

LOW-COST/NO-COST INCENTIVES: Motivating Change on a Budget

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Our Behavior Change Tools In a Nutshell...

- Treatment **TEACHES** new behaviors
- Supervision **DETECTS** behavior
- Sanctions **STOP** behavior
- Incentives **REPEAT** behavior
- ❖ Used together, they motivate **CHANGE**.

Incentives Are Powerful!

- **Incentives motivate engagement, repetition of compliance.**
- **Incentives are validating, instill hope, build confidence, and feel good!**
- **Can have LONG lasting effects BEYOND the program**
- **SUD is a chronic disease with a 40-60% likelihood of recurrence**
- **Incentives teach: “I did it before. That means I can do it again.”**

THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN,
WHERE, WHY & HOW OF
INCENTIVES

A BRIEF REVIEW

We Reinforce ALL Target Behaviors

✓ **Showing up***

✓ **Timeliness***

✓ **Honesty***

✓ **Neg UAs/ Blows**

✓ **Phase Promotion**

✓ **Treatment Progress**

✓ **Sobriety Milestones**

✓ **Recovery Support
Achievements**

✓ **Prosocial Achievements
(job, GED, helping others,
volunteer work)**

*Proximal behaviors

In the beginning, look for—
and REWARD—the baby steps!

**“If NOT doing something earns a sanction,
then DOING it should earn a reward.”**

Incentives Must Be Delivered Correctly to Motivate Change

Key Components of Effective Delivery of Responses:

- ✓ **Certainty**
 - ✓ **Requires Reliable Detection**
- ✓ **Consistently (Fairly)**
- ✓ **Meaningful to the client**
- ✓ **Associated with the behavior**
- ✓ **Immediately**

“Aren’t Incentives Just For the Judge to Give in Court?”

- **Waiting for court may likely mean missing an opportunity to motivate. Don’t wait!**
- **Participants’ situations change rapidly. Intervening behaviors occur. Impact can wane in a matter of hours to a couple of days, at most.**
- **Best practice: Team communication throughout the week via email**
- **Empower team members to deliver court-approved low-mod incentives (tokens, fishbowl) immediately.**
- **The judge will review at court hearing, creating a learning opportunity for all.**

No Budget? No Problem!

- Need not be extravagant
- Can be tangible and intangible
- We can give things participants like or take away things they don't like
- Just the opportunity to earn a reward is motivating (fishbowl, wheel, raffles)
- But the reward must be valued by the person

How Do We Know What Rewards Work?

ASK THEM! Let them CHOOSE.

What are your favorite incentives? (Circle all that apply)

Fishbowl

Spin the Wheel

Praise, positive feedback

Gift Card

Movie Passes

CS Removal

Curfew Reduction

Zoom Court

Candy, treats

Treasure Chest

“A” Team/MVP

Certificates

Snack Box

Decision Dollars/Store

VIP Parking

Treatment Bingo

Fast Pass: Court / Lab

Other: (Specify) _____

What are some fun things you do that help you stay sober?

How Many is Enough?

Incentives Should Far Outnumber Sanctions!

- 4:1 is the starting place. 10:1 should be the goal.*
- Commonly used incentives may contain numerous incentives.
- Incentives can, and should, be given to reward compliant behaviors even if the participant is also receiving a sanction.
- Each response is given with clarity to avoid confusion.
- For each behavior: describe WHAT behavior the team liked/disliked, WHY we liked/disliked it, and HOW continuing the behavior will help/harm the participant.

*Wodahl, E. J., Garland, B. Culhane, S. E., and McCarty, W.P. (2011). Utilizing Behavioral Interventions to Improve Supervision Outcomes in Community-Based Corrections. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38 (4).

SOCIAL APPROVAL

PRAISE

APPLAUSE

POSITIVE PEER BOARD

CERTIFICATES

Judicial Praise & Approval

- Never underestimate the redemptive value of the relationship.
- Can be used immediately
- Praise is free, easy to administer, unlimited in supply and effective.

Other Forms of Team Approval Delivered During the Week (Before Court Date)

Probation/Treatment:

- **Supervisor praise**
- **Follow-up emails, texts, FaceTime**

Judge/Team:

- **Video messages, recorded by team, immediately following the behavior**
- **Cards/ notes from the team**
- **Letter home to a *supportive* loved one**
- **Written commendation for the file**

Positive Peer Boards: “A” Team

**A posted list in court of those who are not getting a sanction.
Remember, we are looking for progress, not perfection.**

Contains 4 INCENTIVES IN 1:

1. Conveys approval from judge/team
2. Holds client up as a positive example
3. Invites peer approval (applause)
4. Incentives go first.

