



# Participant Handbook

Updated 8/24/23

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Welcome to Hamilton County Recovery Court!

This Handbook is designed to answer your questions and provide information about the Recovery Court program, policies and rules.

Your decision to enter the HCRC will help you learn how to make positive and successful choices. The HCRC Team is excited to be there with you as you cross the bridge to recovery.

## OUR MISSION

*To promote recovery from substance use in the lives of justice-involved participants, their families, and the community by providing effective treatment and comprehensive support.*

## HAMILTON COUNTY HCRC TEAM

The judge and team work together to make all decisions regarding your participation in HCRC. The HCRC team consists of the following members:

HCRC Court Judges  
Recovery Court Director  
Assistant District Attorney  
Assistant Public Defender  
Defense Attorney  
Navigator  
Case Managers  
Community Corrections  
Counselors  
Program Assistant  
Community Corrections  
State Probation  
Chattanooga Police Dept.

**Judge Alex McVeagh and Judge Amanda Dunn**  
**Shannon Morgan**  
**Andrew Basler**  
**Jay Perry and Jonathan Wilson**  
**Chrissy Mincy**  
**Brittany Baldwin**  
**John Cooper, Mysti Wilson and Caleb Ernsberger**  
**Chris Jackson and Justin Strand**  
**Kevin Webster, Lindsey Drapala, and Elizabeth Riley**  
**Abigail Taylor**  
**Chris Jackson and Justin Strand**  
**Teanna Chastain**  
**Terry Topping**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HCRC RULES AND REGULATIONS

While participating in HCRC, you are obligated to comply with all Court Orders, including the HCRC Contract, as well as all verbal orders given by the judge during court. It is essential to follow any verbal or written instructions given to you by HCRC Staff, as well as the rules set forth in this Handbook. To acknowledge your understanding of these rules, initial and date the bottom of each page after you have carefully reviewed its contents.

## I. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

To successfully complete HCRC, you are required to be involved in several activities that will benefit and sustain your recovery, including:

- Engage in substance use treatment and mental health treatment if recommended
- Follow rules/guidelines at treatment center/recovery residence where placed
- Attend scheduled court sessions/hearings
- Individual meetings with Case Managers and Counselors
- Agree to submit to random drug and alcohol testing
- Obtain employment and/or attend full-time school
- Pay any restitution, child support, and/or court costs/fines

## TREATMENT

Your treatment is essential to the recovery process. Prior to entry into the program, a Recovery Court clinician will complete an assessment to determine what level of treatment will be necessary to support your needs. You will work with your counselor to create a treatment plan that will help you set goals, select methods for meeting those goals, and develop target dates for achieving those goals. Treatment services that will be offered include, but are not limited to:

- Mental health/Psychiatric counseling
- Medication maintenance
- MOUD (medications for Opioid Use Disorder)
- Individual counseling
- Inpatient treatment
- Trauma therapy
- Group therapy
- Group skills and education
- Family and couples counseling
- Parenting classes
- Recovery residences
- Grief Counseling

Treatment levels might begin in inpatient or outpatient. All outpatient treatment occurs at the treatment center. Below is a treatment schedule for the program. You will receive a more thorough description during your treatment orientation:

Treatment Level	Minimum Length	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Ascend: Level 1	13 Weeks	Court (phase dependent )	9:00am-12:00am	9:00am-12:00am	9:00am-12:00am	9:00am-10:00am
Elevate: Level 2	13 Weeks	Court (phase dependent )	9:00am-12:00am		9:00am-12:00am	
Soar: Level 3	21 Weeks	Court (phase dependent )		3:00pm-5:00pm	3:00pm-5:00pm bi-weekly	
Glide: Level 4	21 Weeks	Court (phase dependent )	3:00-4:30 bi-weekly			

## HCRC HEARINGS

Participants will meet with the judge for ‘therapeutic court sessions’ to check in with judge and HCRC team about weekly progress. Participants should be prepared to discuss weekly goals and accomplishments. If there were any rule violations during the week, participants will discuss with the judge during court. **Court occurs at the Courthouse building; 600 Market Street. (Felony and General Sessions Recovery Court dockets are located on the third floor in Judge Amanda Dunn’s courtroom).** Participants will attend court weekly during Phase 1, two times per month during Phase 2 and 3 and one time per month in Phase 4 and 5. Please contact your case manager if you have any questions about your court schedule. Please see \*Court Schedule\* attached.

