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SUPPORT COURT
PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION PACKET

The United States District Court for the District of Connecticut has developed a Support Court Team to provide support and structure to participants who struggle with drug and alcohol addiction to assist them in achieving lifelong sobriety. We will connect participants with treatment, employment, educational resources, and pro-social organizations in the community. The Support Court Judges will address participants' behavior through meaningful incentives and timely sanctions. The Team, recognizing the nature of substance addiction, will treat participants with dignity and respect, to promote a rehabilitative atmosphere that empowers participants to lead law abiding lives.

SUPPORT COURT – ORIENTATION PACKET
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WELCOME TO SUPPORT COURT!

We are pleased that you chose to participate in the Support Court. Your commitment begins now. Total participation is vital. We want to assist you in your recovery, encourage you to improve your quality of life.

We intend to assist you in completing a program of effective substance abuse treatment. We use graduated phases to encourage you to succeed. You are not alone. Other people who are in recovery will also assist you in developing a lifestyle that is free from the use of alcohol and other drugs.

This handbook is a guide that contains information that you will need to successfully complete this program. We encourage you to read it and to share it with your family and friends so that they can support you on your road to recovery.

The answers to most of your questions concerning this program are in this orientation packet. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ask your probation officer, treatment counselor or any Support Court Team Member. We wish you every success in this program.

"Support Court Works!"

Professionally yours,
The Support Court Team

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INTRODUCTION

The Support Court Team works with people who have substance abuse problems. If you participate in this program, your quality of life may drastically improve. This orientation packet covers information about Support Court. After reading it, you should have a good understanding of what we expect. As a participant, you should follow the instructions given to you by your probation officer, treatment counselor, members of the Assistant Federal Defender's Office, and other team members, including the Judge and consult as needed with representatives of the Federal Defenders' office.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our Support Court program is a supervised, comprehensive treatment program for substance abusers under federal pretrial and post-conviction supervision. The program combines the efforts of the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Federal Defender's Office, the U.S. Marshals Service, community treatment providers, and community support groups. This voluntary program involves regular court appearances before the Support Court Judge, community supervision, substance abuse treatment counseling, random drug testing, and pro-social community activities, such as attending meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or other secular or faith-based groups. The program length, determined by each participant's individual progress, will be at least one year. If you are eligible and choose to participate in this program, you must be willing to commit to the entire program. For post-conviction participants, should you successfully complete the Support Court requirements and conditions, you may be eligible for up to one year off your term of supervision. For pretrial participants, the Court may take your successful participation in Support Court into consideration in your criminal case.

WHO MAY ENTER SUPPORT COURT?

Support Court is open to participants who are on pretrial release, probation or supervised release and have been identified by a member of the team as individuals who would benefit from the level of treatment and supervision offered through the phases of Support Court.

Persons are not eligible for Support Court participation if they have:

- a history of arson
- on supervision for a sex offense, have a history of a sex offense, or a pending sex offense charge
- significant mental health issues (may be considered if medication compliant)
- serious medical issues
- serious firearm offense
- pending states charges are considered on a case by case basis
- history of felony crime of violence within the last 10 years (Judge may override)

Support Court participants must have:

- a history of substance abuse
- be in need of drug education, substance abuse counseling and drug use monitoring
- been screened using the Texas Christian University drug screening protocol, in addition to a review of the Presentence Report and other documents
- Residency Connecticut **mandatory**
- District of CT Jurisdiction **mandatory**

THE INTAKE PROCESS

The Support Court team makes sure that all potential participants meet the entrance requirements for the program. Your probation officer discusses with you the program so that you can decide if you would like to volunteer to become a participant. The Federal Defender will review the Support Court Participant's Agreement with you. You are required to view at least one Support Court hearings in progress. A substance abuse screening and a review of information in your pretrial, probation/supervised release file will be completed to determine if you have a substance abuse problem. The Support Court Judge (with input from the Team) makes the final decision concerning program eligibility. Expect to start upon acceptance into the program and signing of the participant agreement. After you are deemed acceptable you will meet with the Federal Defender and sign the participant agreement at the beginning of your first Support Court session, after a brief colloquy by the Support Court Judge.

