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PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

DIVERSION
TREATMENT
CCOURT

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WELCOME TO THE DIVERSION TREATMENT COURT (DTC)

Use this handbook to:

- ✓ Answer questions
- ✓ Address concerns
- ✓ Provide information about DTC



Ask your Case Manager or Defense Attorney to explain to you anything in this handbook that you do not understand.

WHAT IS DTC?

DTC is a special part of the DeKalb Magistrate Court. It is a court-supervised program for those arrested and charged with misdemeanors or felonies in DeKalb County, who also have an Axis I mental health diagnosis. DTC's program includes regular court appearances before the Judge. Following your arrest, you were offered the choice of participating in DTC or having your case proceed as part of the regular court process. If you are eligible for participation, your Case Manager will develop a treatment plan for you. While you are a participant, the Judge and your Case Manager and treatment provider will monitor your progress.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

DTC participants are required to sign a bond modification in court. This contract is an agreement between you and the Judge. It explains what is expected of you while you are active in DTC. The Judge will also sign the bond modification. The bond modification is written specifically for you based on your current charges and treatment needs. Before you sign your bond modification, you will have an opportunity to review it with your Case Manager and have your questions answered. DTC participants are required to attend treatment, as directed by your DTC Case Manager and the Judge, and to remain drug and alcohol-free and live a law-abiding life.

HOW LONG WILL I BE INVOLVED IN DTC?

The amount of time you spend in DTC is determined by your compliance to your treatment plan and by your individual progress. Misdemeanor charges require a minimum of six months participation; felony charges require a minimum of one year participation with DTC. Some persons will be active in DTC beyond the minimum participation time. It all depends on the effort you put into treatment and your progress.

Dismissal or Voluntary Withdrawal from the DTC will result in the return of your case back to the trial division for appropriate resolution on the charges for which you were arrested. Your case resolution may include a plea, trial, jail time and/or probation in the trial court.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

INCENTIVES & REWARDS

DTC acknowledges compliance in the following ways:

- Public recognition
- Recognition from the Judge
- Reduced reporting to court sessions
- Phone-in calls to Case Manager instead of in-person reporting

NO JAIL SENTENCE

Successful completion of DTC will result in a dismissal of your charges and eligibility for expungement if appropriate.

DTC GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Engage in treatment to insure on-going stabilization and wellness
- Return to your family, employment and community productively
- Evaluate and discuss other critical life concerns and issues within a confidential group therapy environment to help you move forward in your life

A SECOND CHANCE!

On the following pages, you will find information on the resources you will need to succeed. Remember that there are many people who make up the DTC Interdisciplinary Team and they all want to see you succeed. If you take advantage of the assistance offered, you will discover many ways to make a better life for yourself.

DTC RULES:

WHAT ARE THE RULES OF DTC?

To remain active in DTC you are required to follow these rules:

1. Appear in court as scheduled – you must attend all scheduled court appearances
2. Follow your treatment plan – you must attend all treatment, support and Case Manager appointments
3. Remain drug and alcohol free – random screens are given to participants that must remain negative
4. Complete DTC – you must successfully complete all bond conditional requirements of DTC for the charging court to dismiss your criminal case
5. Live a law-abiding life

While we recognize that your arrest stemmed from your mental illness, it is important for you to remember that you are in DTC because of criminal behavior that requires total accountability through treatment compliance to avoid future criminal activity.

1. APPEAR IN COURT AS SCHEDULED

You will be required to appear in front of the Judge on a regular basis, usually once a month. The Judge will be given progress reports regarding your drug and alcohol tests, reports to your Case Manager, attendance and participation in your treatment programs, and compliance with any doctor appointments. The Judge will ask you about your progress and discuss any problems or concerns of yours.

Depending on your situation, you may have to come to court several times a month. As you make progress, your court appearance schedule may be reduced. Instead of a weekly or bi-weekly court report, a participant may be required to report once a month for a compliance review.

On the day of your court appearance, you must arrive to DTC at 9:30 a.m. and stay until the Judge has finished with your case.

2. FOLLOW YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

The Treatment plan is developed after your DTC intake assessment in conjunction with our social worker and case manager. The minimum requirements of your Treatment Plan are:

- Attendance at a mental health treatment program as directed by your Case Manager and treatment provider
- Regular drug and alcohol testing
- Attendance at an educational, vocational or employment program

Your Case Manager will also help you with other areas of your life according to your individual needs.

Your treatment schedule will vary according to your progress. It is your responsibility to keep all scheduled appointments and to arrive on time. You must review your treatment plan with your Case Manager and follow it carefully.

3. REMAIN DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE

One of the primary goals of DTC is to help you remain abstinent from alcohol and all non-prescribed drugs. A positive test or admission of substance use may result in a sanction or change in treatment. Repeated substance use may result in termination from DTC. Drug and alcohol tests will be conducted at your drug treatment facility and at DTC. You will be tested throughout your participation in DTC.

