

# Implementing Best Practices in Your Drug Court

Juliette R. Mackin, Ph.D.





# What are best practices and why care about them?



- Program practices that contribute to better outcomes
- Lots of research nationally on drug courts has helped us figure out what works best
- The how-to's of the 10 Key Components and making the drug court model real
- Still allow for creativity and individuality



## **DRUG COURT REVIEW**

**Volume VIII, Issue 1**

**Special Issue**

## **BEST PRACTICES IN DRUG COURTS**

# Best practices



Found over 50 practices that were related to significantly lower recidivism or lower costs or both

# Top 10 Drug Court Best Practices: Reduce Recidivism



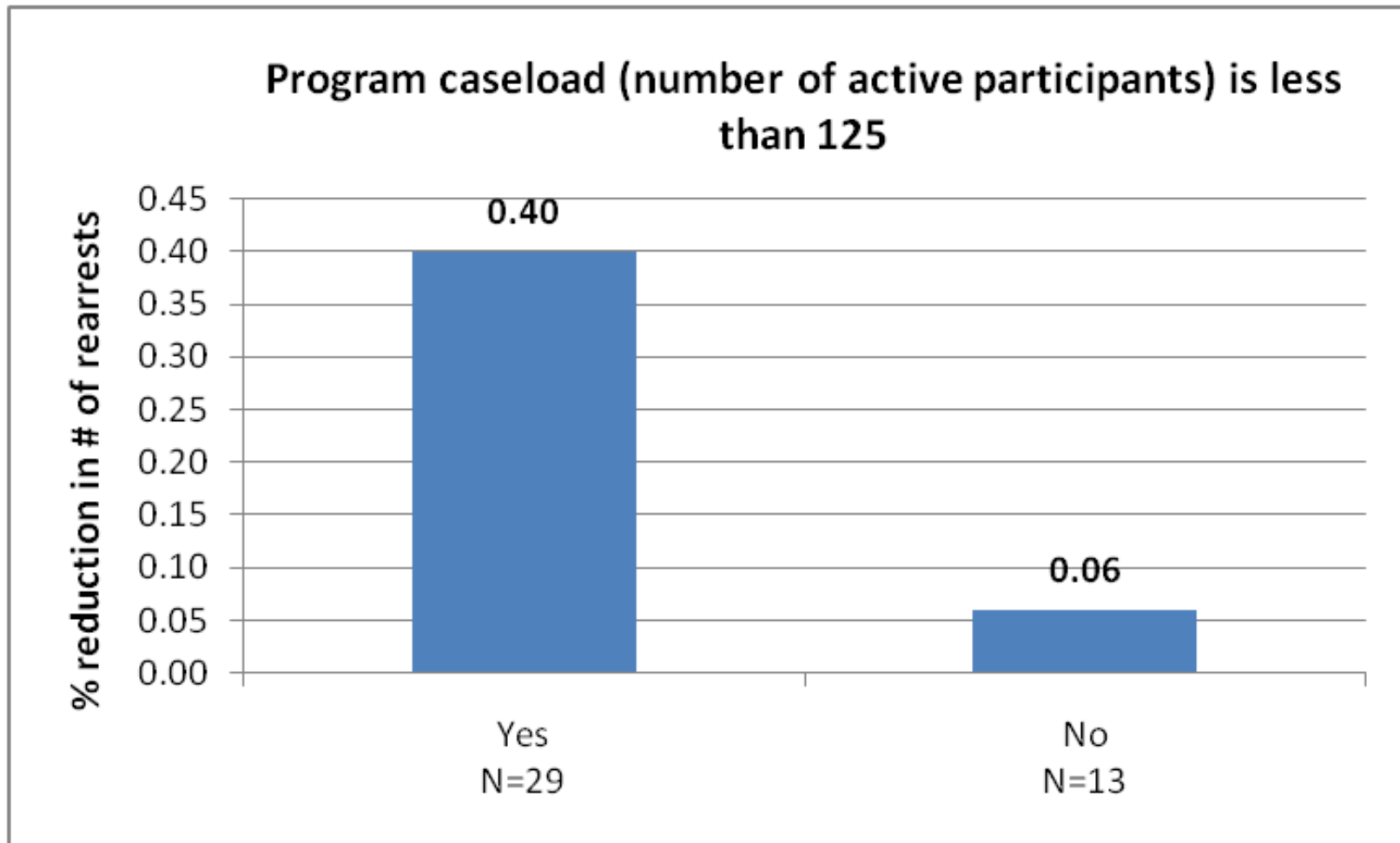
1. Program caseload is less than 125 (active)
2. Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation
3. Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings
4. Treatment communicates with court via email
5. A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)

