

Successful Treatment Results In Developing Excellence

S.T.R.I.D.E.

STRIDE Program Handbook

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Breaking The Cycle Of Jail And Prison

Is this where you are now?

You -- Drugs/Alcohol and/or Untreated Mental Health Issues – Crime—Jail – Court –
Community Control – Drugs/Alcohol and/or untreated Mental Health Issues –
Community Control Revocation – Jail/Prison – Drugs/Alcohol and/or untreated Mental
Health Issues – Crime – Jail – Court – Community Control—drugs/alcohol and/or
untreated Mental Health Issues – Community Control Revocation – Jail/Prison—
drugs/alcohol and/or untreated Mental Health Issues...

Will it ever end?

Where do the things you really care about fit into this endless cycle?

FAMILY?

FRIENDS?

JOB?

EDUCATION?

YOUR FUTURE?

What Is Your Future Story?

Build it with the STRIDE program and build the RESOURCES you need to create a future story that includes:

- ~A clean and sober lifestyle
- ~A medically stable life
- ~A family life with close relationships
- ~Friends who care about you and not what you can do for them
- ~A job that allows you to take care of yourself and your family
- ~An education so you can get a better job
- ~Stable housing and reliable transportation for you and your family
- ~A future YOU choose

What are the resources the STRIDE program offers?

You gain resources when you create relationships with people who care about you.

The STRIDE Program helps you build relationships to help you achieve your future story.

These relationships include the judge, your community control officer, your case manager, your boss and many others. They all work with you to get the most out of treatment and to empower you to choose your own future.

If you want a future story that you choose, the first step is to commit yourself to changing for good. STRIDE offers you this opportunity. You do the work; STRIDE offers the resources to help you prepare for your future.

What is the STRIDE Program?

“Successful Treatment Results In Developing Excellence” (STRIDE) Program is the name given to the Stow Municipal Court Mental Health Docket. The mental health docket is not a separate court, but rather a specialized program that works within the framework of the existing municipal court. Persons who qualify for the program will be sentenced with sentence suspended subject to community control. During community control, the participant is supervised by the STRIDE Program judge, reporting to the judge on a frequent basis, along with other STRIDE participants.

Why does the Court have a STRIDE Program?

The Court started the STRIDE Program to decrease the impact of mental illness and drug/alcohol problems resulting in crimes. The Court understands that mental health issues and drug/alcohol abuse play a big role in many of the crimes heard by the municipal court. The STRIDE Program connects the person who has committed these crimes with needed treatment and other life services. In making these connections, the program helps that person make a permanent change to a stable, law-abiding life.

How is the STRIDE Program different from regular community control?

Participants in the STRIDE Program are evaluated for a number of conditions that regular probationers are not. All STRIDE participants are evaluated for drug, alcohol and mental health conditions. They are also evaluated for neurological conditions that may affect learning or behavior. The results of these evaluations, and others, are considered when determining if the STRIDE Program would enhance their ability to lead a medically stable, law-abiding life.

What makes a person eligible for the STRIDE Program?

A person who is interested in being in the STRIDE Program must meet both legal and medical factors before admission into the program is offered. The legal factors are: current charge(s); criminal history; adjustments needed to prior community control terms; circumstances of current offense(s); outstanding warrants; and other factors which relate to public safety as well as safety for those providing resources to the participant. The medical factors considered include substance abuse and mental health history, social and family history, other health conditions, together with motivation and willingness of participant to change. Admission to the program is voluntary. It is without regard to race, national origin, age, gender or sexual orientation of an applicant.

What happens if I am accepted to the STRIDE Program?

When a person is legally and medically eligible, the person will be offered entrance into the STRIDE Program. If the person accepts the offer to enter the program, the participant will plead guilty to all pending charges and be sentenced to the maximum fines and jail time. The sentence(s) are suspended with the participant placed on community control. The written treatment plan becomes the conditions of community control.

How long will I be in the STRIDE Program?

The length of the STRIDE Program depends upon the treatment plan and the resources that must be developed. Generally, the treatment plan is divided into steps that together take approximately 24 months to complete. Progress in treatment affects the amount of time spent in a step. The development of resources as the participant works on his/her future story also impacts the time needed in the program. The actual treatment plan and time in each step of the program is determined for each participant by the judge, community control officer, and case manager. Graduates have the opportunity to help others still in the STRIDE Program.

What happens if I don't complete the STRIDE Program?

