

Ethics and Boundaries as an Accountability Court Coordinator

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How do you define the role
of a coordinator?

COORDINATOR AT-A-GLANCE



Management

- Oversee day-to-day operations
- Manage staff and other team members
- Supervise direct staff
- Maintain updated policies and procedures

Data and Financial

- Develop statistical procedures
- Maintain data input and tracking
- Maintain responsible spending of grant and county funds
- Develop and maintain operating budget

Liaison

- Bridge between all team members
- Liaison between program and outside agencies
- Liaison between participants and the team
- Liaison between program and the community

Coordinate

- Plan operations of program
- Ensure compliance with policy, best practices, etc.
- Schedule meetings
- Attend staffing and court sessions
- Prepare documents and distribute to team members and participants

ADDITIONAL ROLES

Energize the team

Coordinators help maintain excitement and motivation.

Encouragement

Coordinators encourage participants to stick with the program during difficult moments.



ADDITIONAL ROLES

Teacher

Coordinators educate team members, participants, colleagues, and community members.



Data Management

Coordinators are responsible for developing comprehensive data collection and maintenance policies and ensure compliance.



ADDITIONAL ROLES

Referee

Coordinators should help navigate difficult situations to maintain fidelity and adherence to policy. This can include situations with team members or participants.



Magician

Sometimes coordinators need to pull the rabbit out of the hat and make things happen!



ETHICAL ROLE OF COORDINATOR

Each team member follows a set of ethics as outlined by their profession. It is important to understand and appreciate different ethical codes and how to navigate them as part of an accountability court team.

- Judicial Ethics/Standards
- Prosecution and Defense Ethics/Standards
- Law Enforcement Ethics/Standards
- Counseling/Social Work Ethics/Standards

Coordinators should strive to gain understanding of the limitations team members have in reference to their ethical codes and develop strategies for cohesive sharing of information and collaboration.

Ethics: Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity

Ethical responsibility is the ability to recognize, interpret and act upon multiple principles and values according to the standards within a given field and/or context.

KNOW THE STANDARDS

Coordinators should have a full understanding of the Accountability Court Standards specific to their court type.

All policies and standard operating procedures should be rooted in these standards and programs should remain in compliance.

Coordinators should be mindful of regular policy review and adapt to changes.

CACJ

AFDC Standards

Section I Adult Drug Court Standards

- 1. Drug courts integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing.**
 - 1.1. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-1-15, each drug court shall establish an accountability court team to create a work plan for the court. The work plan shall “address the operational, coordination, resource, information management, and evaluation needs” of the court, and shall include all policies and practices related to implementing the standards set forth in this document.
 - 1.2. The drug court team should include, at a minimum, the following representatives: judge, public defender, prosecutor, program coordinator, POST-certified law enforcement, and certified treatment provider/substance abuse professional. The program coordinator should be a dedicated employee, independent of treatment staff.
 - 1.3. The drug court team shall collaboratively develop, review, and agree upon all aspects of drug court operations (mission, goals, eligibility criteria, operating procedures, performance measures, orientation, drug testing, program structure guidelines) prior to commencement of program operations.
 - 1.4. This plan is executed in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all parties and updated annually as necessary.
 - 1.5. Each of these elements shall be compiled in writing in the form of a Policies and Procedures Manual which is reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
 - 1.6. The goals of adult drug court programs in Georgia shall be abstinence from alcohol and other illicit drugs and promotion of law-abiding behavior in the interest of public safety.
 - 1.7. All members of the drug court team are expected to attend and participate in a minimum of two formal staffings per month.
 - 1.8. Members of the drug court team are expected to attend all drug court sessions.
 - 1.9. The drug court shall adopt standardized, evidence-based treatments to ensure the quality and effectiveness of services. Refer to the Adult Drug Court Treatment Standards (see Section II) for a list of suggested curricula.
 - 1.10. Drug courts should provide for a continuum of services through partnership with a primary treatment provider(s) to deliver treatment, coordinate other ancillary services, and make referrals as necessary.¹

KNOW THE TEAM ROLES



Criminal Justice
Judge, Defense
Attorney, Prosecutor,
SAAG, etc.



Law Enforcement
Jail, Community
Policing,
Probation/Parole



Treatment
Counselors, Social
Workers, Treatment
Liaison, Psychiatrist



Administration and Support
Case Managers, Peer
Support, Mentors, Lab
Technicians

STAY IN YOUR LANE

Maintain the belief that each team member is the **EXPERT** in their role. This will foster a culture of respect and diminish the likelihood of role ambiguity or stepping outside of your lane.

BOUNDARIES WITH PARTICIPANTS

How do you define boundaries?

- Boundary Crossing
 - Boundary Violation
 - Compliant and Loss of Job or Credentials

Example:

1. Use of self-disclosure to develop rapport with participant.
2. Tells the participant that she too is having struggles with her marriage.
3. Develops a strong feeling of “friendship” with the participant since they have started sharing their personal experiences with each other.
4. Gives the participant her phone number and they meet for lunch over the weekend.
5. Another participant sees the coordinator and participant and reports to the judge.



BOUNDARY

BOUNDARIES WITH PARTICIPANTS

Adherence and Consistency

What possible pitfalls can you see in the following scenerios?

- Not reporting all infractions or recommended sanction (according to matrix) to the team.
- Accepting gifts from clients.
- Advocating against policy for a client.
- Relaxing rules outlined in the participant handbook.

DUAL/MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

What are examples of dual relationships?

- Immediate/extended family
- Business associate
- Individuals that have close relationship with you or your family
- Church member

Dangers of dual -relationships

- Impropriety
- Damage to ancillary relationships
- Inability to remain objective
- Exploitation



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Scenario #1

You sense that your participant may be flirting with you. He/she makes you laugh, and you really enjoy interactions with them. In fact, you make sure to look extra nice on days you know you will see them. You haven't done anything wrong yet but feel a little unsettled by how you feel toward the participant.

Scenario #2

A family member or close family friend was arrested and is being considered for your accountability court program. They legally and clinically screen and are an appropriate candidate for enrollment.

Scenario #3

Your car breaks down on the side of the side of the road and you call a tow company. When they arrive, you realize the driver is your participant.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Scenario #4

You have been struggling getting adequate information from your treatment provider. A participant in the program comes to you to complain about the services she is receiving in treatment and feels that you “are a better listener and the only one that believes in” her. She requests to be allowed to stop seeing the counselor and come talk to you on a weekly basis instead.

Scenario #5

Your client tells you that you are the closest thing to a “mother” he has ever had and that he “loves you” and invites you to his vocational school graduation.

Scenario #6

The treatment provider called out sick and you don’t have anyone to facilitate MRT this evening. You haven’t been formally trained but feel like you have a good enough understanding of how to run the group. You will have to cancel the group and cause participants to wait two weeks to advance if you don’t facilitate the session.

AVOIDING ETHICAL PITFALLS

Maintain Consistency

Consistency and objectivity are key components to operating a smooth program and avoiding conflict. Additionally, consistency to policy solidifies various treatment concepts for participants.

Don't Work Outside your Scope

Avoid the temptation to operate within the lane of other team roles. You may be asked to wear multiple hats, but you should never work outside your scope of training and expertise. This can cause potential harm to participants and the program.

When in doubt, DON'T!

Trust your gut and consult with other peers and professionals. Establish strong boundaries and operate within those guidelines.

CONCLUSION



Coordinators wear lots of hats and balance many plates!

Sometimes this can feel overwhelming but is the most rewarding role!

Thank you!

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