

TASC | EVALUATION

Recovery Coach Program: Successful Outreach, Engagement, and Case Management

The Study

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted a five-year study to determine if outreach and engagement in substance abuse treatment services by TASC recovery coaches improved outcomes for these families. The findings were part of a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), which provided support and data for the project, prepared by Joseph Ryan, Ph.D., from the Children and Family Research Center in the University's School of Social Work.

- The study involved over 1,300 parents of over 1,900 children in foster care in Cook County (366 parents and 569 children were assigned to the control group and received the regular substance abuse treatment services previously available; 943 parents and 1,367 children were assigned to the experimental group, which received the regular services and Recovery Coach Program (RCP) services).
- JCAP (Juvenile Court Assessment Program) provided substance abuse assessment and initial referral services to substance-involved families referred at the time of their temporary custody hearing or within 90 days of it.
- TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) provided intensive outreach, engagement and case management services. Recovery coaches encouraged retention in substance abuse treatment and other related services.

The Outcomes

Substance-abusing parents who received TASC Recovery Coach Program (RCP) services experienced the following outcomes, as compared with the control group. Specifically, substance-abusing parents who received TASC RCP services were:

- More likely to access substance abuse treatment services (84% vs. 77%).
- Likely to enter treatment sooner (74 days vs. 108 days).
- More likely to participate in treatment (71% vs. 52%).
- More likely to complete at least one level of treatment (43% vs. 23%).

- More likely to achieve reunification (15.5% vs. 11.6%) with their children and were more likely to do so in a shorter period of time (522 days vs. 707 days) than children in the comparison group.
- Less likely to be associated with a subsequent allegation of maltreatment (20% vs. 25%).

The Cost Savings

Through fewer and shorter foster care placements, expedited reunification and subsidized guardianship and adoptions, TASC RCP services saved DCFS approximately \$5.6 million over the five-year period in which the study was conducted.

The Implications

Intensive outreach, engagement and case management services:

- Increases access to and retention in treatment.
- Reduces episodes of child maltreatment.
- Results in improved client and family outcomes.
- Facilitates a significant cost savings for the child welfare system, court system, and communities.

Prepared by TASC, Inc. TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is a not-for-profit organization that provides recovery management services for individuals with substance use and mental health disorders. Serving more than 30,000 clients in Illinois each year, TASC's statewide infrastructure is designed to intervene when alcohol or other drug use has caused people to become involved with the criminal justice system, juvenile justice system, corrections, child welfare and/or public aid. Pursuant to Illinois statute and administrative rule, TASC is the agency designated to assess offenders with substance abuse issues and make treatment recommendations and referrals for the Illinois criminal justice system. For more information visit www.tasc.org.