

Minutes
Trempealeau County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
November 13, 2013

Members present: Dick Miller, Ernest Vold, Doug Winters, Judge John Damon, Jill Clark, District Attorney Taavi McMahon, Sheriff Richard Anderson, Theresa Anderson, Dr. Duane Sackett, Chief Deputy Brian Puent, Deb Suchla, Lt. Tonya Niederkorn, Brent Falkner

Others present: Pat Bell, Ann Bechard, Catherine Emmanuelle

The meeting was called to order by Miller at 1:02 p.m. stating proper posting and notification has met open meeting requirements. Motion by Damon and seconded by Sackett to accept the agenda as posted. Motion carried 15-0.

Smart Sentencing-Summary of Cognitive Intervention

Deb Suchla presented a brief summary on Evidence Base Practices and how these practices can be used in sentencing and improving assessments. Judge Damon, Sheriff Anderson, Deb Suchla and District Attorney McMahon will be meeting to discuss ideas to put in place. Suchla stated the use of Evidence Based Practices is a good tool to assist in sentencing options and decisions. Theresa Anderson stated that some of the most effective education is cognitive based intervention which produces better results. Anderson added it can be used on any type of offender as it is based on thoughts, decisions and behavior. Anderson advised that their program title is "Thinking for a Change". Brent Falkner stated criminal behavior is not based on one lone factor; it consists of multiple factors, which has the best results noting less people committing less crimes is the main goal. Anderson addressed the top four risk factors that can be addressed in a cognitive based group learning environment. Falkner added that it is important to note what stage the offender is currently in; Pre-contemplation versus contemplation. Anderson advised that the offenders are learning about their thoughts they have for a particular behavior. Damon stated that the court isn't aware of what services or treatment the offender needs until their assessment is completed.

Small Claims Mediation

Clark presented an overview of Mediation for Small Claims Court. Clark stated mediation is confidential and cases are assigned to a mediator on the same day as the initial court appearance which makes it very convenient for both parties involved. Participants tailor their settlement agreement, if one is reached during mediation. Mediation agreements are legally binding and there is no cost which saves time and money for both parties. Clark added that Small Claims Court is scheduled twice a month and mediation usually resolves most cases; however, if noncompliance occurs then a judgment can be entered with the court system. Clark noted there were 758 Small Claims cases filed in court; 149 were contested and out of the 149 cases 65 were settled on the day of mediation and 39 were set for trials. Trempealeau County Small Claims Mediation is currently seeking volunteers to be mediators. Judge Damon added that the process of mediation allows the parties to come up with a solution which can be happier than a solution ordered by a Judge.

Victim Offender Mediation

Clark advised that this program has been around a long time. It is a process which is driven by the victim; however, a majority of victims are not interested in meeting with their offender. The mediation is conducted in a safe and structured setting noting the goal is to hold offenders directly accountable for their behavior. The victim is given a chance to let the offender know how their crime affected them and to receive answers to questions they may have. Restitution is also discussed at which time a payment plan may be developed. Possible reasons why a victim should meet with the offender are: Accountability, Victim Healing, Crime Prevention, Restitution and Public Service. Also, reasons the Offender should meet with the Victim are: Crime Prevention, Public Service, Accountability, Healing and Restitution. Pat

Bell advised he may at times request an offender to attend the Victim Mediation Program. McMahon added that the Restitution collected goes back to the victim with only a 10 percent surcharge applied to the courts. Dr. Sackett stated he feels this is a very good program for the county.

Grant Proposal

Deb Suchla advised that the Grant for \$70,000 was submitted on time. This Grant is focused on two parts: Creating a separate Opiate/Heroin Court and due to the increase in these types of addictions a Methadone, Suboxone as blockers or substitutes for the Opiate/Heroin along with Mental Health Screening to assist the treatment/recovery/court process. Suchla advised that Opiate/Heroin Courts are slow to come about and one of our goals would be to be a model of rural counties within the State of Wisconsin to start up this type of court system. Suchla noted that she should hear on the results of the Grant around December of this year.

What Tools Do We Need

Dick Miller noted that this item will remain on the Agenda as a brainstorming tool. Deb Suchla stated that Heroin/Opiate issues has been growing and impacts everything we do and will continue to eat us alive if measures are not taken to come up with something to help people with this type of addiction get proper treatment and prevention. This type of drug addiction cannot just be stopped cold turkey; cravings affect the chemicals within the brain. Possibilities discussed were a program similar to DARE that would be geared for the students in the 10th grade level. Connecting with community groups and involving speakers that have lived thru this type of addiction. Dr. Sackett suggested well known sports professionals that had experienced this in his/her life would capture the younger generation's attention. Sheriff Anderson stated that we do everything we can do at a local level to combat the illicit drug issue but controlling drugs needs to begin at the borders to prevent the drugs from coming into the area. Pat Bell stated these drugs are cheap and we may never win the battle, however, we should be able to control it at some level. Miller added that we need to educate Physicians as well as young people and their parents. Bell advised there is a 2 ½ day symposium on Motivational Interviewing which is geared to help people recognize, change and maintain their status that is used by Probation. Brent Falkner spoke about Intrinsic Motivations which is a different way of communication used to plant the seed.

Items for next meeting Agenda

Adding Members to the Committee: Justice Coordinator & Public Defender

Set Next Meeting Date/Time

2014 at 1:00 p.m.

Miller adjourned the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Carol L Ressler
Trempealeau County Sheriff's Office
Office/Fiscal Manager