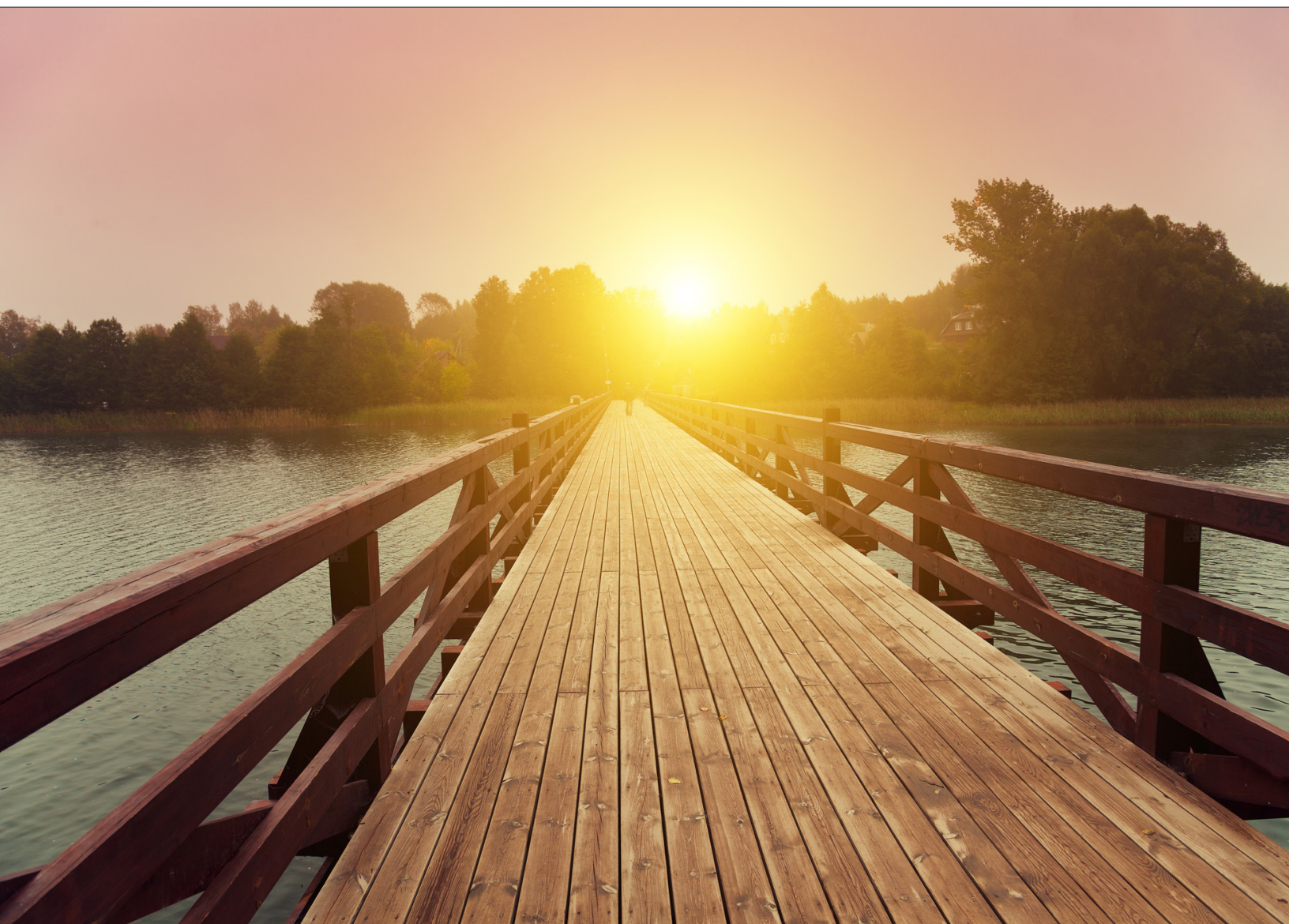




BRIDGES TO JUSTICE: A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR ADULT DIVERSION PROGRAMS

Adult Redeploy Illinois



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Adult Redeploy Illinois (ARI) is a state funding program to expand more effective and less expensive alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders. ARI provides grants to local jurisdictions (counties, groups of counties, judicial circuits) to fund problem-solving courts, enhanced probation supervision with services, and other evidence-based interventions that address individuals' risks and needs, and leverage their assets (family support, employment), with the goal to reduce recidivism. ARI saves the state money through the reduced use of incarceration in state facilities, helping to sustain local investments to improve public safety and support stronger, healthier communities.

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Introduction

Adult Redeploy Illinois is a state initiative to reduce the number of non-violent offenders going to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) by providing financial incentives to local jurisdictions to increase community-based supervision and services that are proven to reduce recidivism.

Communities serve as the heart of ARI. Through ARI programs, eligible individuals facing non-violent charges can stay in their communities in lieu of a commitment to IDOC. The community is not only the place where participants in ARI programs seek treatment and positive changes in their lives, but it also embodies the people that share relationships of support and accountability with participants. Thus, ARI sites cannot fully operate without the buy-in and partnership of their communities.

Many ARI sites and other criminal justice diversion programs in Illinois have integrated community-oriented elements to enhance the services and supervision programming provided to participants for better individual and program outcomes. Alongside these innovative efforts, the interest in community justice among criminal justice stakeholders and decision-makers has only grown within the past decade. Increasingly, the community is no longer seen as simply a geographic setting, but rather an entity that should have a voice and role to play within the criminal justice system.

In light of growing interest, ARI compiled this toolkit to highlight program models and best practices in adult diversion programs that strengthen ties between the criminal justice system and the community. ARI identified sites with strong community involvement components and collected information on programs through site visits, observations, and interviews.

Overview

This toolkit was designed to improve operation of ARI with a road map to strengthen the capacity and role of community in local programs. This document provides guidance on integrating community when planning or operating diversion programs, both in Illinois and nationally. Snapshots of ARI sites with robust community involvement are presented. Snapshots include program descriptions, challenges related to community involvement and strategies to navigate them, and how community involvement has enhanced programs.

Methodology

The information in this toolkit was collected through interviews and site visits conducted from June to October 2016. Guides were used during all the interviews and site visits to ensure consistent and thorough information collection. Information was collected to address the following questions:

- What models exist for community involvement within the ARI network?

- What tools are available for communities seeking to become involved with local ARI programs and adult diversion programs?
- What were the challenges to involving the community? How were the challenges overcome?
- What are the benefits of community involvement in ARI and adult diversion programs to the criminal justice system, the local community, and individuals (justice system stakeholders, program participants, victims and community members)?

Definitions

This toolkit defines adult diversion programs through the ARI lens. That is, adult diversion programs are defined as programs that divert adults facing a felony IDOC sentence through county-level court and community corrections programs that provide services and supervision. Adult diversion programs are the focus of this toolkit. While the populations that access diversion and re-entry programs are often the same or similar, diversion and re-entry programs intervene at distinctively different stages of involvement in the criminal justice system. Diversion programs intervene at the front end to divert individuals from incarceration, whereas re-entry programs intervene after incarceration in county jails or state prisons.

Community involvement is defined as efforts where stakeholders and non-governmental entities are working in partnership with adult diversion pro-

grams. According to the Center for Court Innovation, community stakeholders, or “groups that have an interest in the welfare of the community,” are essential in a community. In a restorative justice roundtable conducted by the Center for Court Innovation, participants defined community as including residents, business owners, faith communities, crime victims, individuals with criminal convictions, government agencies, and youth.

Using the Toolkit

This toolkit serves as a road map that provides examples of and guidance for integrating community involvement components in adult diversion programs. The toolkit is categorized among the following topic areas:

- Engaging the Community
- Restorative Justice
- Building Resources in the Community
- Employment Supports
- Family Involvement
- Peer Support

The authors welcome and challenge ARI sites to use this toolkit to develop, strengthen, and/or evaluate community involvement components within their programming. Use the examples and program spotlights to envision, plan for, and operationalize community involvement in ways that are appropriate to the local environment, and consult others in the quest to strengthen community involvement components in adult diversion programs.

SECTION 1

Engaging the Community

In interviews with various ARI program administrators, participants, and other stakeholders, certain community engagement practices were consistently cited and recommended. The 10 most frequently cited community engagement practices are summarized here.

Ten Best Practices for Engaging the Community

Practice 1: Community outreach

Reach out to community entities (e.g. churches, service organizations, and associations) and ask to present at their next gatherings. Presentations should include a program overview, public safety and economic benefits, client success stories (if appropriate), and ways for community members to get involved. If possible, bring successful participants or graduates to these presentations. Speaking engagements can be booked weeks or months in advance. Follow up with community groups you've presented to with new developments.

Practice 2: Engage higher education institutions

Adult diversion programs can provide excellent professional training for higher education students. If your program has the capacity for hosting interns, contact local colleges and universities with information about potential training opportunities. For instance, your program may be suited for criminal justice stu-

dents, students seeking a master's degree in social work, or Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor (CADAC) candidates to serve as interns. Internship outcomes may include written materials, such as resource manuals. Interns can also assist in direct programming in substantial ways. Another way to create relationships with higher education institutions is to engage them in creating and evaluating programming. Fostering these relationships also helps to spread the word and create more advocates for your work.

Practice 3: Volunteer at community events

Volunteering at community events provides meaningful ways to contribute while connecting with community members. In addition, when both participants and staff volunteer at events, it demonstrates unity and commitment within the program. Lastly, volunteering at community events can open the door to further networking. Matching apparel, such as buttons or t-shirts promoting your program, may invite questions from curious community members.

Practice 4: Reach out to employers

Employment is crucial to a participant's integration into the community and into a healthier lifestyle. Therefore, it is helpful to have at least one individual dedicated to job development. Network with employers that have the potential to hire

your program participants and graduates. When speaking to employers, describe the structure of the program, intensity of program supervision, and benefits of giving someone a chance. Many employers resist hiring people with felony convictions, but by taking the time to explain how your program operates and the support you provide, you may convince them to give your participants and graduates with felony convictions a second chance.

