



**CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY FUTURES**  
Strengthening Partnerships, Improving Family Outcomes



**NATIONAL  
FAMILY  
TREATMENT  
COURT  
PROGRAM**

Training and Technical Assistance

# **Engagement, Safety, Accountability: Effective Responses to Participant Behavior in Family Treatment Courts**

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Center for Children and Family Futures**

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# Acknowledgment

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# OJJDP Priorities

<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov>



Open up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth



Treat Children as Children



Serve Children at Home, With Their Families, in Their Communities







# Learning Objectives

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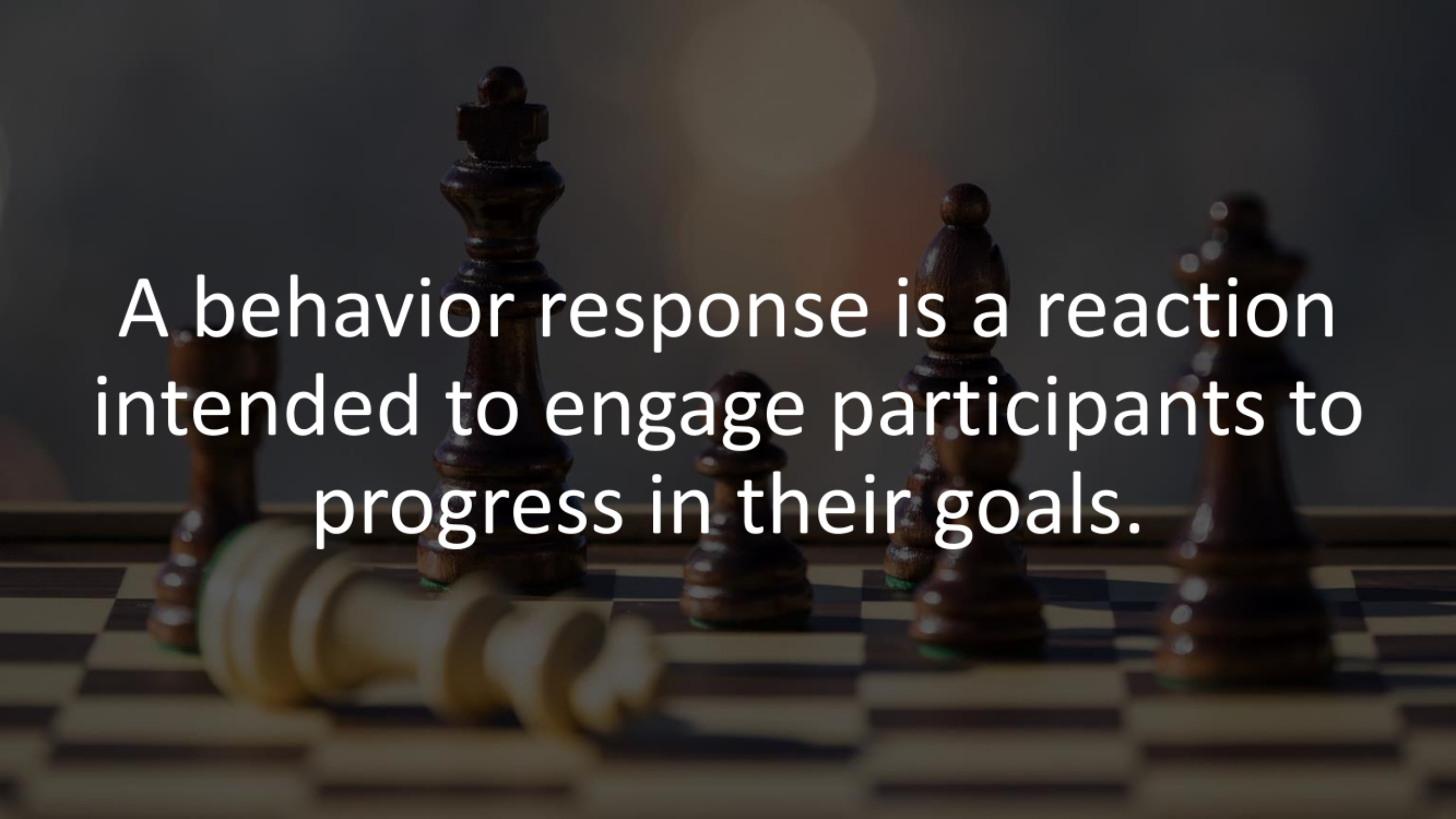
Explain behavior change research associated with recovery and court processes

