



Fremont County 2008 Adult Drug Court SYNC Review

- **FC-L-A-2008-008***
 - *"I have been through drug court once and am now in it again; I just relapsed and drinking this time was no fun at all."*
- **FC-R-A-2008-009***
 - *"Without the services provided in this case, coordinated through drug court, three people may very well not be alive today."*
- **FC-R-A-2008-010***
 - *"This client has gone through drug court two times; the quality of the staff the second time made all the difference in the success of the client."*



*Indicates all cases debriefed on 12/12/08; Riverton, Wyoming



Access to Services:

- When a mental health issue became apparent with a person in adult drug court, it was recognized and dealt with in a timely and productive manner.
- Parenting classes were available and used appropriately; client was able to attend parenting classes on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- A client must sign a contract with the adult drug court stipulating to 43 conditions; some of these influence the behaviors of others such as a spouse or partner.
 - Case managers are very important in this process as they can influence behavior of both the client and a partner with a substance abuse issue.
- In certain cases, a “connection” has been established with a family as early as juvenile drug court that carries over with other family members in adult drug court.

Quality of Services Including Recovery Support:

- Access to Recovery (ATR), which in part recognizes non traditional therapy, is a very beneficial concept for this area given the proximity and involvement of Natives from the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- The client structure, required of those enrolled in the adult drug court, helps clients establish a good routine.
- Clients of adult drug court are asked to complete their General Equivalency Diploma (GED); while not always initially embraced by the client, they ultimately find this very rewarding.
- While adhering to a clear core structure, there appears to be good client individualization in adult drug court.
- Probation officer meets at least once a week with clients, more as they come out of jail, this is a phased, graduated program.
- Employers in the community are generally reported to be very supportive of someone who is in the system; and employers appear to work well with the probation officers for a client’s recovery.
- Client reports decades of failed attempts at quitting alcohol; adult drug court was the program that has been successful.
- Mountain View Transitional House, a converted motel which will serve as a half way home, will open in 2009 for clients. This is an identified need that is being fulfilled in this community.
- Advanced Recovery Group (ARG), through Fremont Counseling focuses on relapse triggers in an effort to prevent relapses.
- The court is recognized as being open to other types of treatment besides “sterile treatment” services.
- Morale Reconnection Therapy (MRT); changes reasoning from low level “I want what I want now” to a more moral level of thought process; it is used extensively in adult drug court and is recognized as a SAMHSA¹ best practice.

¹ SAMSHA stands for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. More information is available at: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>.



- Adult drug court has many partners and players; it truly appears to be a wrap around service approach.
- Safe, sober environment must be present; this helps others in addition to the client; whole family is the client in many cases.
- Client has learned how to access “life services” through adult drug court.
- A faith based transitional program has opened in Fremont County.
- Adult drug court case file:²
 - Initial court orders appear to be “strength based” and encourage the client to be positive in their treatment;
 - There was a thorough needs assessment interview done for the client by the adult drug court and included in the case file;
 - It appears that the program is consistent through documentation in the case file;
 - Expectations for client were clearly delineated in the case file;
 - A picture of the client is included in the case file, and
 - Through documentation in the case file, it appears there was good client participation in the planning process.
- The Access to Recovery (ATR) program recognizes the benefit of allowing a client “planned independence and self esteem.” An example might be for the client to be able to purchase his or her food in a clean sober environment rather than having the food bought for them.
- The current adult drug court coordinator has recognized the need to assist with such things as transportation for clients to be successful in their programs.

Coordination:

- Case manager plays a very important role for the client in the daily living aspects of the program.
- It is reported that there are clearer roles between the case manager and the probation officer than in the past; this has helped clients.
- Native sweats, religious and other reasonable, sober activities can be counted as mandatory meetings through adult drug court.
- In jail based treatment, the Judge typically visits the client in jail at the beginning of the program; the client goes to court upon completion of the program and then is placed on 2 years standard probation.
- Adult drug court team typically includes probation officer(s), case manager(s), court officer(s), adult drug court coordinator and adult drug court committee member(s).
- Current adult drug court coordinator is doing a good job administering the program and limiting client contacts in favor of administrative duties.
- Adult drug court team members seem to generally be sending a unified message from the client’s perspective.

² This case file was given a superficial review; it was viewed in the context of procedure, case planning, compliance, and resource allocation but not treatment. A “check off” list for case file review will be considered for insertion in the review instrument for future reviews.



- There is recognition by team members of those issues and challenges which may be age related.
- Indirect benefits of adult drug court are beneficial for the community as well; such as requirements for the domestic partner in order for the client to be in adult drug court.