Practice 5: Seek opportunities for meaningful community engagement

Find ways for participants to meaningfully connect with community members outside of community service. If you work with veterans, find programs that connect them with other veterans. Some participants may be interested in donating their skills to a nonprofit organization. These opportunities will help to deepen the participant's connection to the community and contribute to long-term success after the program.

Practice 6: Canvass local neighborhoods to gain local support

Face-to-face interactions are most effective in engaging and educating community members. Map out neighborhoods where program staff and volunteers can go door-to-door. Make sure they have a script and handouts with contact information to share. It also can be helpful for program staff or volunteers to pair up with successful graduates who can offer testimony on the program.

Practice 7: Host community forums

Forums differ from presentations in that they are more participatory in nature.



The community has to see the cost-benefit of the specialty courts—both financially and in terms of the human spirit and the community at large.

Julie McCabe-Sterr
Coordinator, Will County Adult
& Juvenile Drug Courts

That is, the primary aim of community forums is to provide a setting for community stakeholders to express their concerns and questions about a certain program or issue. Also, hosting regular forums to update the community on program developments is useful for gathering and addressing community concerns and needs. It also communicates your program's willingness to be transparent and desire to foster community partnerships. For instance, a program can host a community forum if it is considering building a recovery home in the community. The community forum may begin with a brief presentation about the plans regarding the recovery home, but leave time for community members to ask questions and share concerns. Community forums create more buy-in and awareness about your program.

Practice 8: Celebrate program successes with your community

Graduations and other major developments in the program are perfect opportunities to bring the program

stakeholders and community together to celebrate. Programmatically, celebrations are important for acknowledging achievements and boosting morale. It is uplifting for participants to see community support of their progress. Celebrations also help community members to learn about the program in a lively atmosphere with program staff, volunteers, and participants. Think broadly about who from the community should be in the audience, or at the podium, during your celebration.

Practice 9: Create meaningful opportunities for community involvement

Keep the door open for community members who want to be involved but don't know where to start. This is often the case for individuals with loved ones who have completed an adult diversion program or who struggle with mental health or substance abuse issues. Engage the community with volunteer opportunities such as fundraising, leading community service projects, or making program presentations at local groups.

Practice 10: Conduct outreach with service providers.

Access to services is essential for both participants and graduates of your program. Therefore, it is important to engage service providers (hospitals, dentists) to educate them about your program and the needs of the participants. Be prepared with concrete requests. Ask for a set number of free services each year for your participants, such as dental check-ups.

SECTION 2

Integrating Restorative Justice

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative justice is a theory of justice rooted in indigenous cultures that calls for reconciliation in response to wrong doings. More specifically, restorative justice is framed as a shift away from punitive approaches and toward a community-based, humanistic understanding of justice. In restorative justice processes, the offender reconciles with the victim(s) and the community at large through service and dialogue. The needs of the offender are addressed through provision of resources and the opportunity to have a relationship with the community. The needs of the victim are addressed by giving them a say in the justice process. Ultimately, restorative justice aims to strengthen the role of communities in guiding processes of justice (Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, 2016)

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY RESTORATIVE BOARDS?

Community restorative boards (CRBs) are used as an enhanced tool and sometimes an alternative to formal court intervention. They provide a way for citizens to be directly involved in the justice process, while creating opportunities for participants to constructively address their criminal behavior and make amends with individuals and the communities they harmed. CRBs are made up of well-trained community members who first meet with each participant to discuss:

- The nature of the crime.
- The ways that the crime harmed individuals and/or the community.

After discussing these items, the board works with the participant to create a plan for reparation within the community. The plan requires the participant to make amends with the victims of the crime, when appropriate, and other community members. CRBs regularly meet with participants to monitor their progress. After the participant completes their plan, the CRB submits a report to the court stating the participant has complied with all aspects of their plan.

In the end, CRBs allow communities to dictate how participants can engage in a process of reparations. It also helps participants to feel more connected to their communities, fostering a stronger sense of accountability (US Department of Justice, n.d.).

Macon County Adult Redeploy Illinois Community Restorative Board

The Macon County Adult Redeploy Program began as a pilot site in 2011, offering an intensive probation supervision with supportive services program. Housed in the Macon County State’s Attorney’s Office, this program is operated by a multi-disciplinary team including probation staff, the state’s attorney, the county public defender, and local service providers. A vital aspect of Macon County ARI is the community restorative board, staffed by a part-time coordinator and several volunteers.

Community Restorative Board Overview

The purpose of the Macon County CRB is to work with ARI program participants, their families, and victims (when appropriate) to repair harm and restore damage that resulted from the participant’s crime. The Macon County Probation Department recommends individuals from the ARI caseload for CRB participation and subsequently adds CRB participation into their probation conditions. The CRB utilizes a community volunteer-based restorative approach in its work. CRB services typically include:

- Engagement with the client, family, and community.
- Restorative interventions and sanctions.
- “Aftercare” connections and wrap-around services.
- Victim engagement (when possible).

SPOTLIGHT: Macon County

- Located in central Illinois
- Population: 107,303
- Largest city: Decatur, pop. 74,710
- Population per square mile: 190.8
- Comprised of 16 townships
- Median household income: \$46,696
- Poverty rate: 16.3%
- Number of employer establishments: 2,434

The CRB’s four program goals include:

- Helping participants (offenders) understand that being part of a community carries certain obligations and responsibilities.
- Involving local volunteers in the accountability process while clearly communicating community expectations.
- Developing a plan to assist offenders in becoming productive members of the community.
- Creating a circle of support that builds better relations between community and offenders.

Preparing Participants for the Community Restorative Board

Prior to participating in the CRB, participants must complete a cognitive

restructuring group (CRG), all or most of moral recognition therapy (MRT), and must make efforts to pay off their fines. CRG helps participants to better understand the connections between anti-social thinking, feelings and behaviors and introduces them to strategies to resist anti-social thinking and behavior.

MRT is a cognitive-behavioral program that aims to help participants develop moral reasoning by confronting their beliefs and behaviors to develop a stronger sense of right and wrong.

After participating in CRG and MRT, participants are expected to have the frame of mind to value re-establishing community ties.

Community Restorative Board Process

To complete the CRB process, participants must write letters of apology, complete a community service project, and attend regular CRB meetings.

The letters of apology help participants to think about their crimes and the ways their crimes have harmed people, including themselves. Participants have written letters to the judge, family members, significant others, and the community as a whole.

In the community service project, the client utilizes a skill (asset) that they already have to meaningfully help the community. The project might include community landscaping work or preparing free meals for people facing poverty. These projects help participants to see that they can make a positive difference in their communities. It also lays the

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I see a brighter future. You have to always aspire to be better, but it takes time to realize that. This program helps with that. It puts things in perspective.

Former Macon County Community Restorative Board Participant

groundwork for future volunteering opportunities.

In a typical CRB meeting, two or three CRB members will facilitate discussion with the program participant, the participant's family, and the victim (community). Because ARI Programs serve non-violent offenders and there are no direct victims to be addressed through the CRB, the focus is on the impact of offenses on community members, community safety, and local economic development. Regular CRB meetings help board members follow the progress of the participants and help them process their experiences. Initial meetings are dedicated to building trust with participants. CRB members emphasize that:

- What is discussed in meetings stays confidential.
- CRB members are volunteers who care about the participants and the community.
- CRB members are not there to judge or argue with participants, but to help them,.

When or if a participant becomes defensive CRB members explain the process and assure them that they will get a say in how they will be best served by this process. This gives participants some control over the process.

CRB members also stay cognizant of racial- and gender-based power dynamics. In meetings, an identity of the participant is shared by at least one CRB member.

After the first few meetings, once CRB members have built a rapport with participants, the focus moves onto the following issues:

- What the crime was.
- Why the participant committed the crime.
- Who was harmed by the crime.
- How the participant can repair the harm they committed.
- What barriers are present in the client's life.
- What strengths and supports the participant has.
- What the participant wants from the CRB process.
- What service projects interest the participant.
- To whom the participant will be writing apology letters.
- What the participant needs in order to be successful in the CRB process.

CRB members use creative ways to help participants think about their impact in the community to become more active in their community. For instance, a CRB member that is a county board member

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If you move everybody a little bit and some get a lot better, that's okay.

You've got to have realistic expectations and know that there are going to be outliers. You have to have the patience to deal with a variety of outcomes. Every person I have talked to is different.

Macon County Community Restorative
Board Member

uses the county budget to calculate the cost of participant's crime to taxpayers, providing context to the participant on the harm they caused. The same member requires participants to attend at least one meeting of a local government unit. After the participant attends this meeting, the participant shares with the CRB member what they learned. This has resulted in participants becoming more active community members.

Forming the Community Restorative Board

The majority of the CRB's work is carried out by its members who are community volunteers. Macon County was challenged to find community members willing to serve on the board. In response to this challenge, the county reached out to community-based organizations inviting them to attend community forums on

the CRB. Community forums consisted of ARI program presentations, a CRB overview, and a Q&A session. Food was provided and volunteer applications were circulated.

In 2014 a well-known community leader, Dr. Jeanelle Norman, agreed to voluntarily lead the development and growth of the adult CRB in Macon County. A leader with a history of strong community involvement and a multitude of relationships within the community can lead to quick program growth and strong volunteer recruitment. Community members recruited for and contributing to the CRB's success include retirees, business owners, educators, individuals in faith-based communities, and individuals involved with the Decatur Area Criminal Justice Group, a community organization dedicated to eliminating injustice in the criminal justice system. Today, the CRB has nearly 20 members. Ten members regularly meet with participants and the rest support the CRB as needed.

Selecting and Training Community Restorative Board Members

CRB recruits must submit an application. Applicants with criminal histories are unable to join the board.

CRB members receive 12 to 16 hours of training on restorative justice and how to conduct restorative conversations with participants that explore:

- How the participant harmed the victim and the community.
- The harm that the participant has experienced.
- How the participant can repair the harm.

An instructional video demonstrates how these conversations take place and the principles of restorative justice. Members are trained on meeting mechanics, such as how to open CRB meetings, navigate difficult topics, build trust with participants, and co-facilitate meetings with other members.

CRB members also learn about the ARI program for context on the participants' experiences in the criminal justice system. With knowledge of MRT, members are able to structure conversations that build off of and strengthen lessons and skills participants have learned from MRT.

