

Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida

Problem-Solving Courts



Veterans Treatment Court Participant Handbook Clay County

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1.1 Introduction

You have found yourself in the criminal justice system. How did you get here? Do you want to be here? Chances are that you find you just cannot get anyone to understand what you are going through. Maybe you tried to get help before now. Maybe you haven't. But you are here now. You may be recently released from jail, out on bail, or already on probation. You may have been in the system before or this may be your first time. Either way, your service has earned you the privilege of being offered an opportunity to participate in Veterans Treatment Court. This will be a tough journey. But you can do it! You can complete the mission!

Read this manual. Share this manual with your friends and family. This will be your mission guide and you must adhere to it.

The Clay County Veterans Treatment Court program, further referred to in this manual as "VTC" was implemented in 2013. In 1994, through a collaboration of the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Court Administration, the Department of Corrections/Law Enforcement, and Community Treatment Providers, the Fourth Judicial Circuit began operating courts designed to assist individuals with their substance use and/or mental disorders. Following a model of accountability, treatment, and supervision instead of jail or prison, Problem-Solving Courts "PSCs" were developed. These partnerships have proven effective in providing an opportunity to effect change within the community by following established best practices and utilizing evidence-based treatment initiatives.

With the addition of the Department of Veterans Affairs "VA", the Veterans Health Administration "VHA", and community volunteers; the collaboration that started Problem-Solving Courts expanded focus to include military service persons and military veterans, and thus began VTC. The core mission of VTC is immediate and intensive intervention and treatment after an arrest. VTC is one of ten PSCs operating in the Fourth Judicial Circuit designed to help individuals like you gain and maintain stability, improve your mental health, and assist you in achieving sobriety.

Our promise to you is simple. If you engage in treatment, come to court on a regular basis, open yourself up to your counselors, your case manager, your probation officer, your attorney, your mentor, and your judge, we will put you in touch with what you need. VTC is unlike any court you have ever been in. We will celebrate you. We will reward you. We will get to know you (and your family if you wish). We will share experiences with you. We will surround you with support. And, when all is said and done, you will move on with your life with no barriers for success blocking your way.

This handbook is designed to answer questions, address concerns, and provide overall information about VTC. You will be expected to follow the instructions given by the judge and comply with the treatment plan developed for you by your treatment team. This handbook will detail what is expected of you and what you can expect from VTC.

1.2 Program Description


VTC is a court-supervised, comprehensive treatment program designed to identify individuals with qualifying criminal charges who are actively serving or who have actively served in the military, who have a service-related mental health condition, service-related traumatic brain injury, service-related substance use disorder, or service-related psychological problem or has experienced military sexual trauma, and have

an existing nexus between the offense or diagnoses and their military service. To be accepted into VTC, you must have met these criteria. Let us help.

VTC utilizes multiple interventions, including a collaborative approach to treatment and rehabilitation. This approach includes intensive individual, group, and/or residential substance use, and/or mental health treatment, drug and alcohol testing, regular court appearances, educational opportunities, vocational assistance, regular attendance at 12-step/sober-support meetings such as Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Rational Recovery, etc. (as applicable), and engagement with a veteran mentor “battle buddy” that is volunteering to help you see your way through this process. That may seem like a lot, but your treatment plan will be tailored to your needs and may not include all the above.

VTC will provide you with the opportunity to receive specialized treatment services, one-on-one veteran mentor support, assistance in gaining access to veteran healthcare services and veteran assistance, and will provide community supervision, thus ensuring public safety and accountability. VTC, takes place in a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere in which a dedicated multi-disciplinary team works together toward the common goal of restoring lives. The VTC team consists of the presiding judge, state attorney, defense counsel, coordinator, court case manager “CM”, probation officer “PO”/law enforcement officers, veterans’ justice outreach coordinator “VJO”, volunteer mentors, and community treatment providers.

You will report for court status hearings frequently and will have the opportunity to speak directly to a judge who is dedicated to overseeing your progress in VTC. In addition to traditional substance use and/or mental health treatment services, you will be assisted with, as needed, obtaining educational and skills assessments, will be provided with referrals for vocational training, educational programs, and/or job placement services, and may receive assistance with transitional/halfway housing. The program length, determined by your individual progress, will be no less than one year. However, the time may be extended if necessary for you to successfully complete and graduate from VTC.



If you need additional help or services, tell your Counselor and your Case Manager.

1.3 Getting Started “The Basics”

Once you have been approved to enter VTC, you will be instructed to report for your first VTC status hearing. Electing to enter VTC at this stage is of your choosing and is completely voluntary. The VTC program will have already been explained to you, and your Public Defender or your private legal counsel will advise you of your legal options before you sign the participation agreement. Once you sign the participation agreement you will be provided with a fourteen (14) day orientation phase and may elect to voluntarily withdraw during this time. After fourteen (14) days, all authority relating to your continued participation in VTC is held by the VTC Judge. The VTC Judge is your new Commanding Officer.

On your initial court date, you will sign your participation agreement, submit to a drug and alcohol test, be assigned to a CM, receive an appointment with your CM for orientation into VTC, and will be assigned to a temporary veteran mentor. At orientation, you will be provided with your participant folder that includes this handbook, phase petitions, sober-support meeting information, travel forms, and several program related intake forms. Your CM will review all materials in detail with you. You will execute a release of information, release of liability, participant information form, treatment attendance rules, dress code agreement, prohibited substances agreement, and a participant testing policy. You will be provided with a copy of all forms that you execute during this meeting.

Read all documents and ask questions as “I didn’t know” will not be an acceptable excuse later.

If the offense you were arrested for is a felony, you will be supervised by a felony PO through the Department of Corrections. This may be through what is known as pre-trial intervention supervision or may

be formal probation because you were sentenced to complete VTC as a condition of probation. In either situation, you will be required to undergo additional reporting and supervision based on Department of Corrections policies.

If the offense you were arrested for is a misdemeanor or traffic offense, you will only be supervised by a PO if you were sentenced to complete VTC as a condition of misdemeanor probation. Otherwise, your supervision will be strictly through your CM.

Court appointed defense counsel will represent you throughout your participation in VTC. If you have entered the program with private counsel, court appointed counsel familiar with the program shall automatically represent you.

There are 5 phases in VTC, each with specific tasks that must be completed to move forward. You will be guided through each phase by your CM and treatment provider. Any questions you have regarding phase requirements or program rules should be directed to your CM. Your CM can liaise with your treatment provider, defense attorney, and/or mentor as needed to ensure all your needs are met. Advancing to the next phase is not just based on completing each item on the phase checklist. The judge decides if you get to move forward and the judge bases that decision on your overall progress, not just checking the boxes on a form. You need to display change, not just document it.

1.4 Your Rights

1.4.1 Confidentiality

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Florida law. In response to these regulations, policies and procedures have been developed which guard your confidentiality. You will be asked to sign a release of information authorizing the transfer of information among all participating agencies as well as a release of liability. Additionally, an identification number will be assigned to you that will be used in all research and evaluation activities to safeguard your identity.

You are expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of others and can be held accountable for breaching confidentiality. VTC will respect your privacy in return. Information relating to your specific statements made in treatment sessions will not be shared with VTC. Your level of participation, progress, and/or non-compliance is what is shared with VTC. The exception to this rule is statements relating to self-harm or harming others. That information must be shared with VTC. If there are family members that you wish VTC to speak with, make sure you indicate so on your release forms as “family” can refer to multiple people. Information shared with others outside of one-on-one clinical sessions with your treatment provider(s) are not protected. You should never discuss your pending criminal case(s) outside of these clinical sessions, with anyone other than your defense attorney.

You may be subject to employment verification. If you are concerned that you may be terminated if someone contacts your employer, tell your attorney, PO, and the judge. The judge may choose to enter a no-contact order on your behalf. This order would prevent your PO and VTC from contacting your employer for employment verification. However, in lieu of such contact, you will be required to provide regular pay stubs to your PO or VTC as a means of verifying your employment.

1.4.2 Waivers

To enter VTC, you will waive some of your rights to usual court proceedings during your participation in VTC, such as questioning or disputing the legality of a search and seizure, a preliminary hearing, and a trial by jury or court. You will also acknowledge that admission, participation, graduation, and termination from VTC are entirely at the discretion of the VTC Judge and that you do not possess any right to participate in VTC. Entry into VTC is a privilege.

1.4.3 Equal Opportunity

Every person will receive the same opportunity to be admitted into and succeed in VTC. VTC will not discriminate based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, national origin, physical or mental disability, religion, or socio-economic status. If you have a disability, VTC will make accommodations for you in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide language access services to you if you have a limited understanding of English.

1.4.4 Safety

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Safety rules are posted on bulletin boards at service provider locations and in the courthouse. You must obey all court orders and rules/regulations regarding weapons.

