Using Incentives with Case Plans

Clients in the study were placed in standard IOP treatment programming. After receiving treatment the clients in the experimental group would submit substance use tests, review completion of set activities, and set new activities. Participants could set up to five activities per week. Activities fell into one of ten categories. The categories of activities were education, employment, family, health, housing, legal, personal improvement, sobriety, social/recreation, and transportation. Incentive slips were provided for clean substance tests and completed activities. The slips of paper either said “Sorry, try again” or contained incentives from $1 and $20 amounts. The bowl also contained one $100 grand prize.

The study revealed that the participants who received incentives for activities and clean drug tests stayed in treatment longer than the group who did not receive incentives. Two-thirds (66%) of the 1,059 activities/goals identified were completed. Goals were set by the clients with some feedback from a research assistant.

Practical Applications

✓ Provide assessment information to probationers to facilitate a conversation about possible case plan goals related to criminogenic needs.
✓ Consider delivering incentives for the completion of established case plan action steps and goals.
✓ Collaborate with the probationer to establish case plan goals.
✓ Create case plans that are in the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) format.
✓ Try using the optional case plan formats located at Judicialnet>Case Plan>Case Plan Format.
✓ For case plans, quality assurance (QA) and continuous quality improvement (CQI) tools have been created. Use the QA and CQI tools on your case plans to determine your own strengths and areas of improvement. The QA/CQI tools are located at Judicialnet>QA/CQI>Case Planning.
✓ Ask your supervisor for feedback on your case plans, possibly utilizing the case plan QA/CQI tools.
✓ When trained, use the Strategies for Behavior Change (SBC) program to deliver incentives.