



# YOUTH WELLNESS COURT

## FAQ'S



01

**Q: How does a youth get referred to the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

A youth may be referred to the Program if he/she faces criminal charges and is referred by a professional or parent/guardian who believes the youth may have an underlying mental health condition.

02

**Q: What kinds of criminal charges determine a youth's eligibility for participation in the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

The attorneys and judge will determine if the criminal charges exclude a youth from participation based on the seriousness of the offense. Some charges or past behavior might disqualify a youth in participating if the team believes the Program can't meet their needs. However, the State may choose to amend the charges to make the youth eligible for participation. A youth may also not be allowed to join if it seems like he/she or their family won't be active or willing to take part in the Program.

**Q: What are the benefits of participating in the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

03

The YWC Program focuses on youth whose criminal charges are connected to mental health challenges. Instead of going through the traditional probation track, youth will receive age-appropriate therapeutic services. These services will help youth achieve the highest level of mental health stability, become independent, and responsible members of the community. Following successful completion of the Program, a youth's criminal charges will be dismissed and expunged by the judge.

04

**Q: What are the goals of the Youth**

**Wellness Court Program?**

A: The Program aims for each participating youth to:

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- Become knowledgeable about his/her mental health needs;
- Understand the need for continued treatment; and:
- Use new tools and coping skills from treatment to stay stable and avoid further legal trouble.



05

**Q: Who are the members of the Youth Wellness Court Program Treatment Team?**

The Program treatment team includes the judge, attorneys, case managers, and mental health professionals. The case manager will work closely with the youth and his/her family. The team will work together throughout the duration of the youth’s involvement in the Program to support the youth and help them successfully complete the Program.



**06**

**Q: How long are youth involved in the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

The time a youth spends in the Program depends on their treatment needs. The treatment team will discuss the youth’s progress during status review hearings. The team will discuss the estimated timeline for Program completion at multiple stages of the youth’s involvement.



07

**Q: What are the expectations for youth who participate in the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

A: Participants in the Program are expected to:

- Enter a plea of guilty or no contest on the record in Court;
- Attend all required treatment sessions;
- Take any prescribed medications;
- Refrain from using drugs and alcohol;
- Participate in evaluations;
- Attend school; and
- Actively and appropriately participate in Court.

**08a**

**Q: What are the phases of involvement in the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

[Phase 1: Program Entry >>](#)  
[Phase 2: Goal Setting >>](#)  
[Phase 3: Assessing Independence](#)  
[Phase 4: Preparing for Graduation](#)

**>> Phase 1: Program Entry**

- A decision on the youth’s eligibility for admission to the Program is made at the time of an arraignment or bail hearing.
- The youth and parent/guardian are informed that their participation in the Program is **voluntary**.
- Once accepted, a case manager from an outside agency will be assigned to help set up treatment services.
- The youth will then have assessments conducted by professionals to help create a treatment plan and monitor their progress

**>> Phase 2: Goal Setting**

- The team will decide if the youth is ready to take part in the Program.
- Using the treatment plan, the team and mental health and professionals will work with the youth to help manage and treat any mental health needs.
- The youth is expected to follow the Program rules and stay actively involved

