

STEP PROGRAM

(Sobriety To Enhance Parenting)

PURPOSE: To serve the best interests of children by providing collaborative substance use evaluation and treatment services for parents who have lost or are at risk of losing custody of their child(ren) due to abuse, neglect, or dependency.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES: This program seeks to increase substance use treatment compliance, decrease use of substances by parents, reduce the number of days children are in out-of-home care, and to decrease removals of children from their home.

TARGET POPULATION:

The target population for this program are parents who have been identified as having substance use issues and who have pending abuse, neglect, or dependency case before the Hancock County Juvenile Court.

IDENTIFICATION

The process for identification is as follows:

1. If the Hancock County Children's Protective Services Unit (hereinafter "CPSU") is aware that a parent has a substance use issue, a Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (hereinafter "GAIN") assessment will be requested at shelter care or any hearing after the issue arises.
2. Hancock County Juvenile Court personnel will complete an observed drug screen of the parent and a GAIN assessment. The findings will be reported to the parent in question, their legal counsel, CPSU and the Court.
3. CPSU will place substance use concerns on the case plan. If the parent is accepted into the STEP program, completion of the STEP program will be a condition of the case plan.

Prior to the Initial Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Meeting

1. MDT Members will ensure the following:
 - a. Juvenile Court
 - i. Collect an initial urinalysis.
 - ii. Complete a GAIN assessment and refer to appropriate services.
 - iii. Collect signatures on all necessary Releases of Information.
 - iv. Assist participant in setting up mental health or substance use assessments with licensed and approved treatment agency.
 - v. Name other known professionals working with the family.
 - vi. Current/ongoing concerns regarding criminal justice involvement.
 - b. CPSU
 - i. Status of case.
 - ii. Current/previous services provided.
 - iii. Concerns regarding parental substance use.
 - iv. Name other professionals working with the youth/family.

- v. Dates of upcoming hearing.
- vi. Family Engagement History.
- c. Family Resource Center or other Treatment Facility Representative
 - i. Assessments.
 - ii. Diagnoses.
 - iii. Upcoming appointment dates.
 - iv. Progress.
 - v. Treatment Plan.
 - vi. Previous Involvement.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Purpose

The multi-disciplinary team's primary goals are safety of children, improve the mental health of parents, and the well-being of their children through intervention, and treatment in a holistic, strength-based community-supported justice system. MDT members engage in on-going communication including frequent exchanges of timely and accurate information about the participant's overall performance. On-going communication outside of MDT meetings is made through emails, phone calls, and by texts on phone. The team makes the necessary recommendations for utilization of community resources, cross system coordination, and intervention practices that are youth and family focused.

Expectations/ Agreement of Multi-Disciplinary Team Members

Participation in the MDT meetings provides all parties with valuable, relevant, and necessary information that support effective case planning. By attending and participating, professionals are able to work together more effectively and efficiently in order to make informed recommendations to meet the needs of children and families. It is the expectation of each MDT member to share their expertise, learn from others, and contribute to an environment where youth, family, and community issues can be discussed.

1. All professionals directly involved in a scheduled case should attend MDT meetings.
2. Prior to attending an MDT meeting, agency representatives shall research the following information from their respective agencies:
 - a. Previous Referrals.
 - b. Parent Involvement with Services.
 - c. Previous Barriers to Services.
 - d. Parent Participation and Completion with Previous Referrals.
 - e. Placement History.
 - f. Parent Engagement History.

Duties of MDT Team Members

1. Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative
 - a. Facilitates, and fully participates in team meetings.
 - b. Responsible for the administrative aspects of the program

- c. Directly oversees, and maintains the daily operation
- d. Provides compliance monitoring of each participant
- e. Completes drug screens on a random basis for each participant
2. Hancock County Job and Family Services, CPSU Representative
 - a. Monitors the parent's compliance on the agency case plan.
 - b. Caseworker has the most contact with the parents outside the program, including frequent home and office visits.
3. Family Resource Center or other Treatment Facility Representative
 - a. Reports on the developed treatment plans for program participants
 - b. Provides compliance reports regarding treatment process
 - c. Provides attendance reports regarding treatment appointments