➤ Bonus: Powerful platform for a learning opportunity!

Judge's A-Team "Script" at the Court Hearing Creates a Learning Opportunity for ALL Present

It's Amy's turn to talk to the judge:

J: Amy, you're on the "A" team— Congratulations! Please tell us why you are on the "A" team this week.

A: I showed up for all my appointments and testing. I volunteered for a role-playing exercise in group and the counselor said I did a great job."

J: Wow— what a great week! The fact that you are being so responsible about your attendance and testing— and participating in treatment— tells me you are taking the program, and your recovery, very seriously. Can you tell me how continuing to do these things will help you with the goals you are working on?

Making the Most of “A” Team

- Whether in-person or virtual, display/announce the list to entire group.
- Ask participants why they are on the “A” Team.
- Tell participant (and audience) specifically WHAT we liked, WHY we liked it, HOW continuing the behavior will help him/ her. Tie behavior to their goals.
- “A” Team goes FIRST in court– because we are modelling prosocial behavior.
- Take late phase (Phase 5, 4) clients first. They convey: “I was just like you. I struggled at first but now I’m about to graduate. That means you can, too.”

Treatment Court Certificates

We Celebrate All Target Prosocial Behaviors

Certificates Contain 5 Incentives in 1

1. Conveys specific approval from judge/team
 2. Participant goes first. (certificate = “A” Team = MVP!)
 3. Holds client up as a positive example
 4. Invites peer approval (applause)
 5. Tangible item to keep.
- Bonus: Powerful platform for a learning opportunity!

Behaviors We Should Award With Certificates

- Early successes: attendance, testing, participation
- Abstinence, Sobriety Milestones
- Program phase promotion, progress in treatment
- Extraordinary efforts in the face of adversity (disease, divorce, death, etc)
- Recovery support attendance, building support network
- Adopting healthy habits (exercise, stopped smoking, yoga, nutrition class)
- Prosocial Achievements: job, GED, volunteerism, helping others

Making the Most of Certificates

- Include specific language on the certificate: WHAT, WHY, HOW.
- Read aloud to group. It's all in the delivery. This is a BIG deal!
- If virtual hearing, share image so all can see, then:
 - Email copy with team note.
 - Better: Mail a copy in a large envelope. A two-fer! Or frame it and deliver it. Dollar Store frames rock!

Judge's "Script" at the Court Hearing Creates a Learning Opportunity for ALL Present

It's David's turn to talk to the judge. The judge will use the WHAT, WHY and HOW method:

J: David, the team and I see you are working very hard, and we are presenting you with a very special certificate today that we call the Recovery Warrior Award. I want to read this certificate aloud so everyone can see why we are celebrating. (Judge reads.)

J: (WHAT): You are receiving this award because you choose to consistently attend your recovery support group, you regularly meet with your sponsor, and have even led group meetings!

J (WHY): This tells me you understand that recovery will be a lifelong journey and the best way to maintain your recovery is to surround yourself with people who support you, and to engage in activities that will keep your recovery skills strong long after this program.

J (HOW): Can you tell me how continuing this behavior will help you now and later?

Negative Reinforcement: “Easing the Burden”

- Clients value rewards that give back some of their time, money, and freedom. For example:
 - A “go first and leave early at court” pass
 - Report virtually from work or home
- Give community service as a program requirement for all so you can take it away in small increments as a reward.
- Small one-time adjustments in curfew are appreciated.

Examples of Easing the Burden

- Fee reduction
- Go first in court, lab
- A VIP parking spot by the courthouse door
- Brief one-time extension of curfew
- Reductions in program-required (not sanctions!) community service
- Virtual reporting

Making the Most of “Easing the Burden”

- As always, ASK participants what they like. Let them choose from comparable rewards.
 - Ex. A curfew extension is not valued by a “home body.”
- Other than in phase-ups, do not take away court, treatment and supervision contacts as rewards. They are necessary!
 - Rewarding with occasional virtual reporting is a good compromise.
- These are great options to include in your no-cost fishbowl and wheel prizes.

Create Fair Rules for Use

Examples:

- Community service reductions and curfew extensions cannot be used to reduce sanctions.
- Incentives can't be given to others.
- Special passes (Go First, Virtual Report, Curfew Extension) can be saved for future use– as long as they are in compliance.
- Curfew extensions can't be stacked.

Tokens

Point systems

Chips, coins

Cards

Raffle tickets

Faux dollars

Punch cards

Tokens

- Have no value themselves. Their value is in what you can do with them– exchange them for rewards the participant chooses.
- A token economy system is a system in which tokens are earned for appropriate behaviors and exchanged later for reinforcers.
- An excellent way to motivate participants to achieve target behaviors (attendance, task completion, abstinence, honesty, etc.)

