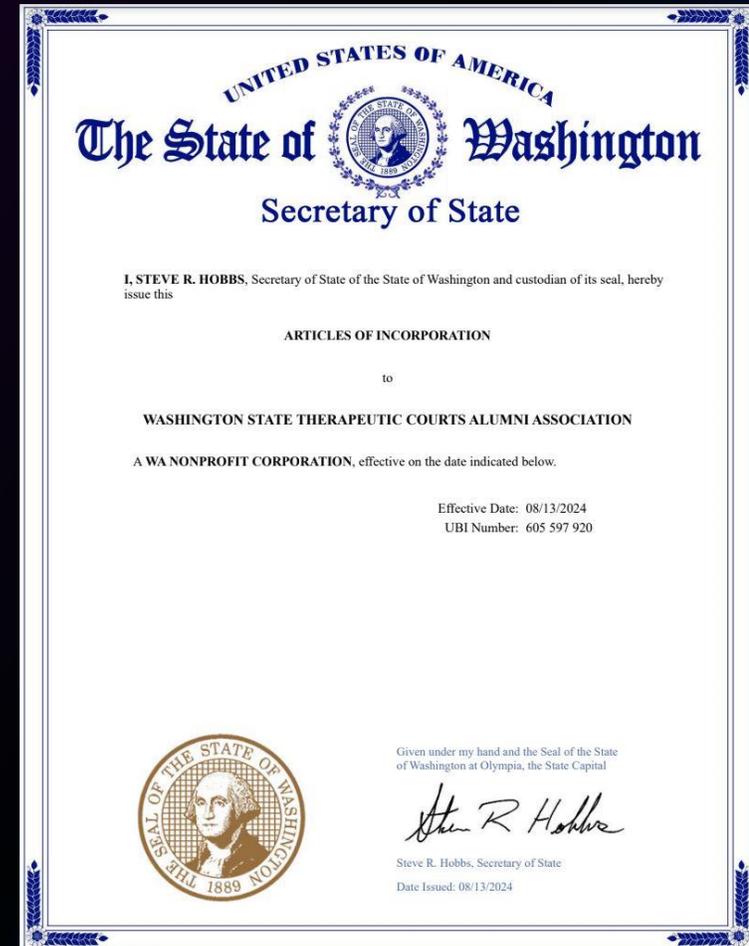


ENCOURAGE YOUR ALUMNI TO COME BACK!!!



Continued Growth & Group Autonomy

- **When is a 501 (c)(3) Necessary?**
- **What are the benefits of a 501 (c)(3)?**
- **What are the challenges?**
- **Where can I find help creating a 501 (c)(3)?**





**THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?**





WA STATE THERAPEUTIC COURT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



WSTCAA

"Rising above and growing together"



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**PLEASE SUPPORT, LIKE, AND FOLLOW OUR ALUMNI
FACEBOOK PAGE**

State Therapeutic Court Alumni Association

WA STATE THERAPEUTIC COURT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



WSTCAA

“Rising above and growing together”

Join US:



**WSTCAA
Monthly
Meeting**

**Second
Thursday of
the month
at 9 AM.**