SUPPORT COURT ORIENTATION

We want you to know what is expected of you while you participate in this program. Therefore, the following people will be involved in telling you about the program: an attorney, a treatment counselor, a probation officer. All of the paperwork that you need for orientation is contained in this packet. **Please ask questions that will help you to understand. We want you to succeed!**

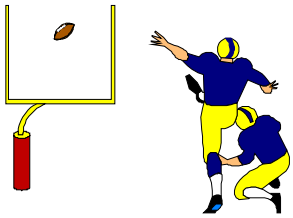
COURT SUPERVISION AND COURTROOM BEHAVIOR

As a Support Court participant, you will be required to appear in Court regularly (see page 8). Missing Support Court hearings may result in termination from the program or failure to advance in the program. At or before each appearance, the Judge will be given a report from the Team concerning your progress, which will include drug testing results, attendance, progress in treatment, supervision comments, etc. The Judge will ask you questions about your progress and discuss any problems you may be experiencing. If you are doing well, you will be encouraged to continue the good work and progress in your sobriety. If there are problems, the Judge may impose sanctions – even short periods in jail.

You must speak directly with the Support Court Judge concerning your progress. You are responsible for your own behavior. Please be on time. Everyone should remain seated and quiet while in Court unless asked to stand and speak. Address the Judge with respect. Participants must remain in Court for the entire hearing unless approved to leave early. Cell phones must be turned off.

GOALS

Although your treatment counselor and probation officer will work with you to set individualized goals, these goals will apply to nearly every participant.



1. Remain free of alcohol and other drugs by living a drug free lifestyle
2. Develop a law-abiding pattern of living
3. Improve employability through on-the-job-training, vocational training and education
4. Participate in pro-social community activities such as AA and NA
5. Improve social skills
6. Enhance self-esteem and personal motivation
7. Learn relapse warning signs and develop a personal relapse prevention plan
8. Accept responsibility for financial obligations and learn budgeting and financial skills
9. Learn and apply better ways of coping with the problems that life offers
10. Develop and improve time management skills

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT - CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal and state law protects your identity and privacy. Because of those laws, policies and procedures have been developed to guard your confidentiality. You will be asked to sign a waiver authorizing the transfer of information among all participating team members and agencies.

In agreeing to participate in the Support Court, you will agree to sign the waiver for the release of information, which will include substance abuse and mental health history and legal and medical information to the Support Court team. The Support Court staff consists of the following individuals or

their designated representatives: the Support Court judge, assistant U.S. attorney, assistant Federal Defender, U.S. Probation Officer, and community treatment providers. This information, absent criminal conduct, will not be used for any prosecution but may be considered by the Court in deciding whether you receive a sanction or are terminated from Support Court. The Support Court is open to the public and therefore there may be occasions when the public will hear information relating to your treatment.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT – GROUP COUNSELING

You will be required to attend treatment counseling sessions and education classes that must not be missed unless properly excused in advance or in the event of a true emergency. Treatment groups are a major component of this program. Arrive on time, participate fully and remain until the event is over. Otherwise, you may be counted as absent. Follow all of the treatment provider's "house rules."

The following actions will not be tolerated:

1. Violence or threats of any kind to staff or other participants
2. Use and/or possession of drugs and/or alcohol
3. Belligerent behavior or acts of vandalism to property
4. Possession of any type of weapon
5. Sexual harassment

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Involvement in twelve-step support groups like Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or other community-based secular or faith-based organizations are important to your recovery. The Support Court requires you to attend pro-social community activities and to provide written verification that you are doing so. You should get to know the people at these meetings who are recovering from addiction and living a drug-free lifestyle. Developing this support system may be critical to a long-term successful recovery. Your treatment counselor and probation officer will assist you to link up with these groups if necessary.

PROBATION SUPERVISION

Participants must report to Probation as instructed. You must abide by all of the terms of your Support Court participant's agreement. Be prepared to provide a urine sample before or after Support Court meetings in addition to any time you meet with probation or treatment provider. You must notify your probation officer if you are arrested or charged with any new law violation. You must immediately notify Probation and the Court if you change your address. If you are unable to report as required, inform your probation officer concerning your problem. Unless it is a true emergency, you will not likely be excused. Working closely with your probation officer should help you to successfully complete this program.