Community Restorative Board Members as Sources of Support for Each Other

When small groups of CRB members work together with a participant, they spend time to discuss the case before and after each meeting. In particular, the CRB members discuss their thoughts and concerns regarding prior meetings, strategies for engaging and building trust with the participant, and the ways they will facilitate the next meeting (e.g. who will speak first, who will say what, how they will open the session).

CRB members do not discuss specific participants with members that are not involved with the participant. However, CRB members do provide support for each other in other ways. For instance, CRB members utilize each other's networks to help find employment for participants. CRB members also consult with one another when they have questions about how to put restorative justice principles and values into practice.

Advice for Implementing a Community Restorative Board

CRBs are collaborative efforts, requiring the commitment of a diverse group of individuals. Macon County CRB members recognize their diversity and their members' strengths and limitations and members are assigned to cases on an individual basis. The diversity helps the CRB to approach each case with a holistic lens.

Members who are business leaders and/or connected to the business community can be instrumental in helping participants find employment.

CRBs must be tolerant of nonlinear and incremental progress. People progress differently. It is the responsibility of the CRB to remain steadfast in their commitment to each participants' success. CRBs also should remain understanding and responsive to unforeseen or unavoidable changes in participants' lives

Communication with the ARI program is key. The CRB maintains regular communication with the county probation department so that they are fully prepared for each participant upon each CRB meeting. Constant communication helps the board meet participants' needs.

A foundation of the CRB is the relationship between the participant and CRB members. It is critical to set guidelines for how people will interact with and treat each other during the meetings.

Benefits of Community Restorative Board

The primary benefit of a CRB is that it provides a way for community members to meaningfully participate in justice pro-

cesses while simultaneously restoring the offender, victim and community.

Community members can play a crucial role in helping individuals who have harmed the community to understand their crimes and make reparations. Furthermore, CRBs help participants find a connection with the community. Through restorative meetings and the completion of community service projects, participants have the opportunity to rebuild trust within the community. This helps participants to feel as if they are a part of their community and develop positive new relationships, strengthening the desire to give back and remain accountable to their families, friends, and the community. In the end, the effects of the CRB ripple through the lives of participants and their communities.

Madison County Adult Redeploy Illinois Community Restorative Board

The Madison County ARI Program has operated out of the Madison County Probation Department since 2011. As part of the program, the county runs a community restorative board (CRB) to help participants engage in processes to make reparations with the community. The board is staffed by a part-time CRB coordinator and relies on several volunteers.

Overview

The Madison County CRB was formed in 2014 to offer participants who have committed non-violent crimes positive, creative opportunities to examine the impact of their crimes and make amends with the community.

Participants are matched with a meaningful project that helps them connect with and create networks of support within the community. The CRB is grounded in the values and practice of restorative justice and participants work to repair the harm they caused while building new relationships with the community.

Process

The CRB process encompasses three stages. First, the CRB receives referrals. Referred are individuals who are in Phase Two of the Madison County's intensive probation with services ARI program. At this stage, participants are informed of the board by a probation officer and meet with members of the CRB. In this 60-

SPOTLIGHT: Madison County

- Located in Southwestern Illinois in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area
- Population: 266,209
- Population per square mile: 376.3
- Comprised of 24 townships
- Largest city: Edwardsville, pop. 24,663
- Median household income: \$53,912
- Poverty rate: 13.1%
- Number of employer establishments: 5,806

to 90-minute meeting, board members get to know the participant, the crime is discussed, and a service project is identified. As the meetings begin, participants may be defensive, distrusting, and/or confused. To alleviate this, board members explain the difference between the CRB and the traditional criminal justice system. Participants learn that the CRB process incorporates a community service project that gives them an opportunity to repair the harm they caused. To build a rapport with the participant, they engage them in a discussion of their:

- Personal story.
- Plans for the future.
- Support system.

- Personal challenges.
- Experience in the Adult Redeploy Illinois program.

Once rapport is built, CRB members engage the participant in a non-judgmental discussion about the participant’s crime. CRB members specifically ask participants to reflect on:

- Who the crime impacted.
- Ways the participant defines their community.
- Ways the crime impacted the community.

Next, CRB members help the participant to explore what they need to do to repair the harm they caused. Discussed are:

- The extent to which the participant feels supported by the community.
- Ways in which the participant feels excluded by the community.
- What the participant needs from the community.
- What the participant thinks is the best way for them to repair their relationship with the community.
- Service opportunities that the interest the participant.



They’re not just checking a box and getting through it. It’s more about respecting their community, being part of that community again, and being respected again.

Danica Byler
Madison County Community
Restorative Board Member & Founder

At this point in the meeting, participants are then able to construct an eight-hour service project that is meaningful to them. They also outline to whom they will be writing a set of apology letters. The service project utilizes participants’ skills, gives them an opportunity to develop relationships with community members, and helps the participant to address the harms caused by their crime. The apology letters help participants describe how they harmed individuals and/or the community and identify ways they will be making reparations and positive changes in their lives. CRB members provide contact information to the participants, who are encouraged to reach out to them for support throughout the process.

Participants complete their service projects in the second stage of the CRB process. Service projects have included:

- Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.
- Creating a directory of local businesses that hire people with felony convictions.
- Developing a resource guide that helps Adult Redeploy participants access basic needs.
- Serving food to the community at a local church.

Lastly, the participant has a final meeting with the CRB to reflect on what they have been able to accomplish and what they hope to accomplish. The CRB members ask the participant to share:

- The experience of carrying out the project.
- Whether they met anybody that made an impact on them.
- Whether the participant feels differently or the same about their community.
- Whether the participant feels that they have begun to make amends with the community.
- How the CRB and the community can continue to support them.

This process has been well received by both participants and community entities that have facilitated the service projects. Participants often continue to volunteer with the organizations after completing their service projects because it was such a positive experience. Organizations such as Habitat for Humanity

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It's as important for the community to be restored as it is for person.

Jackie Havis-Shear
CRB Member and Founder

have praised the work of the CRB and continue to provide opportunities for participants entering the process.

Engaging the Community

The community is essential to the work of the CRB as the main source of healing for this process. The involvement of the community helps to broaden the participants' perspective and develop more positive relationships and networks. Community involvement in this process also helps participants to feel seen, heard, and humanized in the community. Often this helps participants to feel more compassion and accountability toward the community.

Community Engagement Successes

The CRB has had much success with engaging the Edwardsville-area faith community and Habitat for Humanity. These groups not only provide volunteer opportunities, but they also seek to build relationships with the participants. The CRB draws board members from the community and it is important to gather diverse members so participants have a range of individuals with whom they can connect. A shared commitment and belief in the CRB brings the group closer.

Community Engagement Challenges

At times, involving the community has not been easy due to the stigma associated with individuals with felony convictions (i.e., negative community perceptions about individuals with histories of justice system involvement). In order to address this stigma, CRB members make presentations and convene face-to-face meetings with different community entities to educate them about the CRB process and local ARI program. In these outreach efforts, CRB members emphasize the rigor of the Madison County Adult Redeploy Program, describe service projects, and share past success stories.

Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Challenge: Ensuring that participants follow through with their service projects.

Resolution: Stay connected with participants on a weekly basis to discuss progress. This measure not only helps participants to continue making progress, but it also builds rapport with board members and participants.

Challenge: Participants approaching the CRB process as a graduation project to rush through rather than an important interim step in their process of healing and change.

Resolution: Bring in participants during Phase Two of the ARI program instead of near graduation to make clear the CRB is an interim step. At Phase two, participants have been stabilized however

they are still in the middle of change and thus ready to get the full benefit of the CRB process. The CRB emphasizes to the probation department that upon entry into the CRB participants are still in the process of change and still have significant work to do before program graduation. The CRB itself is part of the change process.

Benefits

The Madison County CRB builds and leverages the capacity of communities to directly address the impact of crime in a positive way. CRBs provide communities with the opportunity to facilitate conversations with individuals that have harmed them and find meaningful resolutions. These interactions help participants feel seen and cared for in the community. As a result, participants feel that they have a place in the community.

Conclusion

COMMUNITY RESTORATIVE BOARD BENEFITS

- The community gets a voice in how an individual makes reparations for their crime.
- They create more community buy-in for probation programs, problem-solving courts and other diversion programs.
- They offer a structure for community groups and organizations to be involved in a diversion program.
- Individuals are taught to understand how their crimes impacted people and their community as a whole.
- Community members have an opportunity to positively interact with individuals that they may have previously stigmatized and labeled as “criminals.”
- Allows individuals to create projects that foster positive community relationships while repairing the harm they inflicted.
- Individuals find a place in the community and spend their time helping others.

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

- Focus on small, incremental steps toward change in participants. Do not expect immediate results.
- Find diverse, committed board members.
- When matching participants to CRB members, tailor the groups to each participant’s individual needs, strengths, identities and limitations.
- Provide ongoing training opportunities for CRB members.
- Create clear agendas and worksheets for each meeting for structure and recording.
- Find ways to follow up with participants other than during the CRB meetings. This may include scheduling regular phone calls, emails, or texts with participants to check in with them.
- Spend a meeting or two getting to know the participant. Do not force participants into restorative conversations about their crime before rapport is built.
- Provide ways for CRB members to support and consult with one another.
- Have community members lead CRB member recruitment efforts.
- Meet participants’ defensiveness, distrust, and resistance with care, honesty, and patience.
- Create relationships with nonprofit organizations that can offer service project opportunities.
- Maintain constant communication with probation departments or ARI programs.

SECTION 3

Building Resources in the Community



Crawford County – 2nd Judicial Circuit Adult Redeploy Illinois: Recovery Excellence Through Nurture, Education, and Work

The Crawford County Drug Court is one of 12 rural drug courts in the 2nd Judicial Circuit Adult Redeploy Illinois program. The Crawford County Drug Court shares resources and grant funds with other courts in this circuit such as a drug court counselor. To generate both money and community awareness and additional financial support for the Crawford County Drug Court, the court formed a nonprofit organization: Recovery Excellence through Nurture, Education, and Work (RE-NEW).

Overview

Twelve community volunteers run RE-NEW as part of an executive committee that meets monthly. The committee encompasses individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds, such as education, law enforcement, faith communities, and accounting. This diversity brings different perspectives and helps RE-NEW to reach out to different parts and populations of the community in order to build awareness and financial support.

RE-NEW functions as an entity that provides community awareness and financial support to the drug court. To preserve drug court participant confidentiality, RE-NEW is not directly involved in court operations. RE-NEW activities include fundraising, speaking to community groups about the drug court, writing grants to support the drug court, and managing the distribution of funds to the court or participants.

SPOTLIGHT: Crawford County

- Located in southeastern Illinois
- Population: 19,414
- Largest city: Robinson, pop. 7,665
- Comprised of 10 townships
- Median household income: \$46,057
- Poverty rate: 15.2%
- Number of employer establishments: 424

Forming RE-NEW

RE-NEW was formed in 2011 after Shirley Treadway, RE-NEW's current President, published a letter to the editor in 2010 in the Daily News, a local paper in Crawford County, explaining the county's intention to form a drug court, how a drug court works and the benefits a drug court would provide to Crawford County. There was local recognition for the need of a drug court and local will to form a drug court, but financial resources were necessary. The letter generated numerous responses from interested community members that would eventually serve on RE-NEW's Executive Committee. In its early days, RE-NEW worked with the Effingham Area Problem-Solving Court's Strategic Training and Restoration (S.T.A.R.), a similar entity in a nearby county, to help guide its development.

Fundraisers

RE-NEW holds approximately two fundraisers a year. In February 2016, the organization held an event that included a catered soup lunch and silent auction. This event took place in a community building in a forest preserve. The silent auction featured items donated by community members, including fishing rods, wood carvings, and restaurant vouchers. The event raised nearly \$4,000. At the end of 2015, RE-NEW sold soup at the kickoff for “Christmas at the Square,” a local event during the winter that occurs in the city square of Robinson, Illinois. In other years, RE-NEW has held one-night fundraisers at local pizza restaurants where diners present a card and the restaurant gives a portion of the proceeds of the bill to RE-NEW. In terms of organization and planning, larger events are typically planned in person with increased meeting times over a couple months. Smaller events, on the other hand, are usually planned through phone calls and emails.

These fundraisers serve to generate financial support for the drug court, in particular for components not covered by state grant funds, while also increasing awareness of the drug court which assists to decrease stigma of people struggling with substance abuse. During fundraisers, RE-NEW members wear the organization’s t-shirts, hand out pamphlets (print-

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Our participants need to go out into the community and be accepted. RE-NEW helps along those lines. It impacts the long-term success of the participants.

Shirley Treadway
RE-NEW President & Founder

ed for free at a local hospital), and speak to attendees about the drug court program and its benefits.

RE-NEW has been successful in obtaining grants for the drug court to cover incentives for participants and basic need items. For instance, the group was instrumental in securing grants from United Way and ARI to start the core programming of drug court.

Raising Awareness in the Community

To help raise awareness, RE-NEW members connect with a variety of community groups including high school programs and religious groups. When conducting outreach at these groups, RE-NEW sends members to speak in pairs so that both can share the responsibility of educating the group. This is especially helpful when groups are initially less open to the work

of the Drug Court due to the stigma of justice-system involvement and addiction. When speaking to groups, RE-NEW often shares the economic benefits of the drug court, referring to the high cost of a year in prison versus the cost of drug treatment in the community. The group tends to avoid the use of success stories because they often speak in small towns where confidentiality is important. They do, however, emphasize that the drug court helps people become productive citizens in their communities, as opposed to sending them away to state prison.

Fund Allocation

The funds raised by RE-NEW support drug court expenses that fall outside of the county budget. Funding requests are reviewed and approved at RE-NEW's monthly meetings, and emergency funds may be released with members' approval by phone. RE-NEW has partially funded the salary of a drug court counselor employed by the 2nd Judicial Court, purchased a drug testing machine along with its supplies, bought gift cards that are used as incentives for participants, and has provided financial support to participants to cover basic needs, such as food and clothing.

RE-NEW also holds a luncheon for drug court graduates to recognize program completion and gifts graduates with a watch inscribed with the words, "This is the first day of your life."

Benefits of Community Support

The community is an important source of financial support for the court. That is, funds raised from the community can help to cover costs that county budgets and government grants cannot. Furthermore, getting the community involved in the Crawford County Drug Court helps to create a community climate where participants and graduates are accepted. This helps participants and graduates to sustain the changes they have made in their lives.

Lawrence County – 2nd Judicial Circuit Adult Redeploy Illinois: URCHOICE Program

The Lawrence County Drug Court is one of 12 drug courts in the rural 2nd Judicial Circuit Adult Redeploy Illinois program. The Lawrence County Drug Court shares resources and grant funds with other courts in the circuit. In 2014, URCHOICE was established as a non-profit organization to raise funds for and awareness of the Lawrence County Drug Court.

Overview

All URCHOICE members are volunteers and the URCHOICE Board of Directors holds meetings on a monthly basis to allocate funds raised to the Lawrence County Drug Court or plan events. URCHOICE is crucial for raising community awareness of the benefits of the county drug court. In particular, URCHOICE works to address the frequent misconception that the drug court program is “soft on crime” or a taxpayer burden. Additionally, URCHOICE works to fundamentally change negative attitudes and perceptions about individuals that struggle with substance use. Many individuals are hesitant to support people struggling with substance use, failing to recognize it as a disease rather than a moral failing.

Fundraisers

URCHOICE hosts an annual fundraiser that includes a dinner, dance, and silent auction of donated items. URCHOICE promotes this fundraiser through dis-

SPOTLIGHT: Lawrence County

- Illinois’ easternmost county
- Population: 16,491
- Population per square mile: 45.2
- Largest city: Lawrenceville, pop. 4,316
- Comprised of 9 townships
- Median household income: \$39,569
- Poverty rate: 18.1%
- Number of employer establishments: 27

seminating posters, speaking to the local chamber of commerce, participating in interviews with radio stations, and sending out solicitations to individuals to buy tickets and contribute to the silent auction. In order to maximize funds raised from this event, URCHOICE has been able to cut event costs through hiring a live band that provided entertainment during the event at a discounted rate and having all the silent auction items donated.

The event’s opening speakers cite low recidivism rates among drug court program participants, as well as the program’s economic benefits in comparison to incarceration. Also during the event, drug court participants and alumni share their program experiences. These personal testimonies make an emotional impact on attendees and humanize the work of

the drug court. Last year, event tickets were \$15 for adults and \$10 for children.

The community has provided other resources to URCHOICE, including assistance in developing a manual on transportation, self-help groups, and other community resources for drug court participants. A local accountant helped URCHOICE obtain nonprofit status. Another local nonprofit organization donates meeting space to URCHOICE.

Engaging the Community

Another important component of URCHOICE's work is member participation in monthly workdays. On these workdays, drug court participants volunteer at community events to earn community service hours. Directly participating in workdays is a priority for URCHOICE members as a show of community support to drug court participants. While volunteering at workdays, URCHOICE members wear URCHOICE t-shirts to promote their work. Community residents have reached out to the drug court for assistance, requesting that a workday is scheduled to help with a specific project.

URCHOICE actively promotes the work of the drug court through social media and local media outreach. URCHOICE believes that engaging the community is vital to the long-term success of drug court participants and graduates. Community support not only ensures growth and sustainability of the drug

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Pick active, community-involved people that are good communicators to be on the board so that they can spread the word and come up with positive ideas.

Judge Robert Hopkins
URCHOICE Board of Directors

court, but also that participants develop a relationship with and sense of accountability to the community.

Fund Allocation

With its funds, URCHOICE covers drug court expenses that cannot be paid for with government grants. When a delay in government funding threatened the program, URCHOICE temporarily covered the salary of a drug court counselor and provided funding for drug testing kits. URCHOICE also provides financial assistance to drug court participants in need of clothing and other basic necessities.

Grundy County Adult Redeploy Illinois Treatment Alternatives Court

Grundy County has been an ARI site since 2015. Operating out of the Grundy County Circuit Court, the Treatment Alternatives Court (TAC) is a four-phase mental health court program integrating mental health and supportive services. Since its inception, TAC has had fundraising success due to the county circuit court's efforts to educate the community about its mental health court's goals and benefits. These efforts are an example of how problem-solving courts can engage the community for support without enlisting the help of a formal nonprofit entity.

Engaging the Community from the Start

While the Grundy County Circuit Court was determining the need for a mental health court, it held a community partners meeting at the county administration building. This meeting included individuals from law enforcement, community groups, hospitals, churches, and mental health services. All attendees were provided contact information for individuals associated with the initial planning efforts the mental health court so that they could follow up with any further concerns or question.

The Grundy County Circuit Court has issued numerous press releases to raise community awareness initially on the need for a mental health court and later on the importance of TAC. Shortly after the Grundy County Circuit Court

SPOTLIGHT: Grundy County

- Located 80 miles southwest of Chicago and part of the Chicago metropolitan area
- Population: 50,541
- Population per square mile: 119.8
- Largest city: Morris, pop. 13,926
- Comprised of 17 townships
- Median household income: \$65,197
- Poverty rate: 8.5%
- Total employer establishments: 1,060

submitted the first planning grant application for a mental health court, it issued a press release explaining why the county needed this program. After receipt of its first planning grant, the court released a press release outlining how a mental health court operates. Then shortly after TAC began, the court issued another press release. While the Grundy County Circuit Court was preparing grants paperwork for TAC, administrators continued to educate the public through the media and community outreach with local organizations, such as Kiwanis and the Lion's Club. At these engagements, the goal and methodology of a mental health court was discussed. Messaging included that TAC serves individuals who are involved

in the criminal justice system as a result of mental health conditions, details of programming, cost-effectiveness of mental health courts, and effectiveness of reducing recidivism.

After the robust local media outreach, the first round of donations was unsolicited and came in after the community meetings even before the court began operating. Moved by the court's arguments for a mental health court, community members sent checks to the circuit court ranging from \$50 to \$4,000.

Allocating the Private Fund

The private fund is used to cover expenses ineligible for government grants. The fund has been used to help eliminate barriers to recovery, such as medication, housing, and transportation costs. The TAC team makes funding determinations with the court's presiding judge having the final say. All expenses covered by the private fund are documented to create transparency for donors. Moreover, donations are maintained in a single county line item account, segregated from other revenues.

