

Project Recovery Demonstrates Benefits of Substance Abuse Treatment

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Drug abuse burdens communities in many ways, most obviously financially. Community resources are often strained by the results of drug abuse and that cost is passed along to taxpayers.

Costs to communities include domestic violence services, emergency room visits, foster care and welfare costs, reduced productivity, unemployment, and criminal justice expenses. Substance abuse threatens and compromises community safety. Substance abusers are often involved in lifestyles that predispose them to engage in illegal activity. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reports that half of all convicted jail inmates were under the influences of drugs or alcohol at the time of their criminal offense.

But with intervention, substance abusers have the opportunity to change behaviors, which in turn decreases crime. That's the idea behind Project Recovery, a substance abuse treatment program at the Collier County Jail in Naples, Florida.

Overview

Sheriff Don Hunter was inspired to establish the program by a similar concept he had seen in Manatee County, Florida. By launching this initiative, the Sheriff's Office demonstrated its belief that inmates should make productive use of their time while incarcerated, and that doing so could reduce crime. At the same time, the program addressed the pressure of an overcrowded jail by providing a state-licensed jail diversion program to inmates.

Annually, The Department of Children and Families (DCF) conducts a monitoring of the program and an audit of its documentation to insure that the program is in compliance legislation. Project Recovery continues to garner excellent annual reviews.



"This relapse prevention and therapeutic community inside our facility contributes directly to the theoretical formulation that reduction in substance abuse results in reduced criminal activity. Remarkably, we have discovered that inmates chose to remain with the program even though they must be incarcerated to participate. There truly is a belief in our Project Recovery population that this therapy works and that being in this program is far better than the harm that would be created to the family and inmate if the inmate is left free on the street. This is the first program that has made a difference in consumption and abuse. We believe in results and this program has successfully and consistently delivered."

Collier County Sheriff Don Hunter

In September of 2006, at the request of jail administrators, Project Recovery made an application to the DCF for licensure as an Outpatient Program. The expanded services will allow for more individualized treatment. This new licensure may assist graduates in regaining driving privileges by satisfying a portion of DUI course requirements mandated by the court.

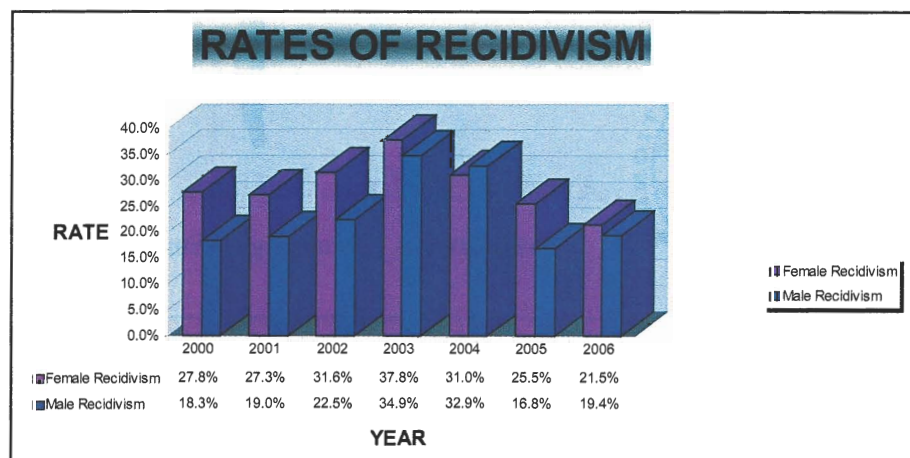
The Program

Project Recovery is a 45- to 90-day program in a therapeutic community setting within the Collier County Jail. Successful completion includes dem-

onstration of the participant's ability to apply the skills learned.

Prison Health Services helped develop the program, administers it on an ongoing basis, and ensures its compliance with Florida regulations.

Project Recovery is a First Step program, where the essence of powerlessness against the substance and unmanageability due to the substance is studied, and the barriers of denial are overcome. The program consists of 60 counselor-facilitated groups to address beliefs, values, shame, relapse prevention, power and control issues, anger, communication, and much more. Par-



Participants self-facilitate groups on topics such as stress, communication, anger, and the propensity for relapse.

Individuals have several oral “exams,” share their personal life story, and meet regularly with their individual counselor to monitor progress in treatment. The program is heartily supported by the recovering community. On a weekly basis, members of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous facilitate twelve-step recovery meetings in both male and female housing areas. This allows inmates to get to know members of the recovering community in preparation for their re-entry into the community.

Finally, each inmate is required to outline in detail and present to staff a personal “release plan.” The “release plan” is a comprehensive outline that encourages inmates to identify how they will handle a myriad of different life stressors and challenges while remaining abstinent.

The risk factors of those who use substances are well known in the varying life domains of the individual, the family, social peer settings, and the workplace. Inadequate life skills, anti-social behavior, family conflict and violence, strong external locus of control, and difficulty with authority are some of the barriers to success. The program seeks to enhance the protective factors of goal directed behavior, support systems, respect, and caring for others.

The Treatment Team

The treatment team is multi-disciplinary, in that it is comprised of mental health and substance abuse counselors who are licensed or certified. In addition, counselors have access to an on-staff psychiatrist for referral and case consultation if needed. Their training in the unique aspects of the correctional environment, a specialized arena that few clinical people choose to enter, complements the team’s experience.

Benefits to Law Enforcement and Courts

Generally, programming within the jail provides increased control of the inmate population by the Detention Officer. Historically, there are few, if any incidents in the therapeutic hous-

ing areas as compared to the general population. The program is a valuable resource to the courts when sentencing drug offenders. Participants can receive a reduced sentence which helps with avoiding overcrowding within the jail. The Collier County Sheriff’s Office maintains a commitment to drug treatment programming that provides a level of service rarely found in other communities.

Benefits to Inmates and their Families

Project Recovery remains consistent in its provision of services to a high-risk group of Collier County citizens. Individuals who become involved in the criminal justice system as a result of drug and alcohol abuse are considered severe and chronic users at high risk for relapse and re-incarceration. Typically these individuals lack essential coping skills, have poor impulse control, lack of assertiveness, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and an inability to formulate relationships. In addition, they lack an ability to conform to social norms and community standards.

Project Recovery seeks to enhance social and emotional competence, including good communication skills, responsiveness, increased empathy, problem solving skills, and correction of self-defeating belief systems. When family members struggle with substance abuse, the whole family unit is in jeopardy. Often there is increased stress and an elevated risk for neglect, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. A crack in the development of the family as a unit has a rippling effect into other relationships and cycles down from generation to generation. Participants are encouraged to seek family counseling upon re-entry into the community to address the far-reaching effects of the disease of addiction.

Program Statistics

Rates of recidivism for the year ending Sept. 30, 2006, were 19.4% for the female program and 21.5% for the male program. The rate for the female population decreased over the prior three years while the male program experienced a slight increase in recidivism in the last year. This rate is the measuring

device the criminal justice system uses to announce results.

How do these numbers fare against other programs?

Success rates vary among state and county programs, ranging from 52% to over 87%. According to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, a 3.1% reduction translates to 94 inmates not returning to prison and a cost savings of approximately \$1.65 million for one year of re-incarceration or \$4.95 million for the average three-year stay.

Summary

Fighting crime happens on our borders, on the streets, in jails, and in treatment programs. Sheriff Don Hunter and the Collier County Sheriff’s Office recognize the importance of addressing criminal activity through substance abuse treatment. They have made a commitment to address a world wide epidemic on a local level and are achieving exemplary results. ★