Communication and Multidisciplinary Teams: How to Communicate and Integrate Treatment and Case information when Working with Justice-Involved Populations

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A. Principles of Individualized Treatment Planning and How to Engage People in Accountable Change

1. Natural Change and Self-Change

(DiClemente CC (2006): "Natural Change and the Troublesome Use of Substances – A Life-Course Perspective" in "Rethinking Substance Abuse: What the Science Shows, and What We Should Do about It" Ed. William R Miller and Kathleen M. Carroll. Guildford Press, New York, NY. pp 91; 95.)

The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) illuminates the process of natural recovery and the process of change involved in treatment-assisted change. But "treatment is an adjunct to self-change rather than the other way around." "The perspective that takes natural change seriously…shifts the focus from an overemphasis on interventions and treatments and gives increased emphasis to the individual substance abuser, his and her developmental status, his and her values and experiences, the nature of the substance abuse and its connection with associated problems, and his or her stage of change." (DiClemente, 2006)

2. What Works in Treatment - The Empirical Evidence

- Extra-therapeutic and/or Client Factors (87%)
- Treatment (13%):
- 60% due to "Alliance" (8%/13%)
- 30% due to "Allegiance" Factors (4%/13%)
- 8% due to model and technique (1%/13%)

(Wampold, B. (2001). *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Miller, S.D., Mee-Lee, D., & Plum, B. (2005). Making Treatment Count. In J. Lebow (ed.). *Handbook of Clinical Family Therapy. New York: Wiley).*

3. Three aspects of the Therapeutic Alliance

(Miller, William R; Rollnick, Stephen (2013): "Motivational Interviewing - Helping People Change" Third Edition, New York, NY. Guilford Press.p. 39):

(a)

(b)

(c)

4. Stages of Change

* Transtheoretical Model of Change (Prochaska and DiClemente):

Pre-contemplation: not yet considering the possibility of change although others are aware of a problem; not actively interested in change; seldom appear for treatment without coercion; could benefit from non-threatening information to raise awareness of possible "problem" & possibilities for change.

Contemplation: ambivalent, undecided, vacillating between whether he/she really has a "problem" or needs to change; wants to change, but this desire exists simultaneously with being satisfied with the status quo; may seek professional advice to get an objective assessment; motivational strategies useful at this stage, but aggressive or premature confrontation provokes strong discord and defensive behaviors; many Contemplators have indefinite plans to take action in the next six months or so.

Preparation: takes person from decisions made in Contemplation stage to the specific steps to be taken to solve the problem in the Action stage; increasing confidence in the decision to change; certain tasks that make up the first steps on the road to Action; most people planning to take action within the very next month; making final adjustments before they begin to change their behavior.

Action: specific actions intended to bring about change; overt modification of behavior and surroundings; most busy stage of change requiring the greatest commitment of time and energy; care not to equate action with actual change; support and encouragement still very important to prevent drop out and regression in readiness to change.

Maintenance: sustain the changes accomplished by previous action and prevent relapse; requires different set of skills than were needed to initiate change; consolidation of gains attained; not a static stage and lasts as little as six months or up to a lifetime; learn alternative coping and problem-solving strategies; replace problem behaviors with new, healthy lifestyle; work through emotional triggers of relapse.

Relapse and Recycling: expectable, but not inevitable setbacks; avoid becoming stuck, discouraged, or demoralized; learn from relapse before committing to a new cycle of action; comprehensive, multidimensional assessment to explore all reasons for relapse.

Termination: this stage is the ultimate goal for all changers; person exits the cycle of change, without fear of relapse; debate over whether certain problems can be terminated or merely kept in remission through maintenance strategies.

B. **Engaging the Participant in Collaborative Care**

1. Developing the Treatment Contract and Focus of Treatment

	Client	Clinical Assessment	Treatment Plan
What?	What does client want?	What does client need?	What is the Tx contract?
Why?	Why now? What's the level of commitment?	Why? What reasons are revealed by the assessment data?	Is it linked to what client wants?
How?	How will s/he get there?	How will you get him/her to accept the plan?	Does client buy into the link?
Where?	Where will s/he do this?	Where is the appropriate setting for treatment? What is indicated by the placement criteria?	Referral to level of care
When?	When will this happen? How quickly? How badly does s/he want it?	When? How soon? What are realistic expectations? What are milestones in the process?	What is the degree of urgency? What is the process? What are the expectations of the referral?