1.4.5 Grievances

You are protected by due process rights through the services of a court appointed defense attorney. However, occasionally issues will arise that are not related to due process concerns and are therefore unable to be addressed by your attorney. Situations may occur where you believe that the fair and consistent application of a policy affecting you has not been followed. In most cases, VTC expects that you will be able to satisfactorily address such concerns within your treatment sessions and through ongoing communication with VTC team members. However, when a problem is not resolved VTC provides you with an alternative mechanism for doing so. A participant grievance policy is in place to ensure your rights to respectful treatment while in VTC. Ask your CM for information pertaining to the Grievance policy if you should need to pursue such action. If your grievance relates to your CM, contact the PSC Director listed on the PSC Contacts page of this manual.

1. Discuss the issue with the person you feel has treated you unfairly or inappropriately.
2. If your concern is not resolved, you may file a formal grievance with the program.
3. To file a formal grievance, complete a grievance form (available from your CM) and submit to the PSC Director.
4. Complaints and grievances will be investigated, and you will be notified of the outcome within 10 business days.

2.1 Program Rules

1. Follow the rules/follow instructions as they are given.
 - The rules in this handbook apply to all facilities, treatment providers, and/or housing programs. The rules of the treatment provider/housing programs apply as if they were issued by VTC.
 - Participation in VTC is a privilege. It is not a place to waste time and “fake it until you make it.” Doing so can result in receiving more jail time on program violation sanctions than you would have received on your underlying charge if not in VTC. If your case is returned to the criminal division for prosecution, you may not be entitled to credit for any jail time served while in VTC.
2. Sign all agreements, releases, and information forms necessary for entering and participating in VTC. Such forms include a release of information, release of liability, participant information form, prohibited substances agreement, dress code agreement, treatment attendance rules, and a participant testing policy.
3. Attend VTC court sessions as required.
 - VTC status hearings are held biweekly on Thursday mornings in courtroom 12. You should expect to attend status hearings biweekly in the beginning of VTC and monthly during the later phases of the program. You need to dress appropriately. If you do not know what is appropriate, ask your CM. You are required to report to courtroom 12 by 9:15 a.m.
 - In VTC, we proudly display the American flag and flags for each branch of the military. You may be asked to assist with flag duty. A mentor or uniformed bailiff will assign these duties at each court appearance. You are required to comply if requested to assist. We open court by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. As mentioned previously, this court is unlike any court you have ever experienced.
 - Court sessions begin when pre-court staffing is concluded. This may not be at 9:15 a.m., it may be later. You are required to stay and wait. If you are a participant in phases 1-3 you are required to remain present for the entire court session each time you appear. Only participants in phases 4-5 may leave court after being seen by the judge, unless otherwise instructed. If at any time you need to be seen early or excused from court, you must let your CM know in advance and not on the day of court.
 - If you are required to attend sober support meetings, you are required to turn in sober support meeting verification forms to your CM at each court appearance. You are also required to submit any previously ordered sanctions/assignments to your CM at each court appearance. If you need to get any documentation from your CM during court, you will have to remain present and wait until the end of the court session.
 - At each court appearance, the judge will be given a progress report prepared by the treatment provider, CM, mentor, and, if applicable, the PO, regarding your random drug and alcohol test results, attendance in all program services, and level of participation. The judge will ask you questions about your progress and discuss any specific problems you have been experiencing. If you are doing well, you will be encouraged to continue with the program and work toward success and will earn incentives such as applause and recognition, phase advancement, certificates, and gift cards.
 - If you are not doing well, the judge will discuss this with you and the treatment team to determine further action. If you commit program violations (i.e.: positive, dilute, missed drug tests, failure to attend individual or group counseling sessions, failure to attend court or sober-support meetings, failure to report to your CM, mentor, or PO, failure to take mental health medications, etc.) VTC will impose sanctions. With repeated violations of program requirements, and a failure to progress satisfactorily, VTC may impose the ultimate sanction of termination from the program. Program violations and

See the Program Responses section of this manual for more information regarding to how the program responds to your achievements and your struggles.

continued addictive/unstable behavior will be responded to differently. If you are struggling with your sobriety/mental health stability and are honest with the VTC team, VTC will provide assistance through treatment responses. Treatment responses and sanctions are very different and are described further in this handbook.

- Failure to appear in court on the date and time you are scheduled will likely result in a warrant for your arrest. If you cannot appear in court as scheduled, you must notify your CM as soon as possible to explain why you cannot appear. Claiming illness and/or transportation problems without substantiating such claims will not automatically permit you to miss your scheduled court dates. VTC will assist you with bus passes and other transportation assistance as needed as long as you are otherwise compliant with the program.
 - VTC understands that life goes on while you are participating in the program and that there may be times when you cannot appear on time for a program obligation. However, you must communicate with your CM (and PO if applicable) ahead of time so that you are not considered as a “no show” or an “absconder” from the VTC program.
4. Complete random drug/alcohol testing as required. You will be randomly tested for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol throughout participation in VTC at a minimum of two times per week. (Testing is also conducted to monitor compliance with recommended medications). The testing conducted in VTC is highly accurate, scientifically valid, and forensically defensible. Test results yielded from specimens you provide will be upheld and you will be held accountable. All specimen collections will be conducted on an observed basis meaning you will be closely visually monitored while providing a urine specimen. The VTC judge will have access to all drug and alcohol test results including any failures to test. Additionally, you may also be directed to test at any time during VTC participation by any VTC team member. A positive or “dirty” test will not automatically terminate you from VTC; however, sanctions may be imposed and will include automatic delays in phase progression. The judge will be reviewing your overall performance in the program when determining sanctions.
5. You will be assigned a drug testing color on the day you enter VTC (see below) and must report as required/requested. Your color may change during VTC at the discretion of the VTC Judge.

Primary Drug Testing Colors:

Female Last Name A-M:	Black
Male Last Name A-M:	Red
Female Last Name N-Z:	Orange
Male Last Name N-Z:	Blue

Secondary Drug Testing Colors:

1 time per week:	Pink
1 time per month:	Hunter
2 times per month:	Beige
3 times per month:	Purple

- You must contact the Drug Testing Color Line 7 days a week by calling (904) 255-2444.
 - It is your responsibility to listen to each message in its entirety and report as directed.
 - The Drug Testing Color Line is automatically updated each morning at 6:00 a.m. You must call the color line no later than 8:00 a.m. to find out if your color was called.
- WEEKDAY TESTING: If reporting Monday-Friday, you must report to Clay Behavioral Health Center located at 2141 Loch Rane Blvd, Suite 120, Orange Park FL 32073 for testing when your color is called.
 - You must report between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. unless otherwise instructed.
 - You must sign in, be seated, and be prepared to wait up to 30 minutes when reporting for testing. The more people present, the longer the wait. This is unavoidable.
- WEEKEND/HOLIDAY TESTING: Testing that occurs on weekends and/or holidays will have reduced hours for reporting. If reporting on a Saturday or Sunday, the reporting time will generally be between the hours of 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. You must pay attention to the recording on weekends/holidays to ensure that you report as required.
 - Calling the Drug Testing Color Line after the reporting time has ended on weekend/holidays will not be accepted as a reason for a missed test.

- MISSED TESTING: In the event of a missed test during the week or on a weekend/holiday, you are required to report for testing by 9:00 a.m. the next business day at Clay Behavioral Health Center located at 2141 Loch Rane Blvd, Suite 120, Orange Park FL 32073.
 - Reporting as required when you miss a test will not excuse your missed test. However, adhering to this policy will likely lessen the severity of the sanction.
 - You must provide a specimen within three (3) hours of arrival at the specimen collection facility. If you fail to provide a specimen within three (3) hours, you will be dismissed from the facility and reported as having failed to provide a specimen which correlates to a missed drug screen.
6. Provide valid specimens for drug/alcohol testing.
- All specimen collections will be conducted on an observed basis meaning you will be closely visually monitored while providing a urine specimen. The monitoring/observation process exists to ensure the collection of valid urine specimens. While in VTC, you will be subject to direct observation of your person during the urine specimen collection process. This process consists of washing hands, removing outer clothing like jackets and sweaters, lowering bottoms to the ankles, lifting shirts, and turning in a circle for a visual inspection, squatting (females), starting and stopping the urine flow, and lastly, having someone monitor the urine leaving your body to ensure the urine is actually coming from you. This process may feel awkward and invasive, but it is necessary. Failure or refusal to abide by this policy will result in sanctions including possible removal from VTC.
 - Before providing a specimen, you must verify the information on the specimen collection container as your own and then initial the specimen collection container to acknowledge it is labeled properly. If you leave the testing area without providing a specimen, your specimen collection container will be destroyed, and you will be provided with a new specimen collection container to verify upon your return.
 - When providing a urine specimen, you must provide a minimum amount of urine to be tested. This amount is indicated on the specimen collection container by a black temperature strip. Providing an insufficient volume of urine during the specimen collection process may be deemed as a program violation (if repetitive behavior) and sanctioned accordingly.
 - You should not consume excessive fluids prior to providing a urine specimen. You are responsible for what you consume and claiming that you had too much to drink prior to providing a urine specimen will not be accepted as a valid reason for a diluted specimen. It is recommended that you do not consume more than one (1) cup of fluids in the hour leading up to providing a urine specimen. Also, you will not be permitted to consume more than one (1) cup of fluids in the presence of staff prior to the urine specimen collection process.
 - You will be sanctioned for providing or attempting to provide a dilute, adulterated, or substituted urine specimen. Under such circumstances, you may receive multiple sanctions to address dishonesty and deception. Tampering with any drug/alcohol test will also be deemed a positive test which may result in a new arrest/criminal charge and may result in termination from the program (this includes flushing, diluting, using someone else's urine, etc.).
- Dilute specimens do not “just happen”. It doesn't matter where you work/how much you exercise. If you are dilute, you will be sanctioned for not providing a valid specimen.
7. Do not use or possess any unapproved drugs or alcohol.
- Sobriety and mental health stability are the primary goals of this program.
 - You are responsible for what you put into your body whether it is legal or illegal drugs or alcohol, prescription or over the counter medications, food, and/or drinks. There are substances as well as foods and drinks that may cross react with testing and cause false-positive test results. These items are included on the Prohibited Substances List. Claiming that consumption of these substances is the reason for testing positive will not be accepted and will be sanctioned.
 - You are prohibited from using or possessing any unapproved legal drugs as well as all illegal drugs and/or alcohol (in any form).