# Top 10 Drug Court Best Practices: Reduce Recidivism



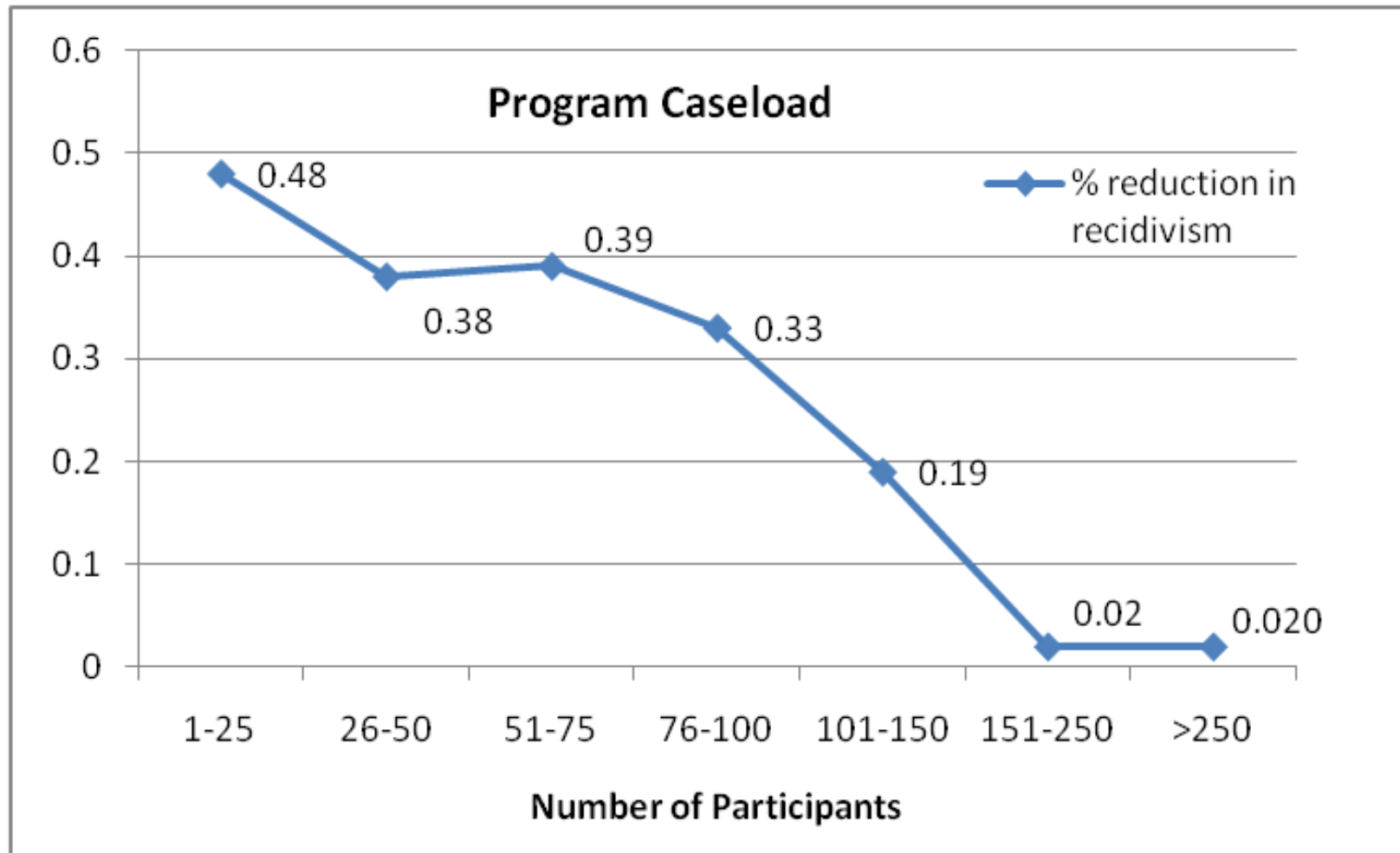
6. Review of the data/program stats has led to modifications in drug court operations
7. A representative from treatment attends court sessions
8. Drug court allows non-drug charges
9. Law enforcement is a member of the drug court team
10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations

# Program caseload of less than 125: 567% greater reductions in recidivism



**Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$**

# Program caseload of less than 125: 567% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



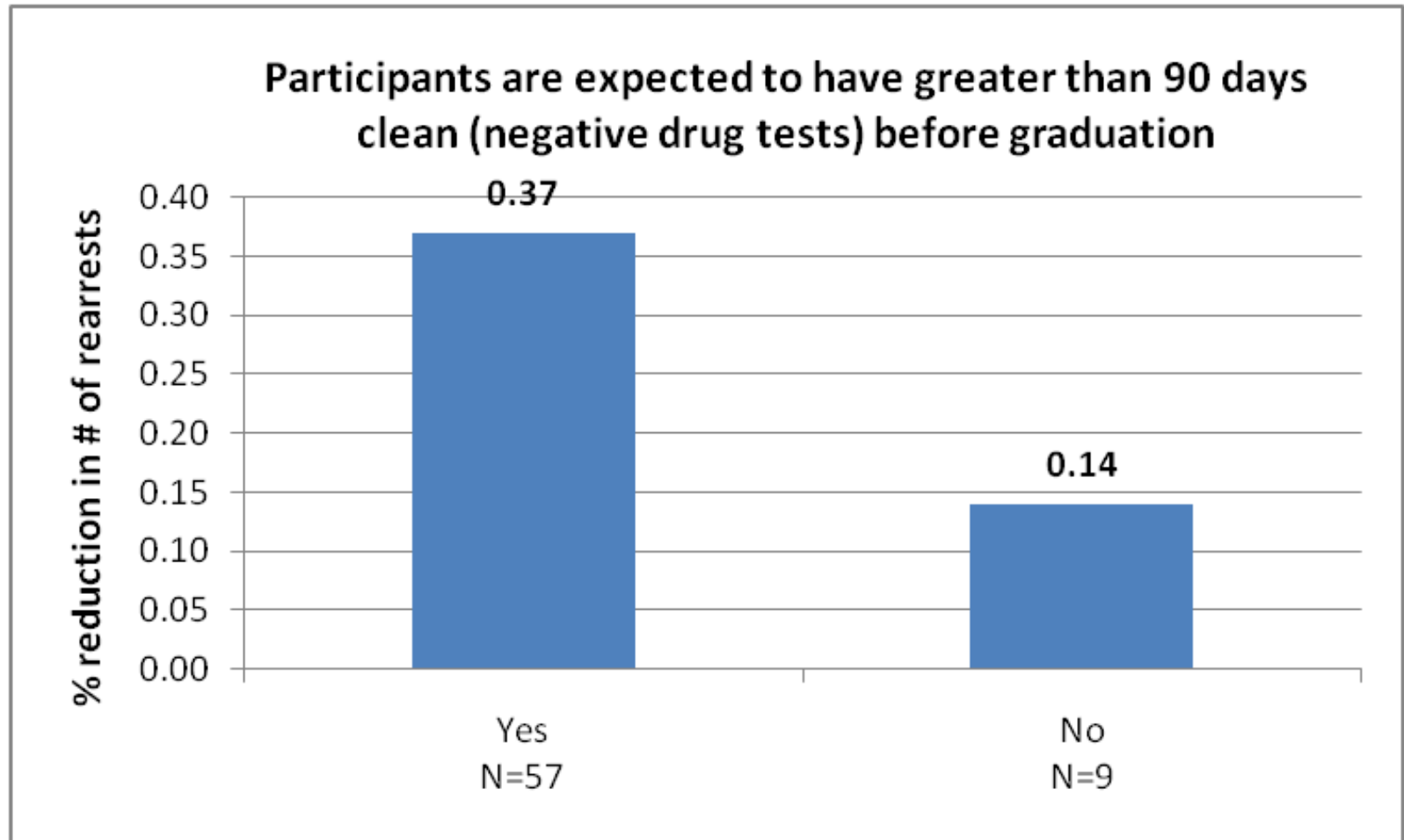
# Program caseload of less than 125: 567% greater reductions in recidivism



