

**Brooklyn Treatment Court  
Veterans Mentoring Initiative**

**Mentor Guidelines**

# **BTC Veterans Mentoring Initiative Overview**

## **History and Background of Mentoring**

The term mentor is over three thousand years old and has its origins in Greek mythology. When Odysseus went off to fight the Trojans, he left his trusted friend Mentor in charge of his household and his son's education. Mentor's name has been attached to the process of education and care by an older or more experienced person.

## **Concept of Mentoring**

Mentoring is a trusting relationship, formalized into a program of structured activities that brings people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee.

## **BTC Veterans Mentoring Program Summary**

The BTC Veterans Mentoring initiative is designed to provide support to veteran participants in their efforts to maintain sobriety, obtain VA benefits and complete their court mandate. The mentors for this initiative will be trained veterans of the armed services who volunteer their time to provide advice, personal experience and guidance to all BTC Veteran Participants.

## **BTC Veteran Mentoring Program Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the Veterans Mentoring Initiative is to provide additional support to clients that face unique challenges during their time in treatment court. Veterans make up a population that often struggles in treatment and the goal of this mentoring program is to facilitate change and help this population overcome the challenges they face. More specifically the goal of this mentoring initiative is to assist veterans in navigating the Treatment Court system, substance abuse treatment system and Veterans Administration System while developing the following areas:

- Social skills
- Problem solving skills
- Relapse prevention strategies
- Effective self care strategies
- Conflict resolution skills
- Educational/Vocational motivation

# **BTC Veterans Mentoring Initiative Orientation and Training Guidelines**

## **Mentor Training Requirements**

1. Meet with BTC Staff for a formal training session
2. Observe at least one Brooklyn Treatment Court session
3. Complete Veteran Mentor Information Form

## **BTC Veteran Mentor Expectations and Responsibilities**

- Mentors should have a desire to help veterans involved in the criminal justice system
- Mentors should be in good standing with the law
- Be a United States Military Veteran: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or a corresponding branch of the Reserve or National Guard
- Maintain participant confidentiality except in cases of substance abuse, re-arrest or the threat of the participant being a danger to themselves or others
- Assist veterans to resolve their feelings about Treatment Court procedures
- Adhere to all Brooklyn Treatment Court policies and procedures
- Mentors will meet with participants on an ongoing basis as their schedules permit

## **Mentor Qualities**

Mentors are more than just teachers or advisors. They are guides that help their mentees grow and develop. Listed below are some the qualities a mentor should possess:

- Mentors must abstain from alcohol or drugs while in the company of the mentee
- Be a good listener – The mentor should always give full attention to the mentees. A mentor who is a good listener can ask probing questions and provide good feedback.
- Be a good role-model – Mentors should exhibit the attributes and behaviors that demonstrate why they are successful.
- Be empowering - A mentor should seek to uplift the mentees and help them overcome their fears and insecurities.

- Be empathetic and patient- Mentors should demonstrate patience and empathy when group members are sharing their feelings and experiences. The mentee should be allowed to draw their own conclusions regarding the resolution of their issues without being forced into any prescribed way of thinking or feeling.
- Be challenging – Mentors should be willing to push the mentees out of their comfort zone, encourage them to think for themselves and work out solutions to their problems.

**Mentors are not saviors, foster parents, therapists, parole officers, 12-step sponsors or a “cool friend”. BTC mentors should *never* exchange money with a mentee.**

## **Mentor Relationships**

The quality of mentor/mentee relationships improves when mentees have an opportunity to share their feelings with their mentors. It is essential to provide an opportunity for mentees to express themselves, discuss ongoing problems, explore areas of interest and learn problem solving techniques. In addition, mentors provide advice and support to the veteran participants by sharing their personal experiences as it relates to their current situation

# **BTC Veterans Mentoring Initiative Evaluation**

## **Evaluation of Program**

Mentees will complete a program evaluation form every three months and at the conclusion of the of their participation in BTC.

## **Ongoing Support from BTC Staff**

- Review Veteran Participant accomplishments and plan future goals for each member.
- Explore mentor's feelings and discuss issues that may arise in individual session.
- Identify conflicts between mentor and participant.
- Discuss ways to improve the individual mentoring sessions.