



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON ALCOHOL MISUSE AND CRIME

Consensus Statements Regarding Screening and Assessment of Offenders

January 27, 2009 Meeting

Consensus Statements

On January 27, 2009, the National Partnership on Alcohol Misuse and Crime (NPAMC) convened a diverse meeting of leaders and stakeholders to discuss the need to screen and assess offenders for alcohol, drug and mental health issues. During the meeting, the group identified several areas of agreement. The following statements reflect the sense of the group. They do not represent the views of any particular participants or their associations, organizations, agencies or companies and should not be attributed to them.

It is important for justice officials to identify offenders with alcohol, drug and/or mental health issues.

Where feasible, the following defendants should be screened for alcohol, drug and mental health issues prior to arraignment using generally accepted tools:

- Defendants with past histories of alcohol, drug or mental health issues
- Defendants arrested for felonies or violent misdemeanors
- Defendants under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs at the time of the alleged offense

Offenders who screen positive for alcohol, drug or mental health issues should be formally assessed for both clinical needs and criminogenic risk factors prior to sentencing.

- Clinical needs include alcohol and other drug use, abuse and dependence, mental health problems, and functional impairments (like inability to maintain employment or relationships).
- Criminogenic risk factors include risk of dangerousness, risk of re-offending, risk of violating conditions of supervision, and risk for failure in standard treatment interventions.

Tools for conducting risk and clinical needs assessments that have been validated for the general population should be validated for specific offender populations as well.

Reliable and culturally unbiased tools for conducting risk and clinical needs assessments of offenders should be validated for the offender population, made readily available in the public domain, utilized, evaluated and continuously improved.

Screening and assessment tools should be administered according to generally accepted practices.

Recommendations based on risk and clinical needs assessments should be communicated to the sentencing judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, defendant, probation officer and prior to sentencing.

Courts should consider recommendations based on risk and clinical needs assessments when sentencing offenders.

Research should be conducted to determine the prevalence of alcohol and drug misuse, mental health issues and functional impairments in offender populations.

Research should be conducted to determine the value of screening and assessing all types of offenders for alcohol, drug and mental health issues and criminogenic risks.

Longitudinal studies should be conducted on criminal justice programs to ensure their effectiveness and optimization.

Participants

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