

# 10th Judicial Circuit of Florida Problem Solving Court



## Handbook for Clinical Treatment Program Participants



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**POLK COUNTY DRUG COURT**  
**TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**  
(POLK, HIGHLANDS, AND HARDEE COUNTIES)  
P.O. BOX 9000, DRAWER J-138  
BARTOW, FLORIDA 33831-9000

**NICK SUDZINA**  
Trial Court Administrator

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**PROBLEM SOLVING COURT PHONE NUMBERS**  
**DRUG SCREEN COLOR LINE: (863)534-5828**

**Lab Hours:**  
**Monday-Friday 7:30am-4:30pm**  
*(Must be signed in by 4:15pm)*

**Outpatient Hours**  
**Monday-Friday**  
7:30 AM–4:30 PM

**Problem Solving Courts**  
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**Florida Department of Corrections**  
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**Polk County Probation**  
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**Department of Juvenile Justice**  
195 N. Broadway Ave.  
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## INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM SOLVING COURT

You have been arrested for a drug related crime and, therefore, have been identified as a person who may have a drug problem. You are being given the opportunity to participate in Polk County's Problem Solving Court. This program is designed to promote self-sufficiency and achieve a substance-free life.

This handbook is designed to answer questions, address concerns and provide overall information about the Problem Solving Court Program. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given in Problem Solving Court by the Judge and comply with the treatment plan developed for you by your treatment team. This handbook will detail what is expected of you as a Problem Solving Court participant and review general program information. All participants are encouraged to share this handbook with family and friends.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Problem Solving Court is a court-supervised, comprehensive treatment program for nonviolent defendants. This is a program which includes regular court appearances before a designated Problem Solving Court Judge, treatment which includes; drug testing, individual/group counseling, and regular attendance at support group meetings. The Problem Solving Court Program is a combined effort of the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Court Administration, the Department of Corrections, County Probation and Department of Juvenile Justice. Program participants will be assisted with obtaining education and skills assessments and will be provided referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services and other identified services. The program length, determined by each participant's progress will be based upon specific program guidelines. However, you could be extended in the program in order to graduate.

Final determination of entry into the program shall ONLY be made by the Judge with recommendation from the State Attorney, defense counsel, probation and Problem Solving Court treatment team.

## PROBLEM SOLVING COURT SUPERVISION

As a Problem Solving Court participant, you will be required to appear in Problem Solving Court on regular scheduled dates. **MISSING** a court date will result in a *capias*, or pickup order being issued. At each appearance, the Judge will be given a treatment progress report prepared by the treatment team and the probation officer regarding your drug test results, attendance and participation. The Judge will ask you questions about your progress, and discuss and specific problems you have been experiencing. If you are doing well, you will be encouraged to continue with the program and work with your treatment team (probation and other programs ordered by the court and court staff) toward success. If you are not doing well, the Judge will discuss this with you and the treatment team to determine further action. If you commit program violations, i.e., positive or missed tests, failure to attend individual or group counseling, support group meetings, failure to report to your probation officer, etc., the Court will impose sanctions. (See **SANCTIONS** on page 10). With repeated violation of program requirements, and a failure to progress satisfactory, the Court may impose the ultimate sanction of discharge from the

program and imposition of sentence. If you entered the program by signing a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, your case will be returned to the assigned division.

Failure to appear in Court on the date and time you are scheduled could result in a warrant or pickup order for your arrest and remand you in custody. If you cannot appear in Court as scheduled, you must notify your probation officer or treatment team prior to scheduled court hearing to explain why you cannot appear. If you have any questions regarding your court appearances or travel outside this city, county or state you are required to contact your probation officer and treatment team. Warrants and/or new arrest could result in you being terminated from Problem Solving Court program and the imposition of your sentence. Other violations which could result in termination include: missing drug screen(s), demonstrating a lack of program participation by failing to cooperate with treatment, failure to follow instructions of the probation officer or treatment team.