## CASE MANAGEMENT

Every participant will be provided with a Case Manager to provide assistance with housing, employment, education, finances and scheduling. Participants will meet with their Case Managers weekly during Phase 1, twice per month during Phase 2 and monthly during Phases 3-5; however, meetings may increase if necessary. You and your Case Manager will create a ‘Case Management Plan’ to assist you in meeting your goals and continue to update your plan throughout the duration of your time in the program.

## DRUG TESTING

Drug testing is an essential part of the program. Drug testing occurs randomly, 7 days per week including holidays during the hours of 8:00am-9:30am. Testing occurs at Treatment Center at 601 Walnut Street, however, alternative locations may be announced for special circumstances. Drug Screen messages are provided through the RECONNECT app each day. Check in time is 7:00am. The following are guidelines for drug testing:

1. If you are running late for a screen, please call your Case Manager and leave a voicemail stating why you are running late
2. It is considered a positive screen if you are more than 10 minutes late or do not appear for a drug screen
3. If you miss a drug screen you are required to attend the next scheduled drug screen
4. If you are released from jail from a sanction you must attend the next scheduled screen regardless if you are scheduled on Reconnect
5. You are strongly encouraged to inform the person providing your drug screen if you have used illicit substances prior to providing a sample
6. If you have a positive drug screen, you will be given a form to sign to admit that you have used
7. While drug screening, you must leave all personal belongings outside of testing area and follow proper screening protocol. \*Please see attached
8. If you feel your screen is inaccurate, you have the right to contest your drug screen and it will be sent to a lab for confirmation. Please keep in mind that if your screen confirms positive you will be charged with the lab fee and be given an elevated sanction. Remember that we always incentivize honesty! \*See Positive Drug Screen Form\*
9. Diluting or tampering with a urine sample will result in elevated sanctions and possibly a termination hearing
10. Refusal to submit a drug screen will be considered a positive drug screen

## SELF-HELP MEETINGS

Attendance at self-help meetings (*AA, NA, CMA, Smart Recovery, Celebrating Recovery, Rational Recovery, or LifeRing Secular Recovery*) is encouraged to increase your support network. Please ask your Counselor or Case Manager for resources to locate in person or online meetings.

## PHASE CRITERIA

The HCRC Program's duration is a minimum of 16 months, divided into five phases. A participant must successfully complete each phase before transitioning to the next phase. Please see \*Phase Change Requirements\* attached.

## REWARDS AND INCENTIVES

Upon the recommendation of the HCRC Team, participants may be given rewards or incentives for meeting and/or exceeding requirements. Common rewards may be as follows:

- In-Court praise, encouragement
- Certificates of achievement
- Promotion to next phase
- Restoration of previously lost privileges
- Special event attendance
- Participant of the week recognition

## SANCTIONS

While participating in HCRC, you will be held accountable through the use of one or more of the following measures:

- Verbal warning
- Reading/writing assignment
- Requirement to sit in courtroom or holding cell for civil or criminal dockets
- Curfew
- Public works
- Treatment clean
- Increased frequency of status hearings
- Increased urinalysis testing
- Phase freeze
- Daily reporting
- Re-placement on GPS
- Alcohol monitor
- Placement on Community Corrections (house arrest).
- Flash incarceration (1-5 nights in custody)
- Termination from program

Please keep in mind that the team will impose sanctions following behavioral modification best practices. Our goal is to restore consequences to actions and not to "punish." Again, be mindful that honesty will always result in a lower level sanction. **You always have the right to speak to a defense attorney prior to receiving a sanction, especially if you contest the behavior.**

## COMMENCEMENT

Commencement occurs after successful completion of the program. In addition to meeting program requirements, you should be able to show how Recovery Court has positively influenced your life. Upon commencement, you will be honored and receive a certificate at a special graduation ceremony.