If a person is terminated from the program, he/she is subject to the jail sentence and fines not forgiven through the STRIDE Program. A hearing will be held to determine whether the participant has violated the terms of community control, which is the treatment plan. If the participant is found to have violated the terms of community control, the suspended sentence is reimposed. If a person is terminated from the program, he/she may not be eligible for the STRIDE Program in the future.

RULES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Releases:

Participant is required to sign releases of information/exchange of information to, from and between the following:

~the judge,

~community control officer,

~all drug/alcohol/medical/mental health provider(s) involved

~and other court staff and STRIDE Program providers authorized by the judge so that they may speak to each other regarding participant's attendance, progress, participation and prognosis in the STRIDE Program and recommended treatment.

The participant understands that if he/she revokes any release of information it will result in immediate termination from the STRIDE Program with subsequent legal consequence.

Cost of the Program

Participant will be assessed a one-time supervision fee of \$500.00 for participation in the STRIDE Program. Participant will also be responsible for court costs and random drug testing that is required.

No Alcohol or Illegal/Mood Altering Chemicals.

Participant agrees to abstain from using or ingesting any and all alcohol and illegal or mood altering chemicals.

Doctor Prescribed Medications

Participant must report any and all prescribed medications to the treatment provider(s) and community control officer. If requested, he/she shall provide verification of any prescription from any doctor including signing a release for a provider of services and/or community control officer to contact his/her doctor. If a doctor believes that it is absolutely necessary to prescribe medication that will yield a positive urine drug screen, the participant must submit a letter to the Court from the physician stating that he/she is aware of the participant's status as a recovering person, why the need for this medication outweighs the possible risks to the participant and that he/she has been made aware of his/her patient's participation in the STRIDE Program and that participant is subject to urine drug screen. If participant tests positive and does not have a letter from a doctor, sanctions may be issued immediately. Participant will also limit use of over-the-counter medications as to not impact their treatment. Participant agrees to take all approved prescribed medications strictly as they have been prescribed.

Following Recommendations of Treatment Provider

Participant agrees to follow the recommendation of any treatment provider and give treatment provider notice of any sanction issued as a result of non-compliance in the STRIDE Program. Further, participant is expected to participate in treatment sessions, not merely attend.

Attending and Being on Time to Treatment Sessions

Participant understands that if he/she is running late or unable to attend a treatment session, participant will call treatment provider. Participant may be asked to provide documentation in order to obtain an excused absence. Any missed sessions due to illness will require a doctor's note. Additionally, participant must inform community control officer personally and immediately of any absences/tardiness of treatment sessions.

Failure to Appear at Court Sessions

Unexcused absences from court sessions are unacceptable. Failure to appear in court as scheduled will result in a bench warrant being issued for arrest of participant.

Agreement to Conduct Self Appropriately

Participant agrees to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner when reporting to the STRIDE Program, to community control officer, to treatment provider, and to any other required appointments. Appropriate manner includes, but is not limited to, being free from the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, arriving on time, being prepared to report to the judge or community control officer or other service provider, dressing appropriately, speaking respectfully both in court and to the community control officer as well as any treatment provider, and maintaining an open and honest attitude.

Staying Out of Bars

Furthermore, participant understands that, as a STRIDE participant, he/she is not permitted to enter any business establishment that serves alcoholic beverages for consumption on site.

Current Contact Information

Participant shall provide community control officer and all treatment providers with current address, telephone number, place of employment, and place where any educational classes are being attended.

Proof of Attendance at 12-Step Meetings

Participant understands that he/she is required to provide proof of any twelve-step recovery meetings attended. Verification must be presented to the judge during the STRIDE Program court sessions. Proof is considered a written attendance slip signed and dated by the meeting facilitator after each meeting attended.

Obtaining and Maintaining Employment

Participant agrees to obtain and maintain verifiable employment, either fulltime, or if enrolled in an educational program, part-time. Employment must be consistent and legitimate. Further, if participant is required to pay restitution, participant must work out a payment plan with community control officer and follow through on it. Participant also must pay any and all fees and court costs owed to the Stow Municipal Court. Participant must pay any and all fines/costs/fees owed to any other court. Participant will not be eligible to graduate unless all of these monetary obligations have been paid.

Obtaining a GED/HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

If participant does not have a high school diploma or GED, participant must obtain a GED prior to graduation from the STRIDE Program, unless participant has a learning disability that prevents him/her from obtaining a GED. Participant will be expected to attend and be able to verify attendance at all classes.

Participant Payee Involvement

Participant payees are required to attend STRIDE Program court sessions with participant. Much of the participant's success during and after the program will depend on his/her payee.

Family, Friends, Sponsor May Attend STRIDE.

