Effective Communication & Media for Treatment Courts
Acknowledgement of white privilege and the replication of oppressive systems
Introductions

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Introductions

• What brought you here today?
• What is your role on the court team?
• Are you more interested in social media engagement or traditional media engagement?
• Do you use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram for personal use or at work?
• Have you ever worked with a journalist or media professional before?
We Will Cover

• How to craft your organization’s story for an external audience
• How to share your message on social media
• How to engage with reporters and the traditional media
What can communications do for you?

- Improve community support for your program
- Increase participation and enrollment
- Raise your profile among government stakeholders
Good communications is simply thinking intentionally about the purpose and the audience for any given message and then distributing that message across the appropriate channels.
Who Is Your Audience?

• Who do you want to know more about your court?

• What do they value?

• What preconceptions (if any) do they have about your program?

• What is the most important thing you want them to know about your program? What benefits do you provide to the community?
Telling Your Story

1. Appeal to shared values
2. Describe the problem
3. Explain how your court is the solution
Example:

Gila River Indian Community Court

Juvenile Drug Court

“Sap Hihim Hekth A’Alga”

Our Children Walking On a Good Path
Mission

Helping our children walk on a good path for an alcohol and drug free life, by providing cultural identity, guidance and resources.
Vision

It is our vision to improve the quality of life for our children, by reducing alcohol and drug abuse, which will create positive family and community environments.
Example Audience

• Who do you want to know more about your court: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

• What do they value?
  Eat rehabilitative services for young people to reduce recidivism and drug use

• What preconceptions (if any) do they have about your program?

• What is the most important thing you want them to know about your program? What benefits do you provide to the community?
  We improve the quality of life for our children by reducing drug and alcohol use, which ultimately improves our families and community.
Writing a Short Story

1) Appeal to shared values

“Communities thrive when their children have the foundation for a good life.”
Writing a Short Story

2) Describe the problem

“Young people with serious substance use disorders often have difficulty in school, poor health outcomes, and challenges forming healthy familial relationships.”
Writing a Short Story

3) Describe how your court is the solution

“By connecting our children to their cultural identity, drug treatment services, and mentors, we improve the quality of life of our children and, ultimately, our community’s safety”
Example Audience

• Who do you want to know more about your court: Local law enforcement

• What do they value? Reducing crime, to stop seeing the same “revolving door” of arrestees

• What preconceptions (if any) do they have about your program? That it is soft on crime

• What is the most important thing you want them to know about your program? What benefits do you provide to the community? Helping to stop crime because we work to address the problems in people’s lives.
Writing a Short Story

1) Appeal to shared values

“A drug-free community, is a safer community.”
Writing a Short Story

2) Describe the problem-

“Our community needs to interrupt the revolving cycle of drug use, arrests, incarceration, and more drug use, and instead foster true, long-term recovery.”
Writing a Short Story

3) Describe how your court is the solution

“With a long-term solution approach, the Salt River Adult Healing to Wellness Court helps individuals recover from drug use and holds people accountable for meaningful lifestyle changes.”
Pro-tips

Use straightforward, familiar terms

Do not use acronyms, legal or medical specific terms

Be clear and concise

Use the active voice
Writing a Long Story

• Use the story of an individual
  Introduce your characters
  Explain the plot/conflict
  Describe the resolution/outcome
• Cite quantitative outcomes
  This is to support your story
• Discuss how you could do even more with additional funding
Where to Tell Your Story

• Your website or your parent court’s/tribal government’s website
• Your social media account or your parent court’s/tribal government’s social
• The local paper
• Print materials like brochure, flyers, etc.
• Grant proposals and fundraising pitches
Social Media 101
This Section Will Cover

• The value of social media for courts
• Pros and cons of different platforms
• Best practices for posting
• Tips specific for courts
The Value of Social Media

Let community members and policymakers know that your program is doing great things

Connect with your audience

Free marketing tool
### Which Platform Should I Use? - Facebook

#### Benefits of Facebook

- Creative control over an online space in lieu of your own website
- Popular among older demographics and those in rural communities
- Great for advertising public events

#### Drawbacks of Facebook

- In order to create an organization page, you have to use a personal Facebook account
- Organization pages have limited audience reach
- No news feed for your organization to track new developments in the field
### Which Platform Should I Use? - Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of Twitter</th>
<th>Drawbacks of Twitter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to stay informed on issues within the field and follow other organizations</td>
<td>• Cannot create event pages on Twitter</td>
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<td>• Journalists and policymakers more likely to have an active Twitter presence</td>
<td>• Has a character limit</td>
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<td>• Appeals to a younger demographic versus Facebook</td>
<td>• Posts are very time specific, expires quickly</td>
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Committing to Social Media

Must be able to post at a minimum a couple of days each week

Make social media an integral part of your job duties

Be creative and post original content
Effective Content Topics for Healing to Wellness Courts

Testimonials

Pictures from graduations

Awareness months

Profiles of successful graduates/inspiring practitioners
Native justice: How tribal values shape Judge Abby’s court

When Judge Abby Abinanti joined the Yurok Tribal Court in 2007, it operated like a normal California court but on a much smaller scale. Today, Judge Abinanti’s cou...

