

“Let loose these old ideas of punitive justice”: Exploring Perceptions and Experiences of Problem-Solving Court Team Members

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Presentation Description:

This project explores the views, experiences, and beliefs of key players involved in the facilitation of problem-solving courts in British Columbia. By examining these perceptions, we can better understand problem-solving courts including their operation, opportunities for improvement, and the interaction between people involved in the system.

Abstract:

Specialized problem-solving courts divert offenders with unique needs away from the revolving door of the criminal justice system. The court's success depends on support, encouragement, and collaboration of key players involved including judges, lawyers, and integrated care teams (e.g., psychiatrists, social workers, probation officers). This study explores the views, experiences, and beliefs of two lawyers, one judge, one probation officer, and one case manager from two problem-solving courts in BC through five semi-structured interviews. An inductive thematic analysis revealed six themes. Primary findings include challenges with facilitating and implementing the model including lack of communication, conflicting mandates, public stigma, and lack of government support. Effectiveness of the model is compared with traditional adversarial court models and participants discussed the effects of COVID-19 on the courts. Finally, I discuss policy implications, recommendations, and the impact of this research on public, legal, and scholarly understanding of problem-solving courts.

References/Acknowledgments:

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