2. Doing Time or Doing Change – the Importance of Collaboration

The mandated client can often present as hostile and "resistant" because they are at "action" for staying out of jail; getting people off their back; getting housing or a job; or getting their children back. In working with mandating agencies whether that be a judge, probation officer, child protective services, a spouse, employer or employee assistance professional, the goal is to use the leverage of the referral source to hold the client accountable to an assessment and follow through with the treatment plan.

Unfortunately, clinicians/programs often blur the boundaries between "doing time" and "doing treatment". For everyone involved with mandated clients, the 3 C's are:

- Consequences – It is within justice services, problem solving courts and dependency and neglect systems' mission to ensure that participants take the consequences of their illegal or abusive behavior. If the court agrees that the behavior was largely caused by addiction and/or mental illness, and that the person, family or youth and the public is best served by providing treatment rather than punishment, then clinicians provide treatment not custody and incarceration. The obligation of clinicians is to ensure a person adheres to treatment; not to enforce consequences and compliance with court orders.

- Compliance – The participant is required to act in accordance with the court, or mandating agency's orders; rules and regulations. From a justice or mandating agency's perspective court personnel should expect compliance. But clinicians are providing treatment where the focus is not on compliance to court orders. The focus is on whether there is a disorder needing treatment; and if there is, the expectation is for adherence to treatment, not compliance with "doing time" in a treatment place.

- Control –Mandating agencies and courts aim to control, if not eliminate, illegal or abusive behavior that threaten the public, children, youth and families. While control is appropriate for the courts, clinicians and treatment programs are focused on collaborative treatment and attracting people into recovery. The only time clinicians are required to control a client is if they are in imminent danger of harm to self or others. Otherwise, as soon as that imminent danger is stabilized, treatment resumes collaboration and client empowerment, not consequences, compliance and control.

3. What is to Say to Engage People

"Thank-you for choosing to come to treatment."

"I didn't choose you. They made me come."

"What would happen if you hadn't come today?"

"I'd do more time, or won't get off probation."

"Would that be OK with you if that happened?"

"Hell no, that's why I'm here."

"Well then thank-you for choosing to work with me so I can help you do less time or get off probation."

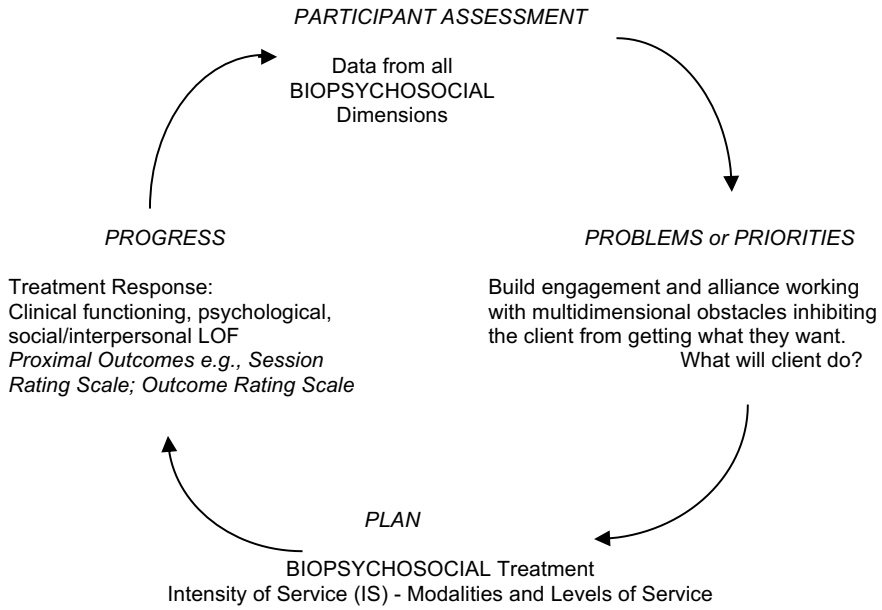
4. What to Say to Orient Participants

"Thank-you for choosing to enter join Drug Court. The reason you have been given the opportunity to get treatment rather than be incarcerated is that you have addiction that is related to your charges. We believe that if you get addiction treatment and establish recovery, this will not only be good for your life, but society will benefit from increased public safety, decreased crime and spending resources on treatment rather than incarceration, which is much more expensive.

