

LANCASTER COUNTY ADULT DRUG COURT



Administered by the
Lancaster County Department of Community Corrections

Judicial Oversight by the
Lancaster County District Court

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PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the Lancaster County Adult Drug Court!

Members of the Drug Court Team have put together this handbook to assist you in understanding the program. It will answer some of the questions you may have during your participation.

The Drug Court Team consists of individuals (a Drug Court Judge, a Prosecuting Attorney, a Public Defender, the Drug Court Coordinator, Supervision Officers, a Mental Health Case Manager, and Treatment Providers) who work together to assess and assist participants as they work their way through Drug Court.

As a participant in the program, you will be expected to follow the orders given by the Drug Court Judge. You will also be expected to follow the direction of your Supervision Officer and to comply with your Drug Court bond conditions. The rules and procedures presented here will give you general information about the program, **but it is your responsibility to ask questions regarding anything you do not understand.**

Drug Court has been developed to help you live a clean, sober, and responsible lifestyle. Because the program is voluntary, your participation is completely your choice. This means that although the Drug Court Team is here to assist and guide you, how well you do in the program is your responsibility. You must take the steps necessary to walk away from the life you once lived. We know that the journey you are about to embark upon will be difficult, but the Drug Court Team is here to help you and to give support along the way. We do not want you to fail. We want you to succeed in making positive changes in your life.

Along the path to this new life, you will need support from others beyond the Drug Court Team. We hope you take some time to look around you and start seeking out those who will provide positive support to you while you are in Drug Court and after you graduate. Share this handbook with people you can count on for support. By doing so, you will be helping them understand what you will be doing to work on your recovery. It will also show them that you have made a commitment to change your life.

As a participant in Drug Court, you will be expected to act in accordance with the following conditions at all times. The conditions listed in this section are conditions of your bond and other requirements of the program. Failure to comply with these conditions is not merely a program violation but a violation of your bond and may result in a sanction, up to and including the filing of an Alleged Drug Court Bond Violation. A list of the typical sanctions for various behaviors is on the Graduated Sanctions Matrix which you received a copy of during intake and is posted in the Drug Court Office. This list may be revised at any time, as well as individualized to meet your needs. You will be notified of any changes and may be required to sign a court document with change(s) to your Drug Court bond.

1. You Must Obey All Local, State and Federal Laws

If you commit a new criminal offense after being accepted into the program, the Drug Court Team will review the police reports (if available) or the situation to determine whether there is probable cause to believe you have committed a crime. If there is, you will be sanctioned, which may include the filing of an Alleged Drug Court Bond Violation.

2. Honesty is Required at All Times

Drug Court could not be clearer on this matter: **We demand honesty at all times.** It is within your control to be honest and your successful participation in this program requires it. This is the reason the Drug Court Team sanctions behaviors associated with dishonesty more seriously. More people leave Drug Court unsuccessfully due to dishonest and manipulative behavior than for any other reason. The Drug Court Team realizes that recovery from chemical addiction is difficult, but we expect you to be honest about the difficulties you are having. Open, honest communication will allow the Drug Court Team to help you in ways that will lead you to graduate from the program.

3. Comply with Requests for Consent to Disclose Confidential Information

You will be required to sign forms which grant consent to disclose confidential information, mostly during your intake. Although you may withdraw a consent to disclose confidential information at any time, Drug Court is a criminal justice program and once you sign a consent to disclose confidential information form you do not have the right to withdraw it and remain in the Drug Court program.

4. Attend All Drug Court Activities

While you are in Drug Court, you will be required to participate in many types of therapeutic and prosocial activities. If you would like to make a suggestion on a required monthly activity, you can make a suggestion by filling out the Monthly Activity Request Form and turning it into your Supervision Officer. These activities are designed to help you create a strong support group for yourself. Research indicates that when Drug Court participants graduate, and have strong positive support in their lives, their ability to remain sober and avoid returning to the criminal justice system is highly increased.

5. Be on Time and Do Not Miss Drug Court Activities

You are to be on time to all required activities. Being on time demonstrates responsibility. Tardiness to program activities is disruptive and conveys a message to others that your program is not important to you. Appropriate sanctions will be given to those who are not on time to program activities. Missing any Drug Court activity (which includes treatment activities) **without prior consent** from the supervision office will result in some type of sanction unless it is later determined to be a true emergency. **Leaving a voice message does not constitute prior consent.**

6. Association Restrictions

Treatment Experts and Community Support Programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous) recommend individuals wait at least 12 months after starting their recovery before engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship and Drug Court is supportive of this recommendation. New relationships or infatuations can distract one from focusing on themselves and the recovery process.