### **DRUG COURT PROGRAM RULES**

As a Problem Solving Court participant, you will be required to abide by the following rules:

**1. Do not use or possess any DRUGS, SYNTHETIC DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.**

Sobriety is the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a substance free lifestyle is very important in your recovery process. This includes mood altering prescription drugs, as defined in restricted medication policy. **You are required to get every prescription or over the counter drug approved by you treatment provider prior to taking anything.**

**2. Report to the probation officer as directed.**

**3. Attend all ordered treatment sessions.**

This includes individual group counseling, educational session and support group meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session, you must contact your assigned primary counselor.

**4. Be on time.**

If you are late, you may not be allowed to attend your treatment session and will be considered noncompliant. Contact your assigned primary counselor if there is a possibility you may be late.

**5. Do not make threats toward other participants or staff or behave in a violent manner.**

Violent or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Court. This could result in termination from the Problem Solving Court.

**6. While in the Problem Solving Court, cohabitation or intimate relationships with other Problem Solving Court participants and team member is discouraged.**

**7. Dress appropriately for Court and treatment sessions.**

As a participant, you will be expected to wear a shirt or blouse, pants, dress, skirt. Shoes must be worn at all times. **Clothing bearing drug alcohol or related themes or promoting or advertising alcohol or drug use is considered inappropriate.** Sunglasses are not to be worn inside court or treatment center unless medically approved. Speak with your treatment team if

you need assistance with clothing. All electronics must be turned off in the Courtroom and at treatment sessions.

**8. While in Court, remain seated and quiet at all times.**

It is very important to observe appropriate behavior in Court for the benefit of yourself and others present.

**PROGRAM FEES**

Program fees are determined by program of admission. Assigned primary counselor will discuss any program fees.

**TREATMENT PROCEDURES**

Your treatment will be provided through a team approach with the combined resources of the probation office and the assigned Problem Solving Court treatment staff. The treatment staff will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommended to the Problem Solving Court team. The treatment team will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to the Problem Solving Court Judge that you receive either outpatient or residential treatment. If you are admitted into a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, a multi-component, outpatient program has been developed which includes:

- **Treatment plans**

An “initial” treatment plan will be developed by you and your treatment team following an overall assessment of you strengths and needs. The plan will act as a guide for your initial treatment phase and within it, you set goals, select methods for meeting those goals, and develop target dates for achieving those goals. The plan will be maintained by your treatment team and will be updated as you progress through the program.

- **Drug Testing**

You will be tested through the entire treatment process. You will be tested a minimum of two times per week. The Problem Solving Court Judge will have access to all drug test results including any failure to test. Any member of the Problem Solving Court team may order a drug test at any time. **Tampering with the drug/urine test will be deemed a positive test and may result in your expulsion from the program (this includes flushes, diluting, using someone else’s urine, etc.).** A positive or “dirty” test will not automatically disqualify you from the Problem Solving Court Program. The Judge will be reviewing your overall performance in the Problem Solving Court Program. Each participant shall be issued an identification card which will be required when signing in for all random drug screens. Failure to produce this identification card will warrant a need for a new identification card at the participants cost of 20 dollars.

- **Counseling**

Substance abuse counseling is comprised of two separate of two separate formats: individual and group. As part of your treatment plan, you will be required to participate in both types of counseling. Together they are designed to develop self-awareness, realize self-worth, and develop the strength to practice self-discipline. The individual and group counseling session will include problem identification and alternative solutions. Your attendance at counseling sessions will be reported to the Judge as part

of your progress report. **You must have prior permission from your primary counselor to be excused from a counseling session (acceptable reason for absence – hospitalization; documentation from the hospital will be required). When in doubt, notify your treatment provider.**

- **Support Group Meetings**

Attendance will be required at Support Group Meetings such to include but not limited to, Narcotics and/or Alcoholics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery. The frequency of attendance requirement is determined by your progress in the program and your phase level. Attendance is an important part of your recovery process to help familiarize you with the support group philosophy, and help you develop levels of trust, to learn and create social bonds with other recovering addicts. Your treatment team will provide you with information regarding the time and location of the support group meetings and will also direct you to special interest and recovery events in the community. You must provide proof of attendance on a weekly basis to the treatment team member.