But you are accountable for doing treatment, not time; for working on changing your attitudes, thinking and behavior; not just complying with a program and graduating."

C. **Underlying Principles of The ASAM Criteria**

1. Measurement-based Treatment – Feedback Informed Treatment



2. Assessment of Biopsychosocial Severity and Function *(The ASAM Criteria* 2013*,* pp 43-53)

The common language of six ASAM Criteria dimensions determine needs/strengths:

1. Acute intoxication and/or withdrawal potential
2. Biomedical conditions and complications
3. Emotional/behavioral/cognitive conditions and complications
4. Readiness to Change
5. Relapse/Continued Use/Continued Problem potential
6. Recovery environment

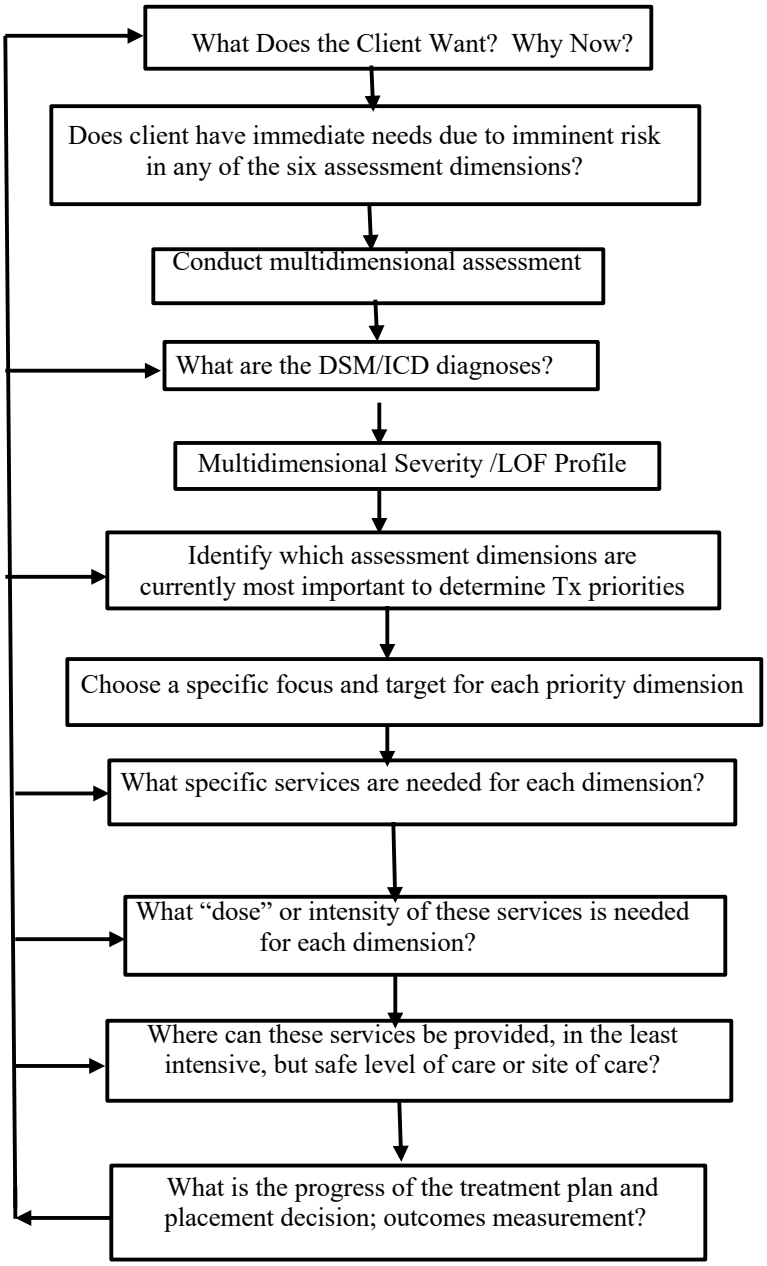
3. Biopsychosocial Treatment - Overview: 5 M's