If you wish to start a romantic or sexual relationship (even a short term one) with someone, whether in or outside the program, you must first consult with your Supervision Officer. You will be allowed to do so, so long as your treatment contract does not prohibit it or a therapeutic reason does not exist to deny it. Your Supervision Officer will want to talk with you about the possible consequences of such a relationship, in order to provide the most support to you and your potential partner. Persons with criminal histories will generally be approved unless there is a **very significant criminal** background causing the team to be concerned for your safety, as well as the safety of other Drug Court participants or of Drug Court personnel. Drug Court may ask your partner to submit to substance use testing to ensure your sobriety. Hiding a relationship, either romantic or sexual, is an act of dishonesty and will be sanctioned.

7. Submit to Search

The search clause of your Drug Court Bond allows law enforcement and Drug Court personnel to search your person, vehicle, place of residence, electronic devices, or any area over which you have control. It also allows them to drug test you. The purpose of the search will be to look for drugs/alcohol, chemicals and/or equipment used to manufacture controlled substances, and weapons. You will be expected to comply with the search and/or on-site drug testing in a cooperative manner. Searches and on-site drug testing are not to be viewed as punishment but rather as an important part of your program. If any law enforcement or supervision officer presents themselves, you are required to identify yourself as a Drug Court Participant and make yourself available for any search, seizure, drug testing, general welfare check, or other reasonable request. It is not only your responsibility, but also in your best interest to make certain no illegal activities are taking place in areas over which you have control. **Failure to comply or interfere with a search and/or on-site drug testing will result in a sanction, up to and including the filing of an Alleged Drug Court Bond Violation.**

Please Note: This includes deleting or removing any communication from any electronic device under your control. Examples include but are not limited to: deleting text messages, hiding social media accounts or emails, failing to disclose a second electronic device, etc.

8. Issues Relating to Employment / Education

If you are not employed or enrolled in an educational program at the time you enter Drug Court, or if you want to make a change to either one once in the program, you must speak with your Supervision Officer before making any changes and then fill out a request form. You must get permission prior to donating plasma, as this is not considered employment and is typically not allowed. You are required to turn in all paystubs, class schedules and/or grades (or copies of such) as you receive them.

9. Taking Financial Responsibility

Taking responsibility for your debts may be quite stressful. Unless you become financially responsible, you will be unable to develop and maintain the lifestyle of an individual who is law-abiding, productive, responsible, and sober.

If your charges include losses or damages that require you to pay restitution, you may be required to do so while in Drug Court.

Any unbudgeted financial transaction above \$100.00 that is not emergency-related (could not get prior permission of supervision) requires prior approval from your Supervision Officer. This also means that you cannot spend income tax refunds, proceeds from student loans, other loans, etc. without the permission of your Supervision Officer. Breaking large transactions up into smaller amounts is also a direct violation of this policy and will be treated more seriously due to the deception involved.

10. Conduct

It is not possible to detail how you are expected to behave in every situation, but you are expected to behave responsibly, civilly, and maturely. Among other things, this means that you will be courteous and polite at all times. If you want to participate, you must show at all times that you are not an aggressive individual. Learning to respond to others in an appropriate, civil, nonaggressive manner is a vital social skill, one which you will have to display if you want to graduate from the program. Sexual harassment of any type will not be tolerated.

During regular Drug Court hearings you are not to bring food or drink into the courtroom and you are expected to pay attention at all times. Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off in the courtroom. You are to be respectful towards others at all times.

While you are in the program, you will not be allowed to go to concerts, casinos, strip clubs, bars, headshops, or tattoo parlors. If you are unsure of something, always talk to your supervision officer first. You cannot get any new tattoo(s) or piercing(s) while in Drug Court, without prior permission from supervision.

11. Dress Appropriately for All Drug Court Activities

Dressing appropriately for the activities in which you are involved is an important social skill; therefore, the ability to demonstrate this skill while in the program is considered important. Female participants must wear shirts or blouses that do not show the midriff; pants, shorts, skirts, or dresses need to be a reasonable length. Proper undergarments should be worn to all program activities. Male participants must wear shirts and pants (or shorts of reasonable length) as well as proper undergarments to all program activities. Clothing that promotes or advertises alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or violent behavior, or is sexually inappropriate, will not be allowed at any time. Members of the Drug Court Team understand that some participants will have to come directly from work in order to be on time to Drug Court but it is preferred that you come to Drug Court in your work clothes rather than be late.

