

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WELCOME**

This handbook is designed to provide you with the necessary tools and information you need to be successful in the program. As you begin your journey, you need to be motivated to work toward changing your lifestyle and becoming free of alcohol and chemical addiction; seeking treatment for service-connected disabilities; and/or completing your transition into civilian life. Please read carefully as you will be required to follow the instructions and rules outlined in this handbook. Provisions of this handbook are subject to change. Participants will be notified and expected to comply with those changes.

First, thank you for your service to our country, and congratulations on entering the Veteran Treatment Docket (VTD)! Entering this docket is a monumental first step in completing your transition to civilian life!

The VTD will provide you with the following tools to help you be successful. As you progress through treatment, you will become familiar with these tools and how to use them to your advantage. The following tools will help you move toward a stable civilian life.

1. Incentives and sanctions
2. Accountability through Court reviews
3. Assignments and/or essays
4. Alcohol/drug monitoring
5. Daily planner/journal
6. Meetings with the VA/private treatment providers
7. A case manager to assist you gaining access to veterans benefits and to help guide you through treatment.

## **MEET YOUR TREATMENT TEAM**

The Treatment Team consists of the presiding Judge, Docket Coordinator, State's Attorney, Defense Attorney, VA Case Manager, Probation Officer, Treatment Provider, Law Enforcement Officer, and court administrative staff.

A description of each of the members of the Treatment Team is as follows:

### **Presiding Judge**

The Judge offers leadership for the Docket and direction in policy developments, and presides over the treatment docket's judicial matters.

### **Docket Coordinator**

The Coordinator oversees all daily operations of the Docket and coordinates with all members of the Treatment Team. This person also oversees record keeping, statistical reporting, program material development, operational program development, grant writing and grant management. The Coordinator serves as an operational troubleshooter, interacting with all necessary Court and partner staff. The Coordinator along with the Case Manager is responsible for building and maintaining the broad network of treatment and social services providers utilized by the Court and serves as a full member of the decision-making team.

### **Case Manager**

The Case Manager provides case management services and referral for all participants. The Case Manager is responsible for monitoring the progress of each participant through collaboration with service providers. He/She is also responsible for monitoring the progress of each participant's compliance with the treatment plan, and Court mandated monitoring appointments and referrals. The Case Manager facilitates referrals to support treatment goals, and facilitates communication with the individual, family, treatment providers, Probation Officer, and Program Team regarding the progress of the participant. He/she participates in Treatment Team meetings and appears in Court. The Case Manager maintains accurate records of the veteran's treatment progress and works closely with all Docket matters with the Docket Coordinator. The Case manager provides an oral report summarizing the progress of all participants which is provided to all members of the Treatment Team, and is responsible for coordinating rides for those participants who are unable to secure transportation on their own.

### **State's Attorney**

The State's Attorney represents the State in the Treatment Team. The State's Attorney files all necessary legal documents, participates in a coordinated strategy for responding to positive alcohol and/or drug tests and other instances of non-compliance. The State's Attorney makes decisions regarding the participants continued enrollment in Treatment based on performance rather than on legal or political aspects of the case.

### Defense Attorney

The Defense Attorney represents the Program participant. The defense attorney is independent and does not represent any outside interest. The defense attorney's primary functions are to articulate and advocate the participant's position and to protect the participant's legal interest. A participant may represent himself *pro se* in the VTD.

### Court Staff/Clerk

The court staff/clerk maintains a current court calendar and a record of the court proceedings. The Clerk is responsible for supervising the Docket Coordinator.

### Probation Officer –

The Probation Officer will supervise and monitor the veteran while engaged in the program; including home and work visits, random alcohol and drug testing, and verifying veteran's compliance with conditions of participation in the program; reports veterans progress to the treatment team during the team meeting.

### Law Enforcement Officer –

The Law Enforcement Officer helps supervise and monitor the veteran while engaged in the program, and serves as a liaison to local law enforcement agencies and helps build community awareness and support of the program. Supervision may include home and work visits, random alcohol or drug testing, and verifying the participant's compliance with program requirements. The Law Enforcement Officer will report on participant progress and compliance to the Treatment Team.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accounting Act of 1996 (HIPAA), 45 C.F.R. Parts 160 & 164 require that your identity and privacy be protected. In response to these regulations, the treatment team has developed policies and procedures to guard your privacy. You will be asked to sign a Release of Information for the sole purpose of court hearings, Treatment Team meetings, and reports concerning your specific case between your Case Manager, Treatment Provider, Probation Officer and Docket Coordinator. See attached Releases.