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Describe the array of responses available to improve and support parent, child, and family functioning through behavior change

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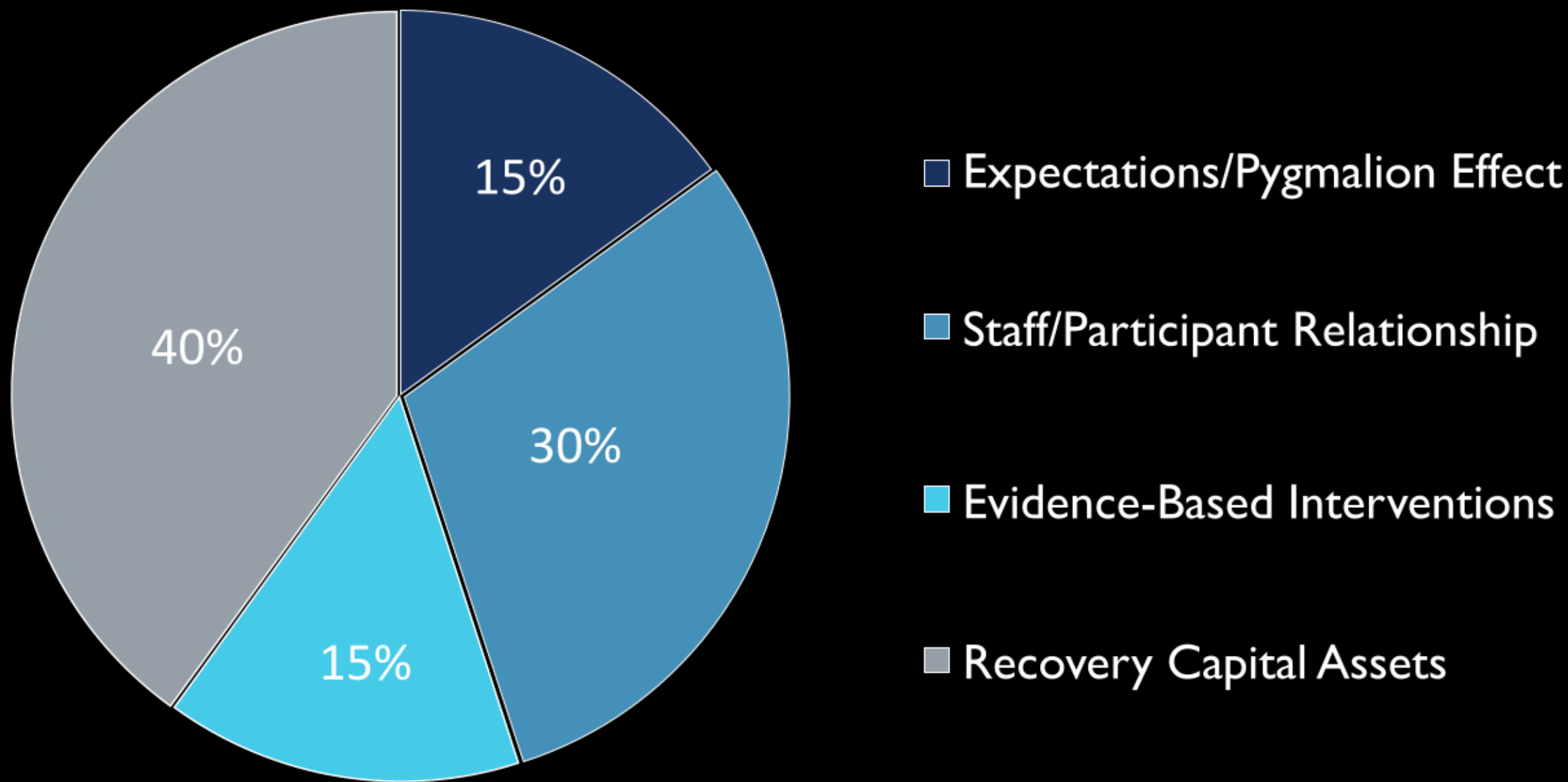
Learn key strategies to support behavior change associated with long-term recovery and family well-being