- The Judge spent less time per participant in court
- Tx and LE were less likely to attend staffings
- Tx and LE was were less likely to attend court hearings
- Tx was less likely to communicate with the court through email
- Greater number of Tx agencies (8 vs 3)
- Drug tests were less frequent
- Team members were less likely to be trained

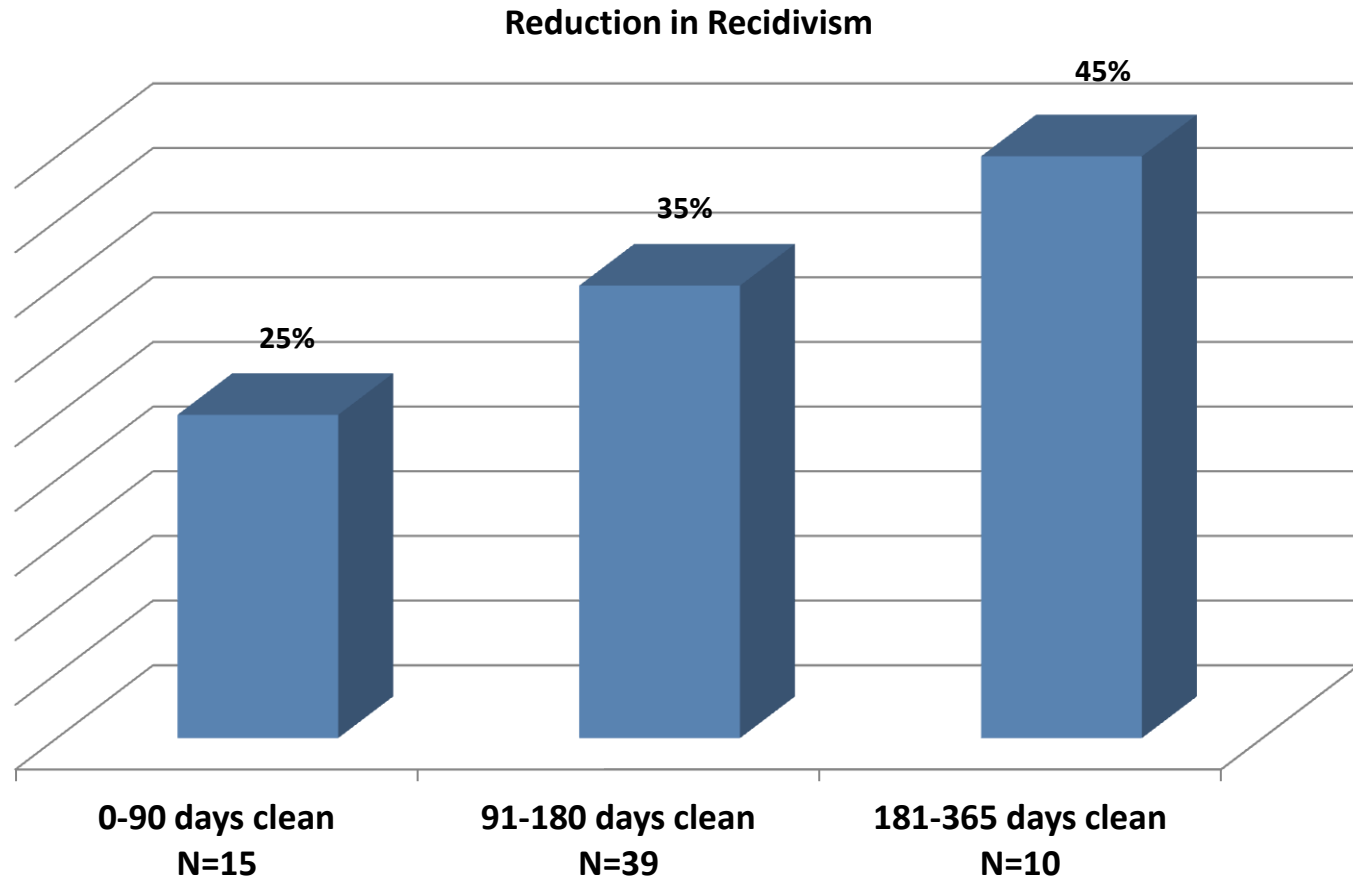
\*All findings above were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Participants are expected to have more than 90 days clean before graduation:  
164% greater reductions in recidivism