TREATMENT FEES & COURT RELATED FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Co-payment for treatment is determined on a case-by-case basis. Program participants with court related financial obligations such as child support or restitution are expected to make payments on a regular schedule. You may be required to show proof of payments to your probation officer. If you cannot make a payment, discuss your situation with your probation officer in order to make other arrangements. Failure to make scheduled payments while in this program may delay your progress.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME, EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

As you advance through the program, you will be required to maintain steady employment, perform community service or participate in school full time. A combination of the two is acceptable also. It is important for you to use your time constructively. Idleness and boredom are not your friends. Probation will verify your employment by visiting you on the job. Inform your employer about your participation in Support Court because you may be required to attend court during work hours. You must inform Probation right away if your employment or educational status changes. Although we will work with your schedule as much as possible, you cannot miss court, group sessions and appointments due to conflicts with your work schedule.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Program participants will be required to wear "appropriate" clothing while participating in the program. Men must wear pants, shirt and shoes. Ladies may wear pants, skirts or dresses of appropriate length with a modest blouse. Women should not wear see through blouses, midriff tops, tube tops, bathing suit tops or halter-tops. No hip hugger pants or low riding pants. Clothing bearing drug or alcohol related themes, promoting, or advertising alcohol or drug use is prohibited. No gang colors or clothing and no gym clothes are permitted. Sunglasses and hats may not be worn inside the courtroom or to any Support Court related meetings. You may be asked to change your clothes if staff notices that you are wearing clothing that is not appropriate. Speak with your probation officer if you have any questions concerning what clothing is appropriate to wear while participating in the program.

PARTICIPANT FRATERNIZATION

Entering into a new intimate relationship within the first year of recovery often results in relapse. For this reason, participant fraternization is not allowed.

DRUG TESTING - "A POSITIVE IS A POSITIVE"

Using prescription drugs and certain over the counter drugs can lead to your relapse. We understand that on rare occasion you may need to take prescription and over the counter drugs. However, you will be required to advise your physician of

your prior drug history and Support Court involvement and allow your probation officer to confirm this notification.

In this program, you will be drug tested frequently. Instead of trying to "catch you" when you use alcohol and other drugs, we would prefer to assist you in remaining free of alcohol and other drugs. Even though we strive to use the best testing methods possible, no drug testing system is perfect. This program will only be successful for you if you let it. Do not sabotage yourself by trying to figure out how to "beat the test".

Failing to provide a urine sample upon request will be counted as a positive drug test. Tampering with a test, using adulterants, and smuggling in another person's urine will be dealt with in a much more severe manner. Experience has taught us that making exceptions to this policy usually enables addicts to continue to use drugs. We are against that. Your success in this program depends on you holding yourself accountable for your own actions. We want to help you to be honest. You will not likely be "kicked out" of the program because you use drugs. Instead, you will be held accountable while you continue to participate in the program. We are very interested in assisting you to live a drug free lifestyle. We want you to spend your time working on recovery instead of arguing drug-testing results. Therefore, when a participant tests positive on a drug test, the program's position is **"a positive is a positive."**

DRUG TESTING – NO ALCOHOL - ALCOHOL IS A DRUG

Alcohol is a drug. Do not consume alcohol. You are not permitted to enter an establishment whose primary purpose is to sell or distribute alcohol. It may be smart for you not use tobacco or caffeine also, but they are drugs that program participants may consume legally. You may be subject to breathalyzer testing.

DRUG TESTING - YOUR DOCTOR AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

You should follow the medical advice of your doctor. We encourage you to receive medical treatment from a qualified doctor. In fact, one component of recovery is to properly address medical issues and physical ailments. It is a good idea to get a physical examination by your doctor on a regular basis. We do insist that you honestly disclose your substance abuse history to your doctor.

You must register any prescription or over the counter medication with your treatment counselor **before** taking the medication except in a life-threatening situation. In such a case, inform your treatment counselor as soon as possible after taking such medications. You may not be allowed to enter the program if you are using a mood altering prescription drug or one that will test positive on a drug test. You may become eligible for the program if you stop using the medication under the supervision of your doctor, or if your doctor prescribes another medication that is not mood altering and will not test positive on a drug test.

