

MINUTES
PROBLEM SOLVING IN FAMILY SUPPORT MAGISTRATE COURT
NEW HAVEN PILOT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL RESOURCES WORK GROUP
DECEMBER 08, 2009

The Interagency Resources work group met at 414A Chapel Street, Training Room, New Haven, CT.

Those in attendance: Chief Family Support Magistrate Sandra Sosnoff-Baird, Mr. Blannie Bostic, Mr. Joseph Greelish, Mr. Thomas Horan, Ms. Sandra Joyce (guest from the New Haven Support Enforcement Office), Ms. Sherman Malone, Ms. Dalia Panke, and Ms. Yosley Saxton.

1- Review and approval of program notes from 11/17

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by Ms. Dalia Panke. Program notes were approved. Guest, Ms. Sandra Joyce, was welcomed. Ms. Panke briefly stated the issues up for discussion.

2- Discussion - how to best utilize the New Haven Reentry Resource Guide to assist in local resources identification? And 3- Discussion – What information do we need about each resource?

Items 2 and 3 of the agenda were part of a blended discussion.

Copies of the New Haven Reentry Resource Guide were handed out to everyone present. Ms. Panke stated that the guide contained a wealth of information. She challenged the group to brainstorm about how to identify which of the programs listed in the guide were most appropriate, within the realm of Problem Solving, to be contacted. Also, how to use them in a meaningful way. Ms. Malone offered to contact the Reentry Roundtable, since she is a member, in order to get a Problem Solving representative on the agenda of a quarterly meeting. She indicated that the meetings generally have substantial agendas. She will attempt to schedule a more formal problem solving presentation for the January meeting. In addition, the New Haven Family Alliance (NHFA) staff will work on trying to schedule a meeting with the Male Involvement Network and committee representatives. The meeting will provide a forum to form collaborative opportunities with the local agencies/providers.

A suggestion was made to have the Commission on Legal Publications (COLP) print, with permission, the New Haven Reentry Resource Guide to provide copies to the New Haven Court Service Center.

A question was posed to the NHFA staff to inquire if they are aware of the need to have private insurance for services. NHFA indicated that many did not require private insurance. The possibility of developing a step in the problem solving process for the individual to apply for state medical insurance was discussed. The existence of state funded medical insurance may increase the number of potential providers available for enhanced problem solving techniques. It was suggested that DSS might be a good resource to develop a referral tool for state medical assistance.

NHFA staff spoke about the particular model they follow. They said it is a prevention model with universal features where they provide selective services based on each individual's needs and indicated services for individuals with multiple barriers. They have an open door policy. They assess every person who comes to them by utilizing a 15 page assessment tool. Services are provided directly and through their partners in the Male Involvement Network. Capacity issues are handled with the help of their partner organizations.

It was noted that the Problem Solving Court model that we are implementing is similar to the one utilized by NHFA – staff will conduct the assessment and direct people to the services as needed. A detailed explanation of how the Problem Solving Court will be structured was provided by judicial staff for the benefit of the NHFA staff. NHFA stressed the most important criteria when accepting referrals is to have motivated individual who wants to be connected with the child(ren). NHFA indicated that their current capacity is approximately 85 individuals per year, which is currently the number of cases they are receiving from Judicial (either through paternity, establishment, modification or contempt dockets).

Everyone agreed that there must be clear referral mechanisms in place to better identify the needs of the person and to clearly determine what the issues are to refer them to the appropriate service. These referral mechanisms must be able to be replicated in other Judicial Districts. They also agreed there must be a good understanding of the programs to ensure a better match of people to services.

All agreed the goal is to help people become stable enough to pay child support and hopefully reconnect with the child(ren). In order to succeed, the Problem Solving Court should examine the best way to route people to NHFA. Two possibilities include; first, by referring individuals to NHFA until they reach full capacity, then they can send the overflow to their partners; or second, the Support Enforcement Officer contacts each program directly to determine the best fit. All parties will brainstorm about which alternative is the most suitable and realistic due to volume, and will discuss how to identify the provider's desired program eligibility criteria at the time of assessment.

4- Discussion – what type of tool to use to easily record/retrieve resource info.

This item has been tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

5- Other Items

No other items were discussed.

6- Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 12/17/2009 at 10:00am at 370 James Street, New Haven.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm