



SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION ONEIDA COUNTY FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

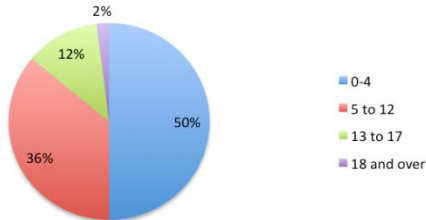
5th Judicial District
Oneida County

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! (Judge James Griffith, OCFTC)

Ages of Children in Family Treatment Court April, 2009



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%).
- (NYS OASAS Resource Book, 2004).

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."

(Owens-Manley, 2007. Family Treatment Court: Lessons Learned From the First Year)

Children 'biggest losers' in Family Court

(The Epoch Times, April 1, 2009-photo courtesy of googleimages.com)



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."

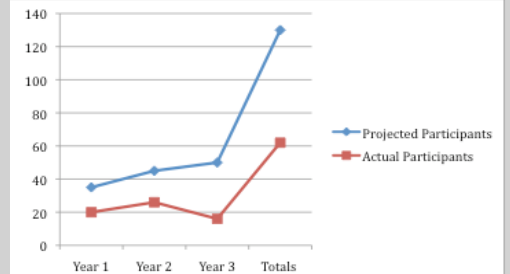
"I didn't think that I'd ever be sober. You're down on yourself, and they pick you back up. I'm a new improved person. I had a problem. I took care of it, and I'm moving on."

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

(Owens-Manley, 2007. Family Treatment Court: Lessons Learned From the First Year)

Who Are the Participants?

Mean Age = 31.5 yrs.
 Age Range = 24-42 yrs.
 Single = 86%
 White = 68%
 < HS Education = 82%
 Female = 78%



Referrals and Participants in FTC 2005-2008

- 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.

(Owens-Manley, 2009. Final Evaluation: ONEIDA COUNTY 2005-DC-BX-0052 DRUG COURT FAMILY IMPLEMENTATION GRANT)

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."

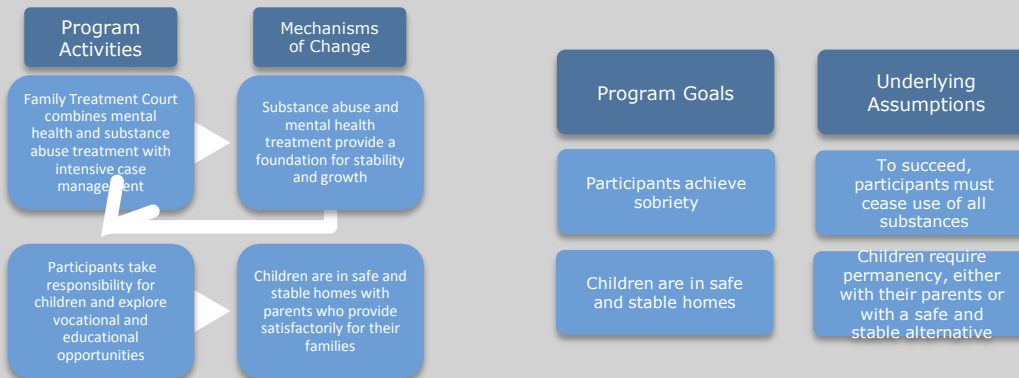
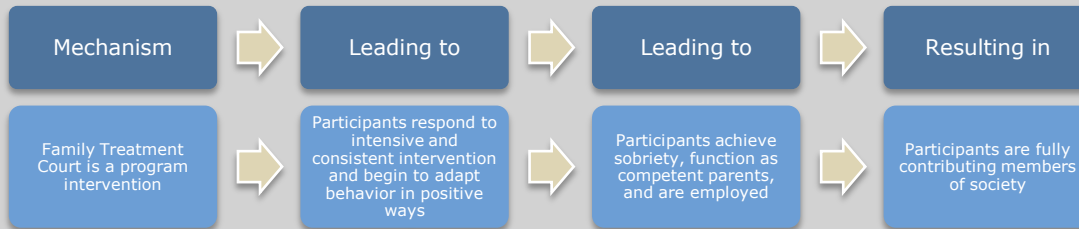
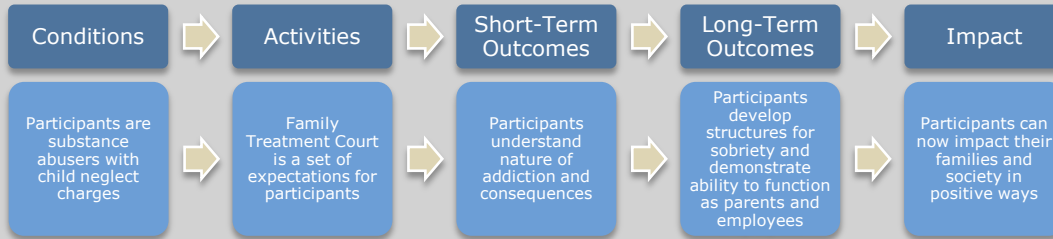
(Owens-Manley, 2008. Successes and Failures in Family Treatment Court)



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 explain the “hows” and “whys” of certain outcomes within a program.

Developing a Program Theory

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



5th Judicial District
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SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION CASE STUDY IN FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

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 bias.

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.

Colin Robson. *Real World Research, Second Edition*. Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Sample Case Study Phone Interview Between Student Interviewer and FTC Participant

[Phone interview - 29 April 2009, start time: 2:30]

Interviewer (AI): Hello. I am calling to ask you a few questions regarding your experience in Oneida County Family Treatment Court. I am part of the Program Evaluation class at Hamilton College and we have been working closely with FTC this semester. We are currently interviewing all the graduation candidates to find out about your experience at FTC, what has worked and what you think could be improved. Before we start the questions, I just want to remind you that our conversation will remain confidential. You signed a consent form explaining that while your answers can be viewed, they will not be linked to your identity. Do you have any questions before we start?

FTC client (C): No questions, but I am glad to have the opportunity to reflect on my time at FTC.

AI: Alright, let's begin. You have been in FTC for a few years, and I imagine that there have been both ups and downs. Looking back, how would you characterize your overall experience? Has it been like a roller coaster, a mountain to climb, like a marathon, or something else?

C: My time in treatment court has been mostly like a marathon. I may have a unique experience because this was something I was interested in. I wasn't pressured at all. I knew that I wanted my children back, this would be the most direct path.

AI: During this marathon how you progressed at all?

C: For the first few months I was relapsing big time. I did not want to listen to the judge. After I spent a few days in jail under contempt of court, I was willing to submit to the judge. After I understood my selfishness I began to follow the court's orders and have remained clean.

AI: Wow! That is incredible! It seems like you have a lot to be proud of, but I was wondering, what are you most proud of or to have anything specific that sticks out as a success?

C: First and foremost, my recovery... and being a mom. It is hard being a single parent. I know I will not always be perfect, but as long as I keep my children healthy and happy and continue moving their needs first I am doing well. I really feel that FTC turned me into a better person and a better parent and I am very appreciative of all the tough love they give me.

AI: Okay. You also mentioned briefly the definition of parenting. Can you tell me what has been like going through treatment court as a parent? Has this experience changed you as a parent? And, how has your kids dealt with it?

C: Well, when I first got my kids back I was a push-over parent. There was little I could say 'no' to, so it took awhile to balance being strict with the joy of being with my kids, all the time. We are a close family and I constantly reassure my kids that they can't go out on anything.

AI: How are your kids doing?

C: As far they were happier than me having again - especially my daughter. She was really young when I left her treatment, and because she is still young, she does not know what type of consistency my respect.

A: It seems like your family is quite the success story? My next question is more related to Court. What parts of the program have been especially helpful? What hasn't been useful?

C: Actually, there isn't really anything that hasn't helped me. One component of FTC that stands out to the support group and that motivates me before the court sessions. We are able to voice our concerns in a safe and more personal environment. As far as things I don't really like, there aren't many. In fact, the only thing I can think of is that when I was on the stand during court, I often felt uncomfortable as that my answers were out there. I can recall many times when the judge told me to 'talk to my attorney first' or that 'this wasn't the time to bring something up'. These comments made me feel less important, although I am sure there was a reason behind the court's actions.

AI: Interesting. That is a really good observation about Court. It is wonderful what their rationale is behind calling you out. Maybe they just want to save time... We are almost done. The next question is: How has your support network changed since you entered FTC? Who do you lean on now? Who can you count on?

C: I am going to say meetings which were frequently now because I realized I needed that support. I think my network is basically the same people, but has expanded a bit.

AI: Are there any people that you try to avoid now that were part of your pre-FTC life?

C: Yes. I had to break away from my children's father, which was really difficult. I also had to stop seeing my parents. I realized that if I continued those relationships I would quickly fall into the same hole - it doesn't take much.

AI: Okay, last question. It seems like your world has changed drastically since your time at FTC and therefore a whole new future is available to you. What does your future look like as you right now with graduation right around the corner? How do you see yourself progressing as a parent, online, and/or productive member of society?

C: I am glad you asked. I am very excited about the next chapter of my life. As far as parenting goes, I plan on taking a few more classes on how to deal with pre-teens and teenagers. It is hard to be a single mom! Also, I am currently working on my GED and expect to pass it really soon. After that I want to go to a two-year college and get a degree so that I can help other work through their addictions. I've really enjoyed it to be a better event.

AI: There are all very respectable plans for the future! I hope that all worked out. Before we end, is there anything that you want to say about FTC or any questions for me?

C: Yes. I just want to mention that I would recommend FTC to anybody who is trying to get their life together. They do great for me and I am glad to have had this experience.

AI: Well, thank you so much for your cooperation and honesty. It was a pleasure chatting with you and I am sure the Court will be glad to have appreciative you are. Best of luck!

[End of interview]

Consent Form

The Arthur Levin Public Affairs Center
Hamilton College
198 College Hill Rd.
Clinton, New York, 13323

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to participate in an interview with a student researcher from Hamilton College as a part of the program evaluation of the Family Treatment Court program. The student will be asking you to tell her or her about specific issues in your life and/or your children's lives as you prepare for graduation. This will help the Court to understand how to prepare FTC participants for life after graduation and to better plan for the needs that graduates and their families will have.

Your conversation with the Hamilton student researcher will be summarized in notes without your name attached. There will only be 5 people interviewed, and each situation will be highlighted with the others on a research poster at a presentation at Hamilton College in May of 2009.

Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary, and you may stop the interview at any time. You are free to not answer any questions with which you are uncomfortable, and you may also stop and ask the Hamilton student any questions that you may have. You will receive a \$10 gift certificate for your time and attention at the interview.

Our poster session will be held in a public area on the premises of a program like the Family Treatment Court. It will be on display for one day at Hamilton College, and photos of the poster may also be displayed on a website for the college.

If you have questions regarding the interview, you may contact Judge Owens-Mantley at Hamilton College, 516-486-1406 (owensm@hamilton.edu)

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked any questions I had regarding the interview, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the interview, and I understand that I will be receiving a \$10 gift certificate in compensation for my time.

Name of Participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Participant _____

Thank you for your participation!

How We Conducted Our Case Study

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.”

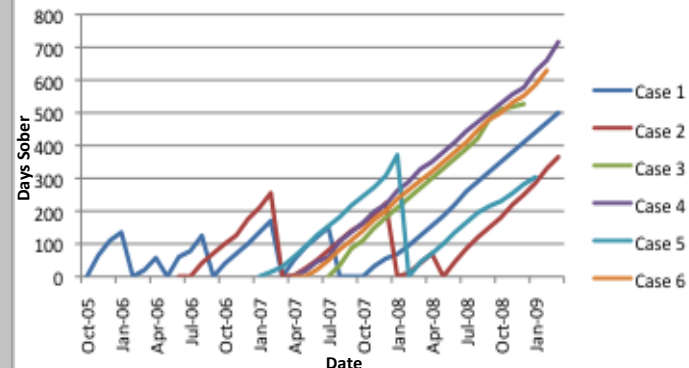
– “My success was 50% me and 50% Family Treatment Court. Without myself or them I couldn't have done it.”

– “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.

FTC Case Study Sobriety Paths





5th Judicial District
Oneida County

Seminar in program evaluation

Content analysis in a family treatment court

What Is Content Analysis?

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' (Robson 2002). 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

Robson, Colin (2002) [Real](#)

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 World](#)

Research

FTC Participant Essay

To whom it may concern, 11/16
I'd like to take an opportunity to express my feelings to the court regarding my progress.
I feel in the year plus that I have resided at Serenity Village that I've grown into a much better person. I have a positive outlook on my addiction and my recovery. I also am the mother of my beautiful daughter of whom I worked hard to and have regained full custody of.
I fully intend to continue my treatment but I feel it is time for me to leave Serenity Village and I feel I need to move on to the next steps in my life. I'd like to have a home and a schedule that doesn't fluctuate so much. She had not had much stability in her life thus far. I'd like to start to rebuild the bond between her and her grandparents without having to request

Coding Themes

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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.

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 up

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



SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

Surveying A FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

5th Judicial District
Oneida County

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.

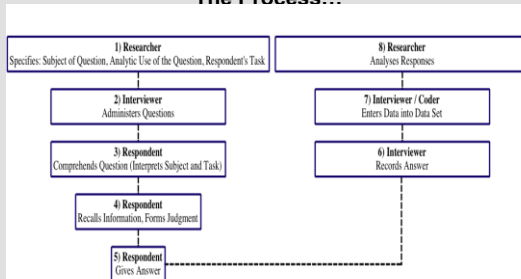
Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys

	Advantages	Disadvantages
All Studies	1) Simple and straight-forward approach to the study of attitudes, values beliefs and motives. 2) Collect generalizable information from almost any human population	1) Data affected by the characteristics of the respondents (memory, knowledge, motivation). 2) Respondents won't necessarily report beliefs, attitudes, etc accurately.
Self-Administered	1) Easiest way to retrieve information about the past history of a large set of people. 2) Efficient at providing large amounts of data, at a low cost, in a short period of time 3) Allows <i>anonymity</i> , which can encourage frankness	1) Typically low response rate. 2) Ambiguities in misunderstandings of survey questions may not be detected. 3) Respondents may not treat the survey seriously and you may be able to detect this.
Interview	1) Interviewer can clarify questions. 2) Presence of the interviewer encourages participation and involvement.	1) Data may be affected by interactions of interviewer/respondent characteristics. 2) Respondents may feel their answers are not anonymous and be less open.

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.

The Process...



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.

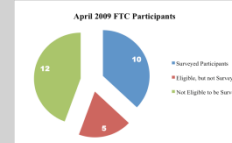
Why Survey the Family Treatment Court?

While the Oneida County Family Treatment Court 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.

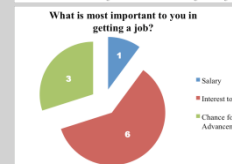
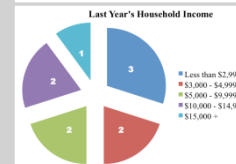
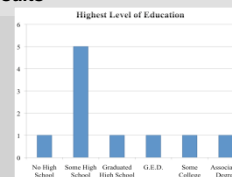
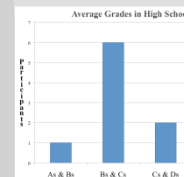
By having the participants complete this survey, the Treatment Team hopes to be able to better serve the participant while gaining knowledge concerning the vocational and educational trends displayed by the general population of participants.

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 survey, participants had to have been in the program for at least six months or have completed intensive day treatment.



The Results



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 Asst/Office Work



SEMINAR IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

Observation of a FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

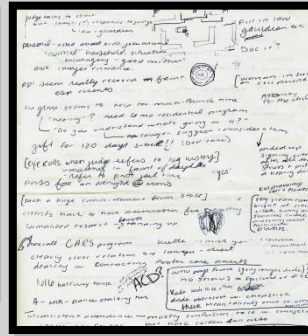
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What is Observation?

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.

Source: Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing



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 a 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.

**"once again [you] handled it just the way you should"
we know you know how to wear orange."**

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 – even as participant observers – that everyone is part of the court family, as evident when "I sneezed & five people said bless you"
Poster by Ezra A. Rosenberg '10

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.

Dimensions of Descriptive Observation

What to look for while observing

1. **Space** layout of physical setting; rooms, landscapes, etc.
2. **Actors** names and relevant details of the people involved
3. **Activities** the various activities of the actors
4. **Objects** physical elements: furniture, pictures, etc.
5. **Acts** specific individual actions
6. **Events** particular occasions: meetings, conversations, etc.
7. **Time** the sequence of the events
8. **Goals** what the actors are attempting to accomplish
9. **Feelings** emotions in particular contexts

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