Back to the Future: Best Practices in Drug Courts

Shannon Carey, Ph.D.

NPC Research
Back to the Future: Best Practices in Drug Courts

But, honestly, do we really need all of this rigmarole??!!
## Meta-Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of Drug Courts</th>
<th>Crime Reduced on Avg. by . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Campbell Collaborative</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14% to 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latimer et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Canada Dept. of Justice</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaffer (2006)</td>
<td>University of Nevada</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowenkamp et al. (2005)</td>
<td>University of Cincinnati</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aos et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Washington State Inst. for Public Policy</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cost Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>No. Drug Courts</th>
<th>Avg. Benefit Per $1 Invested</th>
<th>Avg. Cost Saving Per Client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loman (2004)</td>
<td>1 (St. Louis)</td>
<td>$2.80 to $6.32</td>
<td>$2,615 to $7,707</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finigan et al. (2007)</td>
<td>1 (Portland, OR)</td>
<td>$2.63</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carey et al. (2006)</td>
<td>9 (California)</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>$6,744 to $12,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnoski &amp; Aos (2003)</td>
<td>5 (Washington St.)</td>
<td>$1.74</td>
<td>$2,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aos et al. (2006)</strong></td>
<td>National Data</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td><strong>$4,767</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bhati et al. (2008)</strong></td>
<td>National Data</td>
<td><strong>$2.21</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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Cost Analyses

Yes, but can we get along with just 8 key components even 6 or 7? Maybe we want to put in 9 as well.
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
- Expensive
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
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- Complicated
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
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- Complicated
- Stifling
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
- Expensive
- Complicated
- Stifling
- Divisive
The Key Components are . . .

- Old (1997)
- Expensive
- Complicated
- Stifling
- Divisive
- Non-empirical!
. . . Until Now:


* www.npcresearch.com
Key Component #1

“Realization of these [rehabilitation] goals requires a team approach, including cooperation and collaboration of the judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, probation authorities, other corrections personnel, law enforcement, pretrial services agencies, TASC programs, evaluators, an array of local service providers, and the greater community.”
Team Involvement

- Does it matter if the treatment provider attends court sessions?

- Is it important for the attorneys to attend team meetings ("staffings")?
Drug Courts That Required a Treatment Representative at Court Hearings Had 9 Times Greater Savings

**Percent improvement in outcome costs** refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

\[ p < .05 \]
Drug Courts That Expected the Public Defender to Attend All Team Meetings Had 8 Times Greater Savings

The Public Defender is Expected to Attend All Drug Court Team Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>41%</strong></td>
<td><strong>5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=6</td>
<td>N=4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

*p<.05*
Drug Courts That Expected the **Prosecutor** to Attend All Team Meetings Had More Than 2 Times Greater Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual
Drug Courts that Included **Law Enforcement** as a Member of the Team Had Greater Cost Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

**Percent improvement in outcome costs** refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual
Drug Courts That Required All Team Members to Attend Staffings Had Twice the Savings

Note 1: Difference is significant at p<.05

Note 2: "Team Members" = Judge, Both Attorneys, Treatment Provider, Coordinator

**Percent improvement in outcome costs** refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual.
Does allowing non-drug charges threaten public safety?
Drug Courts That Accepted Participants With Non-Drug Charges Had Nearly Twice the Savings

Note 1: Difference is significant at p<.05

Note 2: Non-drug charges include property, prostitution, violence, etc.
Drug Courts That Accepted Participants with Prior Violence Had No Differences in Graduation Rates

Program Accepts Participants with Prior Violence Charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs*</th>
<th>Yes N=4</th>
<th>No N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is NOT significant
Drug Courts That Accepted Participants with Prior Violence Had No Differences in Cost Savings

Note: Difference is NOT significant
Key Component #3

“Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program.”
Is it really important to get participants into the program quickly? And what is quickly?
Drug Courts In Which Participants Entered the Program Within 20 Days of Arrest Had Twice the Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Drug courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.
Effective Treatment

• Is it better to have a single treatment agency or to have multiple treatment options?

• How important is relapse prevention?
Drug Courts That Used a Single Coordinating Treatment Agency Had 10 Times Greater Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Court Works with a Single Treatment Agency</th>
<th>Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual
Drug Courts That Included a Phase Focusing on Relapse Prevention Had Over 3 Times Greater Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual
Key Component #7

“Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential.”
The Judge

• How often should participants appear before the judge?

• How long should the judge stay on the drug court bench? Is longevity better or is it better to rotate regularly?
Drug Courts That Held Status Hearings Every 2 Weeks During Phase 1 Had 2 Times Greater Cost Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

*"Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual
Different judges had different impacts on recidivism.

The Longer the Judge Spent on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes
Different judges had different impacts on recidivism

Judges did better their second time

The Longer the Judge Spent on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes
The Longer the Judge Spent on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes

- Different judges had different impacts on recidivism
- Judges did better their second time
Drug Courts That Have Judges Stay Longer Than Two Years Had 3 Times Greater Cost Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Judges Who Spent at Least 3 Minutes Talking to Each Participant in Court Had More Than Twice the Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.1
Key Component #5

“Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.”
Drug Testing

• How frequently should participants be tested?
• How quickly should results be available to the team?
Drug Courts That Performed Drug Testing 2 or More Times Per Week During Phase 1 Had Savings

Program Performs Drug Testing at Least Twice per Week

Percent improvement in outcome costs

Yes
N=10
33%

No
N=3
-9%

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Drug Courts That Received Drug Test Results Within 48 Hours Had 3 Times Greater Savings

Program Receives Drug Testing Results within 48 Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=7</td>
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</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Drug Courts That Required Greater Than 90 Days of Abstinence Had Larger Cost Savings

Program Requires at Least 90 Days "Clean" Before Graduation

Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Key Component #6

“Drug courts establish a coordinated strategy, including a continuum of responses, to continuing drug use and other noncompliant behavior . . .

Reponses to or sanctions for noncompliance might include . . . escalating periods of jail confinement”
Do your guidelines on team responses to client behavior really need to be in writing?
Drug Courts That Had Written Rules for Team Responses Had Nearly 3 Times the Cost Savings

Program Has Written Rules Regarding Team Response to Participant Behavior

| Yes   | 39%  | N=14 |
| No    | 14%  | N=6  |

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Jail

- How important is jail as a sanction?
Drug court with same judge and same team had better outcomes for participants when the option of jail as a sanction was available.
Key Component #9

“Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation, and operations.”
Training

- How important is formal training for team members?
- Who should be trained?
- *When* should team members get trained?
Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for All Team Members Had 5 Times Greater Savings

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual.

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Drug Courts That Received Training Prior to Implementation Had 15 Times Greater Cost Savings

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05

Drug Court Team had Training Prior to Implementation

Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>29%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Key Component #8

“Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.”
Monitoring and Evaluation

• Does it matter whether data are kept in paper files or in a database?
• Does keeping program stats make a difference?
• Do you really need an evaluation? What do you get out of it?
Drug Courts That Used Paper Files Rather Than Electronic Databases Had **Less** Savings

*Note: Difference is significant at p<.05*

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**Program Continues to Use Paper Files for Some Data**

- **Yes**
  - N=8
  - 20%

- **No**
  - N=3
  - 33%

*"Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual*

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**Note:** Difference is significant at p<.05
Drug Courts That Used Evaluation Feedback to Make Modifications Had 4 Times Greater Cost Savings

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant at p<.05
Key Component #10

“Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances drug court program effectiveness.”
• How important are partnerships in the community for your drug court?
Drug Courts That Had Formal Partnerships with Community Organizations Had More than Twice the Savings

Drug Court has Formal Partnerships in Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Improvement in Outcome Costs</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=15</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note: Difference is significant as a trend at p<.15
Recipes for Failure

- Water down the intervention
  - Drop essential elements
  - Accept imitations

“It’s not scalable”
“We’re just like a drug court”
Recipes for Failure

• Change course with new populations

“Change course with new populations”

“It won’t work here”

“My clients are different”
Recipes for Failure

- Stepped Care
  - Start with less and ratchet up if you need to

  “It’s more economical”

  “It’s less burdensome on clients”
Recipes for Failure

- Target the wrong people
  - 1st-time offenders
  - Low risk and low needs

“‘It’s safer’"

“‘It’s a form of prevention’"

“‘They’re more deserving’"
Recipe for Success

- Send us the high-value cases
- Fidelity to the 10 Key Components until proven otherwise!
- Ongoing judicial authority
- Inter-agency team approach
- Branching model
  - Get it right the first time