Family, friends, and/or sponsor are also welcome and encouraged to attend STRIDE Program court sessions with participant. Emotional and moral support is very important for recovery.

Policy/Procedure for Urine Drug Screen

Participant agrees to submit to random Urine Drug Screen (“UDS”) while involved in the STRIDE Program.

A missed UDS is the same thing as a positive UDS and will result in court sanctions.

Participant is not permitted to drink more than forty (40) ounces of any liquid prior to providing a urine sample. This will eliminate the possibility of diluted urine screens, which are considered positive UDS.

If there is any discrepancy in whether or not participant provided a urine sample, the burden of proof is on participant to provide verification. If no written verification is available, participant may go to jail as a sanction just as for a positive UDS.

If participant tests positive on a UDS and wishes to have the specimen re-tested for confirmation, participant will be expected to pay for the re-test. If the re-test is returned negative, the court will refund the re-test fee. If the re-test is returned positive, participant will receive court sanctions.

If participant desires to leave Summit County, Ohio for any length of time, participant must obtain permission from community control officer. In addition, participant will be expected to make arrangements for ongoing UDS in the location where participant may be or an alternative arrangement may be ordered by the Court or Community Control.

Participant will be required to submit to a drug screen at any time upon request by the judge, community control officer, and/or case manager. A refusal to submit to a UDS will be considered a positive screen subject to appropriate sanctions, including jail.

PROGRAM STEPS

PHASE I

Step 1. Contemplation

This phase is associated with individuals being more aware of personal consequences associated with substance use, non-compliance with psychiatric care and involvement in the criminal justice system. There may be some ambivalence toward changing behavior, individuals are on the “teeter-totter” of understanding pros and cons of changing, and may doubt long-term benefits associated with quitting will outweigh the short term-costs. During Contemplation individuals are more open to receiving information and are more likely to use educational interventions and reflect on their own feelings and thoughts concerning negative behavior. **(Time Frame 4-6 weeks)**

- 1) Attend four (4) consecutive court appearances.
- 2) Attend all Doctor appointments unless excused
- 3) Attend all Case Management appointments unless excused
- 4) Take medications as prescribed
- 5) Verbalize an understanding of program expectations
- 6) Complete assessment for chemical dependency needs
- 7) Complete MHC SAMI Assessment

Step 2. Preparation/ Determination

During this phase individuals have made a commitment to make a change and begin taking small steps toward cessation of the problem behavior. It is during this phase when individuals often gather information about what they need to do to change their behavior. **(Time Frame 3-6 months)**

- 1) Seek or obtain stable housing
- 2) Attend all court appearances unless excused
- 3) Attend all Doctor appointments unless excused
- 4) Attend all case management appointments unless excused
- 5) Take medications as prescribed
- 6) Complete MHC IOP (if required)
- 7) A minimum of 30 days with negative drug screens
- 8) Complete vocational assessment/referral to Pathways (VR)

Steps 3. Action/Willpower:

During this phase individuals believe they have the ability to change their behavior and are actively involved in changing behavior. Action/Willpower is the shortest of phases and is the point when individuals are “AT THE GREATEST RISK FOR RELAPSE”. Individuals begin to develop plans to deal with both personal and external pressures that may lead to slips. Individuals are often open to receiving help and likely to seek support from others. The use of short-term rewards to sustain motivation can be effective. **(Time Frame 3-6 months)**

- 1) Seek, obtain, or maintain stable housing
- 2) Attend all court appearances unless excused
- 3) Attend all Doctor appointments unless excused

- 4) Attend all case management appointments unless excused
- 5) Compliance with all mental health treatment
- 6) Active participation in structured daily activity
- 7) Participation of Recovery Group for relapse prevention (if required)
- 8) Complete Individualized Life Plan
- 9) Complete Life Skills Group

PHASE II

Step 4. Maintenance

Individuals should be able to successfully avoid any temptations to return to the bad habit. Individuals are regularly reformulating the rules of their lives and acquiring new skills to deal with life and avoid relapse. **(Time Frame 3-6 months)**

- 1) Maintain stable housing
- 2) Attend all court appearances unless excused
- 3) Compliance with all mental health treatment
- 4) Attend all case management appointments unless excused
- 5) Participation in structured daily activity
- 6) Active participation in structured daily activity
- 7) Active participation in Recovery Planning, Job Development, or Employment
- 8) No new convictions for prior 90 days
- 9) Participation of Recovery Group for relapse prevention
- 10) A minimum of 90 days with negative drug screens

Step 5. Commencement/Relapse Prevention (Time Frame 2-4 months)

- 1) Maintain stable housing
- 2) Compliance with mental health services
- 3) Review Individualized Life Plan
- 4) Active participation in employment, volunteer services, or structured daily activity
- 5) No new convictions within 6 months of graduation date
- 6) Complete Satisfaction Survey
- 7) A minimum of six months sobriety/ negative drug screens
- 8) Participation in Commencement Ceremony

AFTER GRADUATION FROM STRIDE PROGRAM

After graduation from STRIDE Program the participant is to continue to obey all laws for a period of 1 year.

SANCTIONS

The STRIDE Program uses sanctions to help a participant conform behavior. Entry into the STRIDE Program requires more of a participant than regular community control. It is not an “easy way out”.

The STRIDE Program offers participant a way to have a different kind of life, a life free from drugs and/or alcohol and a life that is medically stable. It offers a life with the prospect of hope and promise. Potential participants are urged to consult with their attorney, family members or other supportive persons in their lives before they commit to the program. While entry into the STRIDE Program is voluntary, compliance with the community control terms is mandatory.

The STRIDE Program is serious about success and expects participants to take their commitment seriously, too. The purpose of the program is to change lives, and sanctions for not complying with the community control terms is a necessary tool, one unique to the criminal justice system, to help reinforce change.

Sanctions are issued according to the seriousness of a violation. Serious violations could result in termination from the program. On any behavior that warrants sanctions, there is an overriding consideration of whether the participant should continue in the program.

The sanctions are issued by the judge on a case-by-case basis and with consideration of the effect on treatment for mental health conditions. While the judge does not have a defined sanction for each violation, it is important for the participant to understand the sanctions that would be considered by the judge upon a violation.

Some of the sanctions the judge may order include but are not limited to :

- Community service
- Writing assignment
- Increase frequency of court hearings
- Increase frequency of UDS
- Increase frequency of AA/NA meetings
- Not waiving fine/costs/fees
- Withholding discretionary spending money through payee
- Restitution
- Letters of apology
- Jail
- EMHA
- Completion of inpatient or other program

REWARDS

The goal is to encourage success and discourage failure. With that objective, the STRIDE Program uses rewards and incentives as an important component in making lasting changes in behavior. Incentives and rewards demonstrate acknowledgement of the difficult changes participants are making in their lives.

Participants are rewarded by:

- Decrease frequency of court hearings
- Forgiving all or part of fine/costs/fees
- Vouchers to stores or restaurants
- Tickets for recreation such as a movie
- Personal care items
- Discontinuing certain services as medically appropriate
- Forgiving all or part of jail sentence
- Transportation passes for personal use
- Recognition of accomplishment from the judge

The judge will dispense rewards as the participant's status and conduct indicate. The STRIDE Program seeks to be creative in its use of rewards, ever mindful of the therapeutic impact on client and the needs of the criminal justice system.

The ultimate reward is clinical stability and termination of community control. As a graduate of the STRIDE Program, the participant may be given the opportunity to speak at a STRIDE Program meeting to current participants and/or mentor new participants in the program.

Upon successful completion of the STRIDE Program, a participant is required to attend the graduation ceremony with presentation of a certificate or plaque.

LET'S IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE...

You've started to work with others who are on the same path you have been safely and successfully traveling; you're able to offer hope and encouragement because you've been there. Now that you've graduated...

It's been twenty-four months of hard work and a meaningful transition to a new, sober, stable and clean lifestyle.

You may have earned your GED, graduated from high school, or enrolled in college.

You've found a job that provides you with financial independence and satisfaction.

You have met new friends with whom you can share the joys as well as the frustrations of recovery – friends who value you for who you are, not what you can do for them.

Maybe your marriage or other significant relationships have seen positive changes.

Perhaps your children have come to know you in a new way and to feel more safe and secure with you present in their lives.

You have found some sense of security in your own life. Your words will mean more to a newcomer than anyone else's! BUT, your journey has just begun. The judge, your community control officer, and your case manager recognize your efforts but remind you that the rest of the adventure is up to you.

Freedom from the prison of drugs, alcohol and/or untreated mental illness requires steady, day-by-day effort. Hopefully, the tasks of recovery have become second nature to you. You see that your life is better today than it was when this journey began.

Get active in your community, share what you've learned, and give back to the community.

You never have to return to jail again, or stand before a judge again, IF you're willing to keep doing what you've been doing.

Your future is in your hands. The adventure has just begun. Continue to keep your STRIDE one step at a time.

We hope for you a fulfilling life.