Sustaining Community Support

To help sustain TAC's private fund, court and TAC administrators regularly engage donors, community organizations, and foundations. TAC regularly communicates with donors on the court's needs and spending, as well as its appreciation. TAC Team Representatives also regularly

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We wanted to make sure the community as a whole understood that we are serving a population that needs to be served. In a small community, you need support or you aren't going to last.

Judge Lance Peterson
TAC Presiding Judge

meet with community foundations, such as private contributor United Way, to discuss long term needs and plans.

Benefits of Community Support

To TAC, community support is crucial. Without community donations, the court would be entirely dependent on government funding, a resource that can be scarce. Perhaps more importantly, TAC needs the community's approval and support for court sustainability and positive participant outcomes. Relationships with the community can help participants feel more supported and accepted.

Conclusion

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING AND AWARENESS

- Provides an opportunity for community members to more fully engage with the court.
- Creates a more supportive environment for participants.
- Helps the community to understand what the court does and program benefits.
- Helps community members feel more comfortable referring people they know to the court.
- Networking and relationship building within the community may help participants to find jobs and housing.

BENEFITS OF A NONPROFIT FUNDRAISING ENTITY

- Provides an opportunity for community members to advocate for the court.
- Enhances community awareness of the court and its benefits.
- Assists with long term sustainability of the court by diversifying funding and creating community support.

Continued on page 32

Conclusion, continued

FUNDRAISING TIPS FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

- Find enthusiastic volunteers motivated to build the non-profit organization.
- Plan and implement strategic outreach to community leaders to build a broad base of support and widely disseminate program information.
- Use media outlets and professional organizations to recruit volunteers.
- Ask for individuals in the community to donate their services.
- Encourage program staff to show enthusiasm for the work of the drug court.
- Share participant testimony, when appropriate, to illustrate the impact of problem-solving courts.
- Create ways for program graduates to participate in the organization.
- Organize community meetings and forums to share your work and allow ample time for questions.

SECTION 4

Employment Supports



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois - Randolph County Adult Redeploy Illinois: Employment Skills School

In 2015, the 20th Judicial Circuit started an ARI court program of supervision and services featuring the Second Chance Citizen Reentry Program in Randolph County. Second Chance Reentry provides enhanced employment services through a partnership with the Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) Employment Skills School (ESS).

Employment Skills School Overview

One of LSSI's vital components is Re-entry Services for Returning Citizens, a multi-faceted program that supports people transitioning back into their communities after a prison or jail stay. Offered is ESS, a 23-day, computer-based employment program with a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:3. The curriculum was developed by LSSI and Southern Illinois University Work Force Development. Throughout the program, instructors administer pre- and post-unit quizzes to measure course retention.

Job Skill Training Services

The ESS course offers training on how to find and keep a job, with skill-building exercises ranging from computer orientation, getting on the Internet, and creating an email account to maintaining interpersonal relationships at work. Before starting the course, participants must sign an agreement outlining program expectations. Participants must abide by a strict

SPOTLIGHT: Marion, Illinois

- Located in southern Illinois' Williamson County
- Population: 17,803
- Median household income: \$42,489
- Poverty rate: 18.3%

attendance policy, with classes from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday. Participants are assessed for skill level and units are tailored as needed.

Digital literacy skills are taught, including typing, using Microsoft Office, and using email. The goal of this unit is to make participants proficient enough to submit online applications and communicate through email with employers. Participants learn how to fill out an application, how to locate job opportunities, and steps to applying for a job online.

Workplace skills also are covered in the course. Participants first learn how to effectively and appropriately communicate with their coworkers and supervisors. This includes lessons on interpreting body language, telephone etiquette, how to peacefully resolve conflicts, providing constructive criticism, and controlling emotional reactions. Next, participants learn about professionalism, ethics, and workplace safety. This part of the course covers topics such as how to participate in meetings, time management, identi-

fyng work place environment issues, understanding business image, and how to assume responsibility for actions and decisions.

The next unit of the course covers financial planning and housing, with a focus on budgeting and maintaining the five requirements for living: shelter, food, utilities, transportation, and appropriate work attire. Participants also learn how to read through a lease and where to look for housing.

Landing and retaining a job is another focus. Participants start by creating cover letters, resumes, letters of explanation about their criminal records and how they have made amends, thank you letters, and references. Mock job interviews are conducted during which participants are required to dress appropriately. If participants do not have proper attire, ESS will assist them in obtaining clothing. Additionally, participants develop and practice 30-second professional “elevator pitches” with each other, providing an opportunity for constructive feedback.

Career portfolios are created for each participant that include their resume, cover letters, reference letter, letter of explanation, thank you letters, certificates, pens, mints, and a flash drive containing all relevant employment documents.

Outreach Program

Employer outreach is conducted by a dedicated ESS staffer to grow job opportunities available to participants. By

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When I came home from prison, I didn't have anything and people worked with me to help me get on my feet. Seeing that the community was so willing to help me enhanced my positive attitude. It showed me that someone cares.

Thomas White
ESS Instructor & Former Participant

providing participants with job stability, they argue, employers can enhance public safety within their communities.

In discussions with local employers, staff may recommend a specific participant for employment. This has been an effective strategy to get beyond employers' initial reluctance to hire people with a criminal record. ESS representatives partner with employers to monitor and support participants to ensure a successful working relationship. Many local employers now recruit ESS participants for employment.

LSSI holds monthly community meetings on reentry issues. Meetings often feature guest speakers—ESS participants who tell their stories. Meetings

typically are attended by social service providers and community members.

AmeriCorps volunteers

AmeriCorps volunteers help staff LSSI and many bring deep knowledge of the community to the program which greatly assists with outreach to community members. These volunteers track the outcomes and demographics of LSSI clientele, teach ESS classes, and conduct intakes and case management.

Geography Matters

ESS operates within a rural setting. The City of Marion is a small, tight-knit community. Staff members say this has been advantageous to the program, as it allows them to leverage personal relationships to help advocate for participants. Staff says that running the program in a small community means that community members see helping the participants as helping their own fellow community members which is not always the case in a larger urban setting.

Community Involvement

The community actively supports the efforts of LSSI. Many community organizations and faith-based groups regularly donate hygiene kits, food, and clothing for participants. There are also many employers that will readily hire participants. Many AmeriCorps volunteers also are longtime community members. To sustain these relationships with the community, LSSI also gives back to the community. An example of this is that LSSI will always pass on donations such as food and clothing they cannot use to other organizations or thrift stores so the community can continue to benefit.

Benefits of Job Skill Training

Justice-involved individuals face numerous barriers to both job skills training and employment opportunities, especially in rural areas where employment opportunities can be scarce overall. Job skill training is vital to a participant's chances of employment and the stability that comes with steady income. Specific job skills services offered by volunteers or LSSI staff, such as life skills groups and computer and e-mail training, help to show participants that the community cares for them, that they are valuable community members, and that they have a vital role to play in the community.

ESS Course Daily Schedule

- Day 1: Orientation and Keyboard Introduction
- Day 2: Life Skills Group, Computer Literacy Test, and Keyboard Review
- Day 3: Computer Orientation, Getting on the Internet, and Creating an Email Account
- Day 4: Seeking Employment, Getting on the Internet, Keyboard Skills
- Day 5: Life Skills, Job Application Forms, Getting on the Internet, and Keyboard Skills
- Day 6: Applying for Employment, Keyboard Skills, Job Application Forms
- Day 7: Life Skills Group and Communicating on the Job
- Day 8: Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships at Work, Review Email, and Job Application Forms

- Day 9: Voter Registration, Getting on the Internet, Checking Email, Keyboard Skills, and Job Application Forms
- Day 10: Life Skills Group, Demonstrating Teamwork, Getting on the Internet, and Checking Email
- Day 11: Re-Introduction of Word Functions, Maintaining Safe and Healthy Work Environments, and Job Application Forms
- Day 12: Life Skills Group, Maintaining Professionalism, Continue Word Functions, and Keyboard Skills
- Day 13: Work Ethics and Behavior and Job Application Forms
- Day 14: Introduction of Career Portfolio and Getting on the Internet
- Day 15: Life Skills Group and Financial Planning
- Day 16: Housing and Leasing Presentation and Financial Planning Continued
- Day 17: Life Skills Group, Financial Planning Continues, and Keyboard Skills
- Day 18: Financial Planning Continued, Work on Career Portfolio Documents, Getting on the Internet, and Keyboard Skills
- Day 19: No Class
- Day 20: Life Skills Group and Mock Job Interview Shopping Day
- Day 21: Online Job Applications and Personality Tests
- Day 22: Life Skills Group and Green Reentry Opportunities
- Day 23: Employment Presentation
- Day 24: Begin Final Edits on Career Portfolio
- Day 25: Life Skill Group and Keyboard Skills
- Day 26 – Day 27: Field Trips
- Day 28: Restorative Justice Presentation
- Day 29: Final Edits on the Career Portfolio Documents
- Day 30 – Day 32: Mock Job Interviews
- Day 31: Computer Literacy Test and Graduation

Conclusion

BENEFITS OF A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED JOB SKILLS TRAINING

- Participants practice life skills and prepare to enter the job market.
- Connects participants to employers.
- Supports participants' long-term success.
- Helps to break down the stigma associated with justice-involved individuals.
- Provides a central resource for justice-involved individuals in need of job skills.
- Helps individuals who are reentering their communities develop support systems and find a place.

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING A JOB SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

- Collaborate with universities and experts in workforce training development to design and teach the curriculum.
- Design slides on the lessons to aid in teaching and ensure lessons are taught consistently.
- Conduct participant pre- and post-tests to measure progress through the program.
- Assess knowledge and skills of each participant and adjust the curriculum accordingly.
- Make sure that your curriculum covers the very basics of financial management and job skills such as computer basics, mock interviews and housing and leasing issues.
- Collaborate with volunteers to manage program administration and provide direct services.
- Ask former participants for their support in delivering services.
- Practice role-playing. Create an environment where participants are comfortable enough to provide feedback to one another.
- Create events where you can educate the community as a whole about your work, such as community meetings.

