

# Fourth Judicial Circuit



## Problem-Solving Courts of Nassau County, Florida

## Veterans Treatment Court Participant Handbook

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## **1.1 Introduction**

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You are being given an opportunity to participate in the Nassau County Veterans Treatment Court program (VTC). The Fourth Judicial Circuit began operating problem-solving courts in 1994 through collaboration of the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Court Administration, the Department of Corrections/Law Enforcement, and Community Treatment Providers. 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. VTC is another example of the commitment to improve outcomes for those who have honorably served our country.

This program represents a fresh and innovative approach to diverting Veterans from incarceration into treatment. The core mission of VTC is immediate and intensive intervention and treatment after an arrest. VTC relies on the cooperation and collaboration between the criminal justice system, the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA"), community treatment agencies, community volunteers, and YOU. VTC is one of ten Problem-Solving Courts (PSCs) operating in the Fourth Judicial Circuit designed to help individuals like you gain and maintain stability, improve your mental health, assist you in achieving sobriety, and successfully reentering society as a productive individual.

Upon successful completion of VTC, if you entered VTC under a pre-trial intervention program/prosecution diversion, you will have your charges dropped by the State Attorney's Office. If you entered the program as condition of the sentence (condition of probation) imposed by the Court, successful completion of the VTC program will have provided compliance with that probation task. Such compliance may be used to pursue early termination of probation (if applicable) and will possibly avoid serving a prison sentence (if applicable).

This handbook is designed to answer questions, address concerns, and provide overall information about the VTC Program. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given in VTC 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 as a VTC participant and review general program information. You are required to read and abide by all rules and procedures outlined in this handbook and are encouraged to share this handbook with family and friends.

## **1.2 Program Description**

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The Nassau County Veterans Treatment Court Program is a court-supervised, comprehensive treatment program designed to identify individuals with qualifying criminal charges who: (1) are active military or who have a honorable or general under honorable conditions discharge from military service; (2) have a documented mental health diagnosis, including but not limited to, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and/or a substance use disorder; (3) have an existing nexus between the offense or diagnoses and the military service; and (4) are eligible to receive veterans healthcare services (unless excluded by income). This program is modeled after existing local Drug and Mental Health Court programs utilizing multiple interventions, including a collaborative approach to treatment and rehabilitation including intensive individual, group, or residential substance use and/or mental health treatment, drug and alcohol testing, regular court appearances, educational opportunities that are intended to provide the skills necessary to maintain a stable lifestyle and to reconnect you with your family and the community, regular attendance at 12-step/sober-support meetings (Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Rational Recovery, etc.) (as applicable), and participation in pro-social events.

VTC will provide you with the opportunity to receive specialized substance use and mental health treatment services, one-on-one veteran peer 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, as with other problem-solving courts, requires a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere in which dedicated multi-disciplinary teams work together toward the common goal of breaking the cycle of addiction and/or self-neglect. You will be assisted with obtaining educational and skills assessments and will be provided with referrals for vocational training, educational programs, and/or job placement services as well as transitional/halfway housing. The program length, determined by your individual progress will be no less than one year. However, the time period may be extended if necessary for you to successfully complete and graduate from VTC.

Following arrest, if determined to be eligible, you may be offered a choice between VTC and prosecution by the State of Florida for the pending charges. Eligibility for acceptance into the program shall be made upon determination that you meet the established clinical, legal, and suitability requirements for VTC as determined by the VTC team. The VTC team consists of the presiding judge, state attorney, defense counsel, VTC coordinator, VTC court case manager, Veterans Administration Justice Outreach Coordinator, probation officer/law enforcement, volunteer mentors, and community treatment providers. Upon approval for program entry, 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. However, once you enter VTC you may not elect to voluntarily withdraw. All authority relating to your continued participation in VTC is held by the VTC Judge.

If you are placed into VTC as a condition of a sentence (condition of probation), then you have been offered the chance to avoid prison, and again, cannot voluntarily withdraw from the program. In either event, a representative from the State Attorney's Office will discuss the VTC program with you and a Public Defender or your private legal counsel will advise you of your options before you sign the participation agreement. Once you have entered the VTC program and exhausted your two (2) week orientation phase, only the presiding judge can terminate your participation. This condition exists for a very specific reason: to protect you from running away when/if the going gets tough. If quitting drugs and/or alcohol, achieving stable mental health, and restoring/re-building your life and family were easy, you wouldn't need to be in VTC.

On your initial court date you will sign your participation agreement, be assigned to a probation officer (felony offenders only) and case manager who will provide supervision and enforcement of the terms and conditions of VTC throughout your participation, and receive an appointment for orientation into VTC so that you can get started in the program right away. At the orientation appointment with your case manager, you will be provided with your participant manual which includes this handbook, phase petitions, sober-support meeting information, travel forms, community resources, and a calendar. Your case manager will review all materials in detail with you. You will complete a criminogenic risk assessment tool and will also execute required program intake forms at this meeting including a Release of Information, Release of Liability, Participant Information Form, Prohibited Substances Agreement, and a Participant Testing Policy along with an Orientation Checklist upon completion of the orientation meeting. You will be provided a copy of all forms that you execute during this meeting.