🔗 csmonitor.com
16th Circuit Court began the Adult Drug Court program in 2003. Since that time we have successfully graduated 241 participants. Congrats to these individuals and thank you to our great Drug Court team! #NationalDrugCourtMonth #DrivingChange
A prime example of the way Michigan’s veterans treatment courts are transforming lives.

Full annual report: courts.mi.gov/Administration

“Each month, I’d leave the program and my spirits were soaring, I was rising; I couldn’t even believe how good I felt afterwards. On graduation day, I felt like I could jump up and touch the stars.”

— Kevin Hier
Veterans Treatment Court Graduate
Stephanie Johnson, a mother of five, had been drinking since she was 16. Her addiction affected every area of her life, finally resulting in two of her children being removed from her home. But California’s San Joaquin County Collaborative Court gave her the chance she needed to change. On Thursday, her children watched her graduate from the program with honors.

"It was a lot of hard work and digging deep. I had to let go of old ideas and allow myself to see the world in a different way and learn to live without alcohol. All I see is a bright future."

#DrugCourtMonth #JusticeForAll

Collaborative Court graduates celebrate sobriety

STOCKTON — Stephanie Johnson beamed as she walked across the stage. "I’m not a taker anymore, I can give back now."

RECORDNET.COM
Social Media Best Practices

Keep it short!

Avoid technical or legal jargon

Entice the reader to click on a link or post and find out more

Include a picture

On Twitter, especially, include appropriate hashtags and tags wherever possible
Who to Follow

• Tribal Law and Policy Institute- @TLPI1996
• Drug Court Resource Center - @theNDCRC
• Local government officials in your community
• Journalists from local papers
• Other tribal courts
Free Resources to Help

• HootSuite/TweetDeck

• Bitly.com

• Canva
Bring Attention to New Accounts

- Flyers
- Brochures
- Website
- Newsletters
- Business Cards
Click here to create an organization page.
Join Twitter today.

Justice Programs Office Drug Court

drugcourtemail@gmail.com

Password

Personalize Twitter based on where you’ve seen Twitter content on the web. Learn more.

Sign up

By signing up, you agree to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, including Cookie Use. Others will be able to find you by email or phone number when provided.

Advanced options
Media Relations 101
This Section Will Cover

- The basics of media relations
- Media engagement strategies
- Summary of all the dos and don’ts you should have learned
- Q+A
“Based on a long history of being burned, there is a reluctance to trust the media. Several leaders attested that their comfort in dealing with the media comes from the relationships they have built with individual reporters over the years. Talk with other leaders about the relationships they have with reporters who do a good job of reporting fair and balanced stories that represent tribal issues fairly.”

“Effective Tools for Communications and Leadership in Indian Country”; National Congress of American Indians
What Is Media Relations?

Media relations refers to a mutually beneficial relationship developed between an organization and media professionals such as journalists, editors, reporters, bloggers, and producers.

The media get the benefit of easy access to story ideas and sources, while the organization secures free publicity and an opportunity to inform the public about its mission, policies, practices, and successes in a positive and credible manner.
Why Engage in Media Relations?

What is the value of media relations to you and your drug court?

• Develop a public image/foster goodwill in your community
• Reach a large audience without high costs
• Influence decisions makers
• Build awareness and credibility through a third-party source
• Create an understanding of what a healing to wellness court is and why it matters
• Publicize something new
The Basics
Types of Media

• Print (newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and trade publications)

• Television (news programs, talk shows, and public service announcements)

• Radio (news programs, talk shows, and public service announcements)

• News wire services (Associated Press, Reuters, etc.)

• New media (blogs, social media influencers, online newspapers, online streaming sites)
Types of Media Stories

• Hard news
• Features (human interest)
• Analysis/opinion stories
• Editorial
What Reporters Do Consider News

- Something new
- Unique
- Timely
- Local interest
- Unusual or unexpected
- Trending/what people are talking about
- About an extraordinary person or someone who has done something extraordinary
- Solution to community problem
- Controversy/conflict
What Reporters Don’t Consider News

• Existence
• Consistent annual data
• Regular events
• Expected outcomes
• Unsubstantiated theories or perspectives
• Repeated topics
What Can You Give Them as News?

- New court
- New judge
- New funding
- Graduation
- Extraordinary graduate or practitioner
- Official statement responding to something timely
- Opinion piece responding to something timely
The role of media is to tell a story, not necessarily your story, and you are not the only one trying to get a media professional’s attention.

Newsrooms get hundreds of pitches every week and are short staffed.

Always think when pitching an idea to a reporter:
1.) Why should their readers, listeners, viewers care?
2.) Why is this important now?
3.) What is the problem, solution, threat to the community, or benefit?
Getting Started
Determine Media Goal

An effective media strategy is driven by a specific goal

• What do I really want?

• Who is my target audience?