SECTION 5

Family Involvement



Will County Adult Redeploy Illinois Drug Court Program

The Will County Drug Court Program is one of three problem-solving courts (drug, mental health, veterans) that operate out of the Will County State's Attorney's Office. These problem-solving courts have been in operation since 2001 and joined Adult Redeploy Illinois in 2015 for support to enhancement the current courts and to start a special ARI docket for individuals who were not eligible for the existing problem solving courts. In addition to serving court participants, the Will County Drug Court Program provides specialized supportive programming for family members of participants and graduates. Family members are defined as any supportive person in the participant's life.

Drug Court Overview

Since 2001, the Drug Court Program has grown from an initial 12 participants to more than 50 participants at any given time. The program serves individuals whose criminal behavior is motivated by drug use. Program participation is limited to those convicted of a non-violent felony or misdemeanor, are residents of Will County, admit to having a drug or alcohol problem, are willing to accept treatment recommendations of the drug court team, and have no convictions for violent crimes in the past 10 years. Cases are considered individually to determine program suitability and eligibility.

SPOTLIGHT: Will County

- Located in northeastern Illinois
- Population: 687,263
- Largest city: Joliet, pop. 147,806
- Comprises of 24 townships
- Median household income: \$76,142
- Poverty rate: 8.1%
- Number of employment establishments: 14,556

Individuals who are accepted into the program receive treatment for 12 to 18 months.

Family Programming Overview

Every month, the drug court program holds Family Night, a support group for family members. Family Night is open to family members of current and past program participants. The group is for family members ages 16 or older.

The group educates family members about the program and provide pathways to healing. It is recognized that having a loved one struggle with substance abuse can be a traumatic experience. The support group is largely dedicated to helping family members process their own experiences in a confidential environment.

Encouraging Participation of Family or Loved Ones

To draw many people to the meetings, the facilitator of the support group regularly disseminates fliers to drug court participants and judges. The family support group facilitator also attends court hearings and speaks to family members afterward, inviting them to attend the support group. Furthermore, drug court team members engage participants in a discussion regarding who the participant wishes would attend the group. Family members are defined as any supportive individual in the participant's life. Family Night attendees refer others as well. Attendees have encouraged other families involved with the drug court to attend the support group. The number of attendees ranges from 4 to 12 people and generally summer reduces participation.

Family Night Structure

The support group is structured according to the needs of the family members. The facilitator begins meetings with meditation which helps to de-stress and center the attendees. The group frequently discusses navigating family reunification. Other topics relating to having a recovering family member come home include:

- How to set realistic expectations.
- Ways to set boundaries.
- Effective ways to communicate that build trust and care.

- How to resolve conflict when there is a child in the home.

A drug court program graduate also has visited the group in the past to provide insight.

Benefits of Involving the Family

Another important aspect of the support group is that it allows for family members to develop connections with one another, a form of peer support. Group members often share contact information with each other for peer support between meetings.

The program also hosts movie nights. Movies screened at these events address drug abuse and facilitated discussion follows. It has been especially helpful for attendees to watch a movie they can relate to, where they see their life circumstances reflected in the story.

It is important to gauge family needs. Without support and education, it is unrealistic to expect that families have a full understanding of how to support their loved ones as they progress through the program. Families need peer support to decrease the chance of family conflicts arising with the drug court participants. Family Night Support Group ensures that participants and their families can build stronger relationships to support the long-term success of the participants.

Winnebago County Adult Redeploy Illinois Therapeutic Intervention Program Court

Formed in 2005, the Winnebago Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) Court is a mental health court that serves individuals with non-violent felony convictions whose mental health conditions are an underlying factor for their criminal actions. This is a voluntary program that provides all participants with treatment and community services. Adult Redeploy Illinois has funded parts of the TIP Court since 2013. To address all aspects of participants' lives, TIP offers an array of family support services.

Overview of Family Supportive Services

The Rosecrance Ware Center, an adult mental health treatment organization, greatly supports TIP Court operations. In particular, the Rosecrance Ware Center works with participants on forming and adhering to treatment plans. The center also partners with the TIP Court to help empower and support family members (any supportive person in the participant's life) of participants, primarily through the work of a family education and advocacy specialist.

Participants must give permission for their family members, significant others, or close friends to participate in their treatment. Once permission is given, the TIP Court works to ensure that the family members are connected to community resources that will teach them about mental illness, substance abuse, and recovery skills.

SPOTLIGHT: Winnebago County

- Located in northern Illinois
- Population: 287,078
- Largest city: Rockford, pop. 150,251
- Population per square mile: 575.2
- Comprised of 14 townships
- Median household income: \$47,523
- Poverty rate: 16.9%
- Number of employment establishments: 6,471

All TIP Court staff work with family members at various times. Probation officers and case managers often connect family members to resources. The TIP Court family education and advocacy specialist works most closely and consistently with family members, meeting them at the court, Rosecrance Ware Center, the hospital, and in their homes. These meetings provide participants the opportunity to share their experiences with mental illness and/or substance abuse. It also helps family members to identify gaps in their skills and knowledge.

Connecting Families to Community Resources

The family education and advocacy specialist connects family members with the following community resources:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Family members are encouraged to attend meetings and support groups with NAMI. NAMI also offers opportunities for families to advocate for increasing mental health services and ending the stigma of mental illness.
- Hope Over Addiction: Families can access training on how to administer Narcan (naloxone) injections, an opiate antidote, to save their loved one from an overdose on opioids (e.g. heroin, morphine, oxycodone).
- Counseling Agencies: It is important for families to access as much mental health support as possible, especially families struggling to address their loved one's mental health issues and criminal behavior.
- Spiritual Communities: Families often can access social, spiritual, and physical support from spiritual or faith-based communities. This is especially beneficial for families that may have lost the support of other large family networks.
- Public Defender: The public defender shares information with family members to help them to understand the legal aspects of the TIP Court.

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By coming together, family members are better able to understand their loved ones, skillfully assist their loved ones and strategize ways to help their loved ones stay on track with recovery.

Marcia Cox

Family Education & Advocacy Specialist
Winnebago County Adult Redeploy Illinois
Therapeutic Intervention Program Court

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- Free Community Events: It is important for participants and their families to have fun, as well. Free events are often organized by the YMCA, local libraries, and the park district.
 - Systems Advocacy: The specialist also helps families with a variety of issues such as how to help transition their loved one between outpatient to inpatient care. Another important issue is how to request help from law enforcement officers specially trained in crisis intervention, if needed.

Curricula for Working with Families

There are three curricula that the TIP Court uses when working with participants and their families:

1. Hazelden’s Family Co-occurring Disorder’s Program: This program teaches families and participants about mental illness, substance abuse, and coping skills.
 2. Mary Ellen Copeland’s Family Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP): Participants and their families draft this action plan together. The plan centers around specific action steps that help participants to take their medication regularly and avoid using harmful substances. This planning process begins with identifying activities that make the family feel better or stay well, such as eating meals together, listening without judgment, and doing chores cooperatively. Then, the family identifies ways to address barriers and challenges. In the end, this process helps families to respond to warning signs and take effective action that de-escalate potential crisis situations.
 3. Rosecrance Family Adolescent Weekend Manual: This resource helps families to learn about enabling behaviors so that they can change the ways they help their loved one in the program.
- self-sufficient and assists in better utilization of the supports that are already in their community. Education and support help family members to better understand behavioral health issues and create safer and healthy environments for both the participants and the entire family. For the broader community, family involvement and family peer support assist to reduce the stigma often associated with behavioral health issues and encourages future early intervention and service access.

Benefits of Family Involvement

Involving the family in an adult diversion program, such as a mental health court, has benefits for the individual, the family, and the community. Family involvement helps to ensure that participants become

Conclusion

BENEFITS OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Helps to create a more supportive environment for participants.
- Creates a space for participants and their families to learn more effective communication skills.
- Provides ways for staff to respond to family questions or concerns.
- Helps to ensure the long-term success of participants.
- Offers participants support in repairing relationships with family members.
- Reduces the chance of participants being kicked out of their family's home and into an unstable living situation, increasing the risk of homelessness.
- Helps participants to more effectively utilize and cultivate their support networks.
- Trains family members to more effectively interact with various service providers and advocate for their loved ones in the program.
- Provides ways for family members of court supervision graduates to continue to access supportive services, a key factor in maintaining recovery over the long-term.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Create spaces for families to address concerns and questions with the participant.
- Define family broadly.
- Provide ongoing support for families.
- Reach out to families personally to let them know that support is available for them as part of the program.
- Outline ways that the program specifically supports families.
- Allow families to process their experiences in a variety of ways. Examples used here included meditation and watching and discussing a film.
- Designate an individual or team that specifically handles issues relating to family engagement.
- Disseminate information about community resources for families.
- Encourage peer support among families.
- Create opportunities for family fun.

SECTION 6

Peer Support



Cook County Adult Redeploy Illinois ACT Court Ambassador Program

The Cook County Access to Community Treatment (ACT) Court was established in 2013 with ARI funding. In this court, participants meeting legal, criminogenic, and behavioral health criteria have rapid access to community-based treatment. The ACT Court was designed to leverage expanded Medicaid within a court program to intervene with a population with high criminogenic needs to end the inexpensive and ineffective cycle of incarceration. Once admitted into the program, participants must complete an 18-month program (with potential for completion in as little as 12 months) that consists of court supervision and community-based treatment. As part of this court, participants also can partake in the ACT Court Ambassador Program, a peer mentoring program.

Ambassador Program Overview

The ACT Court Ambassador Program recruits successful ACT Court graduates who are living in recovery and trains them to serve as program ambassadors. Ambassador responsibilities consist of providing support to participants in their recovery and representing the ACT Court in the community and courthouse. This program is based upon an alumni/peer support network model where ambassadors offer supportive and positive interactions with participants.

