



Motivational Incentives for Drug Courts

**How to structure and
implement incentives**



Drug Courts Are Making A Difference

	<u>Drug Court</u>	<u>Conventional Tx</u>
Remained for ≥ 30 days (%)	80	57
Completed 16-week Tx (%)	56	32
Mean weeks retained	11	8
MA-free UA's provided (%)	97	91

from: Marinelli-Casey et al., JSAT, 34, 242-48, 2008



Drug Court Outcomes Can Be Improved

- Negative UA's provided by those who stayed BUT
- Nearly half drop out, suggesting relapse
- Incentives programs could potentially improve these outcomes



Implementation issues: How to do incentives

- 1) Behaviors to reinforce
- 2) Reinforcers to use
- 3) Behavioral principles to apply



1. Behaviors to reinforce

Behaviors must be concrete and observable



Choice is based on treatment goals and philosophies as well as baseline data ?

- Attendance
- Drug abstinence
- Treatment goals compliance



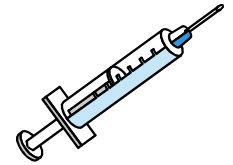


Appointment Attendance

- Target if needed: Are missed appointments a problem?
 - Treatment
 - Probation
 - Court dates
- What is the appropriate and effective response?
 - Positive reinforcement for making appointment
 - Small immediate penalty for each missed session
 - Incentive/sanction combo
 - Large delayed penalty after many missed sessions X

Drug Abstinence Target

Most direct way to impact primary outcome;
improve long-term outcomes



Secondary benefit on attendance

Implementation issues

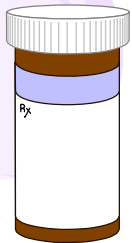
Where to implement?

Which drugs to target?

How many drugs to target?

How often to test?

How long to intervene?



**Abstinence Incentives
at the treatment program?
at the probation office?
in the courtroom?**





Where To Implement?

- Courtroom is “end of the line” whereas immediate reward is most effective
- Acknowledge abstinence in courtroom but move tangible incentives to treatment clinic and/or probation office

Points Escalate with Drug-Free Test Results & Reset with Positives



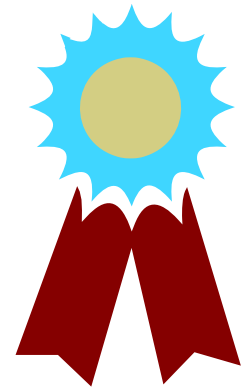


St. Louis Drug Court Judge Frank Lee Upright

This is to acknowledge that

has achieved 1 Month of continuous
drug-negative urine tests

Signed: _____ Date _____



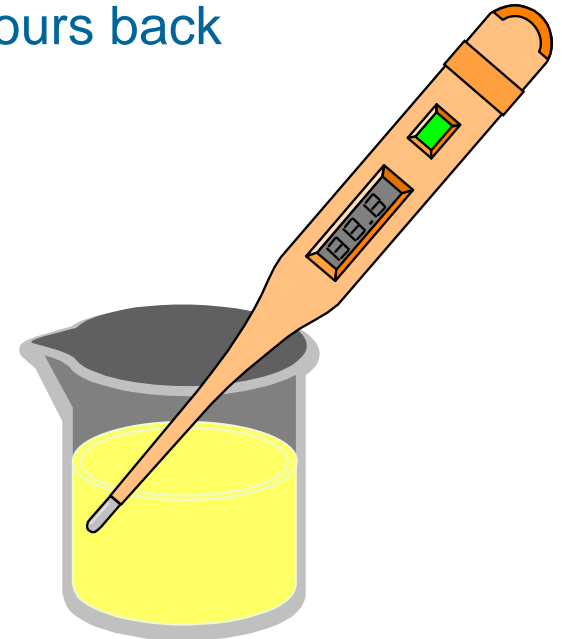


Which Drugs to Target?

- Depends on local drug use profile and laws
 - Methamphetamine
 - Opioids
 - Marijuana
- Use escalating schedule for major drugs with bonuses for secondary

Drug Abstinence: Implementaton Issues

- Screen samples frequently so that all use of the target drug is detected.
 - opioids, cocaine: test 3x/week
 - marijuana: in chronic users, 2-3 weeks before sample reads clean
 - alcohol: breath samples measure only 12 hours back
- Ensure validity of sample.
- Use onsite testing system to provide immediate feedback.
- Keep rewarding as long as possible



Treatment Goals Target





Goal areas and related activities

➤ Education

- college application, homework

➤ Employment

- resume, turn in application

➤ Family

- write letter, outing with kids

➤ Health

- make or attend appt.

➤ Housing

- get/complete application

➤ Legal

- go to court, probation appointment

➤ Personal improvement

- journal, come on time

➤ Sobriety (12-Step)

- attend meeting(s), get sponsor

➤ Social/recreational

- bowling, library, church

➤ Transportation

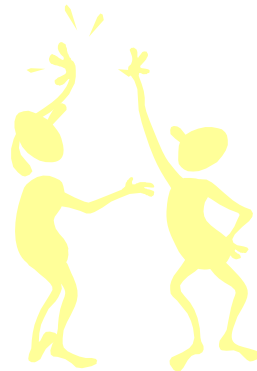
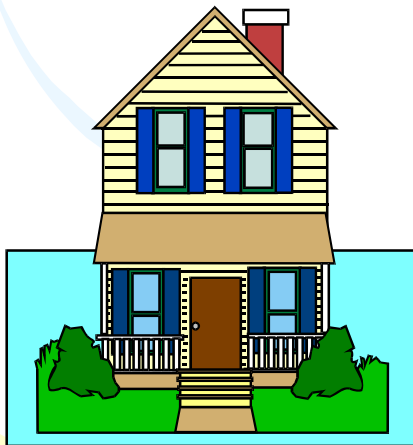
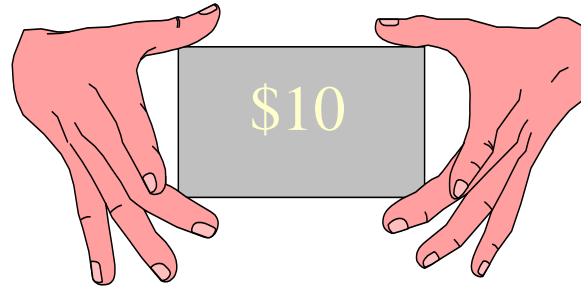
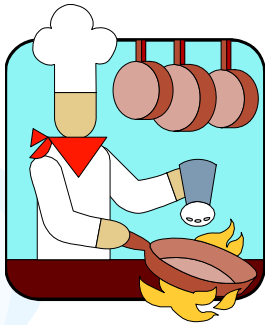
- sign up at transportation program



Advantages of activity completion

- Individually tailored; all clients can benefit if small steps are reinforced
- May improve therapeutic alliance and enhance psychosocial functioning
- Reinforcers delivered by counselors or case managers; progress acknowledged in the courtroom
- Consider Tic Tac Toe method

2) Reinforcers to use





Possible Reinforcers in a Drug-Court

Certificates of achievement

Bus tokens

Gasoline vouchers

Gift cards

Free legal services

Fewer requirements

Reduced fees

Recreation outings

Give clients a choice

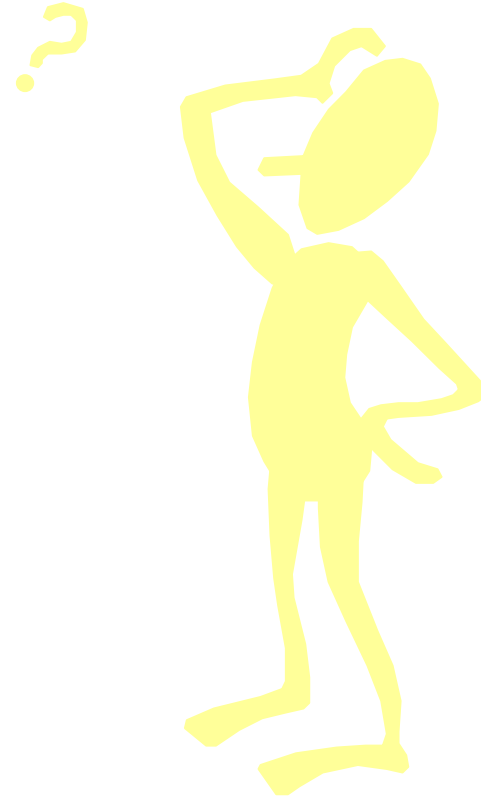
Be sure desired prizes are available

Use verbal praise lavishly to supplement



Other reinforcers???????

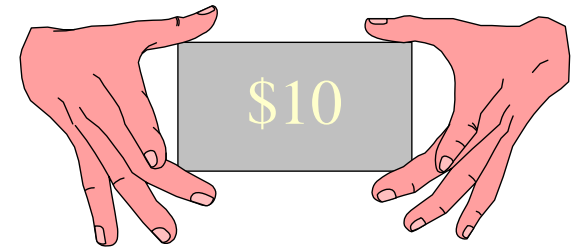
Ask your clients what they want!





3) Systems to use

- Escalating schedule
 - More points/draws or larger prizes as time goes along with sustained good behavior
 - Penalty- reset to lower values- for lapses
- Vouchers or prize draws
 - Both have been shown effective
- Tic Tac Toe
 - Well suited for individual goals



Voucher Point System

Increasing magnitude, bonus, up to \$1000

\$1.50	\$4.50	\$7.50
\$2.00	\$5.00	\$8.00
\$2.50 + \$10	\$5.50 + \$10	\$8.50 + \$10
\$3.00	\$6.00	\$9.00
\$3.50	\$6.50	\$9.50
\$4.00 + \$10	\$7.00 + \$10	\$10.00 + \$10

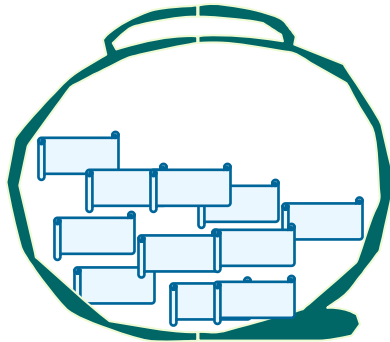
Continue for weeks 10-18 @ \$30 per week; total earnings = \$433.50

Advantages: demonstrated efficacy, voucher system maximally accommodates personal purchase preferences

Disadvantages: cost of staffing to manage accounts & purchasing

Intermittent schedule/prize system

- Draws from a fishbowl



- Advantages: can be less expensive, fun for clients; can use donated items as prizes
- Disadvantages: need to calculate draw probabilities to set up bowl; need to maintain bowl and drawing slips; inventory bowl and prizes to prevent cheating



Fourth Visit Date:	Second Visit Date:	Third Visit Date:
Task: 3 Negative UAs	First Visit Date:	Task: Probation Office Visit
Task: Negative UA	Task: Negative UA	 14 Day Anniversary!



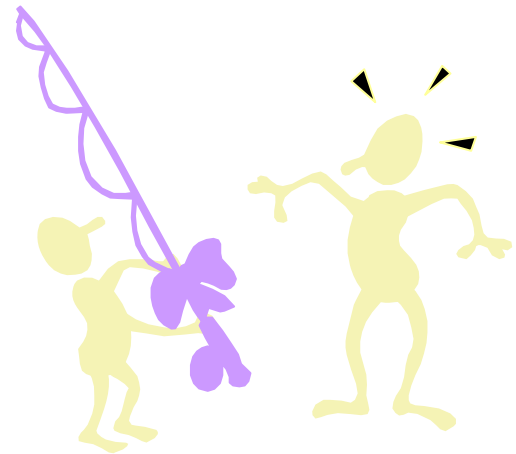
Principles for Effective Use of Motivational Incentives

- Frequent
 - Reinforce small steps/improvements
- Immediate
 - Reinforce negative UA when submitted not a month later
- Contingent
 - Neither free incentives nor gratuitous sanctions change behavior
- Consistent
 - Don't promise what you can't deliver reliably

Priming

Clients should experience the reinforcer early in treatment.

- Start at the first visit with a freebie
- Welcome gift for first attendance





Reinforcer Magnitude

Higher magnitude reinforcers engender greater abstinence (Silverman et al, 1999; Stitzer et al., 1984)

- More is better

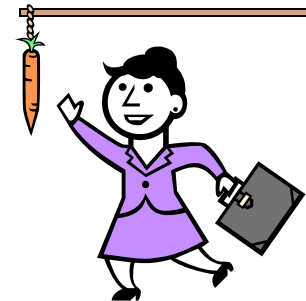


- Your reinforcers need to compete with drug use
 - Look for reinforcers of “high magnitude” but not high cost.



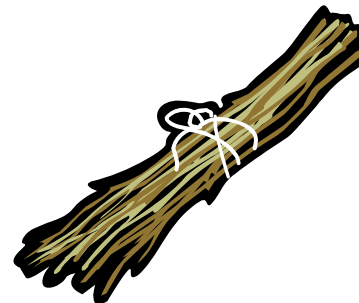
Unique Feature of Drug Courts

- Both carrots and sticks are available
- Avoidance of sanctions is powerful incentive
- Where and how can positive incentives make a difference?
- How can rewards and sanctions best be combined?



Example: Response to Positive UA's

- Positive incentive
 - Escalating reward schedule with reset delivered at treatment program
- Add sanctions
 - Develop graded sanction system parallel to escalating rewards





Graded Sanction Example

Violation

Sanction

First positive UA

1 day community service or small fine

Second positive UA

2 days community service; med fine


Subsequent UA positive

escalate service requirements or fines;
add brief jail time



Potential Role of Sanctions in a Positive Reward System

- Get those who relapse back on track more quickly
- May impact those not responsive to positive incentives
 - If consequences are immediate, fair, consistent and known in advance



Designing an ideal incentive system for drug courts

Make regular court appearances

Keep probation appointments

Attend treatment sessions

Provide drug negative UA's

Provide evidence of pro-social progress

Stay out of trouble with the law



Abstinence as Key Outcome

- Implement testing and abstinence reinforcement at the treatment program
 - Test on-site once per week or more often
 - Use escalating system of voucher points or prize draws
 - Require abstinence from opiates, stimulants and marijuana
 - Offer \$20-\$30 per client per week



Incorporating Attendance Target

- Treatment
 - Separate attendance reinforcement may not be needed if abstinence is reinforced
- Probation
 - Fishbowl & prizes at the office
- Court hearings
 - Appropriate sanction for missed appt

The slide features a decorative background on the left side with a light green balloon at the top, a light blue balloon in the middle, and a light purple balloon at the bottom. Yellow streamers and triangular shapes are scattered around the balloons. The main title is in a large, bold, teal font with a slight drop shadow.

Incorporating Goal Achievement

- Case manager coordinates and tracks
- Reinforce small steps!
- Acknowledge progress in the courtroom

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Change Reinforcement Target Over Time?

- Start with attendance
 - After 3 months of good attendance
- Switch to negative UA's
 - After 6-9 months of negative UA's
- Switch to treatment goals
 - Stable drug-free housing
 - Steps toward employment or training

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Role of Incentives vs Rewards

- Incentives motivate improved performance
 - Provide incentives especially for those not doing well
 - Celebrate short periods of success or improvements
 - Get clients on track through shaping
- Rewards acknowledge long-term success
 - Use certificates & verbal praise for those with history of success
 - Or shift incentives to other behavioral goals such as employment



What The Drug Court Can Do

- Require detailed reporting
 - from treatment, providers, probation officers & case managers
- Lavish praise for good reports
- Award certificates and prizes for meeting concrete goals especially sustained abstinence
- Impose graded sanctions for violations
- Advocate/require use of incentives in treatment programs to which you refer clients


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**How Are Incentives Used
in Your Court?**

Could they be improved?

A decorative graphic in the top-left corner featuring a glowing lightbulb with yellow rays emanating from it, set against a light green circular background.

Sample case

A decorative graphic in the middle-left area featuring a glowing lightbulb with yellow rays emanating from it, set against a light blue circular background.

Probation appointments are being kept at a rate of 70% and some clients are getting into trouble over this; you would like to improve the rate of kept appointments.

A decorative graphic in the bottom-left area featuring a glowing lightbulb with yellow rays emanating from it, set against a light purple circular background.

Design an incentive intervention with both carrots and sticks to improve attendance at probation appointments