

Best practice 1 Full Transcript

[Slide 1 – Title]

Now we get to the real work, starting with Best Practice One: Organization and Structure. I am Meghan Fitzgerald, FTC Training Coordinator at AOC, and facilitator of these online modules.

[Slide 2 – Funding Acknowledgement]

While I am here to facilitate, these modules are only a small portion of the work being done on Best Practice for FTCs in Washington State. We have a full team funded by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that are all working on this project. Please check my introduction videos and our website for additional information

[Slide 3 – Learning Goals]

Using the Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards published in 2019, our learning goals for this Best Practice 1 Structure and Organization are to: Understand the 10 provisions identified in the Best Practice guide regarding the structure and organization of an FTC. To gain clarity about how each member of a local Family Treatment Court supports the structures and organization development of the FTC. To make actionable goals to create sustainability in your local FTC.

[Slide 4 – Materials]

Before you fully invest, take a second to gather the materials you may need together. Consider any mindfulness or focus tools you need to be engaged (being trauma-informed is relevant to professionals in FTCs too!). It is worth having your Best Practices document, and a copy of our FTC BPs cheat sheet as well. Note taking tools, whether they are from the handouts here or your preferred method. For BP One there are quite a few references to your written materials. If you are new to best practices, or to your work with an FTC, its worth having access to those as well in case you want to make notes for updates, or check how something is currently set up in your court. I'll have some natural pauses built in, but remember the pause button is there for a reason, take breaks often for reflection – this is really the best way to actually remember the material you are learning!

[Slide 5 - Summary of Best Practice 1]

This guide does not start small, in fact best practice standard 1 pretty much contains all of the housekeeping pieces of starting and sustaining an FTC all in one. I'm going to break this down into pieces for you, but we will start by giving the big picture summary straight from page 10 of the Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. I will read this out for you for our colleagues who might only be able to listen right now. "The family treatment court (FTC) has agreed upon structural and organizational principles

that are supported by research and based on evidence-informed policies, programs, and practices. The core programmatic components, day-to-day operations, and oversight structures are defined and documented in the FTC policy and procedure manual, participant handbook, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs)”

The underlined sections here are my own highlights, because in my interpretation, they really get to the heart of best practice one – FTC development should be guided by the research, and the policies that we use should be clearly laid out and documented for all of the team members (and participants) so that expectations are clear.

[Slide 6 –Provisions of Best Practice One]

This standard is broken down into 10 component pieces. These I won't read now, because we will be going through them one at a time but you can find them on pages 11-13 of your pdf or manual.

[Slide 7 – Together]

The thing to remember as you start on your work for an FTC is that you have a role and expertise on this team: advocating for your client, making decisions from the bench, implementing a treatment plan, whatever it is that's your specific role. BUT, you also are agreeing to be a part of a collaboration; to work **together** with a team of folks in as non-adversarial a way as is possible, while still following the ethical requirements of your profession. This is difficult, but worth the work, because it is shown to increase successful outcomes in all of our participants.

[Slide 8 - A. A multidisciplinary and multisystemic collaborative approach: Rationale]

The heart of this provision is that these three systems, and all of the people and their various areas of expertise work together in each of your family treatment courts. When these systems work in a spirit of collaboration and for the best interest of our FTC families, we see success in a statistically demonstrated way (which I will talk more about in a bit).

[Slide 9 – Difficulties of Working with a Diverse Team]

I say diverse in terms of the systems approaches here, but the same could be said of having a diverse cultural and experiential background, which I hope you have also worked to include in your FTC. The partner organizations, agencies, and individuals working to support families that are joining a Family Treatment Court have different approaches and different roles to play within the FTC. This may cause friction within the team if not addressed, which will translate into lower success for clients. Working with teams can be difficult, particularly when we all have been working in an adversarial system, and have developed habits and practices that reinforce that.

[Slide 10 - Ameliorating the Difficulties]

Fortunately there have been a number of studies on group dynamics within a treatment court model. I'll give you a the take-aways here, then go into one of the studies' findings in detail.

First: Developing shared agreements for working with partners. If we do this reflectively and carefully we can be sure that everyone on the team understands their own responsibilities and role on the team, but also has an understanding of the role that other team members have to play. One of my personal favorite team agreements is to truly believe that all members are coming with their best intentions. They may still do something that feels wrong to you, but if you assume best intentions, you can often see a solution more easily then assuming evil goals. Lol, I say that in jest, but I think we all know that it can be hard sometimes to assume that even though the judicial officer didn't agree with my suggestion they still have that client's best interest at heart or even though that attorney is really advocating for something different, I shouldn't take that personally, because that is their job. Understanding each other's roles and responsibilities and having a shared agreement to assume the best intentions of your fellow team members will create an environment that is more collegial and empathetic and therefore feel safer for our families to put their trust in.