* Motivate - Dimension 4 issues; engagement and alliance building
* Manage - the family, significant others, work/school, legal
* Medication – withdrawal management; HIV/AIDS; MAT - anti-craving anti-addiction meds;
* Meetings - AA, NA, Al-Anon; SMART Recovery, Dual Recovery Anonymous, etc.
* Monitor - continuity of care; relapse prevention; family and significant others

4. Treatment Levels of Service *(The ASAM Criteria* 2013*,* pp 106-107)

1 Outpatient Services
2 Intensive Outpatient/Partial Hospitalization Services
3 Residential/Inpatient Services
4 Medically-Managed Intensive Inpatient Services

D. **How to Organize Assessment Data** – How to Target and Focus Treatment Priorities
(The ASAM Criteria 2013, p 124)



2. What to Do with Poor Outcomes – ACCEPT © David Mee-Lee, 2018

Assess what is and is not working

Change treatment plan to improve outcomes

Check treatment contract if participant reluctant to modify the treatment plan

Expect effort in a positive direction – "do treatment" not "do time"

Policies that permit mistakes and honesty; not zero tolerance

Track outcomes in real time – functional change (attitudes, thoughts, behaviors) not compliance

E. **Communication with all Members of the Multidisciplinary Team to Track Treatment and Court Plan Progress**

1. What to Say to Check on Progress

"Tell me about your treatment plan." (Pause to see what the participant says and monitor if they are working on anything in particular to improve functioning for public safety; or whether they are just "doing time" e.g., "I just have to be here and have another three months.")

"What you are working on to change your attitudes, thinking or behavior that has gotten you into trouble with crime, restricted your freedom and threatened public safety?"

2. What to Say to Track Treatment Engagement

"What would you like to do in this session or in group today to advance your treatment plan?" (Pause to see what the participant says and monitor if they are working on anything in particular to improve functioning for public safety; or whether they are just "doing time" e.g., "I just have to be here" Or "What do you want me to say?")
What you would hope they would say is: "I don't have an anger problem, but I am trying to get off probation so I'm going to ask someone to role play with me an angry situation. Others would get into a fist-fight but not me. I have good anger management skills and am going to demonstrate to the group how to handle that in assertive but nonviolent way. You will note that down and let my PO know that I am doing well."

3. What to Say to about Positive Drug Screens

"In addiction treatment, it's not OK to use any unauthorized substance. But if this didn't happen and everyone had perfect control over using, they wouldn't have addiction and wouldn't need treatment. You can learn skills and use supports to never have to use again, so it is not inevitable that you will have a flare up and use.

But if it happens to you or anyone else in treatment with you, it is your responsibility for your safety and your fellow participants to immediately address any attitudes, thinking or behavior building up to any use substance use; or any actual use. Reach out to a team member just like you would if experiencing a heart attack. They will then work with you to find out what went wrong and how to improve your treatment plan to prevent another flare-up.

If substance use happens in a residential setting there will be a community meeting ASAP to help anyone who used with you. If you or anyone else is not interested in finding what went wrong and how to fix it, then anyone has the right to choose no further treatment and take the legal consequences of their criminal offense."

4. What *not* to say to about Positive Drug Screens

"In addiction treatment, it's not OK to use any unauthorized substance. You are mandated to be abstinent and if you use and it is found on a drug screen, you will be sanctioned and could be set back a phase in your treatment program. If it happens more than once, you could be incarcerated for a brief period and it may even be grounds for discharge from the drug court program.

