

Polk County Problem Solving Courts

**Honorable Robert L. Williams, Jr.
Presiding Judge**

**Behavioral Health Court (BHC)
Veteran's Treatment Docket**

**Drug Court Laboratory
Adult Drug Court
Juvenile Drug Court
DUI Drug Court
PADC MM Drug Court
PADC Felony Drug Court**

Polk County Behavioral Health Court and Veteran's Treatment Docket (BHC/VTD)



- BHC was initiated in October 2007 (Administrative Order 2-73.0) in response to the growing number of defendants with serious and chronic behavioral health issues who cycle again and again through the criminal justice system. The program was initially funded through the Justice Assistance Grant and the Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant.
- BHC expanded in February 2015 (Administrative Order 2-73.5) to include a Veteran's Treatment Docket (VTD) in an effort to help those veterans with behavioral health issues within in the criminal justice system.
- BHC staff is currently funded under Polk County's Indigent Health Care Division. In addition to these county funded positions, this program receives funding from Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (DCF) for drug testing and receives services from the community network at large.

➤ Successes:

Of 325 total participants since inception in 2007:

- ✓ 156 participants were successful graduates, with only 38.46% were re-arrested within one year post graduation
- ✓ 169 participants were discharged unsuccessfully, and 67.45% were re-arrested within one year of termination

BHC/VTD Vision



- Our vision is, on an individual basis, to treat each person's behavioral health needs, and to reconnect the broken threads of trust and confidence that these offenders have lost through years of untreated mental health issues. We expect **responsibility and accountability** for actions, but we temper those expectations with the understanding that many issues need to be resolved before treatment can be effective. We are working to create a safety net for individuals, who, through loss of resources, cannot access treatment, jobs, medications and other support. Each of us believes that, if we are able to turn around even one life and make permanent changes for the future for just one person, we have done well for that person and for society as a whole.

If not us, who will?

Traditional Versus Non-Traditional

Criminal Justice System



Traditional



Non-Traditional – An alternative to prosecution of cases.

Behavioral Health Court and Veteran's Treatment Docket

- **Developed because traditional court processes are generally not equipped to improve outcomes for offenders with behavioral health issues**
- **To treat each person's behavioral health needs**
- **Expect responsibility and accountability for actions**



Team Approach-Non-Traditional

All problem solving court programs have specialized teams to work together for the best interest of the client while maintaining judicial oversight.

One Judge, One team strategy, Blended expertise

- **Honorable Robert L. Williams, Jr.,**
- **Court Staff**
- **State Attorney's Office**
- **Public Defender's Office**
- **County Probation and State Probation**
- **VA/Veterans Justice Outreach**
- **Community Providers**

Weekly staffing with TEAM prior to court is
CRITICAL.



BHC/VTD Docket Purpose and Eligibility

- BHC and VTD are established pursuant to Administrative Order AO2-73.5
- Diverting these offenders from our jails and into more appropriate community-based mental health treatment is vital to:
 - **Enhance public safety** by providing judges and prosecutors with alternatives to incarceration and making jail bed space available for violent offenders.
 - **Promote the safety and well being** of persons with mental health issues by reducing inappropriate incarcerations.
 - **Reduce county jail costs** to house affected persons, who generally, because of their mental health issues, cost more to house.
- A voluntary program for Polk County residents who are charged with misdemeanor criminal offenses and who suffer from a mental health issue, co-occurring substance use disorder or a developmental disability. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Ed. (DSM-V) is required.
- Participants are offered **treatment-based** sentencing alternatives that utilize **judicial oversight** and appropriate **community-based treatment plans** in lieu of incarceration. Examples of this are counseling, medication management, case management, substance abuse screening, court appearances, positive reinforcements and therapeutic consequences.
- BHC/VTD lasts up to 12 months.

Benefits to the Problem Solving Court



- ✓ **Stops criminal and other self-defeating behaviors (reduction of recidivism)**
- ✓ **Promotes the safety and well-being of persons with mental health issues**
- ✓ **Breaks the cycle of addiction**
- ✓ **Promotes control of life patterns and decisions**
- ✓ **Encourages accountability and responsibility**
- ✓ **Develops health and life skills**
- ✓ **Improves family and other relationships**
- ✓ **Changes thinking and behaviors**
- ✓ **Provides community based support as well as in-house support with judicial oversight**
- ✓ **Program compliance keeps participants out of jail and/or prison**
- ✓ **Saves taxpayer dollars**