## TERMINATION FROM HCRC

The Recovery Court Judge may terminate you from the program. Circumstances for termination include, but are not limited to:

- You petition the Court for termination
- Absconding from the program
- Selling or distribution of any illegal substance
- Continual unexcused absences from program requirements
- Tampering or attempting to falsify drug test results
- Violent or threatening behavior to other participants or recovery court team
- You are arrested, with or without conviction (case by case basis)

## II. PROGRAM POLICIES

### CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the policy of the Hamilton Drug Recovery Court to protect participants' confidential records. The confidentiality of alcohol and drug use patient records maintained by the HCRC is protected by federal law and regulations 42 Code of Federal Regulations (42 CFR) Part 2 mandates that alcohol and drug treatment programs receiving federal funding take specific measures to protect client confidentiality. The HCRC team and staff may not provide ANY information regarding current or previous program candidates/participants except in connection with their official duties to designees covered in the HCRC's 'Consent for Release of Confidential Information' and only while the consent is in effect. You will be asked to sign a 'Consent for Disclosure of Confidential Substance Abuse Information and \*Release of Information form\*' to share health information with outside providers. The HCRC Team will strive to prevent any confidential information from being shared with other members of the public. Special circumstances in which confidential information may be released without participant consent:

- Medical or safety emergencies
- Criminal Investigations
- Child Abuse or Deprivation

### MEDICAL POLICY

Your health and medication are important! Help us support you by keeping us informed about any medical/medication issues. Medical requirements are listed below:

1. Participants must notify the Recovery Court Team (Case Manager and Counselor) of all prescribed medication
2. Participants must notify staff of any new medication PRIOR to taking the medication
3. Participants are required to carry the \*Medical Advisory Form\* with them at all times and show to any medical/dental professional prior to receiving treatment
4. Participants must provide medical documentation to Case Manager within 24 hours of a medical visit
5. Participants must report to the next scheduled drug screen if they are admitted to an emergency room for any reason
6. Please see \*Approved Medication List\* attached. These are the **ONLY** medications you do not need to notify staff in order to take
7. Participants are **not allowed** to consume the following due to negative effect of drug screens:
  - a) Poppy seeds
  - b) Energy drinks
  - c) Vitamins or supplements not pre-approved
  - d) Kratom, Tianeptine, or any substance you can purchase in stores or online that state they are used for mood stabilization, pain, or energy
  - e) Phenibut

## RELATIONSHIPS

We encourage participants to focus on the relationship with themselves during early recovery and strongly encourage participants to avoid getting involved in relationships within the program, however we encourage honesty first and foremost. We encourage open discussion about relationships with your counselor so we can provide you with resources in order to obtain a healthy and happy relationship.

## VEHICLES AND DRIVING RESTRICTIONS

In order to possess a vehicle, the following must be submitted to your Case Manager:

1. A **VALID** Tennessee, Georgia or Alabama Driver's License, **AND**
2. A copy of your title and registration, **AND**
3. Proof of insurance

Driving is not allowed if you do not have all three requirements.

## CELL PHONES

Please ensure your cell phone is available in your budget. Once you have a cell phone, make sure your Case Manager knows your phone number **immediately**. You are responsible to notify your Case Manager of any phone number changes. Please keep your phones on silent while attending any HCRC activity including treatment sessions and court.

You will be using your cell phone to help you with use the Reconnect App. Your Case Manager will assist you with getting the program set up on your phone and provide instructions.