In order to advance through the phases of the Drug Court program and eventually graduate, you must demonstrate full abstinence. If you do not, there are escalating sanctions, but there are also incentives for those who do stay abstinent."

"Now be honest, did you use or not?!!"

5. What to Say in Individual, Group, or an Emergency Community Meeting

"Please share what happened that led up to and triggered the substance use so we can figure out what went wrong and help you get back on track. If others used with you, please identify them so we can do the same process with them ASAP.

If you are willing to change your treatment plan and work on fixing the mistakes with commitment and effort in good faith, then treatment continues. If you are not interested in doing that, you have a right to choose no further treatment and be discharged from the program."

6. What Court and other Mandating Agencies Should Expect from Treatment Providers

Participants mandated to treatment are varied and can present with addiction, mental health and physical health complexity. These diverse clinical presentations highlight the need for individualized approaches that treatment providers should be pursuing with the client:

1. Assessment of each client's multidimensional needs as per The ASAM Criteria six dimensions. So assessing if a person is developmentally disabled and suffers from an intellectual developmental disorder (previously called Mental Retardation) is important compared with a person who has antisocial personality disorder or lifestyle and is very institutionalized and used to incarceration. The intellectually developmental disordered person has deficits in reasoning, problem solving, abstract thinking, judgment, learning from instruction and experience etc. The institutionalized antisocial person experiences sanctions like water on a duck's back.

2. Assessment and methods to enhance treatment engagement and good faith effort of the client in treatment. Participants with co-occurring mental and addiction issues will have more difficulty with engagement and have needs that require awareness of their multiple vulnerabilities. Treatment plans need to be assessment-based and person-centered not program and compliance based. Because of different client learning styles and their array of needs, any manualized and evidence-based curriculum may require adaptation to fit each client's problems and progress/outcomes.

This calls for a level of clinical sophistication to use Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) in a person-centered and outcomes driven manner rather than a compliance and one-size-fits-all manner. Interactive Journaling is an evidence-based method to facilitate self-change using Motivational Interviewing, stages of change work and CBT. The Change Companies has a Drug Court journal that can be used along with other journals designed for criminal justice populations used by Federal Bureau of Prisons and many others.

3. Outcomes-driven treatment. Is the client making progress in real accountable change? Are they demonstrating improved functioning that will increase public safety, decrease legal recidivism and increase safety for children and families? Active credible treatment is not just about compliance with attendance and negative drug screens. Is the client invested in a change process at a pace that fits their assessed abilities and vulnerabilities? Or is the client merely passively complying, which does not translate into lasting change and increased safety? How do we impact the revolving door of repeated episodes of treatment and incarceration, or child protective services involvement, which wastes resources and does not produce the outcomes we all want?

7. Procedures to assure treatment adherence

(National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards Volume II, 2014)

I. **Multidisciplinary Team**

A. **Team Composition**

Drug court team comprises representatives from all partner agencies involved in the creation of the program, including but not limited to judge or judicial officer, program coordinator, prosecutor, defense

counsel representative, treatment representative, community supervision officer, and law enforcement officer.

B. **Pre-Court Staff Meetings**
Team members consistently attend pre-court staff meetings to review participant progress, determine appropriate actions to improve outcomes, and prepare for status hearings in court.

C. **Sharing Information**
Team members share information as necessary to appraise participants' progress in treatment and compliance with conditions of drug court.

Information shared should focus on whether participant is changing his or her attitudes, thinking, and behavior in areas that previously threatened public safety, legal recidivism, and safety for children and families.

(National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards Volume II, 2014, pages 38, 39, 43.)

II. **Team Communication and Decision Making**

To increase team functioning, the following issues are best addressed:

1. Recognition that all team members have the same common purpose and mission: public safety, safety for children, decreased legal recidivism and crime.
2. All members could benefit from common language of assessment of stage of change – models of stages of change.
3. Develop consensus practice approach for addressing readiness to change: meeting participants where they are at, solution-focused, motivational enhancement that is affirming and respectful.
4. Develop consensus on how to combine resources and leverage to effect change, responsibility and accountability – coordinated efforts to create and provide incentives and supports for change.
5. Improve communication and conflict resolution - committed to common goals of public safety; responsibility, accountability, decreased legal recidivism and lasting change. Keep our collective eyes on the prize: "No one succeeds unless we all succeed!"

