



2013 SYNC Review

Evanston Youth Drug and Alcohol Court

1148 Front Street

Evanston, WY 82930

307-783-6405

Coordinator: Jon Kirby

Established: 1999

SYNC Evaluation Date: January 22, 2014

Total Clients Interviewed: 3; 1 Male and 2 Females. One client was out of town but was interviewed over the phone. Two clients were recent graduates and one client was in Phase 2. The clients that were interviewed ranged from 16-18 years of age.

Other Interviews: Court coordinator, case manager, prosecuting attorney, Judge Harris, defense attorney, treatment providers (group and individual), school counselor

Court Information Summary:

The Evanston Youth Drug and Alcohol Court was one of the first juvenile treatment programs in Wyoming. The program is coordinated under the Evanston Police Department. Currently the program is investigating other options for funding as the program is no longer able to operate under the state funding formula due to difficulties having the number of youth necessary to meet the qualifications. The program would like to continue serving high risk youth with substance abuse issues and would like to investigate how to continue services through the single point of entry.

The program is a minimum of 10 months with an average of 14-16 months. It creates “structure and accountability” for youth in the community in order for them to overcome the challenges that lead to substance abuse.

Eligibility:

Clients are evaluated utilizing the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) and SASSI to determine level of care. Applicant’s requiring level of care 2.1 are considered for the Program. There are many clients who are evaluated and require a lower level of care of 1.0 but currently the court is unable to serve these youth due to eligibility restrictions.

Financials:

The program receives approximately \$127,000 in state grant funds and receives approximately \$400,000 in matching funds/in-kind services. There is a \$150 charge for the program. The individuals are required to pay \$50 per phase and must be current in order to phase up in the program.

SYNC Review Areas:

Access to Services:

- Single Point of Entry has helped make access to the program easier for participants and referral sources.
- Once the client is accepted into the program, services are initiated right away.
- Youth who do not meet the qualification of Level 2.1 are not eligible for services under the current programming so often these youth do not have access to any services. It is difficult for high risk youth who have been in trouble for drugs or alcohol but that don’t meet the high-risk, high-need level of care to receive intervention. Currently the program is investigating other options to serve youth at a lower level of care.
- Cornerstone provides treatment to the individuals as well as families if this is a needed component. Cornerstone keeps treatment costs manageable for the court by utilizing other resources first before charging the program.
- The court has access to multiple programs through Youth Services at no cost to the treatment program which keeps costs down and builds community partnerships for accessible services for youth.

Quality of Services:

- The ten month minimum requirement of three phases is beneficial to clients in establishing their sobriety and building healthier life habits, while receiving varying levels of treatment and supervision.
- The team utilizes an objective measurement tool to determine sanctions and incentives in the program each week. This provides an opportunity for team members to have input without favoring an individual. Sanctions are bested suited for the individual's personality. Clients felt that sanctions and incentives were appropriate and fair. Clients liked the opportunity to draw from the "fishbowl" which encouraged them to meet the weekly requirements so they had the opportunity to draw.
- This program utilizes community partners to deliver services which creates a quality program by capitalizing on the strengths of the community that already exist.
- Clients felt that the counseling sessions and group support are a key to their success.
- The program evaluates successes based on clients achieving any goals regardless of the final outcome. This allows individuals to work through this program at their own pace setting the individual up for success.

Coordination of Services:

- Weekly team staffings assist in additional coordination by all program areas to ensure client information and interests are being well represented.
- Having the group and individual treatment contracted to outside entities creates an opportunity for clients to build a relationship outside of supervision which provides some separation of services allowing for a more open relationship with the therapeutic staff. This also creates an opportunity for clients to continue therapy with the same therapist after completing the program.
- Since therapeutic services and evaluations are conducted offsite, the treatment court did not have to undergo the CARF survey but was able to fully support their substance abuse treatment provider through this process.
- It is difficult to get suicidal youth services, inpatient mental health. This is a "weak link" for the mental health community.