Identification and Process

- **Identification:**
 - How to ID potential defendants?
 - Points of Identification: First Appearance, Arraignment, Pre-trial Conferences, VOPs and jail outreach thru the Veteran's Justice Outreach Program
- **Once identified: Recommend to State Attorney and Public Defender or private Attorney**
- **Team staffing occurs every Wednesday prior to court. Staffing includes case review using the team approach. Several important factors are addressed including, but not limited to:**
 1. Is the case a proper fit?
 2. Has the evaluation been completed and does the defendant have a DSM-V diagnosis?
 3. Would it be a diversion or post plea case?
- **Once approved and accepted into Veteran's Treatment Docket, the participant is managed by the court's case managers and community based services are obtained for the participants.**
- **The Court oversees this process for up to 12 months.**
- **If successful, the participant graduates from the program.**
 1. if diversion, case Nolle prosequi
 2. if post plea, probation successfully terminated, or delayed/deferred sentence

Services Provided

- **Referral and linkage to community services such as:**
 - **Substance abuse treatment**
 - **Mental health treatment**
 - **Medical treatment**
 - **Medication stabilization treatment**
 - **Veterans services**
 - **Local food banks**
 - **Community support groups**
 - **Crisis stabilization treatment**
 - **Vocational services**
- **Coordination with Probation**
- **Weekly communication with participants to determine stability and need for additional services**
- **Coordination with Veterans Services Liaison**
- **Coordination with Judicial team**
- **On-site Drug Screening Laboratory Services**

Community Service Providers



Polk County Indigent Health Care Division
Central Florida Behavioral Health Network
Agency for Community Treatment, INC (ACTS)
CARES
Champion for Children Advocacy Center
Citrus Connection
Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating (DACCO)
Families First
Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services, Inc.
Heartland Intergroup
Hope Now
InnerAct Alliance
Lakeland Regional Medical Center
Mental Health Resource Center
Peace River Center
RBHS FACT Team
StandUP Polk (IAA)
Tenth Circuit State Attorney's Office
The Mission Of Winter Haven
Tri-County Human Services, Inc.
VOC Rehab
VISTE Volunteers
Winter Haven Hospital, Center for Behavioral Health

Polk County Drug Court
Early Learning Coalition Polk
Career Source Polk
Catholic Charities
Church Service Center
County Probation
FACT Team of Winter Haven
New Beginning
Heartland For Children
Healthy Families of Polk
Human Services Associates, Inc.
Lake Wales Care Center
Lighthouse Ministries
McGordon Health and Wellness Center
Polk County Sheriff's Office
Salvation Army
Talbot House
Tenth Circuit Public Defender's Office
The Residence
United Way
Volunteers of America
Women's Care Center (WCC)

And many, many, many MORE.....

For More Information about Problem Solving Courts:

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Success Story

PARTICIPANT # 316 - 11/19/2014 – 10/28/2015

This 25 y/o unmarried male diagnosed with Manic Depressive – Psychosis (Bipolar) disorder and substance abuse, requested to participate in the Behavioral Health Program. His first attempt in 2010 with the Behavioral Health Program ended with an administrative discharge for non-compliance. He was only 19 at the time.

Participant was admitted a second time at the age of 25 with new charges still struggling with maintaining stabilization related to behavioral health issues.

His BHC contract/treatment plan included: substance abuse treatment, behavioral health treatment, job stability encouragement, support group attendance and medication management services. He finished Substance Abuse treatment, attended AA, received Mental Health Counseling, and completed community service hours. With a few “bumps” in the beginning and continuous encouragement/support the participant realized only he could make the changes necessary to complete the program successfully.

Participant attended all court appearances as scheduled, while juggling his full time job and other commitments. Although his plate was full, he never complained and was eager to please the court and the Judge. His employer was also very supportive and gave him time to complete his court obligations.

Participant’s growth in his responsibilities and achievements were visible. Maturity and self-confidence gained while in the program and throughout his path of rehabilitation brought him to another level in his life.

A combined effort of the BHC team, support of his family, stabilization on medications and service providers this participant overcame those issues that continued to place him in the criminal system. With the support of the Judge, Probation, Case manager and all persons involved within the BHC team this participant graduated October of 2015, and continues to do well.

He has not re-offended to this date.....



Why?

Because it is the RIGHT thing to DO!

Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorders have
to be more of a PRIORITY issue.

Problem Solving Court Annual Graduation Celebration

Date/Time: Friday, May 20, 2016 at 2:00 P.M.

**Location: Oliver L. Green, Jr. Courtroom on the First
Floor of the Polk County Courthouse**

Keynote Speaker: Steve Enzor

Please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of participants in our Drug Court, Behavioral Health Court and Veterans Docket Programs.

There will be a reception immediately following ceremony.

Questions and Answers



Thank you for your time.