While in VTC you will be supervised by a case manager and by a probation officer with the Department of Corrections (felony offenders only), either under pre-trial intervention supervision or formal probation supervision, and must comply with specific terms and conditions. Supervision will include unannounced home visits during which your person and residence will be subject to search. 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 unless you specifically request otherwise and your private counsel has agreed to appear as required.

Upon successful completion and graduation from VTC, if you entered into VTC voluntarily as part of a pre-trial intervention program/prosecution diversion, your successful completion and graduation from the program will result in having the charges against you dropped. However, failure or termination from VTC will result in further prosecution of the pending charges by the State Attorney's Office. If you were sentenced to complete VTC as a condition of probation or in lieu of prison, you must complete and graduate from VTC in order to fully comply with your sentence. In this instance, failure or termination from VTC will result in an additional charge of Violation of Probation followed by prosecution and sentencing.

## **1.3 Program Progress/Graduation/Termination**

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### **1.3.1 Progress**

Once you have successfully completed the criteria for each phase (as described in the phases section), 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. It will be necessary to discuss your progress toward the goals you initially set and why you believe you have met the graduation criteria when the time comes. .

### **1.3.2 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. 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 this program 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 dismissed. However, you may consult with an attorney to pursue such dismissal through further proceedings within the criminal division that your case was originally assigned.

### **1.3.3 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 and you are no longer working towards recovery
- 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 processes
- Violating VTC rules (repeatedly)

## **1.4 Participant Rights**

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### **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. If you are employed, your employment may be terminated if contacted by a probation officer. If you think this may happen to you, tell your attorney, probation officer, and the judge. The judge may choose to enter a no-contact order on your behalf. This order would prevent your probation officer from contacting your employer for employment verification. However, in lieu of such contact, you will be required to provide regular pay stubs to your probation officer as a means of verifying your employment. You are also expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of others and can be held accountable for breaching confidentiality. 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.

### **1.4.2 Waivers**

You understand that by agreeing to participate in VTC, you are waiving your right to usual court proceedings during your participation time in VTC, such as questioning or disputing the legality of a search and seizure, a preliminary hearing, and a trial by jury or court. Admission into VTC requires acceptance of this responsibility. You also understand that admission, participation, graduation, and termination from VTC is entirely within the discretion of the VTC Team.

### **1.4.3 Equal Opportunity**

Every person will receive the same opportunity to be admitted into and succeed in drug court. 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**

There is always the potential that treatment you receive by another person or this program may not be perceived by you as either fair or appropriate. To safeguard against any mistreatment or failure to provide quality care, this program has a procedure for addressing your complaint or concern.

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 (see the front desk receptionist) 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.

## **1.5 Community Service Requirements**

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As a VTC participant, 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 programmatic 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 the VTC program and may be able to request such participation be considered as your programmatic community service project.

As a VTC participant, you will be required to complete a community service project prior to successfully completing the VTC program. This project is over and above any court ordered community service you are required to complete as a sanction for programmatic 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/monetary gain, not connected to 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 case manager. This should take place during phase 4 of the VTC program and your project should be completed during phase 5 of the VTC program. Your case manager 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/documentation which reflects what was accomplished. This photo board/presentation board shall be submitted to your case manager and you will be required to present it at your next VTC court appearance.

## ***Chapter Two: Rules and Expectations***

### **2.1 Court Appearances**

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As a VTC participant, you will be required to appear in VTC on a regular basis. At each appearance, the judge will be given a progress report prepared by the treatment provider, case manager, and the probation officer 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 or missed drug tests, failure to attend individual or group counseling sessions, failure to attend court or sober-support meetings, failure to report to your probation officer, failure to take mental health medications, etc.) the Court will impose sanctions. With repeated violations of program requirements, and a failure to progress satisfactorily, the Court may impose the ultimate sanction of termination from the program. Program violations and continued addict/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 in the form of treatment responses. Treatment responses and sanctions are very different and are described further in the Program Responses section of this handbook which also includes information pertaining to possible incentives.

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 probation officer or case manager 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. It is your responsibility to be present for court 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. You must communicate with your case manager and probation officer (felony offenders only) ahead of time so that you are not considered as a “no show” or an “absconder” from the VTC program.

## 2.2 Program Rules

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As a VTC participant, you will be required to know, understand, and abide by these rules. Failure to follow these rules will result in sanctions.

