Why a Treatment Court?

- Family Treatment Court began as a program of Oneida County Family Court in March, 2005, centered in the cities of both Utica and Rome.
- Substance abuse problems interfere with parents’ ability to care for their children, leading to charges of neglect in Family Court.
- Children grow and develop optimally in safe and stable homes, with their parents or with an acceptable alternative (Adoption & Safe Families Act – ASFA).
- Parents who abuse substances are less likely to follow through with court mandates and more likely to lose custody of their children than are non-substance-abusing parents (Cash & Wilke, 2003).

Kids Can’t Wait!

Why Oneida County?

- Nationally, in 2003, Child Protective Services investigated more than 2.9 million reports of maltreatment.
- In 2005, Oneida County Dept. of Social Services Caseworkers reported an increase in parents who were abusing crack, cocaine, and heroin and noted barriers and delays for parents to receive treatment and other essential services (Oneida Co. DSS).
- The traditional Family Court System relied on a fragmented social services network with no way to coordinate or marshal essential services (OCFTC Implementation Grant Proposal, 2005).
- More than half of adult admissions for substance abuse treatment in Oneida County are for alcohol (56%), followed by marijuana (16%), crack (14.7%), and heroin/other opiates (8.2%).

Children ‘biggest losers’ in Family Court

Participant Voices: In the beginning

“... at first, I was very angry – not just with the Court, but because of what I’d done!”

“I didn’t want anyone to tell me what to do ... I agreed to FTC thinking, ‘Well, you can always get out!’”

“I was irritated as hell. It bothered me that they made me get breathalyzed, urine screens ... I just wanted to quit!”

“In the beginning, I fought, I screamed, I cried, I threatened to pull out.”

(Manley, 2007. Family Treatment Court: Lessons Learned from the First Year)

Participants in FTC 2005-2008

Who Are the Participants?

- Referrals from Oneida County DSS were lower than expected, and turnover in child welfare staff was key.
- Criteria for acceptance and exclusion ruled out numbers of families with domestic violence and mental health issues.
- Potential participants refused to participate in the program, possibly out of fear or reluctance to cooperate.

Participant Voices: In the end

“It’s helped me as a person – a lot of people don’t pay attention to the person behind the addict. We’re sick people trying to get better.”

“It’s been an opportunity to realize the kind of life that I want to live again – above the chaos, above the drama.”

“I didn’t think that I’d ever be sober. You’re down on yourself, and they pick you back up. I’m a new improved person. I had a problem. I took care of it, and I’m moving on.”

“I can handle myself now. There’s a difference in attitude and in my whole appearance. My family is proud of me!”

(Manley, 2007. Family Treatment Court: Lessons Learned from the First Year)

What Defines Success?

“... we try to look at the person as a whole, which I think is best.”

“Is doing well our version, or is it just staying clean and sober? If we can get as far as that and teaching kids what’s right, that’s success ... if we can break the chain.”

“It’s their ability to get clean, stay clean, get their child back and able to maintain so that they don’t have to ‘replace’ the children.”

“You could see in their selves - they like themselves, they are able to express that and still give to other people. They don’t need us anymore, they can stand on their own two feet.”

(Manley, 2008. Successes and Failures in Family Treatment Court)
SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION
PROGRAM THEORY IN A FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

Types of Program Theory

What is Program Theory?
Program theory is a way of explicitly stating the theories behind the choice of specific program components. Program theory links interventions to projected outcomes to assist in program evaluations and make program improvements.

Program theory is also:
"The assumptions, principles, and hypotheses used both to develop their programs or services and to understand effects."
- Colin Robson, 2000

"The set of beliefs that underlie action."
- Carol Weiss, 1997

How is Program Theory Helpful?
- Planners, staff, and program evaluators can all use program theory to help clarify a program’s focus. By discussing the assumptions behind a program’s activities or goals, these groups have the opportunity to create a better program.
- Program theory is useful to indicate the differences between assumptions and actual outcomes in a given program and can shape program evaluation by indicating a program’s effectiveness.
- It helps to identify the intermediate results of a program. Planners have the opportunity to understand the thought processes individuals follow to make the program more effective.
- Program theory can explains the “hows” and “whys” of certain outcomes within a program.

Developing a Program Theory
1. Talk with program staff for theory ideas.
2. Consult additional literature and other research for more ideas.
3. Examine evaluations of similar programs, if possible.
4. Identify implausible program theories. These may contain unstated and unrealistic assumptions about the program.

By Jennifer Kleindienst, Hamilton College ‘09
What is a case study?