Ambassadors typically work with two to three ACT Court participants who

SPOTLIGHT: Cook County

- Located in northeastern Illinois
- Population: 5,238,216
- Largest city: Chicago, pop. 2.7 million
- Population per square mile: 5945.1
- Comprised of 30 townships
- Median household income: \$54,828
- Poverty rate: 17.1%
- Total employer establishments: 130,833

are struggling to complete their program. Ambassadors attend court once a month on a rotating schedule and the program aims to have three or four ambassadors at any given time. When attending court, ambassadors meet with one participant at a time to offer support and guidance. Ambassadors also may invite participants to 12-step meetings or other community-based sober activities to help participants develop deeper roots in the community.

Participants are encouraged to share their experiences about going through the ACT Court with ambassadors. Ambassadors speak from their own experiences—they do not serve as counselors or substitutes for or interfere with ACT Team staff.

Ambassadors attend mandatory monthly training sessions with a program administrator covering basic requirements of the program, roles of ACT Team members, program rules for new participants, and a discussion on how they feel about their peer work and their own recovery progress.

Components of Community Involvement

Ambassadors are successful graduates of the ACT Court and can offer their own experiences to participants. Each newcomer to the ACT Court is provided an opportunity to meet with an ambassador and then the participant can decide if they would like to access ongoing peer support through the ambassador while in the ACT Court. During meetings with participants, ambassadors share their own program experiences, their progress, and their struggles. In many ways, ambassadors aim to be a living example of what new participants in the program are striving to be. The shared experiences between the ambassadors and participants, along with the egalitarian nature of their relationships, allow for a level of honesty and connection that can be difficult to manifest in relationships between participants and ACT Team members. There are many instances where ambassadors can lend a hand from a strong position of experience and empathy which is much different from the assistance ACT Team members can provide.

The ultimate goal of the ACT Court is to help participants find stability within their communities. Ambassadors are able to support this goal because they are often members of the same communities

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The ACT Court’s overarching goal was to build bridges from entrenched patterns of incarceration to a stable space in participants’ communities. The Ambassadors were some of the planks for that bridge.

Katy Welter
Former ACT Court Project manager

and neighborhoods. Thus, ambassadors help participants prolong their sobriety in their communities which is often much different than maintaining sobriety while under supervision of a court program or in treatment. This is especially important as many participants’ home communities have limited recovery support.

As sources of strength and support in their communities, ambassadors are able to help participants think about and actualize how they can live healthier and safer lives. Additionally, many ambassadors become civically active in their own communities, advocating for ways participants can be better served in public health and public safety systems and by neighborhood infrastructure. Lastly, ambassadors aim to help participants develop a stronger understanding of how to be a better community member. For instance, ambassadors show participants positive ways to spend their time in the community.

The Ambassador Program serves as a stepping stone to integrate graduates into strategic planning with the ACT Court, assisting the entire program in addition to individual participants. The Ambassador Program provides an entry way for the local program's steering committee members to witness the unique and valuable role that graduates can play in the ACT Court. Ambassadors have successfully advocated for court funding from county boards. In doing so, their testimony humanized the work and impact of the ACT Court for many decision makers. This advocacy showcased the benefits of using direct participant feedback for sustainability.

Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Challenge: Maintaining program longevity, development, and enthusiasm, especially during times of fiscal and program uncertainty.

Resolution: Develop adequate administrative support to keep a cohesive program. It is best to have paid staff dedicating some time to coordinating and administering the program. A resource coordinator should be responsible for therapeutically supporting program ambassadors since that is an identified need.

Challenge: Sustaining the program with limited financial resources for the court.

Resolution: Develop partnerships with other programs, such as community-based organizations, and seek volunteers. When resources are limited, it is helpful to work with other programs to share resources and staff. In addition,

ambassadors can be a valuable, cost-effective source of assistance.

Challenge: Preventing power dynamics from developing between ambassadors and participants.

Resolution: Ambassadors must understand they are not to serve as counselors or substitutes for members on the treatment team. Encourage ambassadors to have positive, supportive interactions and relationships with the participants by speaking only about their own experiences. Organize mandatory, regular training sessions that outline the responsibilities of all members of the program and provide guidance on how to refer clinical or legal questions to the treatment team. Schedule individual meetings with the ambassadors to discuss how the program is going for them and their own recovery.

Lake County Adult Redeploy Illinois Veterans Treatment and Assistance Court

The Lake County Veterans Treatment and Assistance Court (VTAC) is a problem-solving court created in 2011 that helps justice-involved veterans improve their quality of life by addressing their criminogenic needs. Participants commit to 18 to 24 months of supervision, undergoing counseling and treatment for issues such as anger management, personal finance, and substance use. VTAC also offers a mentoring program. Participants voluntarily connect with a mentor for assistance in navigating the court process and adjusting to life in the community. In Lake County, ARI does not fund a standalone program, but instead since 2013 has funded components of VTAC and the other Lake County problem-solving courts.

Mentoring Program Overview

VTAC participants are matched with mentors that also are veterans. Although VTAC has a capacity of 40, an ideal court docket size is 25 to 30. There are typically nine to 12 active mentors at any given time, and each mentor works with two or three VTAC participants simultaneously. The program strives to match participants with mentors aligning with branch of service, combat experience, age, and gender.

Defining the Mentor's Role

The mentor's role includes advocate, friend, and ally. To prevent mentors from

SPOTLIGHT: Lake County

- Located in northeastern Illinois
- Population: 703,462
- Largest city: Waukegan, pop. 88,826
- Population per square mile: 316.6
- Comprised of 18 townships
- Median household income: \$45,465
- Poverty rate: 13.8%
- Total employer establishments: 6,649

taking on an accountability role, mentors are not included in VTAC staffing meetings. The intention is to help mentors avoid situations in which they would be faced with a decision to disclose a participant's negative behavior. It is important that the participants trust their mentor and that confidentiality is respected in the mentor-mentee relationship.

If mentors feel that they need to disclose problem behavior to VTAC staff, they can speak to the mentor program's co-coordinator who then reports the behavior to the treatment team for discussion on how to address the situation. The co-coordinator then follow up with the mentor to provide advice. VTAC administrators say maintaining a mentor training manual, providing regular trainings, and fostering ongoing communication

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At the beginning, I didn't talk much and I don't get out much, but now I talk to my mentor a lot. Now it works well for me. I had to get more phone minutes.

Lake County
Veteran's Treatment & Assistance Court
Participant

with mentors are key to helping mentors better understand and fully carry out their role.

Training Mentors

Mentors receive extensive training and support from VTAC. Mentors attend monthly meetings to participate in mentor-mentee matching processes, seek support, and offer input on the program. In addition, mentors participate in trainings through the county probation department on motivational interviewing, mental health first aid, trauma-informed treatment, and risk/need assessment tools. Additionally, mentors must shadow another mentor for a period of time before they are allowed to begin meeting with their mentee.

Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Mentors meet with participants in person on a monthly basis at a minimum

however many mentors and mentees communicate multiple times a week and meet in person on a weekly basis. In addition, VTAC schedules pro-social outings and activities open to all participants and their mentors, such as bowling and sporting events. These activities are often provided to VTAC for free or at a discounted rate by community organizations, VTAC team members, and businesses. Mentors also attend court hearings with participants.

VTAC alumni are encouraged to volunteer as mentors after graduation. However, before alumni are matched, they must have at least six months of post-graduation success. During these six months, alumni are encouraged to come to outings and VTAC monthly mentor meetings to stay connected with the court. This also helps VTAC staff support alumni's transition out of the court.

Benefits of a Mentoring Program

The mentoring program builds community support for VTAC and trust between the court and the community, all of which is vital to VTAC. Closely involving individual community members in VTAC's programming helps to create advocates in the community. This community support then helps VTAC participants and alumni feel a part of a community that understands and cares for them which can help inoculate against future unhealthy or criminal choices.

Effingham County 4th Judicial Circuit Adult Redeploy Illinois Communities Restoring Wellness

The Effingham Area Problem-Solving Courts serve Effingham, Clay, Fayette, and Jasper counties. Each court has a Communities Restoring Wellness (CRW) component including mentoring, prosocial, and other community engagement activities for participants. Administered by a CRW coordinator, the purpose of the CRW component is to create opportunities for participants and community members to see and engage with each other in positive ways.

Mentoring Program Overview

After internal program data revealed that participants needed more ongoing support while completing the program, in 2013 the Effingham Area Problem-Solving Courts partnered with The Wellness Loft, a local mental health treatment provider, to form a mentoring program to help participants create and maintain relationships with community members with similar interests. The goal is to help participants find ways to be active members of the community. Participants learn to spend time in the community in a healthy, law-abiding way.

Mentor Recruitment

Program mentors are community members and include graduates of the problem-solving courts. Graduates are highly encouraged to volunteer as mentors because it helps them to stay on track after the program and continue to build confidence. Mentors are mostly recruited

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The community is a vital part of the program. It's impossible to restore the participants to the community without community members.

Amy Guy
Clinical Director
The Wellness Loft

through the personal networks of staff and other mentors. The program also conducts media outreach to recruit.

Training Mentors

All mentors are trained on legal and mental health issues. If mentors require more hands-on training, the CRW Coordinator will work individually with them. After completing formal training, mentors attend quarterly CRW meetings. Meeting summaries are later shared with graduates, staff, and mentors.

Mentor-Mentee Relationships

The mentoring program starts to interface with participants in the third phase of the problem-solving court program. In this phase, the CRW coordinator meets with participants to gauge their interests, goals, and needs. The coordinator then

matches the participant to a mentor. In the program's fourth phase, the participant and the mentor are matched together at an in person meeting for the first time.

During their first meeting, the participant and mentor fill out a form outlining goals and agreements. The form serves as a working document that guides the ways the participant and mentor spend their time together.

Other Activities

In addition to the mentoring program, the CRW coordinator also plans prosocial activities and other community engagement programs. Prosocial activities provide participants with optional opportunities to take part in recreational activities in the community, such as softball games and holiday caroling. The coordinator also helps to organize community service projects where participants can volunteer time to help in animal shelters or food pantries. Lastly, the coordinator helps with the problem-solving court's monthly Alumni Program. This alumni group meets to share their progress and give feedback to the courts and its programs on how they are doing.

Benefits of a Mentoring Program

The CRW is grounded in the belief that the more deeply rooted participants and graduates are in the community, the longer they will stay well. Providing participants with mentors helps participants to grow deeper roots into the community

and find pathways to wellness, all of which can lead to avoiding future justice system involvement.