How do we immediately reward target behaviors?

Everyone on team distributes immediately, throughout the week. Examples:

- Treatment: participation, attendance, homework, testing
- Probation: OV, testing
- LE: curfew check, testing
- PD: choosing honesty
- Prosecutor: in court
- Judge: in court

Some Teams' Creative Uses of Tokens

Great Falls, MT: Bravo Bucks

- An easy DIY token to create, 1 BB = \$10
- Participants can apply them toward fees and CS, or trade for other perks (gift cards, household items, etc.)

Green Lake, WI: Chip System

- One upfront expense, then can be recycled.
- Can be color-coded so each team member has their own color
- Chips can be exchanged for:
 - Fee reduction (1 chip = \$5)
 - Community service reduction (1 chip = 15 min)
 - Other rewards, passes, raffle tickets, etc.

Montrose, CO Team's Kudo's Cards

- ALL team members can give them IMMEDIATELY
 - Categories: education, leadership, support, self-advocacy, hope, patience, integrity, responsibility
- With a note on the back as a reminder of why it was earned and from whom.
- Participant brings them to the next court review docket and reads them aloud to peer applause and judicial/team praise.
- Then they go into a bowl for a drawing for a \$50 gift card.
- Cards are returned to participant to keep
- Six incentives in one!

Determine Appropriate Token Increments for Specific Behaviors: Consider Proximal & Distal Behaviors

- Ex., Client shows up for testing. Showing up is an easier proximal behavior.
 - Phase 1: 1 token for showing up
 - Phase 3: No token, but praise for continued compliance
- Ex., Client produced a negative drug screen
 - Ph. 1: Abstinence is a difficult, distal behavior
 - 2 tokens earned
 - Ph.3. Abstinence is becoming proximal
 - 1 token earned

Choose Back-up Reinforcers & Establish Your Exchange Procedure

- Most fun: Reach out to community partners to create a treatment court “store” (housewares, cleaning products, school supplies, etc)
- May also be used in monthly gift basket raffles– the more tokens, the more chance to win.
- Let participants choose. They may prefer to use their tokens to reduce fees, curfew or CS, a Fast Pass to Court, Lab, VIP parking

Tokens: 6 Incentives in 1

1. Conveys immediate, specific approval from team member
2. Tangible item to keep/collect
3. Approval from judge/team in court
4. Holds client up as a positive example
5. Peer approval (applause)
6. Used for drawing or store

Bonus: Powerful platform for a learning opportunity!

Judge's "Script" at the Court Hearing Creates a Learning Opportunity for ALL Present

It's Carla's turn to talk to the judge. The judge will use the WHAT, WHY and HOW method:

J: Carla, did you earn any chips this week? May I see them? Can you please tell me how you earned them?

P: I went bowling with the peer mentors on Sober Bowling night and had a really great time. I even made some new friends.

J (WHAT & WHY): That's fantastic! When you go to sober events and make friends with people in recovery, that tells me you understand how important it is to learn how to have fun without drugs and alcohol. It also tells me you understand that making friends with people who are also in recovery will help you stay strong long after you leave this program.

J (HOW): Can you tell me how continuing this behavior will help you now and later?

Tangible Reinforcers (On the Cheap)

Bracelets, coins, keychains, pins

Treasure Box

Snacks

Treasure Box/ Snack bar

- Freebies, white elephants, etc. donated by the team
- Primary value is social approval, entertainment
- Put the team DA or LE in charge of this one.
- How do you increase the value of low-value prizes?
- Make it interactive. Use puns, humor. Involve the team. Involve the participant.
- If you are having fun, your participants will have fun, too.
- Part of the fun is the prizes are REALLY low value. Lean in.

Chatham Co, GA Team's Golden Ticket Twist

- The team gives out large candy bars as incentives with DIY wrappers with the treatment court logo and affirmations.
- Some of the wrappers have golden tickets tucked inside that can be exchanged for prizes such as a free month of treatment!

Examples of Sweet Treats

- Team member's special baked treats (cookies, cupcakes, etc.)
- Candy cards that spell out a message
- Success-themed brand name items:
 - "Kudos," "Mr. Goodbar" candy bars
 - "Smarties" candy
 - "Extra" gum
 - Star themed candy
 - "Starburst"
 - "Trolli All Star" gummies

Small Items

- Small items, delivered correctly, can have a BIG impact
- Bracelets, coins, keychains, pins
- Can be collected, distributed for special achievements (phase ups).
- It's all in the delivery! Attach meaning and significance.

