DRUG COURTS
WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

Developed by:
National Drug Court Institute

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Disclosure

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• Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.
SUD AND CRIME

- US: >.75M violent crimes/year under the influence
- Internationally, 48% of homicides under the influence of alcohol
- SUD: property or drug related offenses > violent offenses
- Violent crimes: alcohol > any illegal drug
- DWI: 1.4M/year in the US (Vs. 114 M admit to DWI)

Aoun et al; 2019; PRAINC
(National Crime Victimization Survey, BJS, 2008)
**Overrepresentation of SUD in the Justice System**

- 2/3 of inmates have SUD
- Parolees/probationers 3x more likely to have SUD
- 40% were under the influence at the time of the offense
- 1/3 committed the offense to obtain money for drugs
- 60% of all arrestees with + UDS at arrest

Defining Documents

- Define what an excellent drug court is (the “ceiling”)
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness
- Research based 2 Volume look at building effectiveness of treatment courts

- Define what a drug court is (the “floor”)
- Not necessarily the only effective model
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN THE PAST 25+ YEARS?

A GENERAL COMPARISON
Nearly entirely consistent (thus far . . .)

Key Components
✓ State of knowledge as of 1997
✓ Derived from professional experience
✓ Measurable performance benchmarks
✓ Emphasis on distinguishing characteristics
✓ Envisioned 10 of them
✓ Never intended as the final word

Best Practice Standards
✓ State of knowledge as of 2013 and 2015
✓ Derived from an empirical threshold of ~50% to 100% improvement in outcomes; research in Commentaries
✓ Quantitative benchmarks
✓ All contributing elements
✓ Envisioned far more than 10
THE PROBLEM

23.5 million people are in need of substance use disorder treatment

345,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans have a substance use disorder

50% of offenders have a moderate to severe substance use disorder

Three-fourths of persons referred to treatment never enter or leave prematurely
National Report Card:

How did we do?

A Review of the Scientific Literature

www.ndci.org
Drug Courts ARE Criminal Justice Reform

Drug courts are the single most successful criminal justice intervention for seriously addicted offenders. Proven to save lives, save money, and reduce crime, these courts:

- Treat substance use disorders
- Treat mental health needs
- Deliver services for lifelong recovery
- Secure education, employment, and housing
- Produce tax-paying, productive citizens
- Break the cycle of addiction in families
- Reduce re-arrests and re-incarcerations
- Reduce substance use and overdose
- Reduce emergency room admissions
- Reduce foster care placements

Learn More: allrise.org
Drug Courts ARE Criminal Justice Reform

- 1.5 million total served by drug court
- 4,000+ drug courts in the U.S.
- 150,000 people served by drug courts each year
- Up to 58% reduction in recidivism
- $6,000 average savings per drug court participant
NCDC
NATIONAL CENTER FOR DWI COURTS

Top DWI courts reduce recidivism by 60%.

2+ million drivers in the US with 3 or more DWI convictions.

The estimated cost of alcohol-impaired crashes in the US in 2010 was $44 billion.

$3.19 saved for every $1 invested in DWI courts.

698 DWI courts in the U.S.

10,511 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in 2010.

There is a disturbing upward trend in the number of annual impaired-driving-related fatalities due to repeat driving while intoxicated (DWI) offenders and drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or higher. However, the criminal justice system’s traditional response of incarceration and other punishment does not deter these offenders because it does not address the root cause of the problem: addiction.

DWI court participants are 19 times less likely to reoffend. DWI courts are changing the criminal justice system’s approach to impaired driving:

- Provide intense supervision
- Provide individualized, long-term treatment
- Change participants’ thinking and behavior
- Demand accountability
- Save taxpayers’ money
- Improve public safety

Learn More: dwcourts.org
BE INFORMED
THE NATIONAL FACTS

JUSTICE FOR VETS

15,000 currently served by veterans treatment courts¹
5,700 veteran mentors in VTCs¹
407 VTCs in the U.S.¹

460,000 Iraq/Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD or depression²
345,000 Iraq/Afghanistan veterans have a substance use disorder³
181,500 incarcerated veterans in the U.S.⁴

BENEFITS THEY'VE EARNED

The majority of our veterans return home strengthened by their military service, but many struggle with trauma, mental illness (such as PTSD) and substance use disorders. These issues can be exacerbated by the loss of structure and camaraderie found in the military. Veterans treatment courts (VTCs) provide treatment, accountability, and mentoring, and they help connect justice-involved veterans with the benefits they’ve earned. VTCs save the lives, families and futures of our veterans while also saving taxpayer dollars.

SUPPORT THEY DESERVE

A study published by the Community Mental Health Journal found that veterans who participate in veterans treatment courts experience significant improvement in:

✓ Depression
✓ PTSD
✓ Substance use
✓ Mental and emotional health
✓ Housing
✓ Relationships and social connection
✓ Overall functioning and well-being

Learn More: justiceforvets.org

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2019)
² National Coalition for1 (2019)
³ Federal Bureau of Investigation (2019)
⁴ National Coalition for1 (2019)
The Perceived Challenges

- Drug Legalization
- Diversion Programs
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Bail Reform
THANK YOU

VANESSA PRICE

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