• How do I reach them?
What Do You Need to Get Started?

• Key points about your court
  • When was it founded?
  • Who is the judge?
  • How many people has it served?
  • What are your graduation rates or other success metrics?

• Brief information about healing to wellness courts in general
  • Have basic facts on hand about the history of healing to wellness courts and benefits to communities

• Designated spokesperson
Media Engagement
Identifying Media Person to Contact

- Read local newspapers, magazines, online community publications like the Patch
- Keyword search through Google to search keywords related to drug courts and find whose writing pops up
- Use social media to track # trends
- Review coverage
  - Positive or negative
  - How recent was there coverage on a similar topic to your idea
Building an Engagement Approach

• Reach out before you need anything and introduce yourself
  • Consider inviting the journalist out to lunch or coffee
  • Follow them on Twitter and like/comment on/retweet articles
• Ask them how they prefer to receive information (phone, short email, press release, tweet) and comply
• Ask them what they are working on and offer to be a resource/share bio about your spokesperson and why they are an expert
Pitching Your Idea

• Write a catchy subject line and/or identify the news hook in the subject line – keep it short and to the point
• Personalize your pitch to the media professional in the body of the email
• Introduce your story idea and define your angle
• Explain why your idea is timely, unique, important, relevant to readers
What Can You Pitch?

• Call with breaking news
• Give advance notice for events with a media advisory
• Pitch a feature story idea with plenty of lead time
• Send a press release with drug court news
Media Lead Times

• Daily newspapers – same day for next day coverage of breaking news; two weeks for features
• Weekly newspapers – two days to a week before publishing
• Magazines – four to six months in advance
• Television – same day to two weeks for news; four to six weeks in advance for other program types or features
• Radio – same day to two weeks
• New websites – vary from same day to one week to several months
• Bloggers – one to three weeks
Responding to Media Inquiries

• Ask for details about what they are seeking and offer to call back
• Research the reporter
• Research the publication
• Decide on whether you want to take the interview

NEVER TAKE A COLD CALL!
Get the Details

• Is it an on-camera interview, radio interview, podcast interview, or interview for an article?
• Ask about the topic, deadline, journalist’s contact info, publication date
• Will it be in-person, video chat, over the phone, podcast, broadcast?
• Will they include a photo or just printed quotes?
Do Research

- The reporter
  - Do they usually cover this topic?
  - What is their background in this topic
  - Have they covered your drug court before? Was it a positive or negative story/experience?

- The publication
  - Type of media outlet
  - Audience
  - Obvious political bent
  - Are you comfortable being represented in this publication?
Interview Preparation

• Prepare, prepare, prepare
  • Ask for questions in advance
  • If questions aren’t available, analyze the request
    • Determine the 2-3 key messages you want to convey
    • Try to come up with 2-3 difficult questions that might be asked and come up with answers
• Gather any supporting materials or relevant information that you can give the reporter at the interview or send to them in advance or after
• Rehearse (for yourself or with your spokesperson)
  • Practice key messages, particularly if this for a live interview
  • Go over any facts and stats that you want to use about drug courts or your drug court
  • Practice with a colleague, hold mock interviews, consider recording yourself with your phone
The Interview

• State or restate the question and tie it to your key messages
• Answer the questions that are asked
• If you don’t know the answer, say so
• Keep your answers short
• Use firsthand examples and descriptive language
• Use relevant facts but avoid jargon
• Be informational but not promotional
• Be yourself—be conversational, sincere, smile
• Don’t panic; take time to collect your thoughts
• Pause before answering
• Don’t be defensive
• Don’t say no comment
Helpful Phrases

• From my perspective
• Yes, but
• The real question here is…
• At the heart of the matter is…
• What really matters is…
• The most important issue is…
• The more interesting question is…
• I can send you additional information about this topic
• Can you elaborate on the question
• I’m not familiar with this situation and so am not equipped to discuss this
After the Interview

• Send any materials or info you promised or was requested of you
• Address any factual errors or mistakes made during the interview
• Read the article/watch or listen to the interview
  • Negative or positive
  • Any issues needing to be addressed?
• Follow up with your media contact
  • To praise the article
  • Correct a mistake
• Share positive news with your team and over social media!
# Dos and Don’ts of Media Relations

**Do:**
- Be respectful
- Your homework
- Keep your message simple
- Make sure to proofread
- Be honest
- Share background info

**Don’t:**
- Send your idea to just anyone or everyone at the publication
- Use professional jargon or acronyms
- Lie, embellish, generalize
- Let inaccurate statements go
- Be afraid to say, “I don’t know”
Dos and Don’ts of Media Relations Cont’d

Do:

• Stay on message
• Give concise answers
• Go into an interview with two or three main points you want to get across
• Be yourself

Don’t:

• Be afraid to repeat yourself
• Be afraid to follow up
• Be discouraged
Further Resources


A native communications consulting firm: https://www.tinhorn-consulting.com/

A native consulting group: http://www.nativeamericanconsulting.com/index.html
Questions?