- You are prohibited from purchasing, filling a prescription for, possessing, or using any prescribed and/or over the counter drugs/medications without obtaining approval from VTC prior to purchasing or ingesting. See the Prohibited Substances List for more information.
 - Contact your VTC CM for permission before you buy or fill anything.
 - You must maintain compliance with all approved medications.
 - Medication Assisted Treatment programs are permitted if deemed medically necessary and monitored pursuant to VTC policies.
 - If you are receiving mental health treatment only (no history of substance use) you may be permitted to maintain certain mental health medications that would otherwise be prohibited.
 - This issue will be considered on a case-by-case basis only.
 - Approval must be received from the VTC judge prior to continuing any medications.
 - You must maintain compliance with all approved medications.
 - You are strictly prohibited from using or possessing all “synthetic” or “designer drugs/stimulants”, including supplements, that can be purchased legally or illegally. This includes but is not limited to substances like synthetic marijuana, bath salts, kratom, tianeptine, and phenibut. All “smoking mixtures” (other than products specifically designated to contain only tobacco) are also strictly prohibited. All products sold or marketed under false pretenses with the warning “not for human consumption” are also strictly prohibited.
 - Violation of this rule may result in immediate termination from VTC.
 - Over-the-counter drug use (OTC) can become a serious problem for people recovering from drug and/or alcohol use. Improper use of over-the-counter medications can lead to relapse, health problems, and even death. A wide variety of the over-the-counter medications can be misused- from attempts to treat real illness, to self-medicate and, of course, for recreational purposes. All over-the-counter medications have a legitimate medical purpose; however, when used improperly (taking higher than recommended doses, or using more frequently than directed), these drugs can produce a range of potentially damaging effects, including relapse. OTC medications containing alcohol and those that can be used for mind-altering purposes are prohibited. You should carefully read medication labels to look for potential intoxicating ingredients.
 - If you must sign anything to get a product from the pharmacy, it is a prohibited substance.
 - Once you have determined an OTC drug that will work best for you, you will also need to get permission from VTC before purchasing or ingesting/using the medication. Contact your CM. You are responsible for the substances you consume and how they affect a urine analysis and if you fail to get permission for something that impacts your random testing, you will be held accountable.
8. Tell your doctors you are in treatment.
- If you must seek medical attention, you are required to inform the physician that you are in a treatment program and cannot be prescribed narcotic, controlled substances, or habit-forming medications as take-home medications. Medications provided by physicians in an inpatient/supervised setting (ER visit, hospital stay, office administered) are at the discretion of the physician.
 - You must submit copies of all medical documentation to your CM within twenty-four (24) hours of release.
 - If short-term take-home narcotic/addictive medications are determined to be medically necessary for your recovery, VTC will monitor your usage of such medications for the expected duration of use and will suspend all VTC participation/progress during such time.
9. You must take medication as prescribed.
- It is your responsibility to maintain compliance with the medication regimen that has been approved for you in VTC. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the medication (i.e., the dosage,

Always tell your doctor that you are in a treatment program. They will not prescribe addictive take-home medications if they know you shouldn't be taking them.

the frequency, and/or any side effects), they need to be addressed with your prescribing physician. Your CM or the VJO will assist you with calling your prescribing psychiatrist and/or primary care physician to schedule an appointment to have your medication reviewed.

- If you are not taking medication as prescribed, you will be considered non-compliant in VTC.

10. (Felony Offenders Only) Report to a PO as directed.

- If you are a felony offender, you must report to a PO during the first week of each month. You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at each visit. Failure to report as required to a PO or failing to attend a scheduled appointment/visit may result in sanctions and/or fines. If you have any problem making an appointment, you are to call your PO at 904-213-2930.
 - You must provide 24-hour notice of any cancelled probation appointment.
 - You must leave a voicemail or send an email/text message if you cannot reach your PO.
 - You must inform your PO of any change of address prior to changing locations.
 - You must inform your PO when you gain and/or change employment.
 - You must receive permission from a PO or your CM to leave Clay County.
 - Day trips with no overnight stays may be approved by a PO or your CM.
 - Overnight travel requires submission of a travel form and approval from the Judge.

11. Participate in random searches.

- You are subject to a search of your person, possessions, residence, and/or vehicle by any member of the VTC team.
 - VTC conducts random searches and planned searches. Searches can take place at any time and any location. This includes review of cell phone communications and social media. If you refuse to submit to search procedures, you are in violation of VTC.
 - Items and/or information obtained from your property (physical items, written, or electronic records) relating to direct or possible criminal activity involvement, discussions of other VTC/PSC participants and their program status, participant/courtroom/treatment session photos, or other unapproved dissemination of VTC/PSC materials is a violation of VTC.

12. Leaving the County/Travel Requests.

- You are required to remain in the county in which you reside. Day trips for work obligations or medical/mental health appointments outside of your county of residence are permitted. Just let your CM or your PO know that you have an appointment. Otherwise, do not leave the county without approval.
- If you endeavor to travel overnight to a location outside of your county of residence, you must submit a travel request form to VTC and receive written approval.
 - The travel request form is included in your participant folder and is available at the PSC Main Office. This form is also available via email from your CM.
 - The travel request form must be completed in its entirety and submitted via email or in person to your CM for processing.
 - The travel request form must be submitted at least 5 business days prior to your requested travel timeframe. Exceptions to this rule will be made for emergency travel requests only. All other requests not submitted as required will be denied.
 - All approved overnight travel requires submission of a drug and alcohol test prior to leaving the county and immediately upon return.
 - Medical/mental health appointments through the VA or other providers outside of your county of residence are permitted without a travel request. Just let your CM know that you have an appointment.
 - Day travel requests (not overnight) are to be submitted via email, text, or in person to your CM (travel form not required) and may be submitted the day prior to the requested travel only if not known of in advance.


- VTC is a privilege, not a right, and offers you an opportunity to receive help, not plan vacations. At no time will travel outside of the United States or its territories be authorized, without special authorization from the Judge.

13. Avoid inappropriate places including without limitation and by way of example only, bars or restaurants with a primary purpose of serving alcohol, adult entertainment venues, co-defendant's homes or places of work, and other Problem-Solving Court participant's homes or places or work.

- You may not work or visit places where alcohol or illegal drugs is the primary item being dispensed, sold, or marketed.

14. Avoid inappropriate people.

- You will be subject to associational limits as determined by the VTC team. Active users, known felons, and individuals on probation shall be discussed with your CM and PO, prior to associating with such individuals. If you are on felony probation, this contact is prohibited whether you are in VTC or not. If you are not on probation, it will be up to VTC to permit or limit contact. You are expected to avoid affiliation with non-law-abiding individuals, violence prone individuals, or individuals who are actively using drugs or alcohol. This is in your best interest. Additionally, VTC may specifically prohibit associations with any individual deemed non-conducive to a life of recovery. You will learn more about People, Places, and Things and how important being aware of your associations is as you progress in treatment.
- Relationships with a spouse, significant other, or partner, and even friends and family are an important aspect of recovery. The important people in your life can be a source of support for a clean, sober, and stable lifestyle. However, these people may also prevent you from reaching your goals. If the important people in your life use/abuse mood-altering substances, or are not stable with their own mental health, you may have to avoid them for the sake of your recovery, and this may have to be accomplished through a court order limiting or prohibiting contact between you and that person.



Going to old places, to see old people, and do old things will lead to old behaviors. The "friends" you used to spend time with may not be healthy for you and you may have to stay away from them.

15. Intimate relationships with any other participants are not allowed.

- This includes romantic involvement as well as living with other participants.
 - "Other participants" includes participants of all 4th Circuit PSC programs.
- Violating this section is grounds for automatic termination from VTC.

