



TORONTO DRUG TREATMENT COURT

Issues, Challenges and Best Practices



Differences Between the Treatment and Court Perspectives

TREATMENT	COURT
“client”	“offender”
process, context, intangibles	facts, evidence
client = offender	client = public
individualizing	consistency
experience, insight, relationship	authority, power

Essentials of Collaboration Between Treatment and Court

- Open, regular communication
- Commitment to DTC approach
- Understanding of each other's roles, standards, and priorities
- Consultation with other team re major decisions
- Joint planning re policies and procedures

Issues For DTC Treatment Providers

- Confidentiality/therapeutic relationship
- Definitions of progress
- Working with sanctions
- “Policing” clients
- Drug testing: court vs. clinical requirements
- Heavy external motivation
- Court/Treatment power relationship
- Extra level of scrutiny

Essentials Of Treatment With Drug Court Clients

- Inform clients re: confidentiality limits
- Address motivational issues on ongoing basis
- Avoid "splitting" between court and treatment
- Provide opportunities for support/consultation
- Address criminal behaviour issues

Key Features



- Voluntary involvement
- Immediate involvement
- Close monitoring by court
- Specialized treatment
- Mixed harm reduction/abstinence

Key Features (Cont)

- Close cooperation between treatment and court
- Graduated sanctions and incentives
- High level of community involvement
- No penalty for use—honesty emphasized

DTCs in the International Arena

- Development and expansion of an International Association of Drug Treatment Courts
- DTCs in USA, Australia, Scotland, England, Ireland, Norway, Chile, Jamaica, the Caymans, Brazil, and Bermuda
- Now 8 DTCs across Canada
- DTC planning in Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia, Belgium, Denmark, other parts of the European Union, and some rudimentary work in Thailand and other parts of Asia

IADTC

- Acts as a 'clearing house' for jurisdictions starting their own DTCs
- Provides information and training
- Listserv – valuable resource to member courts about latest developments in the field
- Listserv – handy means of communication with courts throughout the world

IADTC - Objectives

- Reduce substance use, crime and recidivism
- Promote and advocate establishment of DTCs
- Gather and disseminate information exchange and evaluations
- Establish public awareness
- Teach recognized principles of DTCs
- Provide technical assistance and training
- Encourage other court-based interventions

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