A chessboard with several pieces, including a king and a queen, with some pieces lying on their sides.

A behavior response is a reaction intended to engage participants to progress in their goals.

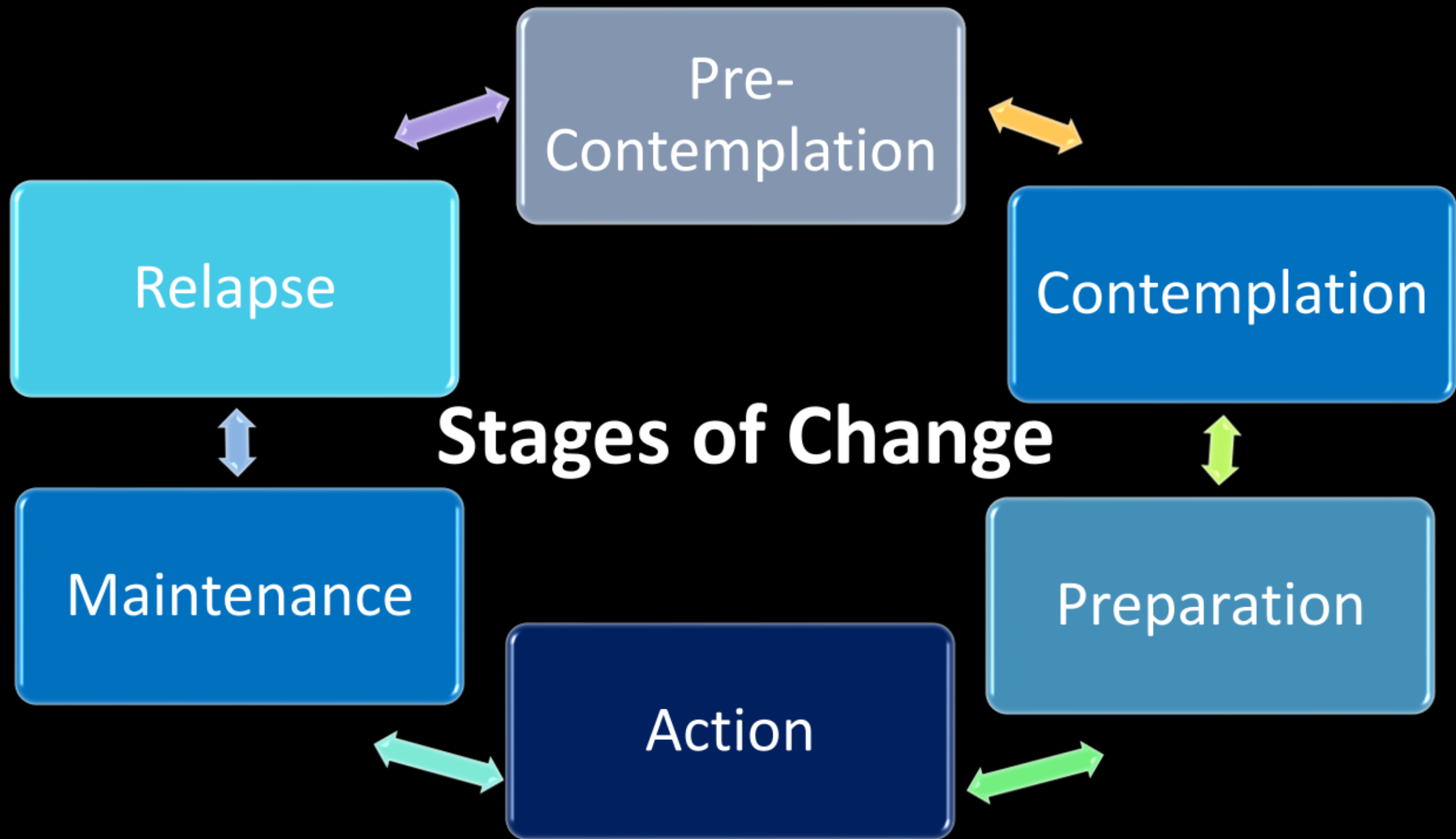


# **What Factors Influence Behavior Change?**



(Albarracín, et al., 2005; Lambert & Barley, 2001; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Witkiewitz, et al.; 2022)





Avery is in orientation phase of FTC. She has been late to treatment every day this week, the first week of SUD treatment. Treatment starts at 8:00 AM, and she arrives at 8:30 each day.



**The “How”**



# Principles of Behavior Modification

Provision G:  
Certainty

Provision H:  
Advance Notice

Provision I: Timely  
Response Delivery

# Principles of Procedural Justice

Provision F:  
Equitable Responses

Provision J:  
Opportunity for  
Participants to Be  
Heard

Provision K:  
Professional  
Demeanor

**The “What”**







FTC Phases



Treatment Adjustments



Service Modifications



Incentives and Sanctions

Child  
Welfare  
Case Plan

FTC Phases

Treatment  
Plan

Behavior  
Change



- Stable recovery
- Long-term reunification
- Closure of child welfare case

- A – Achievable
- R – Realistic
- C – Clearly Defined

Behavioral Benchmarks  
or Milestones

## Proximal vs. Distal



Sustained  
Recovery



Safety, Permanency,  
and Well-being



Stable  
Reunification



Goals



Tasks



Steps



Good  
Health



Family  
Security



Parenting  
Competence



Stable  
Recovery



Employment



Housing




Transportation

Blake is in the second phase of FTC. He recently obtained employment at a local grocery store working second shift. He has three, two-hour supervised parenting time sessions with his children.

He missed two treatment groups and a urine screen this week. He contacted his peer support specialist the day after his second missed treatment group.




FTC Phases



Treatment Adjustments



Service Modifications



Incentives and Sanctions

# Treatment Adjustments



Type of  
Treatment



Level of  
Care



Dosage

- Substance Use
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Social Health