16. Attend all services/appointments. Be on time.

- If you are late for court sessions, 12-Step/sober-support meetings, medical or mental health appointments, educational sessions, and/or group/individual treatment sessions, you may not be allowed to attend and will be considered non-compliant.
 - You must contact your CM if there is a possibility you will be late or have an emergency that will cause you to miss your court appearance.
 - You must contact your Clay Behavioral counselor or, if you are receiving services from the Veterans Administration, you must contact the VJO if there is a possibility you may be late or have an emergency that will cause you to miss your group/individual treatment session.
 - You must leave a voicemail or send an email/text message in the event you cannot reach your CM or provider/counselor.
 - Claiming illness and/or transportation problems without substantiating such claim will not automatically permit you to miss your scheduled appointments. It is your responsibility to be present and to be on time.

- VTC understands that life goes on while you are participating in the program and that there may be times when you cannot appear on time for a program obligation/service. You must communicate ahead of time so that you are not considered as a “no show” or an “absconder” from the VTC program. Additionally, other participants may need the same service and could potentially be rescheduled into your appointment slot. Be courteous of the time of others.
- Failure to attend treatment or missing scheduled appointments will result in sanctions, fines, or may result in termination from VTC. All the sessions are scheduled in advance so that you will be able to make arrangements with your employer and/or arrange for childcare. It is recommended that you exchange phone numbers with other group members in case you need transportation to or from group sessions.

17. Dress appropriately.

- When appearing for court, you must wear a button down or collared shirt (tucked in), blouse, pants, dress, or skirt. Shoes are always required. While you may be permitted to dress comfortably and casually for treatment sessions, you are not to wear t-shirts, shorts, tank-tops, flip-flops, hats, or clothing that is revealing, including drug or alcohol related themes or that promotes/advertises alcohol or drug use when appearing for court or treatment sessions. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside court or at treatment centers unless medically approved. When appearing for random drug and alcohol testing, you must dress appropriately. You are not to wear low hanging pants, midriff baring shirts, short shorts or skirts, tank tops, flip-flops, or hats. Speak with your CM if assistance with clothing is needed.

18. Do not make threats toward other participants or staff or behave in a violent or inappropriate manner.

- Violent or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Court. This will result in termination from VTC.

19. Do not possess any weapons.

- You may not possess any firearms or weapons on your person, in your home, or in your vehicle.

20. Maintain appropriate behavior.

- While in court, you are to wait for your case to be called, sit quietly, and listen to the proceedings. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Upon addressing the Veterans Court Judge, you are to be respectful and use the terms “Your Honor,” “Judge,” “Sir,” or “Ma’am.” In the absence of the judge, the courtroom security officers oversee the courtroom. You must follow their instructions.
- For your benefit as well as the benefit of all participants, proper behavior is expected to be followed by everyone; both in court and at treatment centers. All cell phones and/or electronic devices must be turned off in the courtroom and at treatment sessions. If found in use, these devices will be removed from your possession.
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in treatment sessions. You will be removed from treatment sessions if you behave in an unacceptable manner. Such behavior shall be documented and reported to the VTC team and considered as a missed treatment session.
- When appearing for random drug/alcohol testing, you are to sign-in, sit quietly, and wait for your name to be called to begin the specimen collection process. All cell phones and/or electronic devices must be turned off when waiting to be tested.

21. Do not engage in and/or commit any new criminal offenses.

- Warrants and/or new arrests could result in termination from VTC. This includes traffic related offenses. If you do not have a valid driver’s license, do not drive! If you would like to obtain and/or regain a driver’s license you must let your CM and defense attorney know and VTC will see what assistance can be provided as you progress in VTC.

22. Maintain contact with your CM.

- You will be assigned to a specially trained CM. CMs can be advocates and allies but are also required to hold you responsible for your actions. You must initiate weekly contact with your CM, verbally by phone, and/or through in-person visits. (Text messages do not count.) CMs will request things from you such as self-reports of how you believe you are progressing in VTC, schedules, meeting attendance verification forms, community service verification forms, proof of written assignments, completion and submission of programmatic forms, medical documentation, medication documentation/submission of medications for pill counts, and/or paystubs. CMs will question you about program non-compliance and will try to work with you to rectify situations that are causing you to struggle. CMs will receive updates from your treatment providers as to your attendance and progress in services and will ask you about them. Be honest with your CM.
- Some participants may require a higher level of supervision than other participants. This “extra attention” is sometimes required and may be short-term or long-term, depending on individual progress. You should not measure your needs and services against others. CMs are not “picking on you” and are not “out to get you” but are doing what is expected of them by the program. You are an individual, and individual needs will differ.

23. **(Substance Use Participants Only)** Attend Sober Support Meetings as required.

- If you are participating in VTC as the result of or if you have a history of substance use, you will be required to attend 12-Step/sober-support meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Smart Recovery, Rational Recovery, or other sober-support meetings throughout VTC. The minimum attendance requirement for each phase is below:
 - Phase 1: Daily (1 per day) AA/NA meetings are required during this phase.
 - Phase 2: 2 AA/NA meetings are required per week during this phase.
 - Phase 3: 3 AA/NA meetings are required per week during this phase.
 - Phase 4: 4 AA/NA meetings are required per week during this phase.
 - Phase 5: 4 AA/NA meetings are required per week during this phase.
- Attending these meetings is an important part of your recovery. Additional meeting attendance may be added to your list of requirements based on your individual progress. It will help familiarize you with recovery philosophies, help you develop levels of trust and help you create social bonds with other recovering addicts. Your treatment team will provide you with information regarding the time and location of 12-step/sober-support meetings and will also direct you to special interest and recovery events in the community. VTC will not force attendance of spiritually based support meetings. You will be provided with the option of attending secular meetings that are recognized as sober-support meetings if you request such alternative.
- You must provide proof of having attended the required number of meetings at each court appearance. You will be required to submit a form containing information about all sober-support meetings attended. This form must be signed by the meeting CHAIRPERSON at each meeting you attended. You may be required to include summaries of each meeting attended and if required must include a three-sentence summary of each meeting attended. Virtual/Zoom meeting are acceptable if approved by the CM but must be validated via the web site or a three-sentence summary of the zoom meeting must be turned in to the CM. DO NOT attempt to submit falsified ‘fake’ meeting attendance slips to the court as you will be sanctioned and may be terminated from VTC.

24. Complete Community Service.

- You will be required to participate in and complete certain community service obligations. These obligations are over and above any court ordered community service you are required to complete as a sanction for VTC non-compliance. As opportunities arise, VTC believes it is important to give back to the community and to re-ignite your sense of brotherhood and comradery. You will be provided with details in advance of any required event so that you are able to adjust your schedule accordingly. Additionally, you will be encouraged to attend and participate in other community

service events that are not required by VTC and may be able to request such participation be considered as your VTC community service project.

- You will be required to complete a community service project prior to successfully completing VTC. This project is over and above any court ordered community service you are required to complete as a sanction for program non-compliance and is over and above any required community service obligations issued by the VTC Judge. Community service projects must meet the following requirements: comprised of at least 8 hours, provable/verifiable through photos and letters, no personal or monetary gain, and not connected to your friends or family.
 - Once you have determined what you wish to do for your community service project, you must submit your plan in writing to your CM. Planning your project should take place during phase 4 of VTC and your project should be completed during phase 5. Your CM will submit your written plan to the VTC Judge and the VTC Judge will issue approval or denial of your community service project request. Once you have completed your community service project, you must prepare a photo board/presentation board of photos and/or letters or documentation which reflects what was accomplished. This photo board/presentation board shall be submitted to your CM, and you may be required to present it in court.

25. Satisfy program related fees and costs prior to VTC completion.

- VTC has “participant fees” that are assessed to offset the cost of treatment services. Treatment services are provided to you at significantly reduced rates for program continuity. As a result, you are expected to contribute to your participation in the program by paying fees. This is your “buy in” into VTC. Program fees may be paid throughout program participation (through an established schedule per phase).
- You are responsible for a \$480.00 mandatory program fee payable to in the following manner (must pay each phase balance to be eligible for advancement):
 - Phase 1: Must pay \$30.00 to the Clerk of Court.
 - Phase 2: Must pay \$90.00 to Clay Behavioral.
 - Phase 3: Must pay \$90.00 to Clay Behavioral.
 - Phase 4: Must pay \$120.00 to Clay Behavioral.
 - Phase 5: Must pay \$150.00 to Clay Behavioral.
- You are responsible for a \$50.00 Public Defender application fee if you are represented by or receive the services of the PD while enrolled in ADC. This is a fee established on all criminal cases and may already be assessed on your case prior to ADC. This fee will be applied to each case if you have more than one. An additional fee will not be assessed upon VTC entry if already assessed on your case(s). Payments can be made to the Clerk’s Office at <https://www2.Clayclerk.com/>.
 - Payment of this fee is to be made to the Clerk of Court prior to completion of VTC.
- Pretrial/diversion participants only: You are responsible for a \$50.00 State Attorney's Office fee. Payments can be made to the Clay County Clerk of Court.
- If you are a felony offender and under any level of felony probation supervision, you are required to pay the Department of Corrections a Drug Testing Fee. This fee is determined by the Department of Corrections in accordance with the type of probation you are on. Your PO will inform you of the amount that you owe.
 - Payment will be made to the Department of Corrections using Correct Pay at <https://correctpay.com/florida>. and must be paid prior to completion of phase 4.
- You may also be responsible for the monthly cost of supervision if on formal probation. Speak to your PO regarding this fee and your obligations.
- You are also responsible for victim restitution if your victim suffered monetary damages. Restitution must be paid in accordance with the terms agreed upon in the VTC Participant Agreement and must be paid in full prior to successful completion of VTC, unless otherwise approved by the VTC judge.

