

Assessing Readiness for Reunification

Putting Knowledge into Practice:
Simulated Family Treatment Court Staffing and
Status Review Hearing

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Key Takeaways

A shared definition of success is essential

Recovery is multi-dimensional

Aligning recovery and reunification takes a
coordinated effort





What is Recovery?

SAMHSA's Working Definition

Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.

Recovery is not treatment!

Access to evidence-based substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services are important building blocks to recovery.

Four Major Dimensions

Health

Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being

Home

Maintaining a stable and safe place to live

Purpose

Conducting meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school or volunteerism, and having the independence of income, and resources to participate in society

Community

Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope

Do parents know what they need to do to reunify?



What does the research say about successful and timely reunification?

Factors for Successful Reunification

- Family-centered approach to services
- Collaborating with agencies across systems to build a family-centered model
- Coordinated case work
- Parenting and sibling time
- Supporting reunification, post-reunification and preventing re-entry

Sources: *Supporting Reunification and Preventing Reentry Into Out-of-Home Care* (February 2012) and *Family Reunification: What the Evidence Shows* (June 2011) - Child Welfare Information Gateway, Children's Bureau/ACYF

Phases as an Engagement Strategy

- Leverage the phase structure to create a behavior-based, family-centered program
- Allow parents to see how their progress through the phases moves them to THEIR goal
- Creates shared goals and coordinated case plans for all partners including the family
- Focus on vital services
- Lay out steps towards reunification

Rethinking Readiness to Reunification

- When the parents complete all of the steps on the case plan, will you be comfortable allowing the children to go home?
- Is there any step in the case plan that, if not completed, will keep you from allowing the child to go home?



What Questions Can Drug Testing Answer? ... & What Can it Not?

- Whether an individual has used a tested substance within a detectable time frame
- A drug test alone cannot determine the existence or absence of a substance use disorder
- The severity of an individual's substance use disorder
- Whether a child is safe
- The parenting capacity and skills of the caregiver

Practice Innovation: Reunification Group

- Participation begins during unsupervised/overnight visitations through 3 months post-reunification
- Staffed by an outside treatment provider and recovery support specialist (or other mentor role)
- Focus on supporting parents through reunification process
- Group process provides guidance and encouragement; opportunity to express concerns about parenting without repercussion



Social Connections

Parental Resilience

Nurturing and Attachment

Concrete Support for Families

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families