4. COMPLETE DTC

If accepted into DTC, your criminal case is placed on hold. There will be no court appearances for your criminal case as long as you participate in DTC. If you complete DTC, the prosecutor will dismiss the charges against you. If you are dismissed from DTC for non-compliance or because you no longer wish to participate, your criminal case will continue as normal. Remember that your graduation from DTC will be based on your own progress and your ability to stay focused on what you must do to meet all DTC rules and expectations

5. LIVE A LAW-ABIDING LIFE

If you are re-arrested during participation or after participation in DTC, it would be up to the prosecutor to transfer your new charge(s) to DTC depending on your past criminal history, compliance while in DTC and severity of the charge. Being arrested while in DTC is not an automatic dismissal and being arrested after DTC is not an automatic refusal to be reaccepted.

DIVERSION TREATMENT COURT EXPECTATIONS

WHAT ELSE IS EXPECTED OF ME?

The expectations of DTC are:

- Treat others with respect
- Cease all drug and alcohol related activity
- Comply with drug screening
- Be law abiding

These expectations are explained in detail in the next pages.

The goals you set up with your Case Manager may also cover areas of:

- Health care
- Education
- Employment

TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT

You should respect the opinions and feelings of other people in DTC. Verbal or physical threats to anyone will not be tolerated. Any inappropriate behavior will immediately be reported to the Court and may result in a severe sanction or your termination from the program. You will be required to dress appropriately for your court sessions and treatment appointments. Sunglasses are not to be worn in court unless approved by a doctor. Gentlemen should remove their hats when coming into the courtroom and **everyone** should turn their cell phones off.

CEASE ALL DRUG RELATED ACTIVITY

You will not possess, sell, or use alcohol or illegal drugs. Any relapse by you involving drugs and/or alcohol must be reported to your Case Manager immediately. Any drugs that a doctor prescribes for you must be reported to your Case Manager immediately.

COMPLY WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL SCREENING

In addition to your mental health treatment, one of the goals of DTC is to help you remain abstinent from alcohol and all non-prescribed drugs. A positive test or admission of substance use may result in a sanction or change in treatment. Repeated substance use may result in termination from DTC. Drug and alcohol tests will be conducted at your treatment or at DTC. You will be randomly tested throughout your participation in DTC.

BE LAW ABIDING

You are required to refrain from further violation of the law. Additional offenses may result in termination from DTC.

SUPPORT SERVICES

DTC Support Services are available to you and your family. These services will help you to overcome stress, problems and conflicts that may block your recovery process. The DTC team recognizes that recovery is not an easy process, but we support your effort and courage positive change. Together, we can make it work.

HEALTH

Developing positive health habits and knowing how to handle physical and emotional setbacks are essential for your success in recovery. DTC supports and recommends that you safeguard your physical health by scheduling and monitoring the following health services and others if necessary and applicable:

- Psychiatrist or psychologists referrals
- Other medical screenings (as appropriate)
- Referrals for testing for additional mental health issues or medication issues
- Doctor, dentist and optometrist appointments
- Health and nutritional counseling
- Diabetes screening, monitoring and care
- Prenatal care, if appropriate

You will be expected to follow through on any treatment recommendations. You may also be asked to provide documentation to the court of medical conditions or appointments. Any prescribed drugs must be reported to your Case Manager as random drug screens are scheduled throughout your DTC participation.

EDUCATION

The DTC is concerned and interested in your educational, vocational and employment goals. The DTC will support and encourage your efforts towards:

- **GED:** working toward your high school equivalency diploma.
- **Vocational:** job training in many fields, from food service and haircutting to computer technology and auto mechanics.
- **College:** post secondary education in liberal arts, language arts, science, health care services, medicine, etc.

EMPLOYMENT

Finding and keeping a job that you like is an important part of building lasting success in recovery.

Employment referral services include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Labor
- DeKalb or Fulton County Workforce
- Goodwill

Please note that a participant's legitimate and confirmed efforts and involvement in education and employment pursuits may substitute for DTC day-time structure



SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION (GRADUATION): A TIME TO CELEBRATE AND RECOGNIZE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

You will be able to invite your family and friends to join you at your DTC Successful Completion “Graduation” Ceremony. The Graduation Ceremony marks your successful completion and full compliance with all of the terms and conditions of bond as a participant in the DTC and the beginning of your new way of life.

Requirements for successful completion “graduation”:

- Complete all DTC bond requirements and conditions
- Your Case Manager’s approval and recommendation for graduation
- Progress toward any vocational, educational and employment goals
- Secure an on-going relationship with your mental health care provider and all other treatment providers that you will establish while participating in the DTC



IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS:

**Diversion Treatment Court
556 North McDonough Street
Decatur, Georgia 30030**

IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS TO KNOW:

Attorney:

Case Manager:

Treatment Provider:

Therapist/Psychiatrist/Psychologist:

Emergency Contact:

NOTES

The Diversion Treatment Court (DTC) operates under the direction of the DeKalb County Magistrate Court and is a collaborative effort of the Magistrate Court, Adult Probation, DeKalb Community Service Board (DCSB), DeKalb Volunteer Lawyer's Foundation (DVLf), Integrated Life Center (ILC), Jail Mental Health Services, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Sheriff, Office of the Solicitor, Pre-trial Services, Recorder's Court, State Court, Superior Court, Traveler's Aid of Atlanta, Inc. and the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDS C).

The impetus behind this effort is the decriminalization of persons suffering with serious mental illness.



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