If you are unable to pay your fees, talk to your CM.

- At no such time will the inability to pay program fees prohibit VTC advancement or completion. If, upon verification, you are determined to be unable to pay you may have your fees converted to community service hours computed to a \$10.00 per hour rate to satisfy this requirement.
 - This does not apply to court fines, probation fees, costs of supervision, or restitution. Those are separate fees that are imposed on certain case disposition types and can only be waived or reduced to community service by the sentencing judge through separate court proceedings.

26. Maintain contact with your veteran mentor.

- VTC mentors are veterans of the armed services willing to volunteer a significant amount of time to you and VTC. Veteran mentors are not your CM but are here to help walk you through the VTC process. Mentors help reinforce the military attributes of responsibility and accountability. Mentors maintain contact and provide you with advice, personal experiences, guidance, and recommendations. Mentors essentially act as your coach, guide, role model, advocate, and as a support system. Mentors help to promote and foster a “can do” attitude to help you become motivated to accomplish your goals in treatment. Mentors help make sure you never feel alone and always know that they are there for you. Mentors will be matched with you based on gender, branch of service, and service era. In the event such criteria cannot be fully matched the closest matched mentor will be assigned. The active and supportive relationship between you and your mentor that is maintained throughout VTC increases the likelihood that you will remain in a recovery program, thus increasing your chances of achieving sobriety and reentering society as a productive, law-abiding citizen. However, please be aware that your mentor is not able to give you money, provide you with ongoing transportation, provide you with legal or program related advice, or authorize you to change any aspect of your treatment or obligations to VTC.
- You must maintain weekly contact with your mentor, by phone and/or through in-person visits. It is your duty to contact your mentor on a weekly basis. Your mentor may also contact you and you are expected to answer your mentor’s phone calls and text messages. Mentors will attend court hearings when necessary.

Your mentor is your “Battle Buddy”. Your mentor is not your counselor or your case manager but is part of your support system!

2.2 Additional Services/Programs (as required)

2.2.1 Mental Health Support Meetings

Attending educational and supportive meetings that are focused on your mental health needs may be required throughout participation in VTC. These meetings may focus on peer support, PTSD, depression/anxiety, MST, and/or other trauma. If attendance of these types of meetings is identified as a need for you, you will be required to attend these meetings. The frequency of attendance requirements varies based on your individual needs. The minimum attendance requirement is no less than one meeting per week.

2.2.2 Job Fairs

If you are employable, you may be required to complete job searches, and/or attend job fairs. These events may be targeted at employing veterans or may be general community events. If required to attend, you must attend and submit proof of attendance to your CM.

*WHEN IN DOUBT ABOUT ANY RULE OR POLICY...
ASK YOUR CASE MANAGER.*

3.1 Treatment Procedures

The main purpose of VTC is to provide you with treatment and other services to address the underlying reasons you entered the criminal justice system. If you were able to manage on your own, you wouldn't have committed a crime and put your freedom/life in jeopardy. Treatment services provided in VTC will generally include six (6) to ten (10) hours of services, weekly, during the initial phases of treatment and approximately 200 hours of services over the course of VTC participation. However, VTC allows for flexibility to accommodate your individual differences in your response to treatment. The frequency of attendance will be based on your individualized treatment plan created by your treatment provider/providers. These providers will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to VTC what services you should receive. You will start VTC in phase 1.

If you are admitted to a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. You may be maintained in a residential treatment facility for as little as 30 days or as many as 180 days. It depends on your individual needs and progress.

Upon release from any residential treatment program, you will routinely be placed in phase 2 of the VTC program, regardless of what phase you were in prior to entering residential treatment. If you were in phases 3-5 prior to entering residential treatment, future phase advancement from phase 2 will take place at the discretion of the Judge based on your progress and may not follow the same phase timelines that are listed on your phase petitions. If you were in phase 1 or 2 when you entered residential treatment, you will be placed in phase 2 when you complete residential treatment and all normal phase timelines will apply. When you complete residential treatment, you will enter outpatient treatment services and will remain in, at minimum, outpatient treatment services until you complete VTC. You will likely have more than one treatment provider with one being Clay Behavioral and the other(s) being therapists and physicians at the VA.

If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, a multi-component outpatient program will be developed for you that you must fully complete to be successful in VTC. Outpatient treatment may take place during the day or in the evening, may take place multiple times per week, and may continue throughout your participation in VTC. Your schedule pertaining to employment and/or childcare will be taken into consideration when possible but will not take priority. VTC must be your priority.

3.1.1 Treatment Plans

An "initial" treatment plan will be developed by you and your treatment team following an overall assessment of your problems and needs. The plan will act as a guide for your initial treatment experience and within it, you will set goals, select methods for meeting those goals, and develop target dates for achieving those goals. The plan will be maintained by your treatment provider and will be updated as you progress through the program. You will attend and participate in monthly treatment plan review meetings with your individual counselor. This is in addition to any other services your treatment provider has outlined for you in your treatment plan. You should request and receive a copy of your treatment plan and refer to it often.

If, at any time, you feel that you are not receiving the services outlined on your treatment plan or are not meeting the goals you have identified in your treatment plan, reach out to your counselor, CM, and the VJO for assistance.

3.1.2 Counseling Sessions

Substance use, trauma, and mental health counseling is comprised of two separate formats: individual and group. As part of your treatment plan, you will be required to participate in both types of counseling at various times. Together they are designed to help you develop self-awareness, realize your self-worth, and develop the strength to practice self-discipline. The individual and group counseling sessions will include problem identification and alternative solutions. Your counselors may utilize multiple treatment modalities/approaches to assist you in reaching your goals. Some examples of the treatment modalities/approaches used are: Motivational Interviewing, Living-In-Balance, The Matrix Model, Relapse Prevention Therapy, Moral Recognition Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, 12-Step Facilitation, Relapse Prevention Therapy, Seeking Safety, Life Skills, Anger Management, and Criminal Thinking. All of these approaches are evidence-based practices and are chosen specifically because of their relevance to your issues.

Your attendance and participation level in counseling sessions will be reported to the VTC team as part of your overall progress report. Your personal discussions in these sessions are confidential and will not be discussed with VTC. Only your attendance history, participation level, compliance/behavioral issues, and statements relating to self-harm/harm of others will be shared. If you wish to share information from your counseling sessions with your CM, attorney, or mentor, you may; but you may only share your personal information. You may not share what any other participant has discussed.

3.1.3 Dual Diagnosis Services

If it was determined during your assessment that you have a co-occurring disorder (substance use and mental health disorder), your treatment plan will be developed to include services and goals to address all of your needs. If medication is required to adequately treat your condition, your physician will need to consult with VTC so that you are provided with approved medication. If you were previously engaged with a physician not associated with VTC and wish to continue seeing that physician for medication needs, your physician will need to communicate with VTC pertaining to your treatment. You must obtain permission from your CM to take any medication before you fill any prescriptions.

3.1.4 Medication Assisted Treatment

If it has been determined by your clinician that you would benefit from the use of Medication Assisted Treatment for opioid or alcohol abuse, you will be encouraged to engage in the recommended treatment. Medication assisted treatment and medications for a mental health disorder differ. VTC will not mandate use of medication assisted treatment to remain in VTC. VTC will mandate compliance with mental health medications for a mental health disorder to remain in VTC.

4.1 Program Phases

VTC consists of 5 phases. Each phase consists of specified objectives, therapeutic and rehabilitative activities, and specific requirements for advancement into the next phase. The components and requirements for advancement from each phase are described below.

You are responsible for completing ALL phase requirements before advancement can occur. This includes completion of any additional assignments or sanctions that were ordered for you to complete by the VTC Judge. You may not request phase advancement with any unmet obligations unless the Judge approves for you to do so. You may submit a petition to move to the next phase only after you have completed each task listed on the applicable phase-up petition.

You must submit phase advancement petitions 5 days prior to your next VTC court appearance session. It is important to remember that even if you can check off every task on the phase-up petition that you still might not be approved to phase up if you are not fully compliant with the program. Promotion or demotion between phases is subject to the order of the VTC Judge. Graduation petitions must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the projected graduation date.

