New Mexico Drug/DWI Courts Peer Review Process

Peer Review Fidelity Assessment Protocol

Peer review teams will consist of a minimum of a judge and coordinator. If possible, it is highly recommended that other drug/DWI court team members participate as peer reviewers such as a treatment provider, defense counsel or prosecutor. An AOC staff member will also participate in the process. Additionally, regional teams may be identified to reduce travel expenses and impact on reviewers' home jurisdictions.

*** New Mexico AOC staff will request your assistance as a peer reviewer for a specific program.**

- State coordinator or other AOC staff will contact the program (coordinator, judge, or other key contacts) to let them know the peer review will occur and who the peer reviewer or team is.
- State coordinator/AOC staff will let you (as peer reviewer) know when that contact has been made.

***As soon as possible after site assignment:**

- Make first contact call to the drug/DWI court coordinator of the court to be visited.
    - Discuss collaborative nature of assessment/review & tentative timeline
    - Ask for coordinator to fill out cover page (address information, overview of program, list of team members and contact information).
        - Email cover page to coordinator and ask for it to be filled out as soon as possible and returned to you, or ask the coordinator for that information on the phone.
    - Get information about program's leadership structure and if there is anyone you should make sure to talk to in advance or at the site visit (such as Trial Court Administrator).
        - If so, make sure to contact that person: what does he/she want to get out of the review process?
    - Work with coordinator or other contact person to schedule site visit (allowing at least 30 days advance notice) – advance coordination and cooperation should allow for 2 days on site, but in some cases 3 days may be necessary, plus travel. Block out an extra half day after the visit to complete the report.
        - Find out when court session and team staffing /meetings take place.
        - Explain that team members need to be available during your visit if they would like to be interviewed in person; otherwise you can interview them by phone.
            - Make sure to have dedicated times to meet separately with all key team members and stakeholders (particularly the coordinator and the judge).
            - If a team has multiple people in one team role (such as multiple probation officers or multiple treatment counselors due to a large program population), inform the coordinator of the options below:
                - Designate one of the team members to be a "spokesperson," that can represent and speak on behalf of the team member role.
                - Interview all team members individually, time permitting.
                - Interview multiple team members as a group. This should only be done if all team members within a role are comfortable and willing. If not, schedule those individuals separately.

        - Phone interviews can always be conducted after the site visit, and are a good option to consider if time is limited.
      - Try to schedule interviews/meetings with team members before the staffing and court session so that the debrief can be after court, which might make it more feasible for the team to stay/be there.
      - Set up a time for an exit interview with coordinator and/or team on last day of visit if possible (or by phone after visit if necessary).
        - It may be hard to schedule the entire team, but try to find a time that is feasible for as many people who are interested as possible. Bring in food if resources allow, especially if you are meeting early morning or late evening
    - Discuss the best way, time, and location for you to talk to a group of program participants for a focus group.
      - Ideally, focus groups should consist of at least 6 participants, and no more than 12 total.
      - Ensure that the focus group can be held in a private room/space to protect confidentiality.
      - A good way to increase participation in a focus group is to schedule it before or after the program's court session has ended. Offer this suggestion to the program when discussing your visit, though it may not always be possible. Another option is to have the program replace a regularly scheduled treatment group session with the focus group. Plan for about an hour and a half. You will need some time at the beginning to discuss ground rules, go over the disclosure form, and answer any question. Spend about an hour on the focus group questions. Then leave yourself a few minutes at the end in case anyone wants to ask questions or share any feedback outside of the full group. You may also need a few minutes to set up and clean up if there is food.
      - Random selection may not always be possible, but efforts should be made to talk with a group that is representative of all program phases. It is ok if participant availability influences the makeup of the group, as employment, family obligations, and transportation issues may prevent participants from attending. Programs should be reminded that the focus group is voluntary, and participants are not to be ordered to attend.
      - Ask the program if they would be able to provide some incentives to increase interest and participation in the focus group such as food, drinks, or gift cards.
      - Programs should also be encouraged to allow focus group participation to count as credit towards community service hours, support meetings, group attendance, or other program requirements. This should occur whether or not tangible incentives are possible.
  - Use Peer Review Document *H~* (Site visit Schedule and Interview Sign-up Sheet) to create a preliminary schedule for the site visit. Update Document *H~* with the dates of the site visit, staffing and court schedule, tentatively note when the focus group and exit interview may occur. Be sure to include time for breaks and lunch each day. Leave all other times in the schedule open for team members to sign up for interviews.