Originating in political science and sociology, the case study is a research strategy where the focus is developing an in-depth analysis of a case taking context into consideration.

Data is collected using multiple sources, such as documents, records, interviews, observations and physical artifacts. This process is known as triangulation. Triangulation enhances the validity of case studies and reduces the threat of researcher and respondent biases.

Types of Case Studies

There are different types of case studies because a “case” can be virtually anything. An individual case study is the most common, and most basic. This type of study is a detailed account of one person, often focusing on antecedents, perceptions, and attitudes. They are used to explore potential causes, determinants, processes, etc., that contribute to an outcome.

Case studies do not have to be about an individual though. Case studies can be performed on groups, institutions, neighborhoods, services, relationships, events, etc. In all of these varying studies it is still necessary to follow a research design and to use triangulation methods.

Consent Form

The Consent Form is essential in any research study. It ensures that the participant understands the purpose of the study and consents to participate.

Sample Case Study Phone Interview

Between Student Interviewer and FTC Participant

Date

Days Sober

Alissa Lintala

“09

Participant Thoughts

– “My son thanked the Judge for ‘giving his mommy back.’”

– “I am confident, independent, proud to pay the bills, and now I know that I don’t need to have a man around.”

– “My success was 50% me and 50% Family Treatment Court. Without myself or them I couldn’t have done it.”

– “After graduating I plan on getting a degree in counseling from a two-year college. I would like to help others who are struggling with this disease of addiction.”

Conclusions Drawn from Our Case Study

– There is no path consistency in the case studies.

– Often times the participants continued relapsing until they fully submitted to the Court, admitted to themselves that they were wrong, and were ready to surrender their old lifestyles.

– Participants love FTC and appreciate (at least in hindsight) the “tough love” attitude, especially from the Judge.

– The participants are motivated to lead productive lives after graduation, but they often have limited knowledge of what careers to pursue.

– Most participants find that parenting is extremely difficult and would appreciate continuing parenting classes.

– All participants would recommend FTC to someone who was struggling with getting their children back.

1. Identified our research topic: How and why have specific individuals been successful in Family Treatment Court?

2. Submitted and approved IRB Proposal: A formal document explaining what research was going to be conducted and the importance of it.

3. Consent Form signed by the six participants (those eligible for graduation in May 2009). Consent forms explain what the research will be used for and promise confidentiality. (See Participant Consent Form)

4. Background research: Information was gathered about each individual case study at the Oneida County Court House to understand participants’ present circumstances, relevant social history, treatment and sobriety pathways, and parenting support network. Data was collected using court documents, petitions, in/out patient certificates, court notes, and various other forms.

5. Phone or in-person interview: The interviews were used to understand what parts of FTC helped each participant, what was not useful, and to identify what each individual’s plans are for the future. (See Sample Case Study Phone Interview)

Participant Thoughts

– “My son thanked the Judge for ‘giving his mommy back.’”

– “I am confident, independent, proud to pay the bills, and now I know that I don’t need to have a man around.”

– “My success was 50% me and 50% Family Treatment Court. Without myself or them I couldn’t have done it.”

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Content analysis is an unobtrusive measure of data collection where documents are analyzed in order to help support or disconfirm a research question. This type of analysis became prominent at the start of the twentieth century when scholars began analyzing newspapers in order to campaign against ‘cheap yellow journalism’. Primarily content analysis is used as a secondary method, or one method in triangulation.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Analysis

#### Advantages
- When based on existing documents, it is unobtrusive. You can ‘observe’ without being observed
- The data are in permanent form and hence can be subject to re-analysis, allowing reliability checks and replication studies.
- It may provide a low cost form of longitudinal analysis when a run or series of documents of a particular type is available

#### Disadvantages
- The documents available may be limited or partial
- The documents may have been written for some purpose other than for the research
- It is very difficult to assess causal relationships

### How to start content Analysis

Before starting analysis, it is helpful to decide on a research question as well as categories that would help answer it. Such categories include:

- **Subject matter:** What is it about?
- **Direction:** How is it treated, e.g. favorably or not?
- **Goals:** What goals or intentions are revealed
- **Methods:** What methods are used to achieve these intentions?
- **Values:** What values are revealed?
- **Conflict:** What are the sources and levels of conflict?
- **Endings:** In what way are conflicts resolved?

After deciding on a research question, documents are compiled that would aid in answering the research question. Robson, Colin (2002) Real

### Results From Content Analysis

In analyzing the document above, four categories were used for color coding: relationship to authority, responsibility, motivation and apologies. Below are the results of color coding as well as results from other categories used to analyze this document.