Promotion eligibility and phase advancements are not automatic and are always based upon individual assessment. The VTC team may determine that it is not conducive to promote you even if you have met all promotion criteria. In addition to the individual phase requirements there are overall requirements that apply to each phase of VTC.

It is your responsibility to track your progress and know when you should be eligible to phase up. However, do not expect to be approved to phase up or graduate if you:

- Are not compliant with your treatment provider (attendance and participation).
- Are receiving a sanction on the day you would otherwise be eligible to phase up or graduate.
- Have not completed a sanction that was ordered during your current phase.
- Have not been communicating or participating in services with your CM or mentor.
- Have not paid required fees or completed approved community service in lieu of such fees.
- Are disrespectful toward VTC and/or VTC staff.
- Are requesting to phase up or graduate on a day that VTC court hearings are not being held.
 - Phase-ups and graduations will take place at the next available court date.

4.1.1 Phase 1: Intake, Assessment, and Orientation **Length: 2 weeks (minimum)**

Phase 1 provides you with an opportunity to voluntarily withdraw from VTC without consequences. You have 2 weeks to decide if you want to remain in VTC. If you petition to phase up to phase 2, you are electing to remain in VTC. Once you enter phase 2, you may not withdraw from VTC without consequences.

In Phase 1, you will be assigned to a CM and, if a felony offender, to a PO. Your problems and needs will be assessed by a treatment provider and a treatment plan will begin to be developed based on your self-reported needs and goals. Your complete treatment plan will be developed in phase 2 after you begin attending treatment services. You will complete an orientation/overview of the VTC program and have an opportunity to ask questions before moving forward with your treatment obligations. To complete phase 1, you must:

- Sign formal agreement to enter VTC.
- Attend new participant orientation with CM.
- Review and sign new participant forms including a release of information, waiver of liability, prohibited substances agreement, and drug testing rules and procedures.
- Receive participant folder.
- Receive drug testing color.
- Call drug testing color line daily.
- Appear for drug testing as required/requested.
- Attend daily sober-support meetings- 1 per day. (Substance use participants only)
- Receive temporary veteran mentor.
- Contact temporary mentor weekly.
- Meet with VJO to review history and schedule medical and other appointments.
- Complete treatment assessment to determine appropriate level of care.
- Complete initial report to PO (Felonies only).
- Attend VTC court sessions every other Thursday and remain present for the entire session.
 - Bring your participant folder to court.
- Prepare a list of personal goals that you wish to achieve over the next 12 months.
- Complete a 2-page essay on “What I expect to gain from VTC”.
- Complete a 2-page essay on “Creatinine measurements in drug testing”
- Achieve a minimum of 5 consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol.
 - Including no missed, diluted, altered, or otherwise positive tests.
- Pay \$30.00 VTC fee to the Clerk of Court.
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements met.

4.1.2 Phase 2: Treatment and Personal Goals Length: 6 weeks (minimum)

In Phase 2, your formal treatment plan will be developed by you and your counselor after you have started attending services and as you reveal more about yourself. Group treatment sessions and individual treatment sessions will help you learn about your triggers and how to appropriately respond to them. You will be assigned to a permanent veteran mentor in phase 2 and will be expected to have a firm grasp on the rules and expectations of VTC. To complete phase 2, you must:

- Receive and sign your formal treatment plan.
- Attend and participate in group and/or individual treatment services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan.
- Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner.
- Follow directives of the court, CM, treatment counselors, mentor, and PO.
- Attend sober support meetings- 2 per week. (Substance use participants only)
- Report to a PO as instructed. (Felonies only)
- Call drug testing color line daily.
- Appear for drug testing as required/requested
- Receive assigned veteran mentor.
- Contact your mentor weekly.
- Attend functions with your mentor as requested.
- Attend all scheduled VA appointments and services.
- Attend VTC court sessions every other Thursday and remain present for the entire session.
 - Bring your participant folder to court.
- Complete a 2-page essay on “How drugs/alcohol have impacted my life” or “How my mental disorder has impacted my life”.
- Achieve a minimum of 15 consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol.
 - This includes no missed, diluted, altered, or otherwise positive tests.
- Pay \$90.00 fee to Clay Behavioral.
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements met.

4.1.3 Phase 3: Ongoing Treatment and Life Skills Length: 8 Weeks (minimum)

In Phase 3, your treatment plan will be updated by you and your counselor to identify and monitor your treatment goals and objectives. Counseling and meetings will begin to focus on relapse prevention issues and help you identify ways of coping with stressful situations. To complete phase 3, you must:

- Review your treatment plan with your counselor.
- Attend and participate in group and individual treatment services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan.
- Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner.
- Follow directives of the court, CM, treatment counselors, mentor, and PO.
- Attend sober support meetings- 3 per week. (Substance use participants only)
- Obtain a sponsor (5 or more years of sobriety) (Substance use participants only)
- Report to a PO as instructed. (Felonies only)
- Call drug testing color line daily.
- Appear for drug testing as required/requested.
- Maintain weekly contact with your mentor.
- Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested.
- Attend all scheduled VA appointments and services.
- Attend VTC court sessions every other Thursday, as instructed, and remain present for the entire session.
 - Bring your participant folder to court.
- Search for/obtain employment or engage in pursuit of vocational or educational goals.
- Prepare a list of personal goals that you wish to achieve over the next 5 years.
- Achieve a minimum of 30 consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol.
 - This includes no missed, diluted, altered, or otherwise positive tests.
- Pay \$90.00 treatment fee to Clay Behavioral.
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements are met.

4.1.4 Phase 4: Relapse Prevention Length: 12 Weeks (minimum)

Phase 4 will continue to focus on relapse prevention/identifying ways of coping with stress. To complete phase 4, you must:

- Review your treatment plan with your counselor.
- Attend and participate in group and individual treatment services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan.
- Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner.
- Follow directives of the court, CM, treatment counselors, mentor, and PO.
- Attend sober support meetings- 4 per week. (Substance use participants only)
- Maintain sponsor. (5 or more years of sobriety) (Substance use participants only)
- Report to a PO as instructed. (Felonies only)
- Call drug testing color line daily.
- Appear for drug testing as required/requested.
- Maintain weekly contact with your mentor.
- Attend VTC court sessions on Thursdays, as instructed (every 4 weeks is expected).
- Complete a 2-page essay on “Is VTC helping me and how?”
- Continue to search for/obtain employment or engage in pursuit of vocational or educational goals.
- Submit a written idea/plan for a community service project that shall be completed at least 30 days prior to the end of phase 5.
- Achieve a minimum of 45 consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol.
 - This includes no missed, diluted, altered, or otherwise positive tests.
- Pay \$120.00 treatment fee to Clay Behavioral
- Pay drug testing fee to the Department of Corrections through J-Pay (felony only).

- Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested.
- Attend all scheduled VA appointments and services.
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements met.

4.1.5 Phase 5: Aftercare and Alumni
Length: Up to 24 Weeks

(Under 12 months in VTC, participation will be until 12 months has been reached but will be no less than 8 weeks. Over 12 months in VTC, 8 weeks minimum participation is required.)

Phase 5 will address your ongoing recovery needs to maintain abstinence from drugs and alcohol. An increased focus will be placed on daily living skills. This phase will assist you in your adjustment of returning to the community as a productive, successful person able to care for yourself and others. To complete phase 5, you must:

- Complete your treatment plan/make a plan for ongoing services.
- Follow directives of the court, CM, treatment counselors, mentor, and PO.
- Attend sober support meetings- 4 per week. (Substance use participants only)
- Maintain sponsor (5 or more years of sobriety) (Substance use participants only)
- Report to a PO as instructed (Felonies only)
- Call drug testing color line daily.
- Appear for drug testing as required/requested.
- Maintain weekly contact with your mentor.
- Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested.
- Attend all scheduled VA appointments and services.
- Attend VTC court sessions on Thursdays, as instructed.
- Achieve financial stability, obtain employment, or be engaged in a vocational or educational program.
- Complete a 2-page essay on “How do I maintain sobriety/mental health stability after VTC?”
- Submit proof of completing the community service project approved in phase 4.
- Achieve a minimum of 90 consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol.
 - This includes no missed, diluted, altered, or otherwise positive tests.
- Pay \$150.00 treatment fee to Clay Behavioral.
- Pay \$50.00 to the Clerk of Court for the Public Defender application fee (if not paid prior to entering VTC).
- Pay \$50.00 to the Clerk of Court for the States Attorney’s Office.
- Pay full probation balance, restitution balance, and/or any remaining fine balance.
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements met.

Phase up and Graduation petitions cannot be submitted until all items are completed and all timelines are met.

Petitions for phases 2-5 are to be submitted at least 5 days before your next scheduled court date. Graduation petitions are to be submitted at least 30 days prior to your expected graduation date.

The time you spend in VTC will not be impacted by following this submission policy.