## VTD RULES

As a participant in the VTD, you will be required to follow the rules outlined in the Participant Contract, including but not limited to the following:

1. You must abstain from the use of all alcohol, illegal, legal and prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you by your physician(s).
2. You must inform your treating physician(s) you are in recovery and participating in VTD. You will notify your Probation Officer, Treatment Provider and Case Manager of any medications you are currently taking and the name of the prescribing physician. You will notify them of any over the counter medications you are taking, and such notification must be given **before** you take any over the counter medications.
3. You must also notify your Probation Officer, Treatment Provider and Case Manager prior to taking any opiate, narcotic, or benzodiazepine that was prescribed to you by your physician. You will give permission for any of these Treatment Team members to verify any of your prescriptions and to talk to your physician and/or your pharmacist.
4. You must complete an assessment and comply with all recommended treatment.
5. You must attend all Court hearings and treatment sessions as scheduled and on time. Personal appointments must be scheduled around the treatment requirements, which include but are not limited to Court hearings, treatment, probation appointments, and alcohol/drug testing.
6. You are responsible for applying for VA benefits if you are not currently receiving them and do not wish to use private insurance. If you need assistance applying for benefits or have a civil issue preventing you from receiving your benefits, you will be referred to the South Royalton Legal Clinic's Vermont Veterans Legal Assistance Project. The Legal Assistance Project will not represent you in criminal matters or in VTD; and will only render services related to obtaining necessary access to veterans and state benefits.
7. You must submit to random alcohol and drug testing which may be observed. Any missed or dilute test will be presumed positive for the presence of alcohol and drugs.
8. You must have medical health insurance. VA/TRICARE is acceptable form of health insurance. If you do not have medical health insurance, but have a discharge classification that qualifies you for VA benefits, you will be required to apply for veterans benefits or obtain private insurance.
9. You must keep the Treatment Team informed of your current address and phone number at all times. You must remain a Vermont resident.
10. You must dress appropriately for Court hearings and treatment sessions.
11. Cell phones must be turned OFF before entering the courtroom (OFF, not silent or vibrate mode). Be respectful of others and to the Court. Any disruption may be cause for sanction(s).

12. If you fail to comply with any of the phase requirements, you may revert back to an earlier phase or be terminated from VTD.
13. Abide by all other rules and regulation imposed by VTD.
14. You must remain honest with all members of the Treatment Team and treatment providers.
15. You must not engage in personal relationships with any other participants in VTD.
16. You are responsible for securing transportation to and from all treatment appointments and court appearances. If you need assistance, contact your case manager.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

This program is not an easy one. It demands rigorous honesty and self-discipline. The success of your treatment and re-integration to civilian life is based on your willingness to be honest with the Treatment Team and yourself.

Upon entering VTD, you will meet with your Probation Officer and Case Manager to develop a case plan that sets attainable, short-term and long-term goals with clearly defined action steps and phases.

Contact with your Probation Officer, Treatment Provider and Case Manager is based on initial assessments, your personal treatment plan, and phase level guidelines. Each treatment phase has its own treatment goals and expectations which you will be responsible for achieving. You will progress through one phase to the next, listed below, based on recommendations from your Probation Officer, your Treatment Provider and Case Manager.

#### Phase 1 – Red Phase - 4 weeks – Orientation;

- Clinical assessment by VA;
- identification of other needs and address immediate needs such as housing, SSI benefits, food stamps, etc.;
- creation of individualized treatment plan and calendar.
- Have this handbook read or read to the veteran;
- sign releases and acknowledgements of understanding;
- submit to continuous electronic alcohol monitoring (SCRAM) (if deemed necessary per Treatment Plan);
- Decide if veteran wants to participate in VTD which requires that veteran is sentenced based on a plea agreement reached with State’s Attorney where you will be placed on probation and veteran will agree to all probation and VTD conditions;
- sign Participant Contract
- Veteran reports as determined by the Treatment Team.

Phase 2 – White Phase – 10 Weeks – Stability - Per treatment plan. Veteran reports bi-weekly at a minimum.

