

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DWI COURTS

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1 **TARGET THE POPULATION**

Targeting is the process of identifying a subset of the DWI offender population for inclusion in the DWI court program. This is a complex task given that DWI courts, in comparison to traditional drug court programs, accept only one type of offender: the person who drives while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The DWI court target population, therefore, must be clearly defined, with eligibility criteria clearly documented.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #2 **PERFORM A CLINICAL ASSESSMENT**

A clinically competent objective assessment of the impaired-driving offender must address a number of bio-psychosocial domains including alcohol use severity and drug involvement, the level of needed care, medical and mental health status, extent of social support systems, and individual motivation to change. Without clearly identifying a client's needs, strengths, and resources along each of these important bio-psychosocial domains, the clinician will have considerable difficulty in developing a clinically sound treatment plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #3 **DEVELOP THE TREATMENT PLAN**

Substance dependence is a chronic, relapsing condition that can be effectively treated with the right type and length of treatment regimen. In addition to having a substance abuse problem, a significant proportion of the DWI population also suffers from a variety of co-occurring mental health disorders. Therefore, DWI courts must carefully select and implement treatment practices demonstrated through research to be effective with the hard-core impaired driver to ensure long-term success.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4 **SUPERVISE THE OFFENDER**

Driving while intoxicated presents a significant danger to the public. Increased supervision and monitoring by the court, probation department, and treatment provider must occur as part of a coordinated strategy to intervene with repeat and high-risk DWI offenders and to protect against future impaired driving.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #5 **FORGE AGENCY, ORGANIZATION, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships are an essential component of the DWI court model as they enhance credibility, bolster support, and broaden available resources. Because the DWI court model is built on and dependent upon a strong team approach, both within the court and beyond, the court should solicit the cooperation of other agencies, as well as community organizations to form a partnership in support of the goals of the DWI court program.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #6
TAKE A JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

Judges are a vital part of the DWI court team. As leader of this team, the judge's role is paramount to the success of the Drug court program. The judge must also possess recognizable leadership skills as well as the capability to motivate team members and elicit buy-in from various stakeholders. The selection of the judge to lead the DWI court team, therefore, is of utmost importance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #7
DEVELOP CASE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Case management, the series of inter-related functions that provides for a coordinated team strategy and seamless collaboration across the treatment and justice systems, is essential for an integrated and effective DWI court program.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #8
ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Though nearly every state revokes or suspends a person's driving license upon conviction for a DUI offense, the loss of driving privileges poses a significant issue for those individuals involved in a DWI/Drug Court program. In many cases, the participant solves the transportation problem created by the loss of their driver's license by driving anyway and taking a chance that he or she will not be caught. With this knowledge, the court must caution the participant against taking such chances in the future and to alter their attitude about driving without a license.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #9
EVALUATE THE PROGRAM

To convince "stakeholders" about the power of DWI court, program designers must design a DWI court evaluation model capable of documenting behavioral change and linking that change to the program's existence. A credible evaluation is the only mechanism for mapping the road to program success or failure. To prove whether a program is efficient and effective requires the assistance of a competent evaluator, an understanding of and control over all relevant variables that can systematically contribute to behavioral change, and a commitment from the DWI court team to rigorously abide by the rules of the evaluation design.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #10
CREATE A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM

The foundation for sustainability is laid, to a considerable degree, by careful and strategic planning. Such planning includes considerations of structure and scale, organization and participation and, of course, funding. Becoming an integral and proven approach to the DWI problem in the community however is the ultimate key to sustainability.