5.1 Program Responses

An effective system of program responses promotes your ability to account for your actions. Program responses must be appropriate for your developmental level and graduated as you progress through the program. To motivate you, program responses will be applied in a way that is immediate, predictable, and consistent. Program responses will be tailored to your individual progress/needs. Program responses will also align with your specific capabilities. The VTC team will ascertain whether you are capable of meeting a certain goal at the current time. The VTC team will ascertain whether you are capable of adhering to a certain rule/policy at the current time. You will not be held liable for not meeting a goal or adhering to a rule/policy that you are deemed to not be capable of following at the current time, i.e.: abstinence, improvement in attitude, active participation in services. Your goals will be based on proximal and distal expectations: proximal for those that can and should be expected immediately and distal for those that can and should be expected as you progress in services.

5.1.1 Incentives

VTC recognizes the effort that it takes in attempting to improve behaviors, choices, and ultimately lifestyles. Incentives compel compliance and success in case outcomes. Incentives spotlight desired compliance and help to build trust between you and the VTC team. With that in mind, VTC recognizes all markers of success even if in a small way. Examples of behaviors/accomplishments that lead to incentives are included below.

Behaviors/Accomplishments		Possible Incentives/Responses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 day clean/sober• 30 days medication stability• Assisting others• Increased contact with child• Infraction/Violation free for 60+ days• Maintaining employment• Monthly report of being clean/sober• Mental health stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-day clean/sober• Obtaining driver's license• Obtaining employment• Obtaining GED/degree• Obtaining housing• Outstanding accomplishment• Perfect attendance• Phase completion/advancement• Recognition of investment in program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applause• Books• Candy• Coffee/Lunch with the VTC team• Curfew extension/removal• Decreased court appearances• Early dismissal from court• Early phase advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishbowl drawings• Gift Certificate• Praise from judge• Recognition certificate• Recommendation letter for job• Reduction of community service hours• Reduction of supervision• Sobriety tokens• Standing Ovation• Travel privileges

5.1.2 Monitoring Devices

As a result of VTC non-compliance or as a method of additional monitoring for specific circumstances, you may be required by court order to wear a monitoring device. Such devices may be a GPS ankle monitor, a SCRAM alcohol monitoring device, a remote breath device, or a drug testing patch. VTC has established policies and procedures pertaining to the application and removal of such devices as indicated below.

If you are required to wear a monitoring device, you may be required to do so at your own expense or at the expense of VTC. At times, the expense of the device may be split between you and VTC. This process depends on the reason for the application of the device. If you are otherwise compliant but struggling

and may benefit from a form of additional monitoring, you will not be required to absorb the cost of the device. If you are not in compliance with VTC or have had a recent incident, you will be required to absorb the cost of any such device or may have the cost of such device split with VTC. This decision shall be at the discretion of the VTC judge.

If you are required to absorb the cost of such devices, you will be required to maintain current payments with any providers or be subject to additional sanctions by VTC. If, at any point you are unable to pay balances on the monitoring device and this inability to pay is due to a legitimate, verified difficulty, VTC may elect to assume the cost of such device by leveraging community service hours against you in lieu of such fees. Additionally, if you are required to wear a monitoring device, you will likely wear the device for at least ninety (90) days.

5.1.3 Sanctions

If you fail to comply with VTC, the judge may order one or more of the following sanctions. Sanctions are graduated and individualized. Sanctions are not negotiable and are imposed in an effort to modify your behavior. Sanctions are not intended to be fun and will, at most times, consist of hard work such as manual labor.

Punitive sanctions and treatment responses are very different. “Sanctions” that increase the level of treatment are considered treatment responses and are imposed to help and not punish you. Other sanctions are imposed in an effort to modify behavior so that you learn to make better choices. While sanctions may be viewed as punishment, the intention is to teach or inspire changes in your behavior. Sanctions are not imposed arbitrarily and are imposed after a detailed discussion among the team and, between you and the judge occurs.

Sanctions will not be convenient and may cause you to miss work. This is part of the punitive nature of sanctions. Follow the rules and avoid sanctions!

Sanctions are imposed on an individual basis. Other participants in similar circumstances may receive different sanctions to what appear to you to be the same infraction. This is not unusual nor is it inappropriate. You are viewed as an individual and thus, your individual progress, attendance, and history is taken into account at each occurrence. Do not argue with the judge because you disagree with a response. Ask your attorney to assist you and handle your questions/concerns properly.

Examples of infractions that lead to sanctions and of possible sanctions that may be imposed are listed below. This is not a complete list and only represents possible sanctions that may be imposed. As needs arise and different situations occur, new sanctions may be developed and added to this list.

Examples of Typical Infractions/Violations

- Behavioral issues (poor attitude and/or being disruptive)
- Failing to abide by curfew
- Failing to attend scheduled events
- Failing to complete community service hours
- Failing to bring participant folder to court appearances
- Failing to engage in services
- Failing to follow court, counselor, CM, PO, or mentor instruction
- Failing to maintain contact with CM, mentor, and/or PO
- Failing to submit AA/NA meeting slips
- Filling prescribed medication without authorization
- Lying or deliberately omitting information to/from the court
- Missing a drug test
- Missing treatment appointments
- Missing mental health appointments
- Missing probation check-in
- Missing treatment group sessions
- Non-compliance with approved medications
- Positive drug test
- Providing a dilute/altered drug test
- Tardiness to and/or absence from court
- Tardiness to and/or absence from treatment group sessions
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Use of prohibited substances
- Use and/or Possession of synthetic and/or designer drugs

**Examples of Serious Infractions/Violations
(may result in immediate removal from VTC)**

- Engaging in romantic/sexual relationship with any PSC participant
- New criminal arrest/offense
- Possession and/or Use of synthetic and/or replacement drugs
- Tampering/Falsifying drug test
- Threats of violence or violent behavior
- Submitting falsified documents

Examples of Possible Sanctions/Responses

1st Occurrence:

- 4-24 hours of community service
- Admonishment from judge
- Book reports
- Curfew
- Educational books/workbooks
- Essay on topic related to infraction
- Fines
- Increased AA/NA meetings
- Increased drug testing
- Keeping a calendar
- Phase extension
- Sit in jury box
- Stay to the end of court
- Verbal and/or written apology

2nd Occurrence:

- 10-40 hours of community service
- Admonishment from judge
- Alcohol monitor
- Book reports
- Court observation days
- Curfew
- Educational books/workbooks
- Essay on topic related to infraction
- Fines
- Incarceration
- Increased court appearances
- Increased drug testing
- Increased supervision
- Phase extension
- Remote breath device
- Removal of privileges
- Return to lower phase
- Round table with VTC team

3rd and/or Multiple Occurrences:

- 50-100 hours of community service
- Admonishment from judge
- Alcohol monitor
- Ankle monitor
- Educational books/workbooks
- Fines
- Incarceration
- Increased court appearances
- Increased drug testing
- Increased supervision
- Peer review
- Phase extension
- Program removal
- Remote breath device
- Re-start of the VTC program
- Return to lower phase

Automatic Sanctions/Responses to Certain Behaviors

- Missed/Positive drug test
- Automatic extension in phase regardless of progress (# of days is based on phase)

- Missed court hearing
- Capias “warrant” issued for arrest

This page provides a list as an example only. The judge has final determination of all sanctions based on individual history/previous progress.

5.1.4 Therapeutic Adjustments/Treatment Responses

Honesty = Help. Dishonesty = Sanctions.

If you are honest about any substance use or fail to follow rules and/or expectations which you may not be fully capable of following, you will be responded to with therapeutic adjustments referred to as “treatment responses”. If you are experiencing instability with your mental health or are not responding to treatment interventions, but are otherwise compliant with treatment and supervision requirements, punitive sanctions will not be imposed. Treatment responses that increase your level of treatment are not sanctions. They are imposed to help you learn from your choices and to not repeat them and are designed to improve the overall effectiveness and response to the treatment episode.

Treatment-oriented responses for substance use or mental health instability while in VTC are based on the recommendation of treatment providers. Input from other team members will be permitted for thorough discussion with the ultimate recommendation being made by the treating providers. Examples of behaviors that lead to treatment responses are listed on the next page. This is not a complete list and only represents possible treatment responses that may be recommended. Remember, the ultimate goal of VTC is treatment, not punishment.

Examples of Typical Behaviors That Lead to Treatment Responses

Examples of Behaviors

- Admitted use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Admitted struggling/dealing with issues
- Failing to meet treatment plan goals
- Known use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Mental health decompensation
- Positive drug test
- Unresponsive to treatment services being provided (despite actively participating)

Examples of Treatment Responses

- Book reports
- Educational books/workbooks
- Essay on topic related to infraction
- Increased sober-support meetings
- Increased contact with treatment
- Increased level of treatment
- Increased drug testing
- Increased mental health support meetings
- Residential treatment
- Return to lower phase in VTC
- Secure “in-jail” residential treatment

5.1.5 Violation of Probation

If you are enrolled into VTC as a condition of probation, you are subject to Violation of Probation procedures/proceedings as a result of certain infractions and/or non-compliance. Given the formal nature of violations of probation and the required actions that must be taken to file and dispose of such violations, this handbook outlines the procedure that VTC will follow with regard to violations of probation.