Second, in those shared agreements, responsibilities and expectations should also be clear. Assuming that all members know exactly what their role is from day one, without giving them guidance isn't following our own treatment court methodology. So a clear set of expectations makes sure everyone is able to meet the needs of the team. Third, it is critical to make your environment one where open communication, (including questions and clarifications) is normal and expected. Everyone should have pride in the work they do, but letting egos get in the way of bringing families together is not productive. And last but not least, those agreements, goals, roles, and responsibilities should be documented in your policies and procedures manual. This provides both clarity and accountability for all members of your team.

[Slide 11 – Take a moment to think]

I'd like you to hit pause here for a moment and write down your answers to these questions. Thinking about groups you have worked with in the past – what “agreements” are important to you to be successful in a collaboration? Have you ever had a discussion with your team about what helps them to do their best work? Does your policy and procedures manual have a section about the roles and responsibilities for professionals on your FTC? What happens if they don't hold up their end of the bargain? Can you think of any strategies to help your team start this process if you haven't before?

Go ahead and hit pause right here, and I'll wait until you're ready to move forward!

[Slide 12 – Welcome Back]

Hello, Welcome back!

[Slide 13 – Sample of the Research Behind These Recommendations]

We are going to finish up this section by discussing this paper by a group of researchers out of UW. This is specifically a study that was done on King County FTC in comparison to regular dependency court cases. The study says it was a quasi-experimental study, this just means that it wasn't developed as an experiment where we put some people into this group and some people into that group, because the assumption is that FTCs work better. So instead we have to make sort of a quasi-experiment where we look back on data instead as opposed to looking forward by putting certain groups together. This is mostly just because of ethical concerns. I should also mention that this is the study that I mentioned previously in my introduction or overview videos so you'll notice that this is a similar title there are many many many of these studies just for the sake of your time and mine I'm not going to go through all of them but I do recommend that you read as many of them and as you were open to reading after you done all of this crap best practice work it's really the best way to learn about what is really going on in the research in this area.

[Slide 14 – Effects of an FTC on Child and Family Outcomes]

So here we have a small portion of the results from that study at UW where we have on the left hand side the graph looks at the number of days between the petition date in the first entry to substance use disorder treatment. So these are the numbers over on the bottom of the graph on the left side. Then over on the far left axis, going up we have the proportion that are not in treatment. So as the number goes down and we're looking at how many people have not been entered into treatment yet or sort of a proportion or a percentage as the number gets smaller. So kind of convoluted axis but that's nonetheless what it says. We're looking at this light gray line as the FTDC or family treatment drug court is what they're calling it here. Then the line above is the darker line, the comparison line. So this is a more typical dependency case.

We can see that there's a pretty stark difference between the time that it took to enter that substance use disorder treatment in between regular dependency and the FTDC treatment, so they are moving into treatment a little bit faster. Which is important, if you look into this study a little further they do talk about how many of these case have SUD as an indicator in that case. Of course we don't want people going into treatment if they don't have substance use issues but that isn't really related to what this graph is saying, instead we are just looking at people who would have otherwise gone into SUD treatment accessing treatment and going into treatment more quickly.

Moving over here to the right hand graph we have the number of days in out of home placement. Then over on this axis we have the proportion remaining an out of home placement. As the numbers go down the proportion that are remaining an out of home placement gets smaller. So at the very beginning we have almost 100% children in out of home placement and as you move over to the right game as the graph goes down and we can see that we have less days or less proportion in out of home

placement where some children still staying out of home placement even towards the end of the case, but there's a very clear difference where less portions, the less portion of that population of children that are in out of home placement as the case goes on that again is statistically significant difference between it's considered true for the purposes of science, and that this is a very clear difference between these two groups. In our state of Washington, in King County where they happen to have enough sample size to look at differences between these populations. As we start to collect more data we hope to do these kind of comparisons as well with some of our other counties that might have smaller numbers but when we collect that data in this state level that we can do a more strong comparison between those two.

[Slide 15 Some Final Results from Bruns et al]

Here we have some final numbers taken from that Bruns et al report. At the end of this study children whose parents participated in their FTC were 2.5 times more likely to be returned home and to have their case dismissed. So this was 27 children in the FTC that were returned home in the case dismissed versus 11 in that dependency case that was not an FTC. If the case was still ongoing the end of that TC or at the end of this study: less kids remained in and out of home placement at the end of the study window so this was 24 children in an FTC versus 46 in a comparison group. So again these are these are clear numbers. We could have more in this or more study samples and we hope to continue to do that for certain in our future work.

[Slide 16 A quiz on provision A]

The last thing that I'm going to leave with you for right now is with a quiz. If you want credit for these courses these quizzes are required as part of whether it's CLE over other types of credit that you are trying to obtain. Do make sure that you answer these questions on the quiz. You need to have at least 80% correct before we consider your course complete so if you don't get that 80% go ahead and take that quiz again, maybe re-watch some of the videos make sure you understand the content. Thanks