- \_\_\_ Attends all scheduled Court appearances;
- \_\_\_ Attend all probation meetings;
- \_\_\_ Comply with all VTD rules, conditions, and contract, including sobriety.
- \_\_\_ Attend all treatment appointments.
- \_\_\_ Find and obtain safe and sober housing.
- \_\_\_ Use daily planner/journal
- \_\_\_ Maintain constructive use of your time by seeking or maintaining stable work, school, vocational training, or volunteer work.
- \_\_\_ Have a minimum of 30 days of continuous sobriety, excluding any days using a SCRAM unit, immediately preceding entry into Blue Phase.

Phase 3 – Blue Phase – 18 weeks – Sober Living Skills - Per treatment plan; Veteran reports monthly at a minimum.

- \_\_\_ Attends all scheduled Court appearances;
- \_\_\_ Attend all probation meetings;
- \_\_\_ Comply with all VTD rules, conditions, and contract, including sobriety.
- \_\_\_ Attend all treatment appointments and actively engage in treatments.
- \_\_\_ Find and obtain safe and sober housing.
- \_\_\_ Use daily planner/journal
- \_\_\_ Maintain constructive use of your time by seeking or maintaining stable work, school, vocational training, or volunteer work.
- \_\_\_ Make a financial plan to pay court costs; treatment costs (if applicable) and/or restitution.
- \_\_\_ Begin planning community service project with Case Manager.
- \_\_\_ Have a minimum of 90 days of continuous sobriety, excluding any days using a SCRAM unit, immediately preceding entry into Gold Phase.

Phase 4 – Gold Phase – 24 weeks or until completed – Relapse Prevention

Per treatment plan; secure employment or enrollment in educational/vocational program (unless retired); create continuity plan; prepare veteran for graduation. Graduation ceremony, presentation of certificate.

- \_\_\_ Attends all scheduled Court appearances as determined by the Treatment Team
- \_\_\_ Attend all probation meetings;
- \_\_\_ Comply with all VTD rules, conditions, and contract, including sobriety.
- \_\_\_ Attend all treatment appointments.
- \_\_\_ Find and obtain safe and sober housing.
- \_\_\_ Use daily planner/journal
- \_\_\_ Attend a smoking cessation class if directed to do so by the Treatment Team
- \_\_\_ Maintain constructive use of your time, be working, in school or vocational training, or participating regularly in volunteer work.
- \_\_\_ Maintain financial responsibility by following personal budget
- \_\_\_ Create a continuing care plan and community service projects with Case Manager.
- \_\_\_ Complete community service project; and
- \_\_\_ Maintain six month of continuous sobriety preceding graduation.
- \_\_\_ Prepare for graduation. Prepare Graduation certificate.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG SCREENS**

Since achieving and maintaining sobriety is one of the main goals of the program, you will be tested randomly throughout the entire time of participation.

### **REMEMBER:**

- Testing will be done on a random basis. The number of tests per week may vary and depend on what phase you are in and your Treatment Plan.
- You will be observed to ensure compliance and to maintain integrity and accuracy of the test.
- Methods of testing are determined by the Treatment Team and are not negotiable.
- If you miss a test or submit a dilute test, it will be counted as a positive test.
- Any detectable level of alcohol, drug or other mood-altering substance is considered a positive test.
- If you have a positive test in any program phase, you will receive a sanction. This could include a fine or time in jail to help you stop your alcohol/drug-using behavior. However, the Presiding Judge in consultation with the Treatment Team will consider your honesty about your use in determining the appropriate sanction.

## **SANCTIONS AND INCENTIVES**

Incentives are rewards for positive behavior. Sanctions are the imposition of a consequence for negative behavior.

### **Incentives in VTD**

Frequent Court reviews afford the treatment team the opportunity to respond quickly to your behaviors, whether positive or negative. When you demonstrate compliance and progress in treatment, the Presiding Judge will award incentives. These incentives may include: praise by the Judge and the Treatment Team; Gift certificates/gift cards; promotion to the next phase; reduction of expense.

### **Sanctions in VTD**

If you continue to use alcohol or mind-altering substances or violate VTD rules or terms of the Participant Contract, you will be subject to sanctions. Sanctions will be imposed every time a non-compliant behavior occurs, and will be imposed in open court. The sanctions can be imposed by the Presiding Judge during any phase of the program,

including Graduation. Sanctions can include jury box, community service hours, essay/homework assignment, increased supervision, fines, or time in custody.

The use of incentive and sanctions will be determined by the Treatment Team and the Presiding Judge based on your progress in treatment and your progress in VTD. The policy regarding jail sanctions is attached to this Handbook. Your defense attorney represents your interests and will advocate for you for the type of incentive or sanction to be imposed based on your progress in treatment and participation in the program. If you do not have an attorney, you may represent yourself *pro se*.

