





# Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines Family Engagement

2021 Ohio Specialized Docket  
Fall Education Series

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# DISCLAIMER

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# Warm-up Exercise!





# Warm Up Exercise

- Break into groups
- Designate a recorder and a presenter
- Discuss the following questions:
  - Why do you want to engage with families?
  - What has worked for you in motivating parents to be more engaged?
  - What do you know or wonder about the parents you interact with?

# What will we cover today?

- The Importance of Family Engagement
- What the JDTC Guidelines say about Family Engagement
- What the Research says
- The 3 C's of Family Engagement







# The Juvenile Drug Treatment Court Guidelines



# THE JDTC GUIDELINES AND OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

Based on research

7 objectives with 31 corresponding guideline statements

May also apply to youth with SUD in traditional juvenile court

Some questions not addressed if evidence is insufficient



# 1 Focus JDTC philosophy and practice on effectively addressing substance use and criminogenic needs to decrease future offending and substance use and to increase positive outcomes.



Ineligible Eligible

## 2 Ensure Equitable Treatment for All Youth

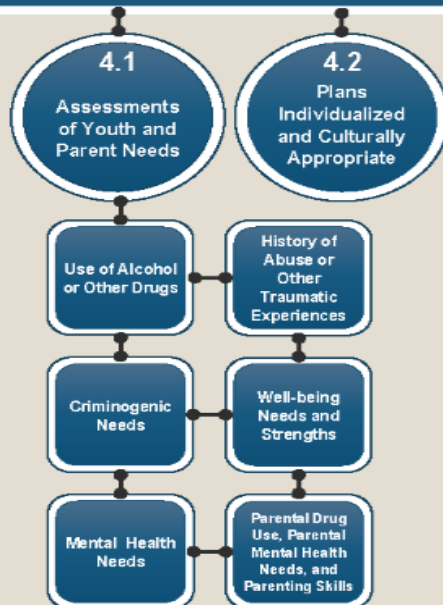


## 3 JDTC Process That Engages Full Team and Follows Procedures Fairly



## 7 Monitor and Track Program Completion and Termination

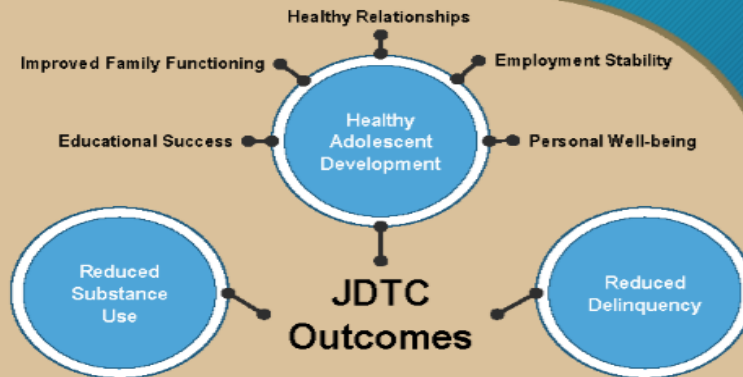
## 4 Comprehensive Assessments That Inform Individualized Case Management



## 5 Effective Contingency Management, Case Management, and Community Supervision



## 6 Evidence-Based Substance Use Treatment and Other Services, Plus Prosocial Connections



# CORRESPONDING GUIDELINES: FAMILIES

## Guideline

**1.5**

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

## Guideline

**1.6**

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

## Guideline

**3.1**

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



# RESEARCH FINDINGS: FAMILIES & JDTC

- A common predictor of failure in the JDTC program is lack of parental support.
- When parents/guardians do not support the court(s), there is a greater likelihood that youth in the JDTC or Family Court will not succeed.
- Research shows that youth's behavior and demeanor are directly linked to their parents' willingness to participate.





# RESEARCH FINDINGS: FAMILIES & JDTC

- Research shows that if a family member attended the JDTC, there was a lower probability that the youth would be late or absent from treatment, late to school, or receive a sanction for non-compliance.
- Programs that offer incentives to parents report stronger engagement of youth and families.
- Offering incentives can facilitate parent collaboration in behavioral management, as they maintain their parental control.





# FAMILIES ENGAGEMENT IN THE COURT ROOM

- Parental involvement is correlated with higher graduation rates in the JDTC program
- Stronger outcomes occur when parents attend court hearings regularly and participate in the process.
- Innovative approaches need to support parents
- Provide materials in varied forms



# Parent/Family Engagement



What we do with parent or family in partnership to motivate and empower them to recognize their own needs, strengths and resources and the family taking an active role in changing things for the better.



