
INTRODUCTION

The Editorial Board is pleased to present the second issue of volume five of the *Drug Court Review* (Volume V, 2). This issue of Volume V is a special research edition, closely examining such pertinent issues as *performance measurement*, *process evaluation*, and *recidivism analysis* under the broad structure of a *national research agenda*.

Continued refinement of drug court research, both through program evaluation and exploration of the drug court process, is critical for the advancement of the field.

In this issue:

- ◆ Douglas B. Marlowe, J.D., Ph.D., Cary Heck, Ph.D., C. West Huddleston, III, and Rachel Casebolt set a national agenda for drug court research. Recommended by NDCI's National Research Advisory Committee and field-tested by a national sample of drug court practitioners and administrators, this strategy aims to focus future drug court research by presenting the research topics, questions, and priorities required to create a robust literature for the drug court field.
- ◆ Cary Heck, Ph.D., and Meridith H. Thanner, Ph.D., present a carefully enumerated method of drug court research known as performance measurement. The authors distill important elements of drug court research into four major categories and recommend the best research-supported methods for measuring and reporting the data for maximum impact.
- ◆ Cary Heck, Ph.D., and Meridith H. Thanner, Ph.D., present specific recommendations on the purposes, techniques, methodologies, and procedures for conducting process evaluations. Covering all the important areas ubiquitous to drug court, the authors also suggest going

beyond the basic model and providing useful idiosyncratic results for the needs of individual courts.

- ◆ Finally, Michael Rempel explores the nuances of conducting a valid recidivism analysis. Presenting complicated research and statistical concepts in plain language, this article clearly defines recidivism and its permutations; explains the universe of clients that should be considered; lists and describes the various options for comparison groups and their ramifications; and identifies methods of ensuring the validity of the comparison.

THE DRUG COURT REVIEW

Published semi-annually, the *Review*'s goal is to keep the drug court practitioner abreast of important new developments in the drug court field. Drug courts demand a great deal of time and energy of the practitioner. There is little opportunity to read lengthy evaluations or keep up with important research in the field. Yet, the ability to marshal scientific and research information and "argue the facts" can be critical to a program's success and ultimate survival.

The *Review* builds a bridge between law, science, and clinical communities, providing a common tool to all. A headnote and subject indexing system allows access to evaluation outcomes, scientific analysis, and research on drug court related areas. Scientific jargon and legalese are interpreted for the practitioner into common language.

Although the *Review*'s emphasis is on scholarship and scientific research, it also provides commentary from experts in the drug court and related fields on important issues to drug court practitioners.

THE NATIONAL DRUG COURT INSTITUTE

The *Drug Court Review* is a project of the National Drug Court Institute. NDCI was established under the auspices of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and with the support of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.

The National Drug Court Institute's mission is to promote education, research, and scholarship to the drug court field and other court-based intervention programs.

Historically, education and training in the drug court field have only been available at regional workshops and the annual national conference; analysis and scholarship were largely limited to anecdotes and personal accounts.

That situation has changed. Evaluations exist on dozens of drug court programs. Scholars and researchers have begun to apply the rigors of scientific review and analysis to the drug court model. The level of experience and expertise necessary to support such an institution now exist.

Since its creation in December 1997, NDCI has launched a comprehensive practitioner training series for judges, prosecutors, public defenders, court coordinators, treatment providers, and community supervision officers; developed a research division responsible for developing a scientific research agenda and publication dissemination strategy for the field, as well as developing a series of evaluation workshops; and published a monograph series on relevant issues to drug court institutionalization and expansion.

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