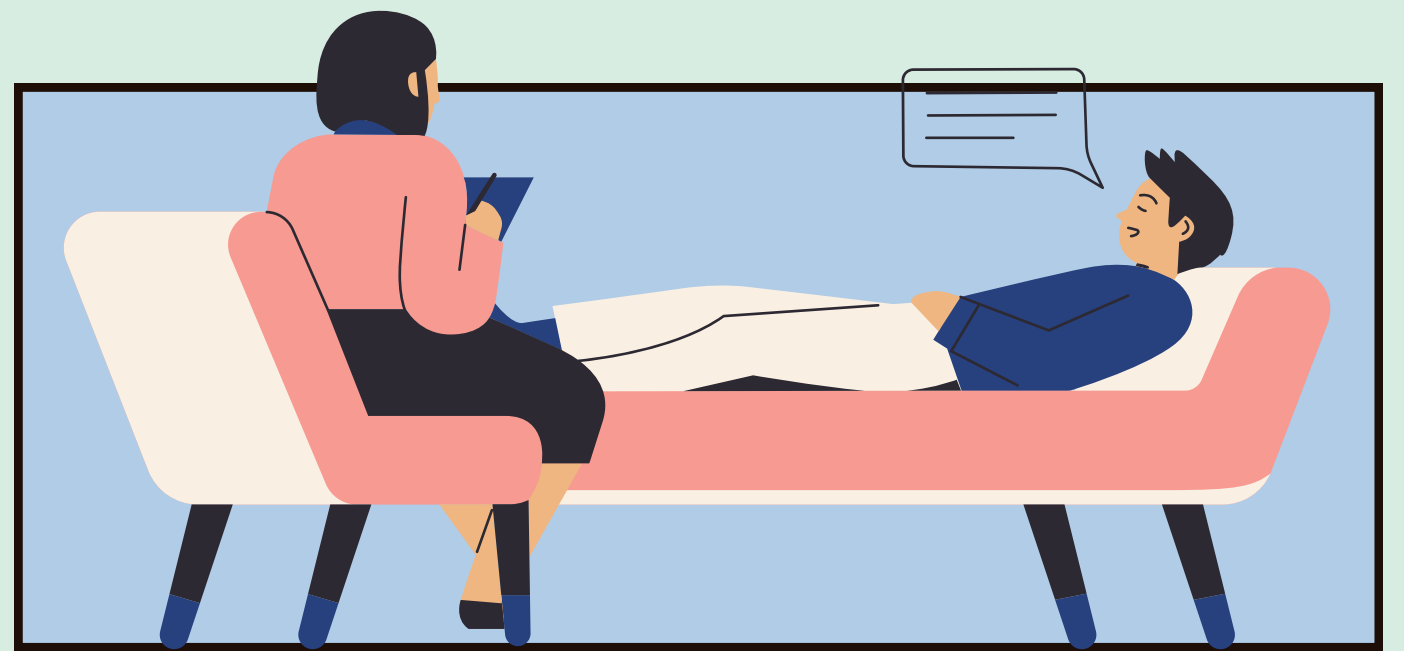


### >> Phase 3: Assessing Independence

- Youth gain more independence to apply skills learned with their treatment plans.
- Appropriate changes may be made to treatment plans and youth may be required to come to Court less frequently.

### >> Phase 4: Preparing for Graduation

- Youth consistently shows that he/she can apply newly learned skills and move towards graduating from the Program.
- The treatment team begins discussing plans for next steps after the youth graduates from the Program.



**Q: How long are youth involved in the Youth Wellness Court Program? (Continued)**

**08b**

**Phase 1: Program Entry**

**Phase 2: Goal Setting**

**<< Phase 3: Assessing Independence**

**<< Phase 4: Preparing for Graduation**

**09**

**Q: What should youth expect during a Youth Wellness Court Program status review hearing?**

- Youth who participate in the Program attend status review hearings once every six (6) weeks.
- Status review hearings typically last fifteen (15) minutes and are in the presence of other participants and family members. The Court may conduct some review hearings individually if there are sensitive matters that need to be addressed in a youth's case.
- Case managers update the judge on how the youth is doing. This includes attendance and participation in treatment, following school rules and any other conditions ordered, and/or drug test results when necessary.
- Youth and their parent/guardian may discuss any issues or problems with treatment during status review hearings.
- The judge reviews the youth's compliance with the treatment plan and Program rules. If the judge is satisfied with the youth's progress, the youth may attend status review hearings less frequently as they move closer to the graduation of the Program.
- If a youth is not performing well, the judge will discuss the matter with the child, parent/guardian, case manager, and/or, clinical team to determine what to do next. Failure to comply with the treatment plan or violation of Program rules can result in consequences up to and including termination of the program.