Encourage the coordinator to take this preliminary schedule to a staffing session to allow team members to sign up for their interviews. Request that the coordinator send you a copy of the schedule once all team members have signed up.

  - Ask where you plan to conduct your individual interviews (team members should come to you as much as possible). Ideally, the coordinator will be able to reserve space(s) for you to conduct interviews during your entire site visit. Avoid changing interview rooms during your site visit if at all possible. Ensure that you have time to get to other buildings, offices, or meeting rooms if travel is necessary. Confirm with the coordinator that interview rooms/spaces are private to protect confidentiality.
  - Ask for Court location / address where you will be meeting and recommendations for nearby hotels if applicable.
  - Schedule a separate time for a pre-site visit conference call with the coordinator if you can't get to the program information questions on this call.

*** 1 month prior to visit**

- Send link to the on-line assessment to the program coordinator as well as the Treatment Definitions reference guide (this document ["f"] provides information about how to answer the treatment question [46 on the Adult Drug Court assessment and 47 on the DWI court assessment]).
  - Set a date for getting the survey back about 2 weeks from when you send it.
- Follow-up with the coordinator to get the cover page information if you haven't received it.
- Set up any necessary travel arrangements (flights, car rental, hotel, etc.).

***3 weeks before visit:**

- Send a reminder e-mail to the coordinator of the due date for the online assessment.

*** 2 weeks before visit:**

- Ask designated AOC staff to download completed assessment and peer review materials.
- Review the assessment from the on-line survey, checking off standards that are achieved based on survey responses and drafting a preliminary list of recommendations.
- Create a list of questions or needed clarifications.
- Call the coordinator to clarify information in the assessment.
- Remind the coordinator that the intention of this review is to identify areas in which technical assistance or other support can be provided to improve the program, NOT to punish the site or only point out areas in which they are deficient.

***At least 1 week before visit:**

- Hold a 1-hour conference call with <u>all</u> peer review team members that will attend the upcoming site visit. Before this call, the peers should have a copy of the completed survey and best practice table for the site being reviewed. During this call, the peer review team will establish:
  - Who will be conducting/leading each interview (One team member should be designated for each interview as the primary interviewer).
  - Who will facilitate/lead the participant focus group?
  - Who will be taking notes (typed or written) during interviews and the focus group? If more than one person is taking notes, who will combine notes after the visit?

    - Who will be writing up the report after the visit is completed?
    - What questions will be asked during the interviews and focus group (in addition to the basic list) based on the program's survey responses and best practices results.
- Confirm plans with the coordinator and finalize your itinerary.

To bring with you:

- Pens/pencils for taking notes, or laptop if preferred; an audio recorder can also be helpful (make sure to get advance permission to bring it into the court and interviews).
- Business cards/bio/your contact information.
- Assessment questions and answers from site.
- In-progress checklist and draft recommendations to date.
- Observation forms (hard copy or electronic).
- Copies of focus group disclosure form (10-15, depending on how many participants you expect and how many peers will be attending).
- Addresses of places you are going (hotel, meetings, court, etc.).
- List of team members and contact information.
- Appropriate dress/clothing for attendance at court sessions.

At the site

- Team member interviews (frame questions related to issues from the assessment or that team brought up on phone and share recommendations and/or thoughts to prepare team for report).
- Observations of staffing and court session.
- Interviews or focus group with participants.
- Debrief findings with the coordinator/team members: make sure to highlight positives and be complementary. Be careful not to be too critical. While you can highlight recommendations and areas of possible improvement, it is not your role to ensure compliance or enforcement of New Mexico Drug Court Standards.
- Inform program that a follow-up phone call will occur with the peer review team to discuss additional findings, commendations, and recommendations in greater detail. Peer review team may consider scheduling the follow-up phone call at the end of the debrief meeting (since all program team members should be present).

Back Home

- Plan to spend half a day immediately after the visit to complete the paperwork.
- Finalize the checklist, summarize program highlights and successes, list recommendations.
    - Keep in mind that some sites have barriers outside of the program's control that make it unable to meet a Standard.
- Schedule the follow up call if it was not scheduled at the end of the site visit
- Send summary report to program at least 1 day prior to the scheduled follow-up call.
- Complete follow-up phone call with program. Discuss site visit findings, commendations, recommendations that were not covered during the in-person debrief and/or solicit feedback from team regarding information contained in the report.
- Incorporate any significant feedback into the summary report before finalizing.
- Submit revised summary of feedback with any program comments to AOC. AOC will review and finalize report and then send to program.