**Relationship to authority:** Subtle, is it passive? She is very bold at asserting her desire, yet maintains formal methods of respect.

**Responsibility:** There is a certain lack of responsibility, she does not mention how she ended living in Serenity Village.

**Subject matter:** A request to leave Serenity Village

**Values:** Independence, practicality, efficiency

**Motivation:** Move out of Serenity Village and rebuild her relationship with her child and her mother. To provide a more stable living environment for her child.

### Color Coding

After locating helpful documents, deciding on specific themes, and reading through the document, the document should be searched for lines or phrases that speak to specific themes. One way to visually represent where categories are located is by color coding the document. The letters located to the left show a before and after visual of color coding.

### Results from color coding and Initial Analysis

In analyzing other documents from Family Treatment Court, four categories were initially used: relationship to authority, responsibility, motivation and apologies. Since each member of the class analyzed different documents, there were varying responses to each construct category. Listed below are a sampling of results:

#### Methods
- Working with the court all of the time, learning tools to be a successful mother
- Recognizes drug and alcohol problems are permanent so he must be aware of triggers
- Tells others of her mistakes, relates to others in court

#### Goals
- Become a role model of children, improve employment through education and improve physical and mental health

#### To help others be successful in court
- Never do drugs again because she does not want to live without her children

### How Helpful is This Type of Analysis?

Examining documents provides a quantitative analysis of what is contained in a document. This method is best used in addition to other methods due to some of the disadvantages of only looking at content analysis, however it is a method that provides valuable insight into the research question that is unobtrusive, low cost and subject to re-analysis.
Central Features of A Survey
- Fixed, quantitative design
- Standardized form to collect specific data from a large number of individuals
- Representative sample of individuals from known population

Types of Surveys
- Self Completion: Respondents fill in the answers by themselves. The questionnaire is often sent out by post, permitting large samples to be reached with relatively little extra effort.
- Face-to-Face: An interviewer asks questions in the presence of the respondent and also completes the questionnaire.
- Telephone Interviews: The interviewer contacts respondents by phone, asks the questions and records the responses.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, values beliefs and motives.</td>
<td>1) Data affected by the characteristics of the respondents (memory, knowledge, motivation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Collect generalizable information from almost any human population.</td>
<td>2) Respondents won’t necessarily report beliefs, attitudes, etc. accurately.</td>
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Self – Administered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Easiest way to retrieve information about the past history of a large set of people.</td>
<td>1) Typically low response rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Efficient at providing large amounts of data, at a low cost, in a short period of time.</td>
<td>2) Ambiguities in misunderstandings of survey questions may not be detected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Allows anonymity, which can encourage frankness.</td>
<td>3) Respondents may not treat the survey seriously and you may be able to detect this.</td>
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Interview

<table>
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<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Interviewer can clarify questions.</td>
<td>1) Data may be affected by interactions of interviewer/respondent characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Presence of the interviewer encourages participation and involvement.</td>
<td>2) Respondents may feel their answers are not anonymous and be less open.</td>
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Survey Question Creation Checklist
- Keep the language simple.
- Keep the questions short.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Avoid questions in the negative.
- Ensure the questions’ frame of reference is clear.
- Avoid prestige bias.
- Avoid creating opinions - allow for a “no opinion” alternative.
- Avoid direct questions on sensitive topics.
- Use personal wording if you want respondent’s own feelings, etc.
- Avoid unnecessary or objectionable detail.
- Avoid prior alternatives.

Advice for Face-to-Face Interviews
- **Appearance:** Dress in a similar way to those you will be interviewing. If in doubt, err on the side of neatness and neutrality.
- **Approach:** Be pleasant. Try to make the respondent comfortable.
- **Familiarity with questionnaire/interview schedule:** View yourself as an actor, with the interview schedule as your script. Know it thoroughly.
- **Question wording:** Use the exact wording of questions and keep to their sequence.
- **Fixed alternative response questions:** Allow only the standard alternatives.
- **Open-ended response questions:** Either code immediately or record the answers exactly for later coding. Don’t make large-scale adjustments, correct or fabricate.

Why Survey the Family Treatment Court?
While the Oneida County Family Treatment Court had much success in helping its participants become sober and regain custody of their children, there appears to be a lack of vocational and educational services provided. This survey was designed to investigate the barriers currently preventing participants from furthering their education or skill development and their hopes and dreams for the future.