III. Drug and alcohol testing provides an accurate, timely, and comprehensive assessment of unauthorized substance use throughout participants' enrollment in the treatment court.

8. Moving from Punishment to Accountability for Lasting Change – Implications for Sanctions and Incentives

(Tips and Topics, Volume 12, No. 6, September 2014. www.changecompanies.net; click on Blogs; click on Tips and Topics and go to the Archives on left hand side.)

1. Sanction for lack of good faith effort and adherence in treatment based on the clinical assessment of the person's needs, strengths, skills and resources. Don't sanction for signs and symptoms of their addiction and/or mental illness in a formulaic manner that is one-size-fits-all.

2. The treatment provider is responsible for careful assessment and person-centered services and to keep the court apprised of any risk to public safety. The court should be informed about the client's level of good faith effort in treatment; and whether the client is improving in function at a pace consistent with their assessed needs, strengths, skills and resources. The provider should not just report on passive compliance with attendance and production of positive or negative drug screens - passive compliance is not functional change.

3. If the client is not changing their treatment plan in a positive direction when outcomes are poor e.g., positive drug screens, attendance problems, passive participation, no change in peer group activities and support groups like AA etc., then the client is "doing time" not "doing treatment and change." Providers need to then inform the judge that the client is out of compliance with the court order to do treatment. The

client consented to do treatment not just do time and should be held accountable for their individualized treatment plan. If the client is substantively modifying their treatment plan in a positive direction in response to poor outcomes; and adhering to the new direction in the treatment plan, then the client should continue in treatment and not be sanctioned for signs and symptoms of their illness(es).

4. Incentives for clients can be explored and matched to what is most meaningful to them. For example, incentives that allow a client to choose a gift certificate or coupon for a restaurant may be meaningful for some clients. But others may find assistance in seeing their children; or receiving help with housing; or advocacy to change group attendance times to fit better their work schedule to be more meaningful incentives to be used. This requires an individualized approach recommended to the court by providers who should know their client's needs, skills, strengths and resources. It is too much to expect the judge can work all this out in a busy schedule of court appearances.

5. A close working relationship between the client, judge, court team, all stakeholders and treatment providers is needed to actualize this approach.

Some judges are rightly concerned that treatment providers are not watching for public safety concerns closely enough and take treatment into their own hands. This can result in sanctions or mandates that are not assessment based e.g., mandating 90 days of residential level of care; or 90 Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in 90 days; or ordering sanctions that may be ineffective in producing improved treatment engagement and real client functional change.

LITERATURE REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

ASAM has guidelines outlining best practices for drug testing in addiction settings:
"ASAM Appropriate Use of Drug Testing in Clinical Addiction Medicine."
https://www.asam.org/resources/guidelines-and-consensus-documents/drug-testing

NADCP has developed a set of guidelines outlining how drug testing is applied in drug court settings:
National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), ADULT DRUG COURT BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS VOLUME II
http://www.nadcp.org/sites/default/files/2014/Best%20Practice%20Standards%20Vol.%20II._0.pdf

"A Technical Assistance Guide For Drug Court Judges on Drug Court Treatment Services" - Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. American University, School of Public Affairs, Justice Programs Office. Lead Authors: Jeffrey N. Kushner, MHRA, State Drug Court Coordinator, Montana Supreme Court; Roger H. Peters, Ph.D., University of South Florida; Caroline S. Cooper BJA Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. School of Public Affairs, American University. May 1, 2014.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) training video on The ASAM Criteria that can be viewed by creating an account and going to the Adult Drug Court Lessons. The system can be found at www.treatmentcourts.org and this video was initiated by Dennis Reilly at the Center for Court innovation.

Critical Treatment Issues Webinar Series, Bureau of Justice (BJA) Drug Court Technical Assistance Project at American University Feb. 10, 2016 – May 3, 2016.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuUEP52z1Xk

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