If you must briefly take a prescription medication that will test positive on a drug test, your clean day count may be suspended while you are taking the medication. You should not have to take this type of prescription very often. Maintaining sobriety can be hard if you have to take mood-altering drugs,

even for a little while. Pain medication can be a big problem. Many prescription drugs are effective, not mood altering, and they will not test positive on a drug test. Most antibiotics fit into this category.

INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

We believe that the use of incentives and sanctions will help you to live a law-abiding, drug-free lifestyle. The Team looks for reasons to encourage you to accomplish your goals.

We also use sanctions if necessary, to help you to change your behavior in meaningful ways. Sanctions are intended to help keep some people from going to prison. The use of incentives and sanctions, even incarceration, can motivate you to succeed. If you have any good ideas concerning a good incentive or sanction, please tell us. We may decide to use your suggestion.

If you are required to complete additional treatment requirements like extra groups or residential treatment, we understand that it might feel like a sanction to you. Please know that we do not intend for **"treatment responses"** to be sanctions.

Post conviction Support Court graduates are eligible for up to one year off their supervised release term. Pretrial graduates may be eligible for favorable consideration in their criminal cases.

PHASE ADVANCEMENT

You will be eligible to advance to the next phase of the program once you have completed all requirements of the phase that you are currently in and the Judge, based on the Team's input, approves your advancement to the next phase.

PHASES

All participants must follow the rules and regulations of the treatment providers and Support Court. Each phase of Support Court requires the participants to be honest with themselves and the Support Court team.

Phase I – 2 months

- Honesty
- Follow the rules and regulation of treatment provider.
- Weekly court appearances
- Field visits at least once per week
- Weekly call-ins
- At least two drug tests a week
- Obtain/apply for state ID
- Apply for state insurance
- Prepare written statement of goals
- 30 days clean time

• Support court program compliant

Phase II – 3 months

• Honesty
•Weekly court appearances
• At least weekly drug testing
• Field visits at least once per week
• Weekly call-ins
• Employment readiness
• Education/GED
• 60 days clean time necessary to advance to Phase III.

Phase III – 3 months

• Honesty
• Bi-weekly court appearances.
• At least three urine screens a month
• Bi-weekly field visits
• Biweekly office visits and/or call-ins
• Obtain or maintain employment or community service
• Participate in pro-social activities.
• Demonstrate parental responsibility
• 90 days clean time plus full-time employment/education necessary to advance to Phase IV.

Phase IV – 4 months

• Honesty
• Once a month court appearances6/28/2012
• At least bi-weekly drug testing
• Monthly field and office visits
• Maintain employment/training/education
• Maintain pro-social activities
• Develop transition plan for graduating Support Court
• Prepare written life plan
• Minimum of 5 months consecutive clean time prior to graduation

EXPULSION/UNSUCCESSFUL TERMINATION FROM SUPPORT COURT

We would like all participants to remain in the program until they are able to live a law abiding, drug-free lifestyle. Therefore, we do not want to terminate you from the program until we have tried very hard to assist you. If you will not complete the requirements of the program, the Support Court Judge, based on the recommendations of the Team, decides if you will be unsuccessfully terminated from Support Court. Typically, expulsion from the program may occur as a result of repeated failures to

participate in treatment, repeated failures to complete all program requirements, numerous positive drug tests, tampering with a drug test or new charges.

Unsuccessful termination from the program will typically result in a return to traditional supervision. Participants must understand that their participation in Support Court does not preclude the sentencing Court from revoking supervised release or pretrial release.

GRADUATION

You will be eligible to graduate from the program upon approval of the Support Court Judge who will base his decision on your progress and input from the Team. To graduate, you will be required to advance to the program's fourth phase and complete the phase four requirements. You should be able to show how Support Court has positively influenced your life. **Graduates will be honored at a special ceremony**. Your family will be invited to join you as the Judge congratulates you on successfully completing the Support Court Program and achieving your goals. Depending on your particular case, you may be terminated early from supervision if you are a post-conviction participant. If you are a pretrial participant, the sentencing court may take your Support Court participation into consideration your criminal case.