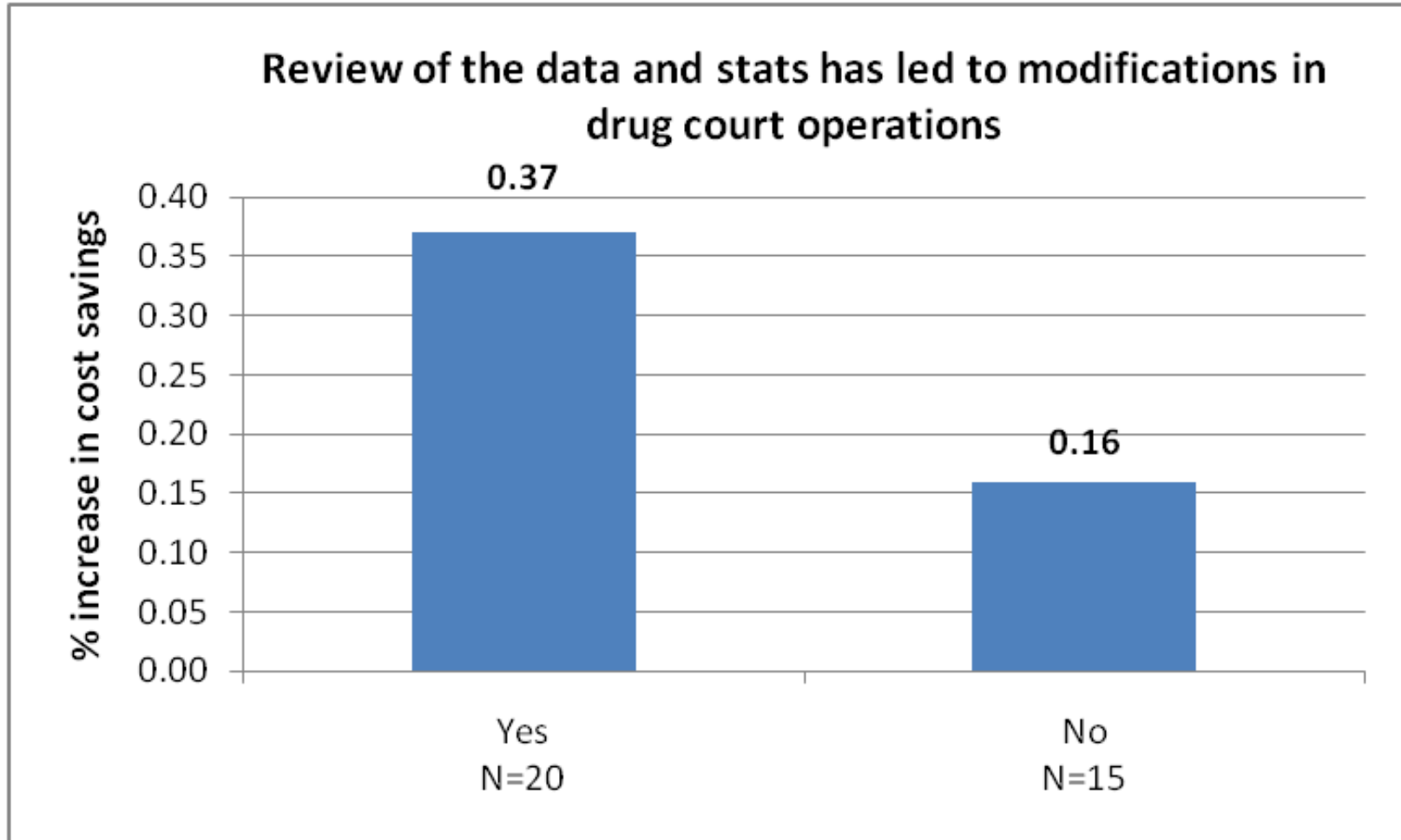
**Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)**

Participants are expected to have more than 90 days clean before graduation:  
164% greater reductions in recidivism



**Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)**

# Review of the data and stats has led to modifications in drug court operations: 131% higher cost savings



**Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$**



# How do we know what practices are best?



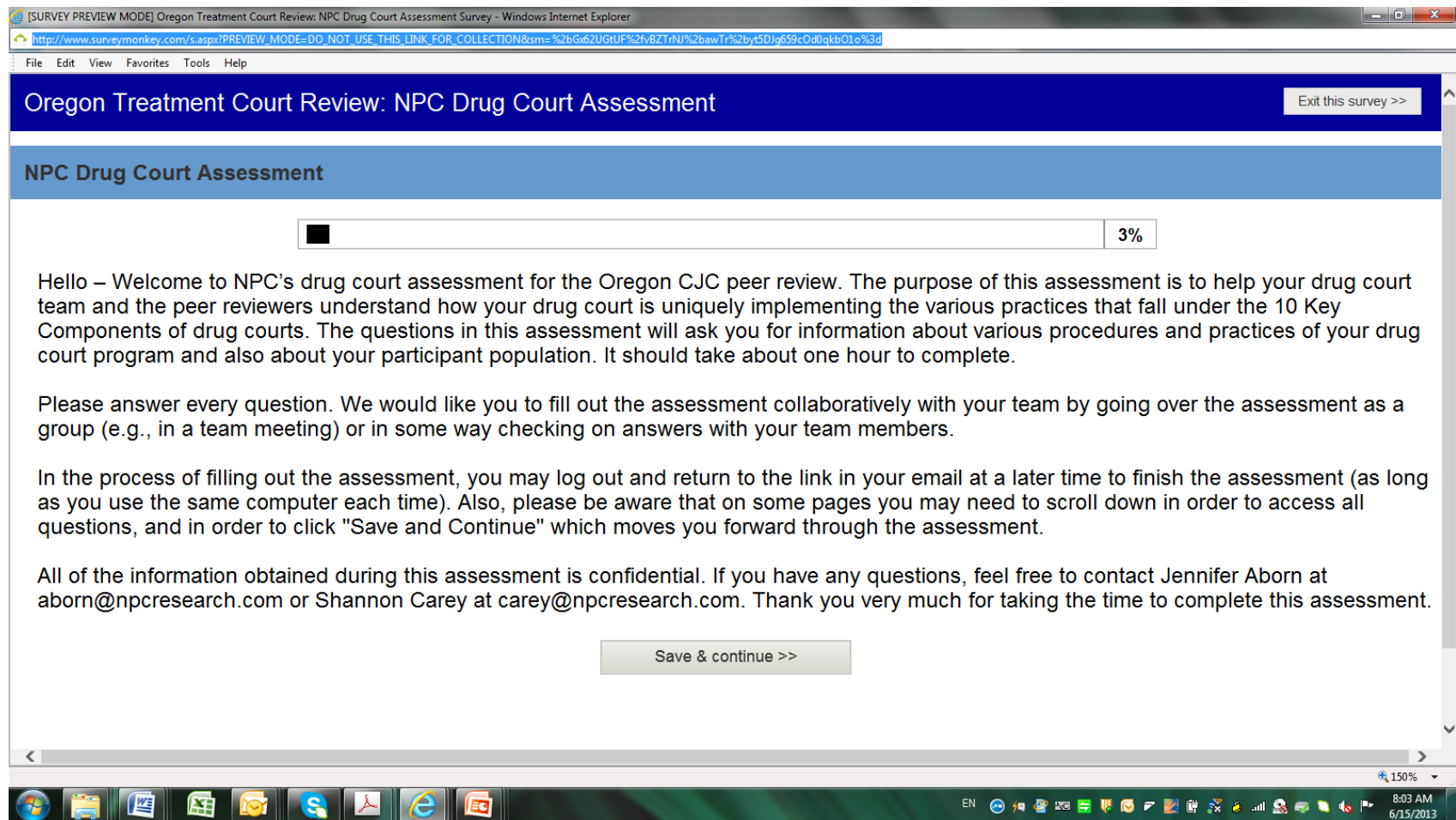
- Coming to these meetings and conferences
- Checking information on the NADCP/NDCI Web site
- Reading research briefs, newsletters, listserve postings
- We are still learning, so it's important to stay updated on new findings

# How do we know if we are using best practices?



- Team member(s)
- Researcher in a partner agency
- Outside evaluator
- Drug court expert or consultant
- Peer from another program

