



# Problem-Solving Justice Toolkit

*The problem-solving court approach focuses on defendants and litigants whose medical and social problems have contributed to recurring contacts with the court system.*

The thumbnail shows the cover of the 'Problem-Solving Justice Toolkit'. At the top, it features the same three building icons and decorative line seen at the top of the main page. The title 'Problem-Solving Justice Toolkit' is centered. Below the title, the authors 'Pamela M. Casey, David B. Rottman, and Chantal G. Bromage' and the date 'March 31, 2007' are listed. A descriptive paragraph follows, along with a list of topics: Why a toolkit?, Substance abuse success story, Judicial perspectives, Defense perspectives, Prosecutor perspectives, Manager perspectives, Social worker perspectives, and Mental health success story. A table of contents on the right lists sections I through V. At the bottom, the NCSC logo and website URL are visible.

An interactive on-line toolkit is now available.



[www.ncsconline.org/PSC](http://www.ncsconline.org/PSC)

# I. Introduction to Toolkit

*The problem-solving approach is a form of differentiated case management for cases involving recurring contacts with the justice system due to medical and social problems.*

Hallmarks of the approach are:

- ongoing judicial leadership
- integration of treatment and/or social services with judicial case processing
- regular monitoring of compliance with court orders
- immediate response to noncompliance
- multidisciplinary involvement
- collaboration with community-based and government organizations

During the last decade, these methods have shown significant promise in producing more effective outcomes for some of the courts' most complex and vexing cases.

# II. Initial Assessment Questions

*The Toolkit contains questions to help judges and stakeholders identify and select options for moving forward with a problem-solving approach.*

**Question 1:** Are you hearing cases that might benefit from a problem-solving approach?

**Question 2:** Are other relevant stakeholders also seeing the problems?

**Question 3:** What are the nature and prevalence of the problems?

**Question 4:** What options are there to address the problems?

**Question 5:** What resources are available or could be developed to help address the problems?

**Question 6:** How will you proceed given the prevalence of the problems, the possible options to address the problems, and the available resources?

# III. Implementation Steps for Problem-Solving Court Programs

*The Toolkit offers specific guidance to jurisdictions choosing to implement a problem-solving court. Though focused on formal court programs, the implementation steps also provide an overview for those using less formal problem-solving approaches.*

**Step 1:** Identify stakeholders to involve in the planning process

**Step 2:** Identify possible models for the court-centered program

**Step 3:** Identify program goals and objectives

**Step 4:** Define target population and screening criteria

**Step 5:** Define terms of program participation

**Step 6:** Define primary substantive program elements

**Step 7:** Determine resources necessary and available to implement program elements

**Step 8:** Determine how the program will be phased in

**Step 9:** Specify management structure and program procedures

**Step 10:** Provide education and training for stakeholders and program staff

**Step 11:** Determine when and how to disseminate program information to the public

**Step 12:** Evaluate the program



The Toolkit was developed at the request of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators to help jurisdictions interested in incorporating a problem-solving approach. It is targeted to local jurisdiction judges, but its content is relevant for other justice system professionals also interested in learning about the components of a problem-solving approach. The Toolkit was prepared with the assistance of an [Advisory Committee](#) of experts from across different sectors of the justice system and supported by [The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) and the [State Justice Institute](#).

Please visit [www.ncsconline.org/PSC](http://www.ncsconline.org/PSC) to learn more information about the various different choices a problem-solving court has.

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