

2024 Family Treatment Court Practice Academy

Intentional Integration: How to Identify and Support Parents with Co-Occurring Disorders

Companion Guide

Five Facts about Co-Occurring Disorders

- Co-occurring disorders (CODs) are complex, bidirectional, and often fluctuate over time.
- CODs are prevalent but undertreated.
- Accurate diagnosis and treatment of CODs is contingent on effective, integrated, and ongoing screening and assessment practices.
- Integrated treatment improves outcomes for people with CODs.
- A family treatment court team can enhance its resources and strategies to improve outcomes for parents with CODs.

Three Pathways to Co-Occurring Disorders

- 1** Common risk factors can contribute to both substance use disorders (SUDs) and mental health disorders.
- 2** Mental health challenges/disorders can contribute to the development of SUDs.
- 3** Substance use/SUDs can contribute to the development of mental health challenges/disorders.

National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2021

Strategies for Supporting Parents with Co-Occurring Disorders

Assessment | Treatment | Recovery | Parenting

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

- Screen and evaluate for each disorder concurrently.
- Review the parent's chronological history of past substance use and mental health symptoms.
- Reassess parents for a co-occurring mental health disorder if they exhibit symptoms that are persistent, severe, or resistant to SUD treatment.
- Observe parents after a four-week period of abstinence to distinguish between mental health symptoms and effects of substances/withdrawal.
- Re-screen and reassess parents on an ongoing basis.



TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

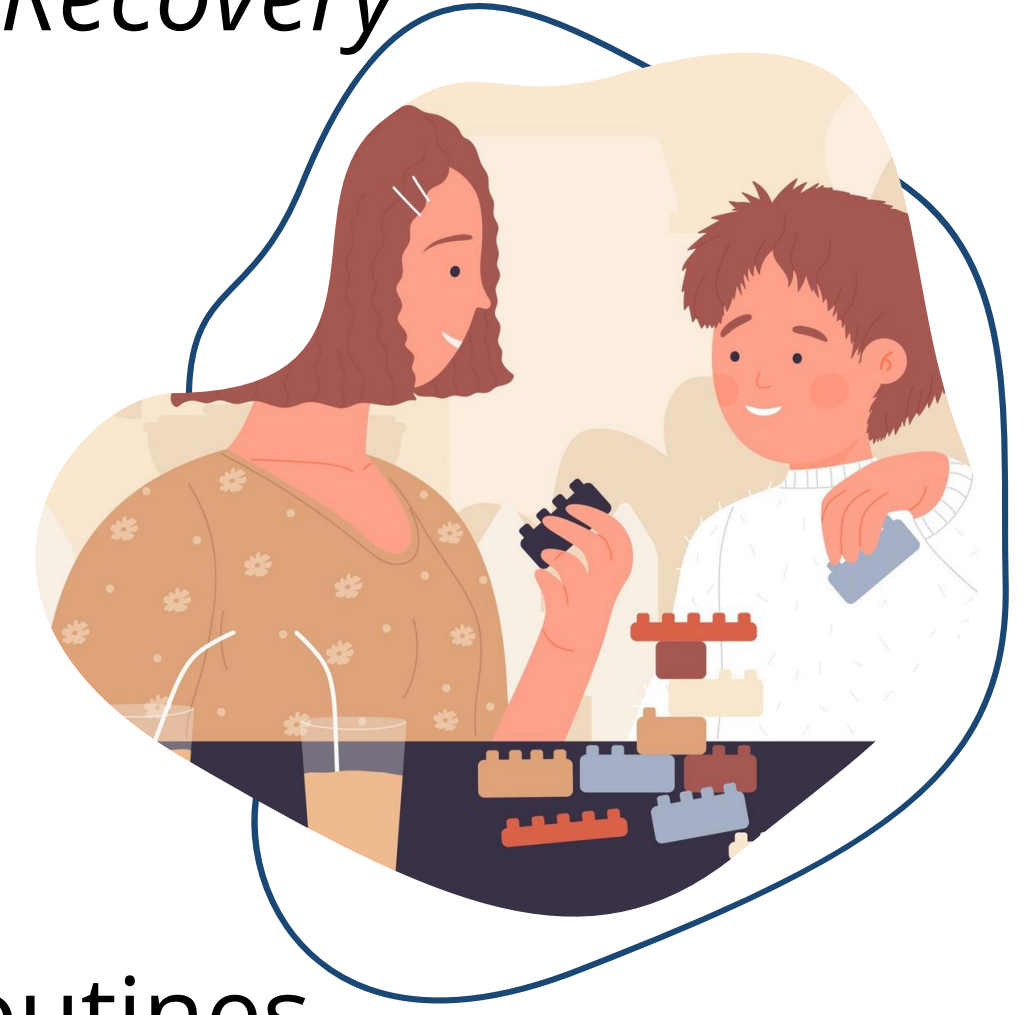
Integrated treatment: Addresses all of a client's diagnoses and symptoms within one agency and by a single team of collaborative providers who actively combine interventions to treat the whole person more effectively.



- Co-locate services, share treatment plans and records, and hold case review meetings.
- Sequence treatment goals by most critical need(s).
- Focus relapse prevention planning on identifying cues, warning signs, and coping skills for co-occurring disorders.
- Use repetition, avoid abstract discussions, keep interactions brief, and use role play to practice strategies.
- Offer psychiatric consultation, medication management services, and mental health psychoeducation.
- Collaborate with crisis response services.

RECOVERY

- Connect with outside organizations providing supportive services for those with CODs.
- Refer to mutual support groups specific to CODs, such as *Double Trouble in Recovery* and *Dual Disorders Anonymous*.
- Integrate mental health support into discharge/aftercare planning.
- Encourage habits associated with stable mood, such as healthy sleep, regular meals and hydration, movement, consistent routines, and supportive friendships.
- Help parents understand the importance of ongoing self-care, and support parents' creation and implementation of self-care strategies and routines.



Resources

[Dual Recovery Anonymous](#)

[Double Trouble in Recovery](#)

[Dual Diagnosis Anonymous](#)

[Wellness Action Recovery Plan](#)

[Stress Reduction: Physical Health and Wellness](#)

PARENTING

- Provide support and teach skills in household management, such as scheduling, home maintenance and organization, meal planning, and laundry.
- Help parents create a consistent and predictable family environments for their children.
- Support parents to educate their children about mental health by giving accurate and age-appropriate information, discussing misconceptions and fears, and modeling language about emotions.
- Encourage and model positive interactions in the family, helping instill a sense of joy and cohesiveness.
- Explore and partner with resources in the community that support parents with CODs.
- Promote informal, community-based support systems by helping parents find connection with other families in their neighborhoods, churches, schools, and playgrounds.



Resources

NAMI's [How to Talk to Children About Their Mental Health](#)

NAMI's [Meet Little Monster Coloring Book](#)

[ParentingWell Practice Approach](#)

[National Parent and Youth Helpline](#)



Contact us with questions and technical assistance requests!



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