Case Management Paper

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**The Population**

A population that receives case management services is adolescents with substance abuse problems. Adolescents, who live in Macomb County, that are charged with first time drug related offenses are eligible for a program known as Teen Drug Court. Once accepted into the program they are assigned a probation officer who acts as their case manager. The program focuses on diminishing criminal behavior and resolving all addiction problems the teen may have. The adolescents and their families are given group and individual therapy. The teen is drug tested several times a week. The program also works with the family and has monthly family therapy sessions. The probation officer is in constant contact with the teen’s family and school. The probation officer administers all drug tests, enforces all the program rules, and monitors the adolescents’ progress through the program. They also provide a monthly report in the court to the judge on the teen’s progress and provide recommendations. Typical problems that a teen probation officer sees are drug relapse, teenage runaways, and depression. They also work with families on family issues and relationship building. An adolescent probation officer regularly arranges therapy services for both individual and group settings, arranges for educational tutors to improve school grades, and arranges all court dates to monitor the client’s progress.

**The Case Study**

A probation officer for Macomb county Teen Drug court associated with the local juvenile court system works as a case manager for his or her clients. Upon meeting a client, their job is to assess the client’s addiction problems, assess the family situation, and create a plan to turn the client’s life around. A 14 year old male client is referred to the teen drug court program by a local court system after a drug related charge was filed. The probation officer will initially meet with both the client and his parents or legal guardians. The probation officer will then recommend admission into the Teen Drug Court program. Then client must then appear at a Drug Court hearing and be accepted into the program by the Drug Court judge overseeing his case.

**The Assessment**

During the initial meeting, the probation officer will discuss with the expectations with the family and client while the client is participating in the program. The client and his family will have to agree to a curfew, weekly drug testing, positive school performance, and attend mandatory therapy sessions. The probation officer must also explore the client/parent relationship because a big part of the recovery process involves a positive support system. The client may never have had to obey strict rules before so the parents must learn how to set and enforce these rules that are required by the probation officer. At the first meeting, the probation officer will describe step by step the process involved to successfully graduate from the program.

The first level of the program involved three weeks of house arrest. This means that the client while not leave the house except for school, work, and probation activities. The client will not have access to any communication devices. No one is allowed to visit them in the home. All of this must be enforced by the parents of the client, and failure of this stage can result in the client being sent to a juvenile detention center. After the client completes this stage, they move onto a strict six o’clock curfew and twice a week drug tests. The probation officer then begins to connect the client with resources to improve their environment and ensure their success in beating their drug addiction. The client will begin meeting with a therapist in an individual and group setting which is arranged by the probation officer. The probation officer will be following the client’s progress throughout the therapy process. The family of the client will also be connected to therapy services through the probation officer so that the family can better understand how to help their loved one. This second stage, usually lasts around eight weeks, and if progress is being made the client will move onto the third stage. The third stage involves an eight o’clock curfew and less frequent therapy sessions. The client will only be drug tested once a week during this stage. This is the final stage and lasts about four months. When the probation officer feels that the client is ready to graduate from the program, they make a request to the program judge. Failure to follow any of the above stage rules will result in the client going before the program judge to explain the situation to the judge. The judge either moves them down a stage or can sentence the client to time in a juvenile detention center depending on the degree of rule breaking.

**Scholarly Articles**

The Drug Court treatment plan which involves the entire family receiving drug addiction therapy is supported by current research. According to Jenson (2010), while it is common belief that community activities such as sports, after school clubs, and academic tutor can largely impact an adolescent’s likely-hood to participate in drug behaviors, this study found that positive support systems can have a larger impact on the client’s ability to restrain from drugs and alcohol. Family involvement and therapy can have a strong impact on the client’s successful recovery. Recent research has shown that working in a group setting, such as group therapy sessions, can improve a client’s ability to regulate their emotions and improve social support seeking (Engle & Macgowan, 2009). By developing these interpersonal skills, the clients are more likely to have the tools necessary to handle future drug situations. The Teen Drug Court program has incorporated this research into their program through group therapy sessions. The program also does group outings such as trips to the Detroit Opera House and they occasionally participate in community service projects. Another aspect of the treatment plan that is based on research is the involvement of the school. Failing grades are a risk factor for drug abuse. By involving the schools, the program is helping the client work harder in school since failing grades are not accepted while participating. This new focus on homework and class grades is teaching the clients new skills and focuses that will hopefully continue on after graduation from the program.

**Local Agencies**

A Teen Court probation officer refers her clients to many local agencies. In instances of the officer suspecting that one of the client’s may have taken a drug that could cause them immediate harm they refer their clients to Henry Ford hospital. They also refer their clients to Macomb County Juvenile Detention Center when the client has broken the program rules. However, while they are being detained they still receive all the services from the program. Lastly, the probation officers refer clients that are struggling in school to Macomb Tutors. This organization works with the program clients to be able to receive tutoring services at affordable rates. Since the clients are required by the program to be passing all their classes it is a priority of the probation officers that they are succeeding in this area of their lives. This organization is also qualified to help clients with learning disabilities.

References

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