

Engaging the African American Family in Drug Court

Presenters

Judge Lela Mays

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Goals

- Educate the family to understand, support and participate in the recovery progress
- Understand how to approach and engage minority families in an authentic way, recognizing personal biases and assumptions.

Where to start

- What is your perception of the African American race. State one word.
- What is your definition of family?

Generic Issues that are present with Addicts

- Denial
- Rationalization
- Distrust
- Manipulation
- Isolation
- Resentment
- Blaming

What to consider when working with the African American family

- Self-Assessment: Identifying your prejudices and limitations
- Stereotyping and Overgeneralization
- Adaptation and Coping Styles
- Bicultural
- Counseling vs. Education
- How it relates to addiction
- Don't minimize your own qualifications

Cultural barriers

- Forcing families to comply with customs of the dominant culture can create mistrust and reduce effectiveness of recovery.
- Team members can work within a culture's customs and beliefs to improve engagement rather than provoke resistance.

To promote family engagement, team members must understand the role of culture and cultural backgrounds, recognize the cultural background of the client and know enough about their culture to understand its effect on key treatment issues

Cultural Competence

The ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths or religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the work of the individual, families, tribes, and communities and protects the dignity of each.

African American Family

- Many extended African American families incorporate various related people into a network that provides emotional and economic support.
- Numerous adults and older children participate in raising younger children, often interchanging family functions and roles (Hines and Boyd-Franklin 1996)

The practice of exchanging assistance is an essential part of extended family life. Many extended families also take secondary members, such as cousin, siblings of parents, elders of the parents, or grandchildren. Approximately 1.4% of African American children are raised in homes where they are unrelated to the head of household (U.S. Census Bureau 2001b).

Intake Coordinator/ Program Manager role

- Introduce Drug Court concepts
- Rally support for the clients participation
- Engage family member to acquire more information that can assist with assessments and overall recovery.
- Be there for the family members as they are afraid, have trust issues and need to know that this process is for their loved ones benefit, not determent.

Prosecutor/DA & Public Defender role

- During the observer phase of the Drug Court, allow family members to attend observer's group and ask questions regarding the program.

Judge's role

- Examine the family dynamic
- Encourages family to come to court
- Encourages family to participate in family counseling as needed.
- Refer to community agents

Case Manager role

- Make sure the family is aware and understands the seriousness of the present legal matter and potential results for non-compliance.
- Inform the family of the program requirements to promote support of strenuous program guidelines.
- Be able to recognize, identify and **RESPECT** cultural differences as it relates to the family.

Case Manager con't

- Be able to address enabling behaviors with offended family member.
- Engage the family by establishing a family contract to hold all parties accountable and engaged in the recovery process.
- Talk to the family on the phone, invite family member to office visit and/or court.

Clinical Team

Assessment Specialist

Counselors

- To engage the family is to gather their perspective with regard to the client's history. This is best done following the initial interview with the client and if appropriate can be conducted with the client present.
- The more collateral information that is gathered on a client prior to their admission, the more accurate the assessment will be, with taking discrepancies into account, motivation and quality of the relationship.

Assessment Specialist & Counselors

The African American client presents various histories, beliefs, thoughts, and opinions with regard to mental health, substance abuse, and treatment or “help.” A family with the belief system that “anyone outside the family is unsafe,” is less likely to trust the treatment team and may attempt to undermine the process.

Assessment Specialist & Counselors

- On the other hand if the client holds the belief that anyone outside of the family is safe and that their family is unsafe, they may not want their family in any part of their treatment as they feel the family would undermine their success.
- The whole family suffers from the negative effects of the addiction

Assessment Specialist & Counselors

- Counselors can invite family members and significant others to come in for couples sessions and teach clients on co-dependency.
- Counselors have to find ways to address trust issues with the Criminal Justice System or distrust and aversion to counseling and medication.

Assessment Specialist & Counselors

- Family participation is essential to client success, where families exist as a part of the client's life system. Parents, spouses, and significant others are encouraged to attend specific IOP groups, which have a relevant family topic.
- Clients that return home from transitional housing stays, meet with spouse and/or parent to establish “expectations” of the client's and family members' behavior. A contract of sorts can be developed so that future conflicts might be resolved

Network Interventions

AA

Al-non

Alateen

Families Anonymous

Spousal support groups

Multifamily support groups

Presentation Contributors

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