### **TREATMENT PHASES**

See individual matrix based on the program of admission.

### **SANCTIONS**

If you fail to comply with the treatment program, the Problem Solving Court Judge upon recommendations from the treatment team may, at his/her discretion, order one or more of the following:

- Increased drug testing
- Writing of an essay on the Problem Solving Court related topic
- Increased participation in outpatient and/or group counseling sessions
- Increased court appearances
- Increased support group meetings
- Rephrase to an earlier phase of treatment
- Community service
- Incarceration
- Residential treatment
- Extended term on program
- Commitment to community residential treatment for a specified period of time
- Violation of probation hearing
- Provide a “teach back” to treatment modality
- Assigned specific drug testing regiment

### **EDUCATION, VOCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS**

Recovery from substance addiction means developing self-sufficiency and becoming a productive and responsible member of the community. During the treatment program, you will be expected to be employed, or involved in an educational or vocational training program. Your treatment team and your probation officer will work to assist you in obtaining an assessment of your needs and skills and will refer you to the proper agencies for education, training and job placement.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Upon your entry into the Problem Solving Court Program, The treatment team will assess your housing, transportation, family and general living needs and when appropriate, refer you to a local, state and/or county agent for assistance.

### **GRADUATION**

Once you have successfully completed the criteria for each phase (as directed in the treatment matrix), you will advance to the next level and eventually be a candidate to graduate from the Problem Solving Court Program. It will be necessary to discuss your progress toward the goals you initially set and why you believe you have met the graduation criteria. Advancement from each phase and graduation from the program shall be determined by the Problem Solving Court Judge, treatment team and probation. Your family is invited to join you in Court as the Judge congratulates you on successfully completing the Problem Solving Court and achieving your goal to establish a substance-free life. If you were sentenced to this program you will have met the requirements of your sentence and conditions of probation. Your record relating to the arrest that resulted in your participation in Problem Solving Court **may be eligible** to be sealed or expunged.

#### **Graduation Criteria:**

- **Acceptable level of sobriety (to include no positive, dilute, missed drug test results for a minimum of 60 consecutive days) as clinical and judicial approval.**
- Obtained gainful, consistent employment or sufficiently involved in a vocational/academic training program as determined by the treatment team.
- Maintained consistent attendance at all court appearances and treatment team appointments.
- Understanding of personal problems of addiction, criminal behavior and relapse prevention.
- Maintained a stable living arrangement and healthy interpersonal relationships as determined by the treatment team.
- A definitive transition plan which may include support group meetings, additional counseling (substance abuse and/or mental health), group attendance and other community support services.
- Fulfillment of formal treatment plan goals and objectives.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Florida law. In the response to these regulations, policies and procedures have been developed which guard your confidentiality. You will be

asked to sign a waiver authorizing the transfer of information among all participating agencies. An identification number will be assigned to you that will be used in all research and evaluation activities to safeguard your identity.

## **CONCLUSION**

**The Problem Solving Court program has been developed to help you achieve total abstinence from illicit and alcohol, synthetic drugs and illegal drugs. The program is designed to promote self-sufficiency and to return you to the community as a productive and responsible member.** The Judge, the court staff and treatment team are present to guide and assist you, but the **final responsibility is yours.** You must be motivated to make this change and commit to a substance free life.

We hope this handbook has been helpful to you and answered most of your questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns about the Problem Solving Court program, please feel free to ask your attorney or the Problem Solving Court team. Important Problem Solving Court telephone numbers have been listed on the second page of this Handbook for easy access.

**Good luck to you!**