ME Judge's Silicone Bracelet Reward

- Awarded for phase promotion
- A different bracelet for each phase:
 - Ph. 1 Believe
 - Ph. 2 Focus
 - Ph. 3 Strength
 - Ph. 4 Inspire
- Judge wears the bracelets on her wrist and personally gives the item as part of the promotion ceremony.

- Why it's great:
 - Highly personal, a special event
 - Conveys the magnitude of the achievement
 - Conveys praise from the judge
 - Holds the person up as a positive example
 - Invites applause & approval from peers

Gift Cards, Certificates

- Amounts need not be large.
- Seek items that support recovery. (No alcohol)
- Ask clients what they like.
- Better: Let clients choose. Not everyone likes fast food, coffee, gas cards, etc.

Opportunity for reward

Fishbowl

Wheel

Raffles

Fishbowl Formula: 50, 40, 10 + 1

Based on research, for every 500 slips:

- ✓ 250 affirmations + social approval
- ✓ 209 low-level reinforcers: < 4 – 12 hr CS, movie passes, + 1hr curfew, Go First in Court, \$1 - \$10 gift card
- ✓ 40 moderate/ high-level rewards: < 12 - 24 hr CS, Report Virtually, Jump the Lab Line, \$25 - \$50 fee reduction, \$15 – \$20 gift card
- ✓ 1 mega prize: 60 hr CS reduction, \$50 - \$100 off fees , \$50 gift card

The Wheel Formula: 50-40-10 (No mega Prize)

- ✓ Think of the wheel as a fishbowl. Likelihood of winning a big prize is small.

No-Cost Fishbowl/ Wheel Prizes

- Reductions in:
 - Community service
 - Fees (lab, sup)
 - Curfew
- Fast pass: court, lab
- VIP parking
- Virtual reporting
- Donated passes
 - Movies, bowling, yoga
- Include other incentives in use: Decision Dollars, Treasure Chest, Snack Bar
- Something crazy: DA joke, LE push-ups, judge's baked goods
- Spin/ draw again

Making the Most of Fishbowl/ Wheel

- Let each person draw/ spin for a chance at a prize.
- Make the “affirmation” prizes fun and participatory:
 - Add standing ovations, salutes, high fives, fist bumps, team salutes, two thumbs up, do “the wave.”
- Virtual options:
 - If virtual, draw/ spin on camera for all to see.
 - Low tech: Let client choose from colorful paper fish on a white board with prizes written on the back
 - High tech: Fun online wheel spin: www.wheel-decide.com

Provide Opportunities to Earn Rewards

- We are also building citizenship, providing opportunities for growth.
- Provide activities that:
 - ✓ promote engagement
 - ✓ model prosocial behavior
 - ✓ encourage participants to use new treatment skills
- Examples: checklists, bingo cards

Incentivizing Productivity: A St. Lucie Florida Judge's (Optional) Challenges

Judge gives incentives for completing short-term, well-defined challenges for:

- Fitness (5K run/walk with mentors)
- Wellness (CM-led yoga, meditation, nutrition class & snack prep)
- Vocational (resume service, community partner fork-lift training/certification)
- Literacy (Alumni Recovery Book Club: read & discuss)
- Life skills (budget class, grooming/ dressing for an interview)

Why it's great:

- Realistic and achievable
- Models/builds prosocial behavior and healthy habits

Contests Promote Engagement

- Recovery-themed contests:
 - Essay Contest
 - Poster Contest
 - Photography Contest
 - Art/Mixed Media Contest
- Incentivize participation for ALL who enter contest
- Contest judges can be local celebrities, media, etc.
- Have contests coincide with graduation ceremony
- Winners receive prizes and talk about their entries

Create a Community Bulletin Board

- Research fun local activities that support recovery.
- Encourage choosing an activity from the board.
- Have participant report to the group if it is something they enjoyed and supported their recovery.
- Reward participation with praise and generous incentives.

Final Word on Incentives

- What we are doing is probably not enough.
- Make time to discuss incentives at staffing.
- Make a place for incentives on the staffing sheet.
- Track history. Recording incentives increases use.
- Look for the little things– they are really BIG things!
- Use a variety of rewards to avoid habituation.
- Even if receiving a sanction, reward compliance with incentives.
- Be specific in your delivery: what, why, how!
- Incentives instill hope, build confidence that lasts beyond the program!

Questions

To receive a pdf of the presentation and a 35-page colorful, detailed guide to creating low-cost/no-cost incentives, please contact:

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