Conclusion

BENEFITS OF PEER SUPPORT IN AN ADULT DIVERSION PROGRAM

- Provides more egalitarian relationships for participants.
- Helps participants to develop deeper connections with the community.
- Creates ways for community members to better understand the benefits of adult prison diversion programs. This helps with fostering community buy-in.
- Provides a way for community members to become more involved.
- Serves as a formalized way for participants to access new support networks.
- Provides a place for participants to bring concerns or questions that they may not feel comfortable broaching with staff.
- Reinforces recovery and wellness of graduates serving as mentors.
- Better prepares participants for graduation by easing the transition process.
- Provides graduates as credible messengers of program goals because of their shared experiences with participants.
- Recruits mentors as formal and informal advocates for the adult diversion program.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM IN AN ADULT DIVERSION PROGRAM

- Create clear boundaries between the roles and responsibilities of the mentors and staff.
- Start new mentoring programs with a smaller participant caseload to ensure the quality of experience for all individuals involved.
- Don't reinvent the wheel. Research similar mentoring programs and ask for help from those who already have achieved success. Site visits to similar programs also help.
- Create ways to stay in communication with mentors and mentees. Leverage social media to engage all program participants.
- Designate a certain person or group for mentors to turn to when their mentees are engaging in harmful behaviors. If possible, make sure that disclosures are confidential and/or do not result in punishment.
- Encourage mentors to recruit new mentors through personal networks.

CONTINUED: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM IN AN ADULT DIVERSION PROGRAM

- Develop a handbook for the mentoring program that outlines policies and best practices. This document should be continually updated, as needed.
- Talk to anyone in the community that will listen. It is important to broadly share information about the adult diversion program. This will help with volunteer recruitment or donations to support the program or participants such as basic needs or funding for activities.
- Paid staff should administer the mentoring program and ensure that the program is implemented with quality and fidelity to the design.
- Create ways for mentors to give feedback about the mentoring program and the adult diversion program in general.
- Develop a holistic matching process to ensure that the mentor and mentee can connect on multiple levels.
- Provide ongoing mentor training and support.
- Find ways to share resources with other mentoring programs.
- Encourage graduates to serve as mentors.
- Have mentors and mentees complete a document outlining goals and agreements.

SECTION 7

Community Celebrations



Will County Adult Redeploy Illinois Drug Court Graduation

The Drug Court Program in Will County has been in operation since 2001 and supported in part by Adult Redeploy Illinois since 2015. This program has grown from an initial 12 participants to more than 50 participants at any given time. The drug court program specifically serves individuals whose criminal behavior is motivated by drug use.

Program participation is limited to those convicted of a non-violent felony or misdemeanor, are residents of Will County, admit to having a drug or alcohol problem, are willing to accept treatment recommendations of the drug court team, and have no convictions for violent crimes in the past 10 years. Cases are considered individually to determine program suitability and eligibility. They are then given the opportunity to preview the program by attending classes for several weeks prior to signing a drug court contract and committing to the program. Once individuals are accepted into the program, their treatment lasts from 12 to 18 months.

Event Description

July 7, 2016 - 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Jacob Henry Mansion - Joliet, Illinois

The Will County Drug Court Graduation marks the final step in the Drug Court Program with the goal of recognizing the accomplishments of the graduates

and acknowledging the significant role that loved ones played throughout the program.

On July 7, 2016, the semi-annual Will County Drug Court Graduation took place in the Victorian Ballroom of the Jacob Henry Mansion located in Joliet, Illinois. The audience seating was arranged theater-style, with the first two rows reserved for the graduates, and a banquet table on the stage reserved with spots for the drug court program's treatment team. Before the ceremony, a slideshow featuring before and after pictures of the graduates was projected on a screen to the right of the stage.

Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow made the ceremony's opening remarks and focused on two topics. First was the need to replace incarceration with community-based treatment. Second was the importance of community support. He emphasized that the graduates could not have succeeded without the support of their loved ones and they now have a responsibility to be productive members of the community.

The graduates were then called upon one-by-one to receive a plaque and token. Each graduate walked up to the stage to a short clip of a hand-picked song. A member of the treatment team then spoke (often using the graduate's own words) about the graduate's condition before the program, what the drug court did for them, what life is like for the graduate now, and the graduate's future goals. The

graduate was then offered the opportunity to make a few remarks, and most did. Next, a member of the drug court staff presented the graduate with a token and a plaque. Before exiting the stage, the graduate took a picture with the treatment team member that spoke about them.

Next, the court was called into session and a judge vacated the felony convictions of each graduate, a graduation action unique to Will County ARI. A candle-lighting ceremony concluded the graduation.

The graduation was followed by cake and punch. During this time, large groups of people socialized with one another. Moreover, elected officials, such as County Board members, spoke with graduates and their families. Additionally, a group of county jail detainees who may have the option of problem solving court participation in the future attended the ceremony. The detainees were able to witness the results of participation and the community's compassion, encouragement and support of the graduates.

Components of Community Involvement

The majority of audience members were either family members or friends of the graduates, in addition to some community members.

The ceremony took place in a venue in the community outside of the courthouse.

The support network of the graduates was continually recognized and thanked throughout the ceremony by both the graduates and the other speakers

Two themes emerged within the ceremony:

1. *Restored citizenship*: The ceremony served as a way to formally acknowledge the graduate as a member of the community. Moreover, the responsibility of the graduate to be an accountable citizen was underscored. That is, living a sober life benefits not only the graduate but their community as well.
2. *Strength and importance of relationships*: Support networks were acknowledged as the reason why the graduates had succeeded. Graduates were highly encouraged to continue building relationships.

Boone County Adult Redeploy Illinois Drug Court Graduation

In 2013, Boone County became an ARI site to create a drug court program. Operating out of the Boone County Probation Department, the Boone County ARI program incorporates assessment, individualized recovery support services, and substance abuse treatment.

Overview

Boone County's ARI-supported drug court program includes evidence-based practices to create a voluntary, individualized recovery support services plan built around the strengths, risk, and needs of the participant. The drug court team closely monitors the participant's progress through court staffing meetings and additional sessions where immediate sanctions and incentives are administered. Program referrals are accepted from the drug court judge, county state's attorney, probation officer, defense attorneys, law enforcement, and the defendant. This program diverts individuals facing non-violent felony charges from state prison. An individual's admission to the program must be determined through the consensus of the treatment team. The length of the program ranges from one to two years.

Event Description

July 15, 2016 - 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Boone County Courthouse - Belvidere, Illinois

This graduation celebrated and recognized two individuals that completed the

SPOTLIGHT: Boone County

- Located in Northern Illinois
- Population: 53,585
- Biggest city: Belvidere, pop. 25,339
- Population per square mile: 193
- Comprised of 9 townships
- Median household income: \$60,166
- Poverty rate: 10.2%
- Total employment establishments: 838

drug court program. The graduates sat together at the front of the courtroom at a counsel table while current participants of the drug court program sat in the jury box. The event's attendees sat in the gallery of the courtroom. The Boone County Drug Court Judge facilitated the graduation and stood at a podium in the front of the courtroom.

The judge opened the graduation by speaking about how difficult it was to graduate from a drug court program, touted the programs state and county cost-savings and emphasized the importance of individually addressing the needs of those entering the court. The judge gave remarks about each graduate's journey through the program. Both graduates then made 10-minute speeches about how drug court changed their lives and the importance of the people that

helped them to succeed. Last, the graduates were presented with a plaque, card, and gift.

After the ceremony, drug court team members and participants served cake and punch as graduates and guests enjoyed a cheerful atmosphere. Participants talked with attendees about their experiences in the program. A local news station interviewed drug court staff, graduates, and families of the graduates.

Components of Community Involvement

The majority of attendees were family and friends of the graduates. Community members and service providers also were present.

Graduates were eager to introduce their treatment team to their family and friends after the graduation.

Community was spoken of as a source of guidance, stability, and support by the judge and the graduates. Graduates spoke about how essential their family's unconditional love and support was to their success.

Community service was cited as an important aspect of the program. One graduate reflected on how his community service projects helped him feel closer to the community and motivated him to complete the program.

Conclusion

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

- Provides a formal opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of participants, staff, and/or volunteers in the program or the program as a whole.
- Provides a time for court staff and the community to socialize.
- Creates an opportunity for court staff, participants, and graduates to speak about the benefits of a diversion program to the community, media, and elected officials.
- Provides a time for reflection.

TIPS FOR PLANNING A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION FOR A PROBLEM-SOLVING COURT

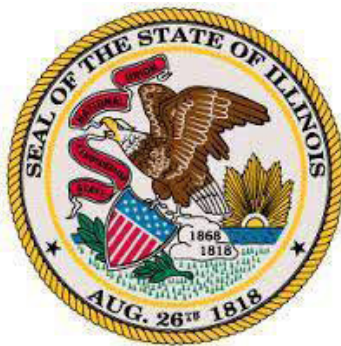
- Host the event at an accessible location.
- Create a slideshow that plays before and during the event. Include before and after pictures of the graduates in these slideshows.
- Provide refreshments at the end of the event to encourage attendees to socialize with one another.
- Invite the media (if appropriate).
- Tell stories at the event to help humanize and concretize the work of the drug court and the importance of it.
- Personalize the event for graduates. For instance, play a clip of the graduate's favorite song as they walk up to the stage.
- Provide an introduction at the beginning of the event that outlines the history of the diversion program, what the diversion program does, and what the event is celebrating.
- Invite past graduates to attend and speak at the event.

Conclusion

In this toolkit, we aimed to provide examples of new and innovative practices in community involvement in adult diversion programs. It is possible to create many ways for communities to meaningfully participate in the criminal justice system, more typically closed off to the community and embedded in government structures.

This toolkit is a call for peer-to-peer innovation among adult diversion programs. When it comes to program development, adult diversion programs have a responsibility to not “reinvent the wheel,” but rather to build and improve upon existing practices through collaboration and partnerships.

The tools, knowledge, and assets are already present in local communities and networks to do this work. The Adult Redeploy Illinois Program is a collaborator in county endeavors to discover best practices and strategies to strengthen and leverage community capacities in adult diversion programs.



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