Access to Services:

- Some individuals may be in “jail based” treatment when they need a higher level of treatment. Jail based treatment is six hours per day, five days per week, and is a level between Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOT) and residential treatment:
 - “Let’s give them a shot” for a lower level of treatment may be setting some clients up for failure.
- There can be up to a six week waiting period,³ once paperwork is done and acceptance is made, for clients to get into treatment.
- Client realizes “hind sight is 20/20,” but client may have been successful if evaluated years earlier and offered the services now receiving in adult drug court.
- Lacking finances and financial support is a detriment to obtaining services according to a client. However, that does not appear to be recognized by all on the team; the new adult drug court coordinator appears to recognize this need.
- Evaluations by Fremont County Counseling may have been skewed in the past to meet the requirements of adult drug court as that is the only option available in the community; evaluations are now being done by a third party.
- Inpatient treatment can result in a very long waiting period.
- A delay in scheduling marriage counseling may have been one of the contributing factors for a client to begin using alcohol again.

Quality of Services Including Recovery Support:

- Clients, who are doing well in their programs, do not get to see their probation officer or case manager as much as those who may not be doing so well and require more attention; this may be a resource/staffing issue.
- Case loads are high in this area of the state, yet this court receives the same funding under the current funding formula that other drug courts do who do not have as many clients.
- No local residential treatment facilities exist for adults.
- “Loss of drinking” counseling may be a service that would be beneficial for clients.
- There is good recognition of cultural difference in this area of the state, but there may be a greater demand for gender specific services.
- Case manager has a case load of 35 and may not be able to provide the services that may be necessary in such an intensive program.

³ Often times this waiting period is in jail.



- A client, in the last month, experienced the death of a sibling yet no grief counseling was offered to the client while in the adult drug court program.⁴
- Adult drug court case manager has an old “cop car;” this does not lend itself to being greeted openly in home visit situations.
- There is an intense focus by the adult drug court to insure that clients remain clean and sober; other issues may not be dealt with as zealously as the sobriety.
- Fremont County Counseling instructed a Native client who was in adult drug court to refer to his native “Peyote Ceremony” as a “Native American Church Meeting.” The client reported that if the counseling center did not honor his or her native traditions and ancestry, it was hard for him to accept and honor their treatment.
- Native American Post Traumatic Syndrome may be a phenomenon that needs to be recognized and explored by treatment providers in this area.

Coordination:

- Data is reported to the state on a regular basis by the adult drug court; because of the reporting requirements the adult drug court employs a data entry person costing a \$1,000.00 per month. Little or no information is reported to be received back from the state system and it is reported there are no local query options available for the coordinators submitting information.
- Evaluation consistency from Fremont County Counseling appears to be lacking.
- Evaluation consistency from the Eastern Shoshone, White Buffalo program has been lacking; it has gotten better in the last six months with a change in personnel.
- While client was out of state in a program there was a change in Department of Family Services (DFS) probation officers⁵ with no transition or information provided to the client for return.
- In the past, there was favoritism on the part of the adult drug court coordinator; this created division between the coordinator and the staff in adult drug court. This trend has been reversed with the employment of a new adult drug court coordinator.
- “Trust issues” according to clients and a counselor, need to be recognized and managed. Clients report that they have “trust issues” from their addiction and it is understandable that staff would also have trust issues trying to monitor a client’s progress in the program.
- Decisions made at staffing and management team meetings are sometimes altered by individuals resulting in lacking consistency; there is a good structure in place that needs to be followed according to staff; notes from staffing meetings might be useful for reference.
- Consistent interpretation of language in different adult drug court policies can be an issue; i.e. one year sober, does time being in treatment count?

⁴ This client had just relapsed and was interviewed while incarcerated in handcuffs and shackles.

⁵ Client is now an adult and in adult drug court but at the time was a juvenile.



- There may be a delay in providing clients information while incarcerated and waiting for treatment; easier for the client to call out than officials to call in and talk to the client with information. Often the client is hesitant to contact the necessary individuals for information.
- Fremont County Counseling Center is perceived as offering only evidence based treatment practices and not being open to other types of therapeutic treatment.
- State certification standards can be a barrier. The state will not accept federal tribal standards for state certification in order for the courts to accept the evaluations of providers.
- Certain Wyoming treatment facilities have yet to really embrace and become culturally competent in their inpatient programs according to one counselor.
- There may have been underlying drug usage issues that were not identified and treated in a case.

It is a totality of circumstances and we are missing some big pieces; lack of quality counseling for underlying issues....

Melinda Cox, Fremont County Adult Drug Court.