- Emotional Health



Structural Barriers

Transportation

Housing

Income

Individual Barriers

Learning disability

Health disability

**Service Modifications**

**Treatment  
Adjustments  
and Service  
Modifications**

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What needs haven't been addressed?

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What can the team do to help the parent progress?

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What barriers can the team help remove?



# Incentives and Sanctions

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Responses to Promote Engagement

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Positive reinforcement for desired behaviors

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5 Positive Comments: 1 Negative

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Accountability: Hold responsible for one's actions and behaviors

Types of Behavior	Adherence to Rules	Violation of Rules
Proximal Behavior (E.g. honesty, attending court, appointments, counseling)	Low to moderate magnitude incentives (e.g. praise or recognition)	High magnitude sanction
Distal Behavior (e.g abstaining from substance use, obtaining employment)	High magnitude incentive	Low magnitude sanction

Types of Behavior

Adherence to Rules

Violation of Rules

Proximal Behavior  
(E.g. honesty,  
attending court,  
appointments,  
counseling)

Low to moderate  
magnitude incentives  
(e.g. praise or  
recognition)

High magnitude  
sanction

Distal Behavior (e.g  
abstaining from  
substance use,  
obtaining  
employment)

High magnitude  
incentive

Low magnitude  
sanction



Types of Behavior

Adherence to Rules

Violation of Rules

Proximal Behavior  
(E.g. honesty,  
attending court,  
appointments,  
counseling)

Low to moderate  
magnitude incentives  
(e.g. praise or  
counseling)

High magnitude  
sanction

**Ask:  
What is meaningful to you?**

Distal Behavior (e.g.  
abstaining from  
substance use,  
obtaining  
employment)

High magnitude  
incentive

Low magnitude  
sanction

What are some *incentives* you  
use in your FTC?

