



SYSTEMS & YOU NETWORKING & COLLABORATING

2013 SYNC Review

Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court

Coordinator: Susan Shipley

Established: 2002

SYNC Evaluation Date: November

Total Clients Interviewed: 2; 1 Male and 1 Female. During each interview the client had a family member present. There was one client in Phase 1 and two clients in Phase 2 of the program. The clients that were interviewed ranged from 16-18 years of age.

Other Interviews: All staff members and the local DFS probation officer and Judge McKee.

Court Information Summary:

The Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court has had many changes for the past year which has lead a variety of program changes to better serve clients. One of the unique aspect of Fremont County is the presence of the Wind River Reservation which has its own governing authority; therefore there is not always alignment with the county authorities. Parents are required to participate in the process.

The Juvenile Treatment Court is a 12 month program with three phases.

Phase I: 12 weeks in length which is the Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Adolescence (IOTA). Client appears in court weekly.

Phase 2: Relapse Prevention (RP) for a minimum of 45 days. In addition to RP, clients start MRT once per week. Steps 1-3 in MRT must be completed before moving to Phase 3. Client makes a court appearance every other week.

Phase 3: RP continues for another 120 days and MRT must be completed during that time. The client is only required to make a court appearance every three weeks.

If an individual has a violation, a sanction is imposed. Jail time is the last resort but often the court may use house arrest, go back in steps in MRT, increase supervision, and/or use an ankle monitor.

Incentive are used as rewards for successes.

Average Participation for Juvenile Treatment Court: 12-15 clients

Recidivism Rate for FY 13: In program rate: 17.14%; Post program rate: 33.33%

Retention Rate for FY 13: 52.27%

The state has requested that the juvenile treatment courts decrease recidivism by 15%. It is questionable if this is an attainable goal. Juvenile services are compared statistically to the adult courts which is not a fair comparison. There is not sufficient research around the juvenile system and the number of participants make it difficult to have statistical significance.

Eligibility:

Juveniles from the ages of 12-18 are considered for the Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court. The juveniles are assessed on high risk, high need for the program. The mental health providers perform the screenings. All initial screenings funnel through the single point of entry process using the PACK assessment. Parents have the option to accept or decline participation in the program. This is a point of contention with the judge as there is concern about procedural safeguards for the youth.

Financials:

Total operation budget is \$301,836.00. Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court receives their matching funds from the County Commissioners and some donations from the City of Lander.

Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court participated in a curriculum review earlier this year. This court also uses a client survey which is a requirement of CARF certification.

SYNC Review Areas:

Access to Services:

- The Juvenile Court utilizes the Single Point of Entry however the juvenile judge is not supportive of this process which sometimes creates a delay in entry.
- There is no longer a juvenile detention center in Fremont County. It closed approximately a year ago.
- There is no crisis shelter which does not allow for placement options for juveniles when necessary.

- It is difficult to get a juvenile into residential treatment facilities if needed as there is not one located in the community and it is difficult to get them admitted into WBI. If a juvenile is accepted to WBI there is difficulty with transporting the youth to their location in Casper.
- The Juvenile Treatment Court utilizes residential treatment centers in Powell and Casper which takes them out of the community and makes it difficult to families to participate in recovery together.
- Juveniles have the option to continue therapy after completion of the program.

Quality of Services:

- Clients feel that treatment is helpful, both individual and group
- Clients express enjoying the interactions during group sessions
- Family members feel that this program “changed my child”
- One family member stated “I wish I would have known about this earlier” because things “might not have gotten so bad”.
- Juveniles find it difficult to connect with the judge.
- Parents are required to participate in the program but it is difficult to engage them at times which impacts the programming for the youth.

Coordination of Services:

- Department of Family Services provides juvenile probation services for the treatment court. The local Fremont County DFS office is available to work with. There is more difficulties with the tribal DFS offices.
- Department of Family Services coordinates some of the one-on-one visits with families.
- There is open communication with the schools as treatment court staff visit the juveniles in that setting.
- There is a lack of supports for aftercare for juveniles such as AA or NA. The juveniles do not always feel comfortable in these meetings because of the age differences and peer interactions.
- It is difficult to coordinate services for juveniles on the reservation. It is difficult to have access to the youth at times if they are on the reservation.
- Jurisdiction with the reservation becomes difficult to navigate at times.
- Juveniles on the reservation are supervised by tribal DFS probation (either the Eastern Shoshoni or the Northern Arapahoe) which lacks consistency. Youth and families have reported feeling “bullied” and there seems to be a lack of boundaries with clients and staff. It is also reported by families that there is a lack of contact with the youth for fulfilling probation requirements. The Treatment Court would like to have better coordination with the tribal DFS offices.
- There are several employers who are willing to accept juveniles from the program as employees or volunteers.
- At times there is no consensus on a decision for a juvenile so the judge makes the decision.

Strengths:

- Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court participated in a curriculum review earlier this year which provided useful information for program improvements.
- The court feels that the implementation of CARF will strengthen their program.
- Staff communicate well with local Fremont County DFS office
- Use of single point of entry for juveniles in the treatment court program.
- Providers have good working relationships with the schools for supervision.
- There are specific employers who are willing to employ treatment court participants.
- Youth and family appreciated the opportunity to interact with each other on a personal basis during family night.
- Although there are challenges working with tribal entities, the treatment court team comes together weekly to discuss how to support success in the program.

Concerns/Areas of Growth:

- Clients felt that a youth N/A and A/A are needed in the community. It is difficult for youth to connect with peers when the groups are primarily adults.
- Data tracking is not representative of actual successes due to the small sample. The treatment court is concerned that data will be used to determine the success of programs instead of assessing what positive impacts are being made in the community on an individual basis. Juvenile treatment court data should not coincide with adult drug court expectations because the focus is different and so are the expectations of that population. Recidivism rate requirements are difficult to attain and creates uncertainty about programming if funding is based on these numbers.
- It is difficult to fit juveniles into the “high risk, high need” requirement based on life experiences which can make it difficult to get youth enrolled.
- Formula funding has made it very difficult for drug courts to maintain sustainability.
- At times families feel that it is difficult to participate in the demanding schedule of the treatment court due to other family obligations; however, one family felt that “it is time consuming, but worth it”.
- Coordination with the tribal DFS office primarily the Northern Arapahoe DFS office.
- Jurisdiction issues related to the reservation.

Recommendations/Requests:

- Continue efforts to educate the community on what ‘Drug Courts’ are and the services that are provided.
- Continue efforts to engage the tribal DFS offices, especially related to supervision for juveniles being served through the tribal DFS office.
- Continue to attempt to engage tribal law enforcement and tribal Business Councils for better communication among the courts related to access, supervision and jurisdiction.
- Continue building relationships with employers and organizations in the community to provide the best resource base possible for clients.
- The state assess is current funding model for the treatment courts in Wyoming
- The state assess the data reporting especially related to the juvenile treatment courts as there is not adequate research in this area to support what defines success.

Overall Impression:

Fremont County Juvenile Treatment Court has unique challenges due to the presence of the Wind River Reservation. The treatment court staff are committed to serving the youth that come through the program to the best of their abilities, however there are sometimes circumstances that are outside of their control which may hindering the success of some juveniles in the program. The treatment court engage the participants in an open and supportive manner so that they feel comfortable to share their experiences. The juvenile treatment program in Fremont County is providing youth with substance abuse problems an opportunity to experience accountability which leads to their own successes. Overall this program is providing an opportunity for Fremont County youth to get necessary services to move into productive community adults.

