



# Community Court Responses to Treatment: Harm Reduction in Context

**Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Enhancement Training**  
**September 26, 2022**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

# Overview

- Community justice
- Treatment responses
- Harm reduction and person centered-care
- Practice based examples

# Who We Are

The Center for Court Innovation works to achieve justice and equity; create safe, healthy, and thriving communities; and ultimately transform justice systems.



We do this in 3 ways:

- Operating programs
- Research & Policy
- Technical assistance

# Community Justice

# Community Justice

- The Center for Court Innovation created the first community court in New York City in 1993: Midtown Community Court.
- Community justice initiatives, including community courts, are designed to serve as an innovative criminal justice response to support the needs of the local community.
  - Involve local stakeholders in planning and operations
  - New measures of success
  - Problem-solving justice approach
  - **Treatment responses**

# Midtown Community Court



- **Idea:** Rethinking the judicial response to low level crimes and “quality of life” violations
- **Location:** A stand-alone building in Midtown, Manhattan; shared with an off-Broadway theater
- **Jurisdiction:** 3 police precincts (now 6), young adults (18-25) and mental health services boroughwide
- **UpNext:** Fatherhood and employment program
- **New initiatives:** Project Reset, Community First, harm reduction services



# Red Hook Community Justice Center



- **Idea:** Engaging a community that had no faith in the justice system or law enforcement
- **Location:** A Catholic school that had been vacant for two decades
- **Jurisdiction:** 3 police precincts; criminal, family, and housing
- **Peacemaking program**
- **Housing Resource Center**





# Community Justice



# What is a Community Court?

An evolving and adaptable model.

Typically:

- Neighborhood-focused
- Community + justice system stakeholders
- Criminal cases or multi-jurisdictional
- Linkages to social services and treatment
- Reduce incarceration and other system harms



# Communities Served



- Residential neighborhoods
- Downtown business districts
- Suburban
- Rural
- Citywide



Las Vegas, Nevada



Honolulu, Hawaii



Ft. Lauderdale, Florida



Melbourne, Australia



Nashville, Tennessee

# Community Court Spaces

- Court-based locations
- Stand-alone buildings
- Community locations
- Mobile outreach

**A focus on person-centered design**



# Community Engagement

- Engaging neighborhoods and community members
- Public health outreach and education
- Community advisory boards



# Procedural Justice

Procedural justice seeks to ensure that the justice system treats everybody with dignity and respect.

4 elements:

- Voice
- Respect
- Understanding
- Neutrality





# BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

Center  
for  
Court  
Innovation

Experts on the Center for Court Innovation's National Training and Technical Assistance Team provide direct assistance to community courts launching or enhancing their programming across the country.



Melbourne, Australia

Non-BJA funded community court established in 2018, recognized by the Center as an international mentor court.



## Community Court Grant Initiative Sites



2020 Cohort



2018 Cohort



2016 Cohort



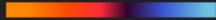
Mentor Courts

# Treatment Responses

- Peer engagement
- Outreach and education
- Harm reduction initiatives
- Treatment readiness
- Group work
- Linkages to detox, inpatient, and outpatient services
- Trauma-informed approach
- Risk-need-responsivity
- Responses to the opioid crisis



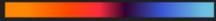
# Harm Reduction and Person-Centered Care in Justice Settings



# Harm Reduction in the U.S. Origins and Evolution

- 1964: methadone first used to treat opioid addiction
- 1971: FDA approves the naloxone antidote (for hospital use)
- 1971: first federal methadone program (post-Vietnam)
- 1970s: first movement to decriminalize drugs (marijuana, cocaine)
- Early 1980s: HIV/AIDS epidemic; National AIDS Brigade/Act UP
- 1988: expansion of syringe exchange programs nationally
- 1996: naloxone take-home distribution (Chicago Recovery Alliance)
- 1998: drug testing kits/practices (e.g., DanceSafe)
- 2020: drug possession is decriminalized in Oregon
- 2021: White House/ONDCP sets harm reduction as priority

(Des Jarlais, 2017; Szalavitz, 2021)



# OVERLAP & TENSIONS

- Treatment > Jail
- Social determinants of health
- Race & gender disparities
- Service gaps



- Mandated treatment
- Abstinence focus
- Use of jail
- Drug testing





# COMMON MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

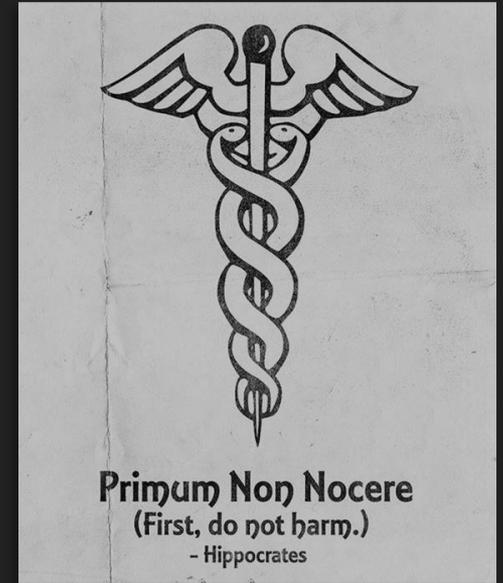
Harm reduction:

- Encourages drug use & downplays its harms
- Is **anti-treatment** & downplays benefits of treatment
- Discourages abstinence
- **Enables** and increases drug-related activity and crime



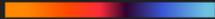
# Person-Centered Practice in Healthcare Settings

- Care is **collaborative, coordinated, and accessible**. The right care is provided at the right time and the right place.
- Care focuses on physical comfort as well as emotional well-being.
- Patient and family **preferences, values, cultural traditions**, and socioeconomic conditions are respected.
- Patients and their families are an expected part of the care team and **play a role in decisions** at the patient and system level.
- The presence of **family** members in the care setting is encouraged and facilitated.
- Information is shared fully and in a timely manner so that patients & family members can make **informed decisions**.



# Person-Centered Practice in Treatment Courts

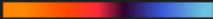
- Partnership:
  - Breaking down the barrier between “us and them”
- Therapeutic alliance
- Restorative
- Breaking down power dynamics



# Principles, Practices, & Scope of Harm Reduction

## PRINCIPLES:

- reducing the harms associated with drug use and sexual activity
- valuing, validating, and respecting the autonomy of people who use drugs
- centering the voices of drug users in program and policy development
- improvement of quality of life
- equitable access to housing, healthcare, and income security
- social inclusion and equity



# Principles, Practices, & Scope of Harm Reduction

## Principles in Practice

# Principles, Practices, & Scope Of Harm Reduction

## PRACTICES:

- low-barrier accessibility via community-based outreach
- drug user and sexual health education and supplies
- peer-driven advocacy, counseling, and activism
- overdose prevention, drug testing, bad drug/date alerts
- medical care, service referrals, housing support

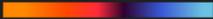




# Principles, Practices, & Scope of Harm Reduction

## Practices in Action





# Principles, Practices, & Scope Of Harm Reduction

## SCOPE:

- Individual: enhance drug user safety, access, and autonomy
- Community: address institutional drug user exclusion/mistreatment; improve public safety
- Policy: overhaul punitive drug policy; expand safer use options





# Principles, Practices, & Scope of Harm Reduction

## Scope of Action

# Takeaways for Healing to Wellness Courts

- Strength-based and trauma informed approaches
- Ongoing community engagement
- Collaborative care
- Participant voice in decision-making around individual care and program development
- Make room for treatment hesitancy
- Center social/cultural needs

Q&A