## RECONNECT

Clients are required to use the Reconnect Community App for randomized drug screens and messaging. Each client will have a profile set up by their assigned Case Manager. The profile will consist of a Username and 6-digit PIN selected by the client. Check in time is 7:00am daily. When instructed to test, each client will report to the courthouse to provide a urine sample between 8:00 AM- 9:30 AM. There will be a \$7.50 fee per month associated with the use of this service that each client will be responsible for. Each client will be provided with an information sheet on how to use the system with the following instructions.

## HOUSING

If you do not having a stable living environment that is conducive to your recovery, HCRC may refer you to a sober living facility or an alternative living situation. The HCRC Team needs to know your current living situation, if you have plans to move, if you will be living outside of Hamilton County, and must know your current address at all times. The HCRC team will be conducting random home visits to ensure each participant's safety.

## **EMPLOYMENT CRITERIA**

Participants should obtain employment as soon as possible after entering program or after completing inpatient treatment. Upon entry, your Case Manager will provide you with an Employment Search sheet, resume and application assistance and a structured schedule of job search. Your guidelines for employment are as follows:

1. Employment outside of Hamilton County must be approved by the HCRC Team
2. Overtime must be approved by your Case Manager
3. Employment changes must be approved by your Case Manager prior to departing from your job
4. If you change employment, please give your current employer adequate and appropriate notice
5. As you search for employment, you will be asked to produce evidence of your job searches. Your Case Manager will provide you with an employment verification form
6. Once you secure employment, you will be required to produce pay stubs to your Case Manager
7. If you are unable to secure employment within 30 days, you will be required to perform community service until you become employed

## **EDUCATION CRITERIA**

We encourage our participants to explore a higher education goal; please include your education goals in your Case Management Plan during your planning session. Your Case Manager can assist you with the process in obtaining your HiSet(G.E.D), High School Diploma, Associate, Bachelor, Master's or PHD degree or a professional certification.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

Any grievances or complaints may be given to the Recovery Court Program Coordinator verbally or in writing and can be written anonymously and placed in the Drug Court mailbox outside of the Program Coordinator's office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the courthouse (Suite 302-A). Participants are also able to report any ethical violation to the Hamilton County General Services Administrator.

## **HCRC SUMMARY OF RULES**

The following section outlines important program rules. Please be advised that violating the program rules will result in a sanction:

1. Please be honest!
2. Participants are not allowed to use, purchase or possess illegal substances, alcohol OR any substances described in the above drug testing policy.
3. Participants are prohibited from associating or being in contact with anyone possessing or using illicit substances.
4. Participants are prohibited from possessing any weapons while in the program.
5. Violence or threats of violence will not be tolerated.
6. Attend all scheduled Court sessions, case management meetings, and treatment sessions on time. If you are running late call your case manager and leave a voicemail if they do not answer. Sanctions are elevated if you do not call to notify staff.
7. Rescheduling appointments for individual counseling sessions or case management appointments will only be accepted with 24 hours notice or will be considered a missed appointment. Group sessions cannot be rescheduled. Medical documentation may be required for any excused or missed services.
8. Your case manager must have your most updated contact information, employment status, and current address at all times. Failure to provide updated information for any emergency changes within 24 hours will result in a sanction. This includes termination from treatment or a recovery residence.
9. Phase change application and phase change proposal forms must be turned in to your case manager 2 weeks prior to phase request change date.
10. Participants must fill out a proposal form for the following 2 weeks prior to request:
  - a. Residence change and/or additional residents moving into household
  - b. Long distance travel (75 miles or more)
  - c. Overnight visit
  - d. Medical appointment
  - e. Tattoo/piercing
  - f. Large purchase (over \$500.00)
  - g. Loans/contracts
    - Out of town visits will only be approved for Phase III and above. Participant must arrange a location that provides observed drug and alcohol screens prior to travel

11. Follow drug screen policy \*listed above, summary of rules are below:
- Drug and alcohol screening occurs between the hours of 8:00am-9:30am.
  - Attendance past 9:30am is considered a late screen
  - Attendance past 9:40am is considered a missed screen
  - If you have an emergency and are going to be late, please call and notify your case manager and leave a voicemail
  - If you miss a screen, are released from a jail sanction, or have visited an emergency room for medical attention, you are required to attend the next scheduled screen regardless if you are scheduled on Reconnect
  - Refusal to submit a sample will be considered a positive drug screen
  - Diluting or tampering with a urine sample will result in elevated sanctions and possibly a termination hearing
12. Participants are required to download the Reconnect application to receive notifications about screening times and program messages. Check in time is 7:00-9:00am EVERY DAY. No modifications to the app are allowed; location must be kept active. Participants must pay 7.50 monthly fee or screen daily until fees are updated.
13. Follow medical policy\* listed above, summary of rules are below:
- Participants must notify the Recovery Court Team (case manager and counselor) of all prescribed medication
  - Participants must notify staff of any new medication PRIOR to taking the medication
  - Participants are required to carry the \*Medical Advisory Form\* with them at all times and show to any medical/dental professional prior to receiving treatment
  - Participants must provide medical documentation to Case Manager within 24 hours of any medical visit
  - Participants must report to the next scheduled drug screen if they are admitted to an emergency room for any reason
  - Please see \*Approved Medication List\* attached. These are the **ONLY** medications you do not need to notify staff in order to take
  - Participants are not allowed to consume the following due to negative effect of drug screens and recovery:
    - Poppy seeds
    - Energy drinks
    - Vitamins or supplements not pre-approved
    - Kratom, Tianeptine, or any substance you can purchase in stores or online that state they are used for mood stabilization, pain, or energy
    - Phenibut
14. If you are given instructions/information by an HCRC team member and then ask another team member hoping to obtain a different answer/information, that will be considered 'staff splitting' and sanction will be imposed
15. Forging documents or providing false information will result in a sanction or termination hearing
16. As a condition of participation in the HCRC program, your person, property, place of residence, car or personal effects may be searched at any time or without a warrant, and with or without probable cause, when required by a law enforcement officer or HCRC Team

17. Failure to appear to a court session, drug screen or program requirements for over a 24 hour period of time without contacting a HCRC team member will be considered absconding from the program and will result in termination if participant does not turn themselves in within 30 days

18. Please follow dress code HCRC Court sessions:

- a. Please wear pants, dress or skirts with short or long sleeved shirts
- b. Refrain from revealing clothing, inappropriate logos or pictures
- c. Please do not wear shorts, ripped pants or athletic gear
- d. Inappropriate tattoos may be asked to be covered
- e. Please show respect and take your hat off while speaking with the Judge

19. Please follow dress code for all other HCRC activities:

- a. The same dress code is required, however shorts that are of appropriate length may be worn
- b. If you need clothing please inform your case manager and they will assist you obtaining what you need!

My Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

My Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## USEFUL NUMBERS

Message Line .....	423.209.7570
HCRC Program Director Shannon Morgan .....	423.209.7573
Hamilton County District Attorney's Office .....	423.209.7400
Hamilton County Public Defender's Office .....	423.634.6374
Navigator/Case Manager Brittany Baldwin .....	423.602-6289
Case Manager Mysti Wilson .....	423.209.7582
Case Manager John Cooper .....	423.209.7581
Case Manager Caleb Ernsberger .....	423.209.7542
Clinician Kevin Webster .....	423.209.7536
Clinician Lindsey Drapala .....	423.209.7677
Clinician Elizabeth Riley .....	423.209.7569
Hamilton County Dept. of Corrections .....	423.847.4833
Narcotics Anonymous .....	423.899.6500
Alcoholics Anonymous .....	423.499.6003

*Next fall, when you see Geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way: as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are. When the Head Goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns facing challenges with people like the geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind? Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly, or until it passes on. Only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.*