# Online assessment



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Oregon Treatment Court Review: NPC Drug Court Assessment Survey - Windows Internet Explorer". The address bar displays a URL from surveymonkey.com. The page has a dark blue header with the title "Oregon Treatment Court Review: NPC Drug Court Assessment" and a button "Exit this survey >>". Below the header is a light blue section titled "NPC Drug Court Assessment". A progress bar shows a small black segment followed by "3%". The main content area contains the following text:

Hello – Welcome to NPC's drug court assessment for the Oregon CJC peer review. The purpose of this assessment is to help your drug court team and the peer reviewers understand how your drug court is uniquely implementing the various practices that fall under the 10 Key Components of drug courts. The questions in this assessment will ask you for information about various procedures and practices of your drug court program and also about your participant population. It should take about one hour to complete.

Please answer every question. We would like you to fill out the assessment collaboratively with your team by going over the assessment as a group (e.g., in a team meeting) or in some way checking on answers with your team members.

In the process of filling out the assessment, you may log out and return to the link in your email at a later time to finish the assessment (as long as you use the same computer each time). Also, please be aware that on some pages you may need to scroll down in order to access all questions, and in order to click "Save and Continue" which moves you forward through the assessment.

All of the information obtained during this assessment is confidential. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jennifer Aborn at [aborn@npcresearch.com](mailto:aborn@npcresearch.com) or Shannon Carey at [carey@npcresearch.com](mailto:carey@npcresearch.com). Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this assessment.

At the bottom of the content area is a button labeled "Save & continue >>". The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 8:03 AM on 6/15/2013.

# Sample summary report

Tech Asst Indiv Site Report - Sample County Drug Court - Microsoft Word

Home Insert Page Layout References Mailings Review View EndNote X5 Acrobat

Clipboard Font Paragraph Styles Editing

Times New Roman 12

Clipboard Font Paragraph Styles Editing

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## RESULTS: SAMPLE COUNTY DRUG COURT

*All the best practices listed in the table below are associated with substantially better drug court outcomes including significantly reduced recidivism and/or increased cost savings.*

### Best Practices Responses by Key Component

“Yes” indicates that the program reports performing this practice.  
 “No” indicates that the program reports not performing this practice.  
 “Missing” indicates that the program did not respond to this question on the survey.  
 “NA” indicates that this practice does not apply to the program.

<b>Key Component #1: Drug courts integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing.</b>	
Law enforcement is a member of the drug court team	Yes
All key team members attend staffing (judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, treatment, program coordinator, and probation)	Yes
The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)	Yes
A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)	Yes
Coordinator attends drug court team meetings (staffings)	Yes
Law enforcement attends drug court team meetings (staffings)	Yes
All key team members attend court sessions/status review hearings (Judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, treatment, program coordinator, and probation)	Yes
A representative from treatment attends court sessions (status review hearings)	Yes
Law Enforcement attends court sessions (status review hearings)	Yes
Treatment communicates with court via email	Yes
<b>Key Component #2: Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.</b>	
A prosecuting attorney is part of the drug court team	Yes
A defense attorney is part of the drug court team	Yes

Page: 3 of 9 Words: 3,052 English (United States) 120%

2:24 PM 6/15/2013



# Once we know how we align, then what?



- Share the report with all partners
- Meet as a team to discuss results
- Include a facilitator/consultant if desired
- Review recommendations and areas for improvement
- Make an action plan
- Start working on it!
- Follow up, keep at it

# Program improvement: Where do we start?



- Which practices are easy to change? (not controversial, not costly, not difficult)
- Which practices are most important (biggest potential impact on outcomes, including staff morale, participant success)?
- Which practices does the team agree would be beneficial?
- What are the short-term steps?

# Where are you in this process?



- Learning about best practices
  - Assessing your program
  - Discussing results
  - Making a plan
  - Implementing changes
- ❖ What is one step you can take when you go home?

# What changes has your program made?



- How did you make them?



# Have questions or want more information?



Juliette Mackin

NPC Research

[mackin@npcresearch.com](mailto:mackin@npcresearch.com)

503-243-2436 x114

*Presentation template by [www.presentationmagazine.com](http://www.presentationmagazine.com)*



A low-angle photograph looking up at the branches of a tree. The branches are dark and silhouetted against a bright blue sky. The leaves are small and green, some catching the light and appearing yellowish-green. The overall composition is a dense network of lines and colors.