### **DRESS CODE**

All participants shall dress appropriately at all times to maintain the dignity, integrity, decorum, and professional atmosphere of the Court and the justice system. All participants shall follow the same guidelines when attending VTD related activities.

#### **Examples of Appropriate Wear:**

- Neat, clean, well-maintained clothing
- Shoes must be worn at all times
- Display proper hygiene
- Collared shirt, no jeans

#### **Examples of Inappropriate Wear:**

- Tank tops, camis, or halter tops
- Clothing depicting or glorifying alcohol and/or drugs
- Hats, caps, bandanas, sunglasses, etc.
- Obscene or profane language or illustrations on clothing, and/or gang/drug related clothing.
- Revealing clothing (all undergarments must be covered by clothing for both men and women).

## **TERMINATION FROM THE VETERANS TREATMENT DOCKET**

Termination from VTD is at the discretion of the Presiding Judge in consultation with the Treatment Team. Upon termination, you will no longer be able to be a participant in VTD and your Probation Officer may file a violation or revocation of probation, whichever he/she believes is appropriate. Dismissal from VTD may occur for various reasons including, but not limited to:

1. You engage in conduct that is a public safety risk.
2. You disappear from Probation supervision and fail to contact your Probation Officer.
3. Any unexcused absence for 45 days or more will be considered automatic termination from VTD not subject to a termination hearing.
4. You move away from an area in which service providers can provide treatment.
5. You are arrested on new criminal charges whether the conduct forming the basis of the new charge occurred before or after participation in VTD.
6. You are determined to have a condition that would prevent you from participating in or achieving benefits from VTD which condition arose after you began participation in VTD.
7. You fail to move through each phase of treatment as required by the Treatment Team.
8. You had unexcused absences from Court appearances.
9. You make threats or engage in acts of violence toward Treatment Providers, other participants, or the Treatment Team while in VTD.
10. You decide to withdraw from VTD.
11. You fail to comply with the terms of the Participant Contract.
12. You engage in Stolen Valor.

## **TERMINATION HEARING PROTOCOL**

Before you may be terminated from VTD, you have certain due process protections. These protections include having written notice of the reasons for termination, the appointment of an attorney, and the opportunity to have a hearing. These due process protections are written in a Protocol, attached to this Handbook.

## **GRADUATION**

Graduation from VTD is recognized as a very important event. Your loved ones will be invited to join you at a special ceremony as the Treatment Team congratulates you for successfully completing all phases of VTD and achieving your goal to reclaim a healthy civilian life.

In order to be eligible for graduation, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Complete all required treatment and progressed through all 4 phases;
2. Complete all terms and conditions of probation;
3. Maintain a minimum of six months of continuous sobriety immediately preceding graduation;
4. Ability to support and maintain myself financially through legal means;
5. Maintain a stable living situation that is supportive of sobriety and developed a healthy system to help me;
6. Developed a long-term sobriety plan that addresses triggers I may encounter after I am out of VTD. It also includes a plan to avoid relapse or seek help should a relapse occur. This plan has been presented to the Court in the form of an essay and has been approved by the Treatment Team;
7. Completed community service project to the satisfaction of the Treatment Team; and
9. Complied with all the terms and conditions of the Participant Contract.

## **CONTINUING CARE**

In order to provide you with a continuing support system and to assist you in maintaining sobriety, you may participate in a Continuing Care phase after graduation. This phase may involve checking in with your Case Manager once a month, following your Relapse Prevention/Maintenance Plan, and following all conditions of probation if required. If you are willing, it may also include mentoring participants who are just beginning the VTD program.

## **CONCLUSION**

The goal of VTD is to help you complete a healthy transition back into civilian life, to equip you with tools to deal with, and access to treatments for, service-connected disabilities. VTD is here to guide and to assist you, but you ultimately have the responsibility to make it work for you. You must be motivated to make a commitment to alcohol and a drug-free life. The Treatment Team welcomes you to this journey and is committed to helping you achieve success!

**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

I have read, or had read to me, this Veterans Treatment Docket handbook. I understand the rules outlined in this handbook, and hereby agree to follow those rules.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT'S ATTORNEY

\_\_\_\_\_  
STATE'S ATTORNEY

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDING JUDGE

\_\_\_\_\_  
CASE MANAGER