By having the participants complete this survey, the Treatment Team hopes to be able to better serve the participant while gaining knowledge concerning the vocational and educational trends displayed by the general population of participants.

Who Participated?
The survey was administered by a Case Worker at the Oneida County Family Treatment Court as a part of a weekly meeting. In order to be eligible to the the survey, participants had to have been in the program for at least six months or have completed intensive day treatment.

The Results: Hopes for the Future

- **If you could hold any job, what would it be?**
  - Customer Service, Truck Driver, Housekeeping, Run a Daycare, Drug Counselor, Youth Counselor, Nurse
- **If training was possible, what field would you be interested in working?**
  - Medical, Social Work/Human Services, Hospitality, Retail/ Customer Service, Administrative Assist/Office Work

While the Oneida County Family Treatment Court has had much success in helping its participants become sober and regain custody of their children, there appears to be a lack of vocational and educational services provided. This survey was designed to investigate the barriers currently preventing participants from furthering their education or skill development and their hopes and dreams for the future.
What is Observation?

There are four observation methods that may be used when evaluating a program. Each of the four strategies includes an increasing amount of interaction with the group that the researcher is studying. The observer-as-participant takes no role in the group’s activities in an effort to have no confounding effect on the group. The marginal participant has a low degree of participation, but acknowledges they may have an impact on their audience. The participant as observer makes clear to the group that they are an observer and then participates in activities with the group and asks them questions. The complete participant role requires the observer to shroud the fact they are an observer and attempts to understand how a group operates by becoming part of the group.

All of the methods focus on taking notes during observation and collaborating multiple observations into an understanding of the group. Observation is also “triangulated” with other research methods such as interviews and primary documents to gain a better overall understanding. In Seminar in Program Theory the class performed participant as observer observation. The judge explained to the court that we were guests, there to observe. However, the rigid structure of Family Treatment Court caused the class to observe more as marginal participants with no opportunity to interact with the group.

How to Observe?

The observation technique requires constant attention to personal bias, in an attempt to be subjective as possible. Some keys to keep in mind:

- Record notes on the spot, during the event using condensed and abbreviated writing
- Notes are used to compile detailed summary and conclusions shortly after direct observation.
- Once comfortable around the group, begin to develop a theory and look for evidence in favor or against the theory.
- During extensive or numerous observations, develop specific coding schemes to quickly indicate repetitive linguistic, spatial, or non-verbal behaviors.

Observations of the Court

The Oneida County Family Treatment Court (FTC) is a rigid and official program, like any court, but with notable exceptions. The crowded nature of all the participants in the wooden courtroom is an easy observation. The interactions between participants that this setup creates is harder to observe. Participants clearly have gotten to know one another and discuss both their lives and court proceedings.

The judge sits front and center facing the entire room, to his left sit the program director and case manager, to his right sit the DSS case workers, defense lawyers and attorneys for the child scatter the room. Participants sit in the back and sides of the courtroom. Each participant testifies on the stand to the judge’s right and interact with the judge and case workers for an average of five minutes. People shuffle around the courtroom continuously.

Events in the Courtroom

The interactions in FTC vary depending on the participants behavior, drug test results, and the treatment team’s plan of action. The judge has the ability to be both stern and sarcastic or compassionate and humorous. The participant’s demeanor and recent history appear to dictate the treatment team’s attitude toward them. Participants who have exhibited bad behavior or drug results typically receive stern warnings or punishment whereas participants who have been clean for multiple months receive compliments and additional encouragement.

The longer a participant has been clean, the more emphasis is put on how their children and day to day activities are going. Close to graduation, discussion of the future goals and aspirations of the participants.

Courtroom Activities

The activities of the participants are particularly noteworthy. Some participants play with their jewelry or the microphone while testifying. Many conclusions can be derived, especially from common actions such as looking at the ceiling or rolling eyes. It is clear that many participants feel uncomfortable or anxious on the witness stand.

A main reason the FTC is quite different from traditional courts is audience participation. Family members stop in to show support for their loved ones accomplishments and the judge interacts with them. Every week the number of clean days are recognized and gifts are given for milestones like 120 days clean. The treatment team appear to act more as a family for the participants who often enroll having lost everyone in their lives due to drug addiction. It was clear that many participants feel uncomfortable or anxious on the witness stand.

I would like to thank the Oneida County Treatment Court for their assistance and openness throughout our class study. I would also like to thank Associate Director for Community Research Judy Owens-Manley and my classmates for their input and help in making this poster.

Poster by Ezra A. Rosenberg ’10

SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION
Observation of a FAMILY TREATMENT COURT