12. Medical Emergencies

If you are given a medication in the case of a true emergency, such as an automobile accident in which you receive serious injuries, you will not be sanctioned. The Drug Court Team will review these incidents on a case-by-case basis to determine if the medication was given in a true emergency. **You are required to notify all medical professionals that you are on Drug Court, and you are required to notify your Supervision Officer of any medical visits or appointments. If you are physically able to contact your supervision officer, you must call or text prior to receiving any narcotic medication or other medications that may show positive on a drug test.**

13. Vehicles

Prior to buying, leasing, being gifted, or otherwise acquiring any vehicle, you must be given permission by your Supervision Officer. You will be required to complete the *Motor Vehicle Request* form for all vehicles you will be driving. You may be sanctioned if your Supervision Officer discovers you are driving a vehicle you did not report. If you are eligible to obtain your driver's license, you may be required to obtain it as determined in your IPP plan.

14. Planners

While in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the program, you must provide the Drug Court Judge, Supervision Officer, Treatment Provider, or other Drug Court staff with your Drug Court planner upon request. It must be carried upon your person at all times. It is highly suggested that you continue this practice beyond Phase 2; based on your progress, you may be required to have it on your person for a longer period of time.

Drug Testing Procedures

1. Testing Basics

You may not use any substance, controlled or otherwise, whether prescribed or not, that is likely to interfere with substance use testing while you are in Drug Court. This includes any synthetic substance that affects the brain or the mood thereof, including, but not limited to: K2, Spice, Bath Salts, Kratom, etc. You will be subject to random, frequent and observed drug testing throughout your participation in Drug Court. A positive test will be met with a sanction as detailed in the Graduated Sanctions Matrix.

2. Refusal to Submit

Willfully refusing to submit to drug testing, when requested to do so by a member of the Drug Court Team or Community Corrections personnel, will result in the filing of an Alleged Drug Court Violation.

3. Regarding Medications

It is your responsibility to report all medications you are taking regardless of whether they are prescribed or over the counter. In order to take any type of medication you must first complete and sign a *Request to Take New Medication* form and receive permission from your Supervision Officer. Leaving a voicemail of the prescribed medication on your Supervision Officer's phone does not constitute permission.

If you know in advance that you are going to have a medical or dental procedure which will require that you take medication(s), you must fill out a *Request to Take New Medication* form and a *Consent to Release Confidential Information* form to the physician or dentist who will be performing the procedure and have it approved by your Supervision Officer. Failure to do either of these things can lead to being sanctioned.

You are not allowed to consume anything that will cause you to test positive for drug use. Do not be surprised, for example, if you are sanctioned because of a positive drug test for **opiates after eating poppy seeds** or for methamphetamine after taking an over-the-counter sinus medication. You are not allowed to consume CBD products, even if it is allegedly THC-free. It is your responsibility to know what you are consuming. Drug Court does provide a list of medications that have been preapproved; this document will be given to you during your intake and is also available online.

It is your responsibility to inform anyone who has the ability to write you a prescription that you are participating in Drug Court and are not allowed to take any medication that will interfere with your drug testing.

1. Phase Length

Each phase has a minimum amount of time you will spend in that phase. The minimum amount of time you will be in each phase is as follows:

| Phase | Minimum |
|---------|----------|
| Phase 1 | 4 weeks |
| Phase 2 | 16 weeks |
| Phase 3 | 16 weeks |
| Phase 4 | 16 weeks |
| Phase 5 | 26 weeks |

The minimum number of total weeks you are required to stay in Drug Court is 78 weeks, which is eighteen months. No one will graduate from Drug Court in less than 78 weeks; however, most participants will spend more than 78 weeks in Drug Court. This is at least one year of intense programming followed by at least six months of demonstrated long-term change with less structured supervision.

During phase 2 of Drug Court, you will attend and complete your recommended level of substance use treatment. Failure to complete the recommended level of care will likely result in the filing of an Alleged Drug Court Violation.

Drug Court fees accrue each month that you are in Drug Court until you reach Phase 5. These consist of a one-time enrollment fee of \$30.00 and a \$125.00 monthly fee that is charged on the first of every month, beginning with the first of the month following bond-in and ending the day you move to Phase 5.

2. Sobriety

In order to graduate from Drug Court, a participant must achieve at least nine (9) consecutive months of sobriety.

Remember: Drug Court is here to help you be successful. The most successful participants are the ones who are open and honest, and who use their Supervision Officer and peers as support. It is always better to ask than to assume something!