- See the parents as experts in their own lives
- See the parent as the client/participant/problem verses and individual with strengths
- Accept the idea that maybe the parent can make as good or better decisions than we can when it comes to their child
- Tasking ourselves as professionals
  - wherever we are in our system to be strength-based

Self Check

# The 3 C's of Parent Engagement

- Compassion
- Creating Safe Spaces
- Communication



# Compassion





“Compassion is the keen awareness of the interdependence of all things.”

Thomas Merton



# How do we Compassionately Engage Family?

- We demonstrate genuine caring and a respectful attitude
- We are real with them not phony
- Empathy
- Build Trust
- Get to know the person
  - Culture, routines, preferences, taboos, facets of their life, what is important to them, fears, heartbreaks, strengths

# How do we Compassionately Engage Family?

- Actively listening - not about you
  - Eye contact when culturally appropriate
  - Open body posture
- Helping them to change things for the better
  - Transportation
  - Support groups
  - Education about parenting, trauma, substance use and other topics relevant to their situation



# How do we Compassionately Engage Family?

- Educate and support the parents' choices
- Answer questions and address their concerns
- We humble ourselves and serve them





# Create Safe Spaces



# Creating Safe Spaces

- Respect Difference - recognize that a single member of a group might feel unsafe and isolated.
- Listen - give people the opportunity to speak their truth. Listen to all voices.
- Refrain from judgment.
- Ground rules should be clearly set forth.
- Questions are answered promptly and appropriately.
- Respect the opinions of others and use I statements when stating your own opinions and feelings.



# Creating Safe Spaces

Parents need to feel that they are active participants in partnership with you.



# Communication



A photograph of a person sitting and reading a book, overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. A solid blue square is positioned in the top right corner. The text "The power of words" is centered in the lower half of the image.

The power of words

# The Power of Words

- Judgment (that is the way these people are, it's the reason they are in this situation, )
- Labeling (poor parenting skills, disrespectful, poor judgment)
- Blame (it's their fault or they are the problem)
- Diagnosis (he is angry, passive aggressive, co-dependent)
- Evaluation (They don't care, they are lying, doesn't respect me or the court)



# Communication Exercise

Write down one thing family members do that you don't like or one thing that makes your job harder.

Use language that doesn't label, blame, judge, diagnose or evaluate

Share with one another.

# Compassionate Communication

- Paying Attention to Detail
- Attentive Listening
- Explanatory Communication & Forbearance
- Validating/Honoring the Parent
- Communicate Understanding
- Offer to Help
- Talk "to" not "at"



# Biggest Barriers to Effective Communication

- Worry, Fear. Guilt
- Illness
- Emotional Issues
- Cultural boundaries
- Goal Conflict
- Style
- Noise (Internal and External)
- Information overload
- Assumptions



# How Miscommunication Happens





## BE FAMILY CENTERED

System level

Provide support/education for the family.

Program level

Ensure families involved in decision making processes at the individual, program, and system levels. This holds youth accountable and keeps the public safe

Individual level

Strengthen families with varied treatment and pro-social options

A person wearing a grey sweater is resting their head on a wooden table. The background is a solid blue color.

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

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

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



A person wearing a grey sweater is shown from the side, resting their head on a wooden table. The background is a solid blue color.

## **GUIDELINE 1.6: MAKING PROGRAM ACCESSIBLE TO ALL FAMILIES**

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

# UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

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



# IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

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





# Family Engagement Exercise

Think of 5 Strategies that might be able to help you engage families in your Collaborative Court efforts?



# 7 Principles for Family Engagement

Be Prepared



Be Respectful



Be Specific



Be Strategic



Be Flexible



Be Creative



Be Collaborative

# How will you know the family is engaged?

- The parent is motivated and empowered to take an active role in changing things for the better.
- The parent recognizes and can readily identify their own needs, strengths, and resources.




# Closing Thoughts

- Parent/Family engagement is an ongoing process not an event
- Parent/Family engagement is a practice and not a program

# Closing Thoughts

Parent engagement and your commitment to it must be a priority and not an add-on

A light green downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the first box to the second.

It requires a shift in mindset and intentionality to bring parents within arms length and not keep them on the margins

A light green downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the second box to the third.

When you harness the positive energy you will have better outcomes



# SUMMARY AND QUESTIONS

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



Thank you for listening  
& for all that you do.

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Any Questions  
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