Moving Away from Cookie-cutter Care: What Individualized Treatment Really Means

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1. What is individualized treatment and why do it?

2. If you do individualized treatment, won't participants scam the system? If we don't treat them all with the same expectations, won't they try to get around the rules as much as they can?

3. What should treatment providers be doing to ensure individualized treatment in their program and to get buy-in from the participant?

   “Tell me about your treatment plan.”
   “What do you want to get out of group today to advance your treatment plan.”

Dimension 1: Acute Intoxication and/or Withdrawal Potential
Dimension 2: Biomedical Conditions and Complications
Dimension 3: Emotional, Behavioral, or Cognitive Conditions and Complications
Dimension 4: Readiness to Change
Dimension 5: Relapse, Continued Use, or Continued Problem Potential
Dimension 6: Recovery Environment

(The ASAM Criteria (2013), pp 43-53)
4. What would an individualized treatment plan look like for Carl?

Carl is a 15-year-old male who you suspect meets DSM criteria for Alcohol and Cannabis Use Disorder, with occasional cocaine (crack) use on weekends. He reports no withdrawal symptoms, but then he really doesn’t think he has a problem and you are basing your tentative diagnosis on reports from the school, probation officer, and older sister. Carl has been arrested three times in the past eighteen months for petty theft/shoplifting offenses. Each time he has been acting intoxicated but says he has not been using any drugs. The school reports acting up behavior, declining grades and erratic attendance, but no evidence of alcohol/drug use directly. They know he is part of a crowd that uses drugs frequently.

Yolanda, Carl’s 24-year-old sister, has custody of Carl following his mother’s death from a car accident 18 months ago. She is single, employed by the telephone company as a secretary, and has a three-year-old daughter she cares for. She reports that Carl stays out all night on weekends and refuses to obey her or follow her rules. On two occasions, she has observed Carl drunk. On both occasions, he has been verbally aggressive and has broken furniture. A search of his room produced evidence of marijuana and crack, which Carl says he is holding for a friend.
5. What kinds of reports and interdisciplinary communication and dialogues should be expected to ensure accountable tracking of a participant’s progress toward increased public safety, decreased crime and improved prosocial functioning?

References

“Technical Assistance Guide For Drug Court Judges on Drug Court Treatment Services” - Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. American University, School of Public Affairs, Justice Programs Office. Lead Authors: Jeffrey N. Kushner, MHRA, State Drug Court Coordinator, Montana Supreme Court; Roger H. Peters, Ph.D., University of South Florida; Caroline S. Cooper BJA Drug Court Technical Assistance Project. School of Public Affairs, American University. May 1, 2014.


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