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What are some *sanctions* you  
use in your FTC?

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**What responses do you  
use instead of jail?**

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# Child and Family Focus

What incentives can support family needs, parenting, and the parent-child relationship?

How will the response affect the children and family as a unit?

How can you focus accountability on the parent?

Parenting time is never used as an incentive or a sanction

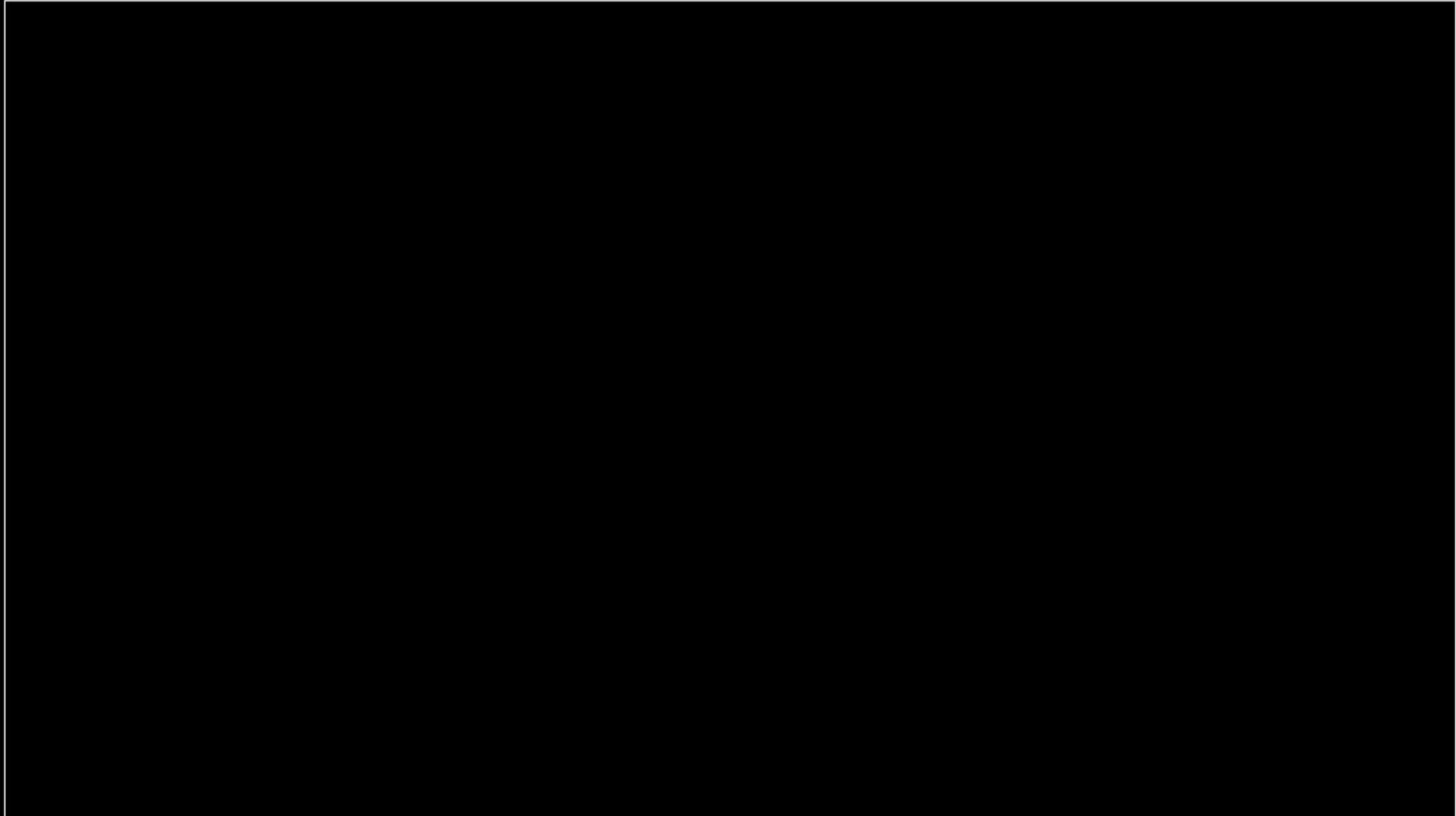
Rowan is in the fourth phase of FTC and has progressed successfully in services for several months. They moved from supervised daytime parenting time to unsupervised, overnight parenting time.