The Initial MDT Meeting

1. MDT meetings will be held within the Hancock County Juvenile Court building and scheduled during the following times:
 - a. 1:00 p.m. on the 1st Wednesday of the month.
2. If an agency representative is unable to attend in person, a video/conference call option will be available.
3. The MDT facilitator is a Hancock County Juvenile Court employee.
4. MDT members/agency representatives include:
 - a. The parent.
 - b. Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative.
 - c. Hancock County Job and Family Services, CPSU Representative.
 - d. Family Resource Center or other Treatment Facility Representative.
 - e. CASA/GAL identified.
 - f. Direct Service Providers – As Needed.
 - g. Representative of the Hancock County Prosecutor's Office.
 - h. Representative of the Hancock County Public Defender's Office or Private Attorney.
5. Timeline of the meeting.
 - a. Introductions.
 - b. The team members will identify themselves, relay the agency that they represent/services offered (if applicable), and their relationship to the parent.
 - c. State the purpose and limitations of the MDT.
 - d. Detail the ground rules:
 - i. Strength-based.
 - ii. Facilitator recognizes that sensitive issues will be discussed.
 - iii. Assurance of confidentiality.
 - iv. Discussion will not include details of offense if the youth has not been adjudicated
 - v. One person will speak at a time.
 - vi. Turn off electronics.
 - vii. The parent will be encouraged to participate and will be asked direct questions.

- e. Releases of Information will be signed as the first matter of business so that all parties can communicate freely.
6. Following the initial meeting, the assigned Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative will e-mail the following to the MDT team:
 - a. Signed release of information.
 - b. Attendance log of the MDT participants.
 - c. Action steps for all members involved.
 - d. The scheduled date and time of the next MDT meeting.
7. If the designated agency representative is unable to attend, the MDT facilitator will be informed.
 - a. It is the agency representative's responsibility to ensure another person with adequate knowledge of the case, is present on behalf of that agency.
 - b. If one person is assigned to represent an agency, it is the responsibility of that person to get updates from their colleagues prior to the meeting.

The Subsequent MDT Meetings

1. Agency representatives are expected to review the referral prior to each meeting, and be prepared to discuss relevant and priority case specifics based on relevant and prioritized information.

If the designated agency representative is unable to attend, the MDT facilitator will be informed.

- a. It is the agency representative's responsibility to ensure another person with adequate knowledge of the case, is present on behalf of that agency.
 - b. If one person is assigned to represent an agency, it is the responsibility of that person to get updates from their colleagues prior to the meeting.
2. Introductions.
 - a. The team members will identify themselves, relay the agency that they represent/services offered (if applicable), and their relationship to the parent.
 3. Review the purpose and limitations of the MDT.
 4. Review the ground rules.
 5. Review concerns/needs/risks.
 - a. Facilitator summarizes the information contained in the referral.
 - b. Facilitator invites input from MDT.
 - c. Facilitator attempts to gain consensus amongst all parties.
 - d. Facilitator interceded amongst parties as needed.
 - e. Review Safety Factors and Protective Capacities (Social Worker).
 6. There will be times the MDT will not come to a consensus with recommendations for the parent. When a dispute between the MDT members occurs:
 - a. The facilitator will acknowledge the differences in opinion, capture the essence of what has been said, and summarize all of the considered recommendations.
 - b. Each team member will have the opportunity to explain why they are recommending the option they chose.

- c. In instances where there is a difference in opinion regarding specific recommendations, the MDT facilitator will follow up with the agency representative and/or agency supervisor regarding guidance on recommendations.
 - i. Each participant will report to their identified supervisor, and the identified supervisors will facilitate a conversation between the parties to work through the concern.
- d. The facilitator will call to follow-up with the parent regarding their perspective on the MDT.
 - i. Confirm parental understanding of the meeting/process/recommendations.
- e. Court will review and consider recommendations made by the MDT when making decisions to proceed with the handling of the case.

MDT Recommendations and Written Report

1. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants are provided with a copy of the MDT notes. The written notes will address:
 - a. Compliance with treatment recommendations and appointments;
 - b. Urinalysis results;
 - c. The person who is responsible for making specific service referrals and a target date to accomplish task;
 - d. The date of the next scheduled MDT meeting;
 - e. Any other matters relevant to the child's best interests, including any services to be deemed beneficial for the parent.
2. The assigned Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative will file a written report with Juvenile Court to include the MDT meeting progress and recommendations prior to each scheduled Review Hearing for the filed Abuse, Neglect and/or Dependency case.

Case Monitoring

1. Following the MDT, parents will benefit from continued case monitoring. The following process is in place to monitor progress with MDT meeting recommendations and case plan goals:
 - a. The assigned Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative is the identified primary communicator between all MDT members, including the parent.
 - i. MDT members shall notify the entire team of parent's communication.
 - ii. Allows service barriers to be identified.

Case Closure

1. When a STEP case closes in either the juvenile justice or child welfare systems:
2. A case closure meeting will be scheduled to include direct service providers and the family.
 - i. The JFS, CPSU case plan may be reviewed and additional recommendations may be made at that time.
 - ii. The assigned Hancock County Juvenile Court Representative will write a case closing summary to include any recommendations that are made to the family.

- iii. The parent and attorneys will receive a copy of the case closing summary.
- iv. Assigned agency representatives from Hancock County Juvenile Court and CPSU agree to be available for future case discussion/consultation.