Florida law requires that if you are in VTC and are subject to the filing of a violation of probation that you have such violation of probation heard and disposed of within the VTC division. This rule applies unless the violation of the program rules results in rejection from VTC prior to the filing of the violation of probation. In this instance, the violation of probation would then be filed in the original criminal division. If you are not immediately rejected from VTC as a result of the program violation, the PO shall file the violation of probation in the VTC division, shall serve you with a copy of the violation of probation, and shall have a hearing pertaining to the violation of probation set and heard by the VTC judge.

5.2 Program Progress/Graduation/Termination

5.2.1 Program Progress

Once you have successfully completed the criteria for each phase, you will advance to the next level and eventually be a candidate to graduate from VTC. This will not happen in less than twelve (12) months. Prior to each phase promotion you will be required to submit a phase advancement petition that includes a list of the tasks you were required to complete that you will initial acknowledging completion. You will also be required to submit a short essay on each phase petition outlining what you have accomplished, what goals you have met, and why you believe you are eligible to advance to the next phase.

5.2.2 Graduation

Approval for graduation from the program shall be determined by the VTC judge with input from the VTC team. Simply completing each phase of the VTC program does not guarantee graduation. It will be necessary to discuss your progress toward the goals you initially set when entering VTC and why you believe you have met the graduation criteria when the time comes for you to petition for graduation. Your graduation petition must include an essay outlining all of your progress and accomplishments during your VTC participation, including progress on all of the goals you set for yourself. You need to have demonstrated that you have learned from the structure and support you have received before the VTC team will agree to allow you to graduate. Your family will be invited to join you in court as the judge congratulates you on successfully completing VTC and achieving your goal to establish a stable life.

If you entered VTC under a pre-trial intervention program/prosecution diversion basis, upon graduation your case will be dropped by the State Attorney's Office. Your record relating to the arrest that resulted in your participation in VTC may be eligible to be sealed or expunged. After graduation, you will be provided with the necessary paperwork to apply for such relief. If you lose this packet, you can request a packet from the Clerk of Courts to proceed on your own behalf or retain an attorney to represent you.

If you were sentenced as a condition of probation to enter and complete VTC you will have met that requirement of your sentence and could potentially have your probation terminated early. Your record will not likely be eligible to be sealed or expunged as your case will not have been dropped. However, you may consult with an attorney to pursue such dismissal through further proceedings within the criminal division that your case was originally assigned.

5.2.3 Termination

Termination from VTC is evaluated on an individual basis. A decision to terminate participation will be made by the VTC Team. The decision to terminate may be made for any of the following reasons:

- Abandonment of treatment program
- Available treatment options have been exhausted
- Evidence that you are involved in any threatening, abusive, or violent verbal or physical behavior towards anyone
- Evidence that you are involved with drug dealing or driving while under the influence
- Failure to attend VTC hearings (repeatedly)
- Failure to make satisfactory progress
- Inability to pass required drug/alcohol screening tests for any reason (repeatedly)
- New criminal charge/Concern for public safety
- Tampering with drug/alcohol screening tests
- Threat to the integrity of the program
- Use of synthetic substances/designer stimulants unable to be detected through normal screening
- Violating VTC rules (repeatedly)

6.1 Conclusion

The VTC Program has been developed to help you achieve total abstinence from illicit and illegal drugs and all criminal activity that is associated with your substance use and/or mental health disorder. The program is designed to promote self-sufficiency and to return you to the community as a productive and responsible member. The judge, court staff, and the treatment team are present to guide and assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. You must be motivated to make this change and be committed to a drug free/mentally stable life. If you are unable or unwilling to complete the program, you will not remain in the program very long. However, it is not your choice to simply withdraw from the program. Only the VTC judge can determine if you are to be terminated from the program and if terminated as a result of your noncompliance, you will likely be taken into custody upon termination from the program.

Honesty is always the best policy, especially when it comes to how the VTC program will respond to your actions/behavior. When you are honest with VTC, you are rewarded with credibility and trust. When you are dishonest with VTC, you lose that credibility and trust which will have a direct impact on how the VTC program responds to you. VTC is a tough, strict program and is not for those that do not want to change/improve their lives. If you want help and are willing to let us help, we are here for you and will walk with you on your path to recovery. If, after learning about this program and completing an orientation meeting with your CM, you decide that you do not want to participate in VTC, please speak with your attorney about your options before you complete phase 1 of the VTC program.

Remember, the rules outlined in this handbook apply in the courtroom as issued by the VTC judge but also apply as though they were issued directly by the VTC judge at each facility, treatment provider, and/or housing program. Upon completion of the VTC program, someone from the VTC team will contact you after you leave the program. The purpose of this follow-up is to get an idea of how people in VTC do after they leave and to measure how well the VTC program is doing. For this to occur, we ask that you provide your contact information upon program completion and that you update the VTC program if that information changes. You will not be identified individually or sanctioned in any way for your answers.

We hope this Handbook has been helpful to you and answered most of your questions. Important VTC telephone numbers are listed on the next page. **Good luck to you!**

6.2 Contacts

VETERANS COURT CONTACT INFORMATION

DRUG SCREEN COLOR LINE (7 days a week): (904) 255-2444

Phone line opens at 6:00 am. Lab Hours are 8am-4pm, unless otherwise noted

Problem-Solving Court Office
501 W Adams Street, Room 2321
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone (904) 255-1040
Fax (904) 255-1051

Stacy A. Peterson
Director of Problem-Solving Courts for
Clay, Duval, and Nassau Counties
Phone (904) 255-1046
Cell (904) 327-8506
stacyo@coj.net

Mary Paul
Case Manager, Clay/Duval County
Veterans Treatment Court
Phone (904) 255-1048
Cell (904) 469-1001
mpaul@coj.net

State Attorney's Office
Angela Sheppard
Prosecution Support Specialist
Phone (904) 529-4702
asheppard@coj.net

Public Defender's Office
Melina Buncome
Assistant Public Defender
Phone (904) 255-4614
mbw@pd4.coj.net

Florida Department of Corrections
Stacy Francisco
Correctional Probation Senior Officer
1407 S Orange Avenue
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone (904) 213-2930
Cell (386)515-5233

Veterans Justice Programs
Reva Scippio, LCSW
Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
Cell (352) 215-7710
Reva.Scippio@va.gov

Mary McNeloms, LCSW
Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
Cell (352) 363-9310
Mary.McNeloms@va.gov

Clay Behavioral Health Center
2141 Loch Rane Blvd, Suite 120
Orange Park, FL 32073
Phone (904) 213-2949

Debra Troupe LMHC-QS CAP
Clinical Manager/Substance Use Disorders
Phone (904) 213-2945
debra.troupe@firstinclay.org

**VA North Florida/South Georgia
Veterans Health Care Locations**
www.northflorida.va.gov

Malcom Randall Department of
Veterans Affairs Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
Phone (352) 376-1611

A.K. Baker VA Clinic
400 College Drive, Suite 200
Middleburg, FL 32068
Phone (904) 213-2700

Jacksonville 1 VA Clinic
1536 N. Jefferson Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone (904) 475-5800

Jacksonville 2 VA Clinic
3901 University Blvd S
Jacksonville, FL 32216
Phone (904) 732-6300

Jacksonville North VA Clinic
145 Heron Bay Road
Jacksonville, FL 32218
Phone (904) 470-6900

Jacksonville, FL Vet Center
3728 Phillips Highway, Suite 31
Jacksonville, FL 32207
Phone (904) 399-8351

**Jacksonville Area Legal Aid
Veterans Services Unit**
126 W Adams Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone (904) 356-8371
www.jaxlegalaid.org

Clay County Legal Aid
825 N Orange Avenue, Room 308
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone (904) 284-8410

Veterans Legal Collaborative
2nd Friday of Every Month
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
In-Person Clinic/No Appointment Needed
Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic
1536 N. Jefferson Street, Jacksonville, FL
Room 2L103 – 2nd Floor

Clay County Veterans Services
420 College Drive, Suite 107
Middleburg, FL 32068
Phone (904) 529-4256
veteransservices@claycountygov.com

**Reliable Monitoring Solutions
Clay County Office**
203 S Orange Avenue
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone (904) 907-7230

Duval County Office
25 N Market Street, Suite 117
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone (904) 907-7230

Five Star Veterans Center
40 Acme Street
Jacksonville, FL 32211
Phone (904)723-5950
www.5starveteranscenter.org

VA Online Discharge Upgrade Tool
<https://www.vets.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions>

Crisis/Hotlines
National VA Homeless Hotline 24hr
Toll Free at 1-877-424-3838
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/>

Veterans Crisis Line 24hr
Toll Free at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
www.mentalhealth.va.gov

**National Call Center for Homeless
Veterans**
Phone 1-877-4AID-VET
www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp