

The Mental Health Court Team Activities Guide



The Mental Health Court Team

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The Mental Health Court Team

These activities are designed to prompt discussion among your team about how you will interact as a single unit.

The activities, which include questions and worksheets, should be completed by the people who will serve on your mental health court team, including its primary champion(s) who will be involved in planning. You will complete some activities on your own and others as a group. One of the activities in this module requires that you watch short video segments of a mental health court team in action. At the end of the activities, you will be asked to list three issues that the activities have raised for your own program planning.









Each activity is explained in the sidebar on the right-hand side of the page. The sidebar can be used for notes as you complete the guide. If you are reading this document online, you can link to the resources for each activity below the activity description.

Module 3



Activity 1: Defining Your Role on the Team

As you'll recall from the online Presentation, each mental health court team has members who come from the behavioral health and criminal justice systems. In this activity, you will consider what role each member will play on the mental health court team. First, you will view and then discuss video segments of the Bonneville County (ID) Mental Health Court team's mock staffing meeting to illustrate the specific roles played by various team members. Next, you will be asked to discuss with your team how different team members contribute to a participant's success in a mental health court program and ensure that the program's goals are met. Finally, you will respond to questions about your own role on the team. The chart below outlines steps to complete the activity, actions required, and how long each step will take.

Steps	Action	Complete as	Completion Time (in minutes)
a. Video clip: New Applications	View		5
b. Questions: Building consensus	Discuss		15
c. Scenario: Val Harris	Read		5
d. Video clip: Val Harris	View		5
e. Questions: Profession-based collaboration	Discuss		15
f. Questions: Your Role	Respond		15
			60
 Complete on your own		 Complete as a team	

Activity 1 is designed to help you think about what your role will be on the mental health court team and how it relates to others' roles and to the overall functioning of your program.

Outputs

- A description by each team member of his/her role on the mental health court team
- An understanding of how team members will work together, given these individual roles

- a. As a group, view and then discuss the video of the Bonneville Mental Health Court mock staffing meeting in which the team reviews new applications to the mental health court.** To access the video, follow the link below to the course site.

Video Link:

Video 1: New Applications

- b. As a group, discuss the following questions.**

1. How might probation and treatment professionals reach consensus on whether or not Bill Smith is eligible for the mental health court program?
2. What should a team do when two referral sources have a different assessment as to whether a prospective applicant is eligible for the program?
3. What role does the judge play in this process?
4. The Bonneville Mental Health Court does not have a defense attorney present at their staffing meeting. How might the conversation have been different if a defense attorney was present? What role would a defense attorney generally play in this process?
5. Why are standardized measures for assessing criminogenic risk and mental illness important for promoting effective collaboration across professional groups?

- c. On your own, read the scenario that describes Val Harris, a hypothetical mental health court participant.**

Eight months ago, Val Harris was charged with assault and sentenced to eighteen months participation in a mental health court. He has four prior convictions for assault and served jail time for each conviction. Mr. Harris struggled with methamphetamine addiction for several years, which likely contributed to a false diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia several years ago. He has also struggled with alcohol addiction periodically throughout his life. When he was screened for mental illness in jail upon his last arrest, Mr. Harris was correctly diagnosed with bipolar disorder. He has been taking lithium for seven months and has stabilized on his medication. He is also attending addiction group meetings three times per week. With the help of Amy, the vocational rehabilitation specialist, Mr. Harris recently secured a job in a vocational rehabilita-

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tion program. His case manager, Janneil, reports that the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team has been pleased with his progress—that is, until recently. He missed his last two treatment appointments and last week tested positive for traces of methamphetamines in a urine test.

d. As a group, view and then discuss the mock video of the Bonneville Mental Health Court staffing meeting in which the team decides what to do about Val Harris. To access the video, follow the link below to the course site.

Video Link:

Video 2: Val Harris

e. As a group, discuss the following questions.

The prosecutor on the mental health court team has the ethical responsibility to protect public safety. Behavioral health treatment providers have the ethical obligation to ensure that court participants receive treatment and support that will contribute to their long-term recovery and their ability to function in the community as law-abiding citizens.

1. Is the resolution that the Bonneville team reached about how to address Val Harris's violation a fair compromise? Does it allow both the prosecutor and the treatment provider to fulfill their respective professional obligations and at the same time to collaborate effectively with professionals from other disciplines?
2. Where do you anticipate treatment and public safety goals conflicting on your own team?
3. How does the Bonneville team work through their differences to resolve this situation? Would you take a similar approach or do something different?
4. Would you use jail as a sanction in this instance? Should Val Harris be able to work through a contingency plan that includes community service instead of jail time if he does not violate any other court conditions?

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f. On your own, respond to the following questions to help you define your role on the team.

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1. How do you see yourself participating in identifying program candidates and selecting program participants?

2. What sorts of meetings, if any, will you have with program participants?

3. Will you share information during a pre-hearing staffing meeting with the team?

4. Will you attend court hearings?

5. Will you contribute to data collection efforts?

6. Will you present information about the program to external stakeholders? To potential funders?



Activity 2: Exploring Ethical Issues

As you'll recall from the online Presentation, the Prep Work you did for these activities, and the video segments you watched in Activity 1, each mental health court team member has ethical obligations that are unique to his/her profession. You will need to anticipate challenges that might arise as you begin working in a problem-solving court. For example, mental health court teams must account for differences in perspectives between prosecutors and defense attorneys. These two professions often hold opposing ethical obligations and traditionally have an adversarial relationship. In this activity, you will first review the Prep Work you did and then respond to questions about your own professional ethics and those of your team members. Second, you will discuss with your team challenges to profession-based collaboration. Finally, you will read about and discuss Susan Lee, a hypothetical person referred to mental health court. The chart below outlines steps to complete the activity, actions required, and how long each step will take.

Steps	Action	Complete as	Completion Time (in minutes)
a. Review: Prep Work	Review		10
b. Questions: Your role	Respond		10
c. Questions: Other roles	Respond		10
d. Questions: Collaboration	Discuss		10
e. Scenario: Susan Lee	Read		5
f. Questions: Susan Lee	Discuss		15
			60
Complete on your own		Complete as a team	

Activity 2 is designed to help you think about the ethical obligations unique to each profession involved in a mental health court team.

Outputs

- A description of your ethical obligations based on your profession
- A description of another team member's ethical obligations based on his/her profession
- An understanding of how team members develop strategies that allow them to work effectively with people from other professional disciplines

a. Review the Prep Work reading assignments from this module.

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b. On your own, respond to the following three questions about your professional role.

1. What professional ethics inform the role that you play on the mental health court team?

2. What challenges do you anticipate in collaborating with people from other professional disciplines who also serve on the mental health court team?

3. Provide one strategy you can use to meet these challenges to interdisciplinary collaboration.

c. On your own, respond to the following three questions about a fellow team member's profession and professional ethics.

1. What ethical obligations that you just read about inform your team members' profession?

2. What challenges do you anticipate this team member having in participating on the mental health court team and collaborating with other disciplines?

3. Provide one strategy that this team member can use to meet this challenge to interdisciplinary collaboration.

d. As a group, discuss the following questions.

1. What challenges does each profession have in collaborating across professional lines?
2. What strategies can the team use to meet these challenges?

e. On your own, read the scenario that describes Susan Lee, a woman referred to mental health court.

This scenario was developed by Dr. Charles Amrhein, Carol Fidler, J.D., and Judge Stephanie Rhoades. The scenario and many of the proposed discussion considerations are the result of numerous presentations by this group to audiences of mental health court practitioners around the country.

Susan Lee is charged with a misdemeanor crime of assault. She assaulted a co-resident in an Assisted Living Facility (ALF). The maximum penalty is one year in jail. There is no minimum penalty.

Ms. Lee is scheduled for an initial hearing today in the mental health court.

The prosecutor agrees Ms. Lee is eligible for mental health court. He has offered that if Ms. Lee pleads no contest to the crime and participates in the mental health court treatment plan successfully for one year, then he will dismiss the charge. Alternatively, if Ms. Lee wants to resolve her case in regular court, she may plead no contest to the crime and receive 6 to 9 months in jail or continue to trial. With good behavior, her actual time in jail could be as little as 4 to 6 months, including her pretrial detention time.

Counsel observes that Ms. Lee is having difficulty following the legal proceedings. The defense attorney is fairly certain that she could coax Ms. Lee through a change of plea hearing in a traditional court, but she and the case worker for the mental health court are concerned that Ms. Lee may not fully appreciate the commitment that mental health court entails. They are also concerned that, given the loss of the ALF as a placement, her poor history of treatment adherence, and her frequent

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use of substances, the available treatment options may not provide Ms. Lee with adequate services to maintain her engagement in and adherence to treatment. Still, the defense attorney is fairly certain that Ms. Lee will accept the opportunity to plead to the mental health court if given the opportunity.

How should the members of the mental health court team proceed?

f. As a group, discuss the following questions.

1. Does Ms. Lee seem an appropriate candidate for the mental health court?
2. What concerns does the defense attorney have about Ms. Lee's case?
3. Do you think that Ms. Lee will be able to meet the conditions of supervision and treatment required by the court? What challenges do you think she faces?

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Summary

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List three issues these activities have raised for your own program planning.

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