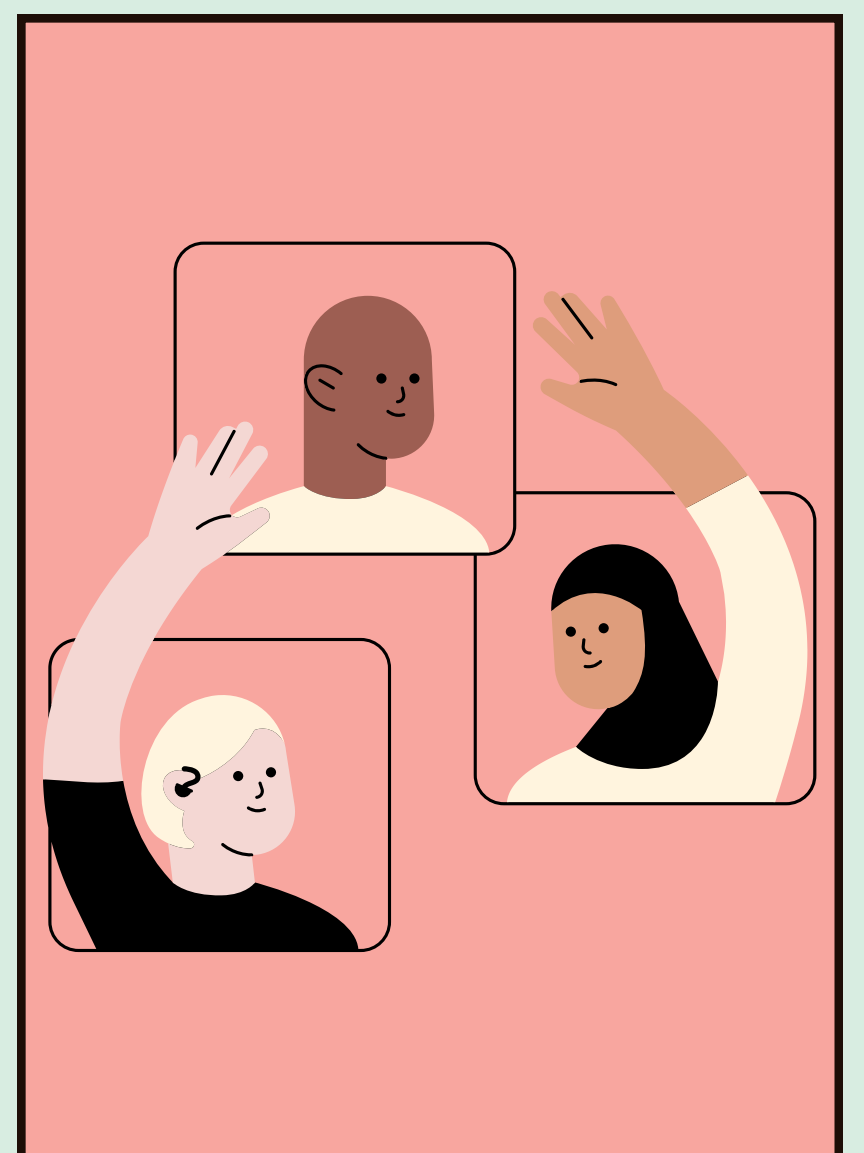
**Q: What are the requirements for graduation from the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

**10**

To successfully graduate from the Program, youth must:

- Show consistent, active engagement and follow all Program rules.
- Attend and successfully participate in all treatment sessions.
- Reach treatment plan goals and receive a recommendation for graduation from the case manager.
- Avoid criminal activity.

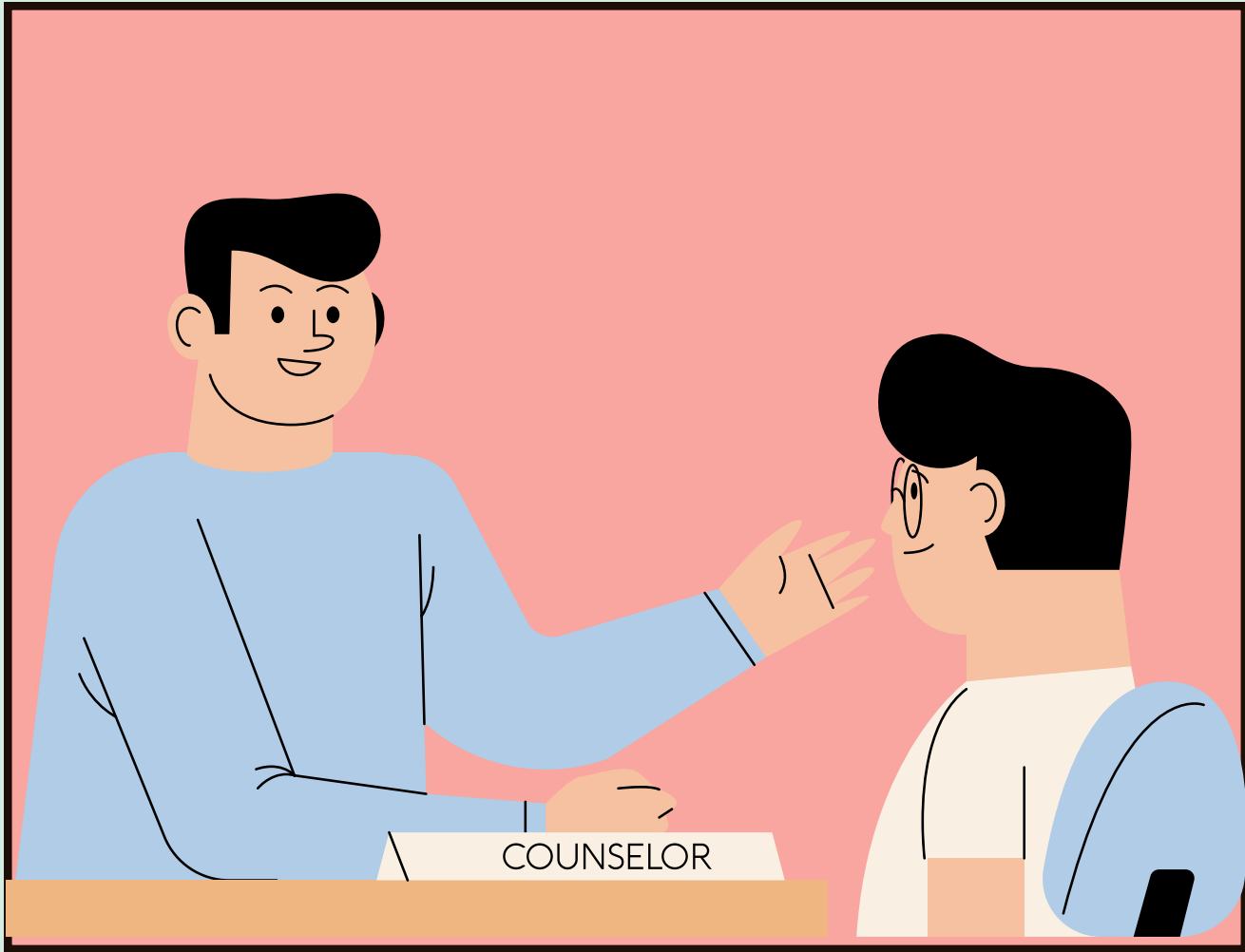
If the youth successfully graduates from the Program, his/her charges will be dismissed by the judge and automatically expunged from the youth's record.



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**Q: What happens if a youth does not complete the Youth Wellness Program?**

A: If a youth fails to successfully complete the Program, he/she will be adjudicated and sentenced for the criminal charges.



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**Q: Under what circumstances may a youth be terminated from the Youth Wellness Court Program?**

A: A youth may be terminated from the Program for violations such as:

- Not following treatment;
- Skipping school;
- Failing to follow Program and/or family rules;
- Committing violent acts;
- Missing Court dates and/or counseling appointments;
- Missing drug tests;
- Threatening violence towards the treatment team, case manager, the judge/Court, or anyone else.
- New arrests for other criminal charges.

Youth who are terminated from the Program will be sentenced for the charges he/she pled guilty or no contest to when he/she entered the program. Youth who are terminated from the Program and later incur new criminal charges are unlikely to be eligible to participate in the Program in the future.

