

Preface

This book is for those who are operating or wishing to create a drug court, physicians who will frequently see people who are drug court clients, judges, prosecutors, treatment providers, defense attorneys, probation officers, case managers, and coordinators currently working in a drug court.

Drug courts are for nonviolent, drug-driven criminal offenders and are a judicial response to a system failure. The criminal justice systems on three continents have failed to control criminal drug use through incarceration and counseling. The courts have become revolving doors where drug offenders are arrested, processed, and returned to the streets, often within the same day, only to offend again. Alternatively, offenders are incarcerated for long periods of time. For these people, prison becomes a training ground for violent, criminal behavior. Drug courts evolved as a solution to this situation.

Drug courts use the coercive powers of the court to leverage the therapeutic abilities of drug testing and mental health professionals. What clients really want and need is a workable path to sobriety and the resulting social and psychological benefits.

Like any other disease, addiction will not automatically respond to a standard treatment. Every person is unique and will react differently to external forces and influences. Some people die from an infected hangnail, whereas others can fall from an airplane and survive. The suggestions in this book are not foolproof, and, despite our best efforts, some people will be resistant to treatment and will die in the throes of their addiction. Others will respond with miraculous changes and gain a state of happy, sustained productivity. Some will respond to treatment and cease drug abuse but maddeningly will return to drugs just when they appear to have achieved sustained sobriety. Like oncology, treatment of addicts is not for the faint of heart or those who cannot abide frustration. One must be ready for multiple relapses.

One of the pleasant surprises we encountered in writing this book was that so many people were willing to spend time and effort in writing chapters to support the drug court movement. Many of them expressed their

enthusiasm in being associated with the first book for a movement that is a viable alternative to failure. Because we have so many contributors involved in this book, the reader may encounter some differences of opinion. We have retained them to stimulate thought and discussion and to recognize that there are various ways to accomplish the same goal. The opinions in this book are those of the individual contributors; we may not agree with all of them, but we found them to be enlightening, well conceived, and worth consideration. We wish to thank the contributors for their help and encouragement.

A special tribute goes to the judges who created Drug Court and who contributed to this book, especially Judge Stanley Goldstein, who helped pioneer the system and was the first drug court judge. In order to make a systemic change in a broken system, many judges took great political risks in starting drug courts.

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