# **Best Practices in Drug Court: Practical Applications**

**Norma D. Jaeger, M.S.**



# Evidence-based Practices



- Follow Risk-Need-Responsivity Principles
- Use Validated Assessment Tools
- Adhere to a Clearly Defined Target Population
- Implement Research-based Drug Court Practices - Standards & Guidelines
- Use Evidence-based Substance Use Disorder Treatment Models
- Monitor Fidelity

# Risk – Need – Responsivity



- Idaho Drug Court Statute requires a criminogenic risk assessment prior to drug court acceptance
- Target high(er) risk offenders
- Standards adopted which reinforce taking moderate to high risk offenders (LSI-R 18-40)
- Target the identified criminogenic needs (anti-social attitudes, substance use disorder, decision-making/problem-solving)



# Use Validated Assessment Tools



- Statewide / System-wide Use of Global Appraisal of Individual Needs GAIN SS, GAIN I, GAIN Core
- Level of Services Inventory – Revised LSI-R
- Statewide Common (mental health) Assessment  
\* *not validated instrument*
- Trauma Assessment Needed

# Adhere to Clear Target Population



- Target High(er) Risk Offenders
- Educate and Persuade All Stakeholders
- Use Risk Assessment in Admission Process
- Statute Requires Substance Abuse Assessment of “Dependent”
- Don’t mix high and low risk offenders
- Allow violent and non-drug offenses

# Research-based Drug Court Practices: Standards and Guidelines



- Guidelines 2003 / Standards 2011
- Examples:
  - Court size 125 or less
  - LSI Score – Moderate to High Risk (18-40)
  - Judges serve minimum 3 years
  - Group size 12 or less
  - One treatment provider preferred / two maximum
  - Incentives more than sanctions
  - Drug test results within 48 hours
  - Use program evaluation results in improvements

# Evidence-based Treatment



- Foster use of Evidence-based Models
  - Matrix Model
  - Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
  - Motivational Interviewing
  - Seeking Safety
  - Moral Reconciliation Therapy
  - Celebrating Families

# Monitor Fidelity: Peer Review



- Peer Review is a three-way win:  
    Court Reviewed \* Reviewer's Court \* State
- Highly Structured Process
- Evidence and Standards-Based
- Includes both Self assessment and Observation
- Blueprint for Teamwork to Improve Court
- Baseline and progressive improvement
- Basis for compliance monitoring



# Peer Review Steps



- Statewide Policy and Procedure
- Peer Reviewer Training
- Introductory Letter to Court
- “Monkey Survey” Pre-assessment
- Schedule On-site Visit
- Visit Court
- Exit Interview
- Written Report

# Peer Review On-site Visit



- Site-visit from Trained Peer Reviewer
  - Interview team members
  - Observe Staffing
  - Observe Court
  - Interview Participants
- Exit Interview with Checklist
- Written Report with Action Plan Format

# Other Fidelity Assessments



- State-level Staff Reviews
- Wider use of the Operational Practices Survey (Monkey Survey)
  - Self Assessment
  - State Assessment
- Reach Out for External Process Evaluation
- National Technical Assistance Review

# What is Technical Assistance (TA)



- TA builds on strengths and assists with the sustainability of your grant so that you can meet your grant goals and objectives and strongly position your organization with an eye toward the future. It can come in many forms:
  - Consultation
  - Advice
  - Support
  - Training

# Examples of TA



- Evidence-based Practices
- Specific Evidence-based Models (e.g. Matrix Model, Motivational Interviewing, Seeking Safety, Moral Reconation Therapy)
- Program Implementation
- Systems Management
- Skills Training
- Strategic Planning



# How to Request TA



- Contact your GPO to discuss a TA Request
- Initiate a TA request using the online TA request system
  - Go to the Services Accountability Improvement System (SAIS) Web site at:  
[www.samhsa-gpra.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa-gpra.samhsa.gov)
- Enter your GPRA username and password to access the system and the TA Request form

# Have questions or want more information?



Norma D. Jaeger  
Idaho Supreme Court  
[njaeger@idcourts.net](mailto:njaeger@idcourts.net)  
208-947-7406

*Presentation template by [www.presentationmagazine.com](http://www.presentationmagazine.com)*