They missed their morning court appearance this week.

**Responding to "the why"**



# Grant County Family Recovery Court, IN



The purpose of behavior response is to  
*promote engagement*

Engagement is *everyone's* job

FTC should be the “*roadmap*” to success for  
families

# Call to Action

Ensure your expectations are Achievable, Reasonable, and Clearly defined.

Review your FTC phases and check for alignment with the child welfare and treatment plans.

Establish a plan to achieve the 5:1 ratio of incentives to sanctions.

Actively engage parents, children, and other family members in the process.



Q & A



Wisconsin  
Family Treatment  
Court  
Community of  
Practice



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2018—Better Together

## *Top 5 Challenges in Responding to Participant Behavior*



Responding to Behavior



- Learn the guiding principles of responding to participant behavior in FTCs
- Understand the unique challenge FTCs face in responding to behavior and the importance of applying a family-centered, therapeutic approach
- Learn how other FTC professionals are creatively and thoughtfully responding to participant behavior

[www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/](http://www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/)

# Family Treatment Court

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# PLANNING GUIDE



- Designed to provide step-by-step instructions for a team planning to start and implement an FTC in their community
- Includes worksheets with concrete steps to support teams in meeting their implementation and enhancement goals

[www.cffutures.org/fdc-tta/planning-guide-2018/](http://www.cffutures.org/fdc-tta/planning-guide-2018/)

## **Family Treatment Court**

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# **PLANNING GUIDE**

### **Worksheet Recommendations**

#### **Worksheet 16: Responding to Behavior**

This worksheet will help you develop a continuum of incentives and sanctions for implementation in your family treatment court.

#### **Worksheet 13: Developing Your FTC Phase Structure**

The collaborative must work together to develop a phase structure that will guide a participant to successful completion of your family treatment court.



# 2019—Checklist to Change



## *Rethinking Phases, Recovery, and Readiness*



- Explore your current FTC phase structure and definition of “success” for partner agencies and participant families
- Highlight specific, innovative strategies to align the FTC structure with the child welfare case
- Learn from FTCs who have adopted a “milestone approach” and behavioral benchmarks to better assess families’ progress towards recovery and reunification

[www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/](http://www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/)



# 2021—Putting the Pieces Together

## *Applying a Family-Centered, Problem-Solving Approach to Staffing and Court Hearings*



Staffing and Court



- Learn how staffing and court hearings shape the path for families working toward reunification and successful case closure
- Learn how to use staffing and court to address the family's needs
- Examine strategies to shift from “problem reporting” to “problem solving” in pre-court staffing

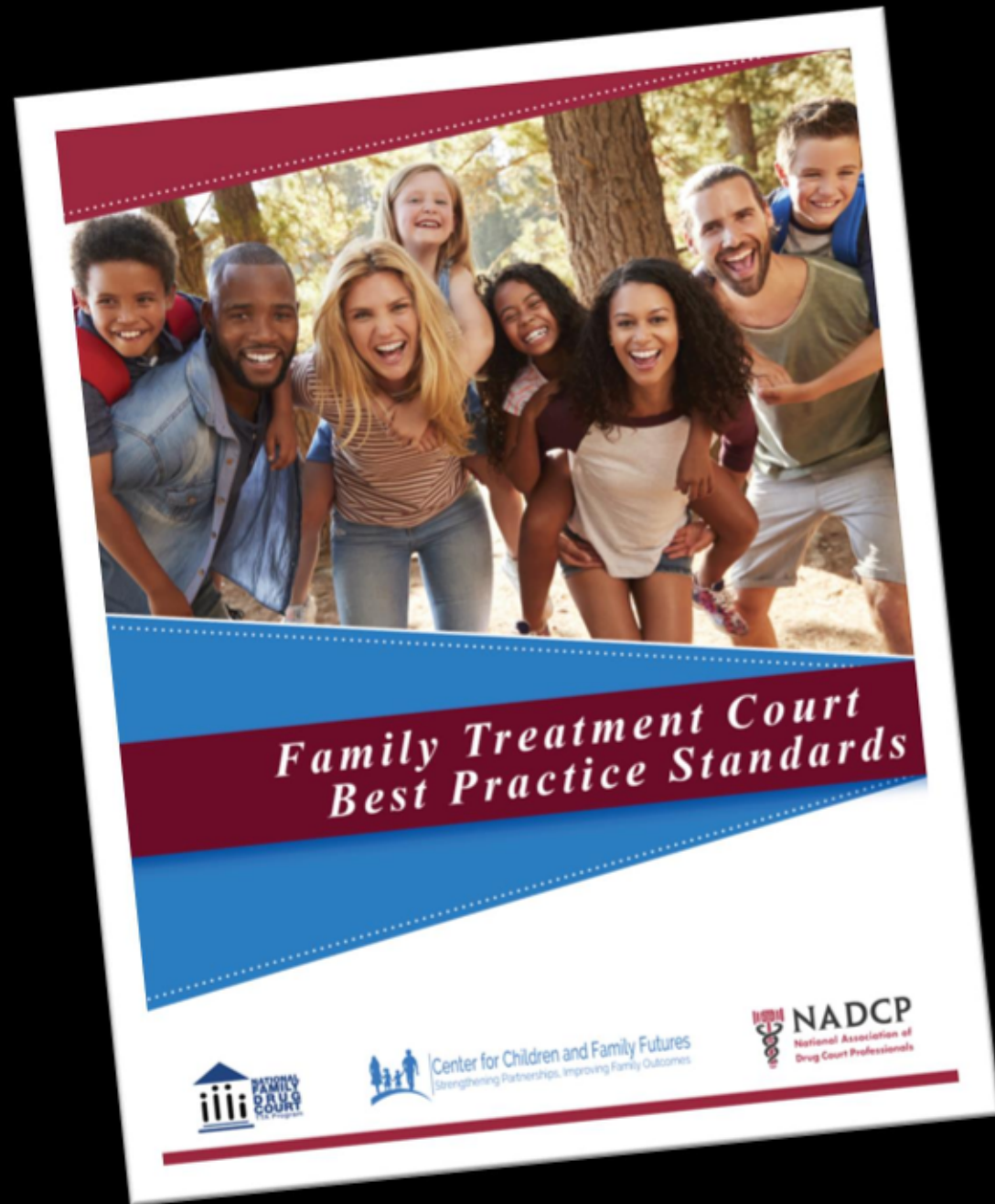
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# Standard 7. Therapeutic Responses to Behavior



<https://www.cffutures.org/home-page/ftc-best-practice-standards-2019/>





2022 – Beyond Collaboration to Results

***Beyond Compliance: Empowering Families to  
Build Recovery Capital***



- Integrate recovery capital and protective factor approaches into your FTC
- Building recovery capital increases family protective factors, resiliency, and wellness
- Improve community acceptance and inclusivity of people in recovery

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# 2021 – Putting the Pieces Together

## *Disrupting Stigma to Support Meaningful Change*



- Re-examine beliefs, attitudes, and language about SUDs and trauma and their effect on recovery, parenting, and family relationships
- Importance of meaningful engagement through relationship building and cross-agency collaboration
- Identify and disrupt stigma in interactions, expectations, language, and policies affecting families

[www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/](http://www.cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy/)

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