Strengths:

- Uinta County has a large number of resources outside of the treatment program.
- Clients felt that the expectations of the program were clearly defined to set them up for success from the initiation of services.
- The current judge presiding over the treatment program is new to the position but is supportive of learning and supporting the program in this community.

- The youth felt that having a team member to assist them with navigating the NA groups and completing the book study from someone who has actual experiences with substance abuse problems is very helpful in their recovery.
- Clients are required to earn a GED or high school diploma or be currently enrolled as a student, as well as hold a job or participate in community service hours which create accountability of the individual and set them up for successful transition upon graduation from the program to further pursue education and employment opportunities.
- The team's primary focus is the individual's success in the program so each team member is willing to listen to the ideas of other team members.
- The team feels that success is defined by small accomplishments and ascertaining skills that will help them in the future. It honors each individual as a person and celebrates individual successes that they are capable of achieving.
- This program utilizes many community resources to provide services to youth and families.
- The team utilizes all possible resources in order to keep youth in their own community to achieve sobriety.
- There is a success mentoring program in the community.
- There is a community center for youth to be involved in.
- Treatment utilizes an evidence based curriculum which focuses on meeting the individual where they are currently in the process of sobriety.
- This team is focused on thinking outside of the box to continue this program so that youth in their community are productive, sober citizens.

Concerns/Areas of Growth:

- Formula funding has made it very difficult for drug courts to maintain sustainability. This court has done an amazing job recruiting other resources but this is not always an option in smaller communities. Although this program utilizes other resources it will not be able to continue under the current programming due to funding.
- The high-risk, high-need standard of the state treatment programs makes it difficult to qualify youth because of lack of life experiences at the 2.1 level
- There is not a close residential treatment facility for youth. This prohibits some family involvement due to transportation and financial restrictions. This also creates difficulty for youth to transition back to their own community and be successful in the environment where they had previously had difficulties. By allowing youth to remain in the community for intensive treatment, it allows for better wraparound services and success in their own community.
- Since this program operates out of the city court, it cannot mandate parental involvement. The city court can "only fine them or time them". This creates a challenge for success with families who are not readily involved in the program. It may take looking at "retooling" court programs to allow for parental accountability.

- The team members think that is program is currently functioning better than it has in a very long time and they are afraid with the loss of funding that this momentum will be lost in the community for high-risk youth.

Recommendations/Requests:

- Continue efforts to educate the community on what ‘Drug Courts’ are and the services that are provided.
- Investigate options to have a 12 step type program specific to juveniles
- Continue building relationships with employers and organizations in the community to provide the best resource base possible for clients.
- Due to the restrictions of formula funding for lower populated areas, it would be beneficial for the state to re-evaluate the funding policy. Possibly investigating the creation of a program that would allow the courts flexibility to create the program from an “outside structure” instead of a full time program.
- Investigate the possibility of creating an alumni program for youth to share their stories.
- Investigate establishing a support group for parents of child addicts
- Continue the strong and respectful relationship that exists between administration, treatment and supervision. There is currently a great primary focus on the clients and their success.
- It would be beneficial if the state office could asses the current funding model for the treatment courts in Wyoming to see how it is impacting the system of care.
- It would be beneficial if the state office would assess the data reporting procedures especially related to the juvenile treatment courts as there is not adequate research in this area to support what defines success.
- There needs to be more resources and opportunities for individuals to advocate for programs that do not always fit a model, especially in rural communities with smaller populations.
- Consider having probation meet with the team if funding will allow.

Overall Impression:

Although this program is going to have to terminate operations under the current state treatment court program, the team is investigating other options to continue the programming that they have worked so hard to create. This program is effective which is best said by one of the graduates, “the program saved my life”. This team feels strongly about having available services for youth who are a level 1.0 because “it is easier to turn a row boat around than a ship”. It is accumulation of the little successes that lead to one client’s perspective of the program; “I accomplished something huge. I needed it.” This program is successfully impacting the lives of youth in the community to concur substance abuse issues. It will be a loss to the Evanston community when this program is no longer in existence.



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