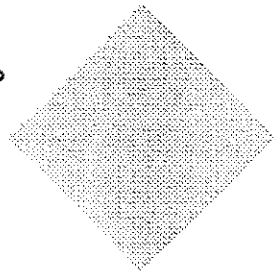
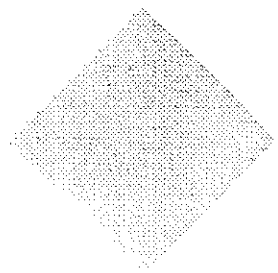
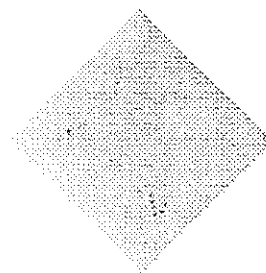
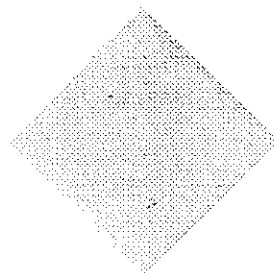
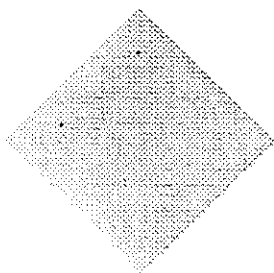
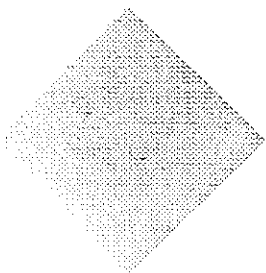
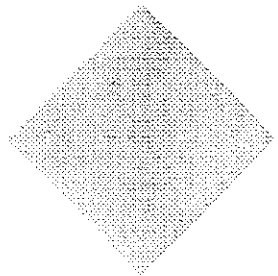


# THE PROMISE AND CHALLENGE OF JUVENILE DRUG COURTS



*Juvenile Drug Court Advisory Committee*

*Developed under a collaborative agreement between  
the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges  
and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*



Through partnerships with schools, law enforcement, and community-based organizations, the court can effectively support the youth's progress in treatment, develop networks of support for the juvenile drug court, maximize limited resources and provide concrete services to increase the youth's skills and bonds to the community. Juvenile drug courts increase accountability and community safety through regular court hearings (during which sobriety and program compliance is monitored), individualized treatment, immediate incentives and sanctions for behavior related to their substance abuse, and access to needed ancillary services, such as, family group conferencing, parenting classes, mentors, tutors, life skills, and conflict resolution. The court's response to the juvenile's progress in the program is tailored to the needs and strengths of the youth while maintaining the institution of justice.

The juvenile drug court judge plays a central leadership role in helping the community fashion its response to juvenile substance abuse. Judges must serve as the catalyst for the development of a community-wide response to substance abuse, coordinating the juvenile drug court with other juvenile courts, the adult court and community programs involving substance abuse<sup>4</sup>. Judges must play a central role in building collaboration between the juvenile drug court and schools, law enforcement, neighborhood, and business leaders in the community. In addition, judges must lead multi-disciplinary teams in the design, operation and evaluation of juvenile drug courts.

At the same time, the judge must learn to work as part of an effective juvenile drug court team which includes the prosecutor, defense attorney, treatment provider and probation officer as essential members. The team approach creates a non-adversarial relationship among all stakeholders. Decisions traditionally made by the judge in a formal adversarial setting can be considered in a more systemic approach with the drug court team. However, the judicial role remains central to establish and maintain the legal foundation and authority of the process, as well as protect the rights of juveniles. Ultimately, the judge remains the leader of the team.

Juvenile drug courts, as a part of the community's response to substance abuse, should establish a positive, open relationship with the media and community which will allow community members to see and understand how the program works and monitor long term outcomes. As an integrated approach aimed at strengthening families and creating more positive peer groups, the juvenile drug court makes a concerted effort to involve juveniles and their families. Families and young people can learn from the experiences of others and combat the barriers to success through building a productive group identity. Creation of these positive peer group demands careful targeting and selection of a small number of juvenile drug court participants. Continual evaluation and refinement are

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4. Honorable Leonard P. Edwards, *The Juvenile Court and the Role of the Juvenile Court Judge*, 43 *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 2 (1992).
5. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee, *Drugs — The American Family in Crisis: A Judicial Response: 43 Recommendations*, 46 *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 1 (1995).
6. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee, *Drugs — The American Family in Crisis: A Judicial Response: 43 Recommendations*, 46 *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 1 (1995).