

Best Practices for Families Impacted by Substance Use Disorder

- **Understand that addiction is a disease** for which diagnosis and treatment are essential to restore family functioning.
- **Create a trauma-informed courtroom** by making the experience more welcoming and supportive, and by interacting with people before you in a way that fosters safety, empowerment, and trustworthiness.
- **Use motivational interviewing to empower the people before you in the courtroom to make meaningful changes.** This evidence-based approach helps people living with addictions and mental illness make positive behavioral changes to support their overall health and well-being. Motivational interviewing techniques are important to learn and use within the basic knowledge set of stages of change related to addiction and recovery.
- **Provide an intensive courtroom experience** by holding more frequent court hearings to ensure reasonable efforts are being met and for greater court oversight in the monitoring of timely and effective substance use disorder treatment and other services being provided to the family, and closely monitor case plan compliance and progress in recovery.
- **Use an interdisciplinary team approach in court** and have the county child welfare agency, drug and alcohol / single county authority, and mental health systems all present and involved at the proceedings.
- **Integrated focus on the well-being and safety of the whole family** by addressing the substance use disorder treatment needs of the affected parent, the child and other family members. Addiction is a family disease.
- **Ensure the individual with substance use disorder have supports in the recovery process.** Interpersonal support through relationships and social networks is essential to recovery.
- **Keep the parent affected by substance use disorder involved in their role and responsibilities as a parent.** This might include kinship care with appropriate contingencies, foster care with increased visitation, or in-patient substance use disorder treatment facilities for mothers and their children.
- **Reunify the child with his or her parent with substance use disorder when it is determined the child is safe using the legal safety analysis.** Establish the conditions for reunification based on what is needed for the child to be safe, with a sufficient, feasible and sustainable in-home safety plan.
- **Understand that relapse is normal in the recovery process,** especially in the early stages of recovery. This is an opportunity for them to recover from the setback, and to learn from their relapse by making the appropriate changes.