

Intent vs. Impact: Are We Set Up to Fail

James Eberspacher

Tuesday, November 7th, 1:30pm-2:45pm

James Eberspacher is the director of the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC). NCDC is a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) providing training and technical assistance to DWI court professionals. Mr. Eberspacher's background in treatment court includes experience at the state and local levels. For seven years, he was the state treatment court coordinator for the State of Minnesota, providing oversight in forming treatment court policy and strategic planning, state standards, funding, assisting in research, and providing training and technical assistance to treatment court teams. Prior to his role at the state level, he served as the coordinator on three treatment court teams in rural Minnesota and also worked as a probation officer. In his current position, he is responsible for NCDC's overall daily operations, training, curriculum development, outreach, and promoting the expansion of DWI courts. Overall, Mr. Eberspacher has over two decades of combined experience in treatment courts, corrections, policy development, and training/technical assistance.

Session Description:

DWI treatment court practitioners want the best for the people they serve. Using a variety of tools, resources, and services enables the team to respond to the specific needs an individual has, thereby providing the greatest chance for a successful outcome. However, having a systematic and inflexible approach (i.e., treating everyone the same) in responding to individual needs may have an impact that differs from the intent. Sometimes, the best intentions simply miss their mark; other times, they have a negative impact. A team needs to understand how to create a program and respond to behaviors that don't set up the program or the individual to fail. This session examines common missteps in providing treatment, incentivizing participation, creating case plans and court requirements, costs of services, and responding to behavior. Note: While this session is aimed at DWI treatment court practitioners, much of the information also applies outside of that arena to other models of treatment court, treatment, and supervision.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will identify the difference between a systematic treatment approach versus individualized treatment, and the importance of alliance and adherence in treatment programming and case management.
- Participants will recognize how teams must be willing and able to be flexible in creating and adjusting case plans and responding to behavior.
- Participants will identify demographic characteristics that impact program rules, requirements, and case planning, and how ignoring these factors may set up a participant to fail.

