



Sheridan County Juvenile Drug Court SYNC REVIEW

- **SC-J-2009-16:**
 - “The treatment team is always available; the client is welcome to come back.”

- **SC-J-2009-17:**
 - “The client describes the treatment team to be “so invested” in the client’s success and that if the treatment team were “to give up,” the client reports they would have given up as well.”

Summary

- ✓ The Sheridan County Justice Office administers adult and juvenile drug courts, juvenile probation, truancy and diversion programs.
- ✓ Referrals are accepted from municipal, circuit and district courts.
- ✓ Located in the old Sheridan County jail, the upstairs cellblock offers a grim reminder of harsher conditions for juveniles once held in custody.
- ✓ The program has current financial support from a drug court enhancement grant, allowing services without cost to participants, except for fees required by statute.
- ✓ Judges (magistrates) operate efficient courts, relying heavily on staff for appropriate evaluations, assessments, service recommendations and use of sanctions.
- ✓ Both judges are well informed and clearly invested in the drug court processes.
- ✓ The judges consider staff highly competent and their judgment and recommendations. Staff recommendations are generally followed by the court.
- ✓ Pre-court meetings demonstrated that staff were fully informed regarding client needs and appropriately represented service requirements.



Access to Services:

- Assessments were completed within three weeks of referral;
- services are centrally located resulting in the dissemination of services being seamlessly and with ease;
- clients immediately referred to appropriate services;
- clients were satisfied with access and timeliness of services and experienced no delays;
- no waiting list for services;
- clients reported that services were available for as long as needed following graduation from the program;
- clients were satisfied with the availability of services and did not identify any unavailable services;
- early intervention services are identified and developed as necessary;
- the adult drug court offers in-house counseling promoting excellent coordination between treatment and probation officer functions, and
- WYSTAR provides outstanding services to the juvenile drug court through contractual services.

Quality of Services Including Recovery Support:

- Community offered support groups;
- family, grandparents and sister being utilized as natural supports for the client;
- availability of alternative schools is a positive resource;
- clients being taught skill for advocating for themselves; staff encouraged, taught and facilitated self-advocacy for clients;
- intake check list is comprehensive including medical, dental, debt problems and substance abuse needs;
- client felt supported by staff and encouraged to succeed;
- clients did not report experiencing discrimination in the community;
- local mental health services are accessed and used as needed;
- cultural competence was evident, and
- individuals and families were appropriately involved in establishing and implementing service and treatment plans.
- A strength of the drug court was that it operated in the gray and not in black and white, providing for individual flexibility in service delivery and individualization of services in most cases.
- Services provided by the drug court include:
 - Intensive outpatient treatment;
 - individual counseling;
 - anger management;
 - random drug testing;
 - substance abuse assessment;
 - financial planning;
 - coordination with cooperating agencies;
 - outpatient services;
 - probation Services;



- Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings;
- residential treatment, and
- jail and detention when required.

Coordination:

- Staff reports good coordination with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS).
- DFS has trained staff on using the DFS juvenile assessment and case planning instrument;
- community service programs are coordinated and made available through the Sheridan County Community Services Officer;
- essential service components appear to be readily available and well coordinated, and
- Communication between organizations is good, including WYSTAR, Rimrock and New Horizons.



Access to Services:

- Drug Court personnel express concern regarding the jurisdictional and service issues that exist between juvenile court and kids referred from municipal or circuit courts. Youth entering through municipal or circuit courts are promptly engaged in services and provided with substance abuse evaluations; youth entering through juvenile court present procedural and jurisdictional challenges.

Quality of Services Including Recovery Support:

- Judge offered a choice between drug court or six months in jail. Clients have limited information about drug court and often become involve in lieu of other sentencing options.
- There is limited customization of services for the individual or family in some cases;¹
- a concern was noted regarding a lack of family involvement or direct family services, especially for families that are separated and being reunited;
- no effective/active youth AA group and early intervention services in any other area was not known, available and or accessed;
- if court had ordered family counseling it may have possibly helped and may have helped the clients mother address alcohol abuse issues;
- family counseling was identified as a need but no services were offered;
- clients parent was not involved in decision making, development and implementation of the service plan or involved in court reviews, and
- adult drug court is not set up for the client to have input in meetings and communication, but the avenues for input are present if the client questions the treatment or service plan.

¹ This appears to not be a consistent finding in every case as individualization was noted in other cases as noted on page 2 of this report.



Coordination:

- Case management seems to occur but there was no specific identified case manager;
- while other mental health providers are used as necessary, especially for co-occurring mental health needs, the connection with those agencies is not strong;
- there is some agreement that strengthening coordination and involvement with the schools would be beneficial,² and
- there exists a continued need to build awareness, public and agency support for program.

Systemic:

- Community residential treatment for juveniles is needed in the area, and
- community detention facilities for juveniles.

² This is almost a universal finding in Wyoming in the SYNC review process and Mini CFSR review process; often times the lack of coordination is because of the school.