1. Sign all agreements and releases necessary for entering the VTC program.
2. Report as required and/or requested for drug/alcohol testing.
  - 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. 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, any member of the VTC team may order a drug test at any time. A positive or “dirty” test will not automatically terminate you from the VTC Program; 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.
3. You will be assigned a drug testing color on the day you enter VTC. You may also be directed to test at any time during VTC participation by any VTC team member. Drug Testing Colors:

Female Last Name A-M:	Coral	Female Last Name N-Z:	Plum
Male Last Name A-M:	Olive	Male Last Name N-Z:	Tan

  - You must contact the Drug Testing Color Line 7 days a week by calling (904) 255-2455.
    - It is your responsibility to listen to each recorded message in its entirety and report as directed.
    - The Drug Testing Color Line is automatically updated each morning at 6:00 a.m. It is highly recommended that you call the color line no later than 10:00 a.m. to find out whether or not your color was called.
  - If reporting Monday-Friday, you shall report to the Nassau County Courthouse for testing when your color is called. You must generally report between the hours of 8:30am- 4:00pm, unless otherwise instructed. Mondays have a reduced reporting time of 8:30am- 12:00pm, and other days may have modified hours as needed.
  - You are to 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.
  - You must provide a specimen within three (3) hours of arrival. If you fail to provide a specimen within three (3) hours, you will be dismissed and reported as having failed to provide a specimen which correlates to a missed drug screen.
  - In the event of a missed test, you are required to report to the Nassau County Courthouse for testing by 9:00 a.m. the next business day.
  - 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.
  - Testing that occurs on weekends and/or holidays may have reduced hours for reporting and will take place at an alternate location. 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.



4. 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, which correlates to approximately thirty milliliters (30mls) of urine. Providing an insufficient volume of urine during the specimen collection process may be deemed as a program violation (if repetitive behavior) and sanctioned accordingly.
5. 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.).
  - 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 dilute 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 VTC staff prior to the urine specimen collection process.
6. The results of our drug tests will be presumed valid in VTC. The tests we use in VTC are very good at detecting any drug or alcohol use.
  - You must avoid using any products which could cause a positive test result. It is YOUR responsibility to read product labels to know whether they contain alcohol. You will not be excused from a sanction if you use a product containing alcohol. You may not use any substance which would result in a positive drug test. You are responsible for what you put into your body whether it is legal or illegal drugs or alcohol, prescription medications, over the counter medications, and 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. Attempting to claim that consumption of substances included on this list as a reason for testing positive will be a violation of VTC as you have previously been instructed not to consume these items.
7. 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 and coughing (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 is necessary. Failure or refusal to abide by this policy will result in sanctions including possible removal from VTC.
8. Do not use or possess any drugs or alcohol.
  - Sobriety is the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a drug free lifestyle is very important in the recovery process.
  - Immediately contact a team member and your treatment provider if you have relapsed.
    - Success requires you to be honest about any continued use or relapse.
  - You are prohibited from using or possessing any unapproved legal drugs, all illegal drugs and alcohol (in any form), and all synthetic/designer drugs.
    - Medications identified as habit forming, having abuse potential, harmful to your recovery, or those that conflict with testing include, include but are not limited to:
      - Central Nervous System (CNS) Stimulates (e.g. Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin, Dexedrine)

- Barbiturates (e.g. Seconol, Butisol Sodium, Phenobarbital)
- Benzodiazepines (e.g. Xanax, Klonopin, Valium)
- Hallucinogens (e.g. Dextromethorphan-DXM, Cannabis, Marinol)
- Sedative-Hypnotic (e.g. Ambien, Soma, Lunesta)
- Opioids (e.g. OxyContin, Vicodin, Codeine, Tramadol, Fentanyl, Heroin, Dilaudid)
- Over the Counter Medications including ingredients of pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, dextromethorphan, phenylephrine, and alcohol (e.g. Nyquil, Sudafed, Robitussin)
- Supplements that contain Creatine.
  - See the Prohibited Substances List for more information.
- 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.
- Medication Assisted Treatment programs are permitted if deemed medically necessary and monitored pursuant to VTC policies.
- 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.
  - You must maintain compliance with all approved medications.
- If you must seek medical attention, you are required to inform the physician that you are in a drug/alcohol treatment program and cannot be prescribed narcotic/addictive 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 the VTC case manager within twenty-four (24) hours of release.
  - If 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.
- You are strictly prohibited from using or possessing any and all “synthetic” or “designer drugs/stimulants” that can be purchased legally or illegally. This includes but is not limited to substances like synthetic marijuana, bath salts, flakka, and kratom. Any and all “smoking mixtures” (other than products specifically designated to contain only tobacco) are also strictly prohibited. And, any and 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- regardless of other progress made. See the Prohibited Substances List for more information.
- You have made a commitment to a life free of drug/alcohol addiction. It is important for you to understand the connection between over-the-counter medications and relapse. Over-the-counter drug use (OTC) can become a serious problem for people recovering from drug and/or alcohol abuse. Improper use of OTC medications can lead to relapse, health problems, and even death. A wide variety of the OTC medications can be misused- from attempts to treat real illness, to self-medicate and, of course, for recreational purposes. All OTC 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. The following are the most commonly abused OTC medications:

- Cold and cough medicines, especially OTC cold and cough medicines that contain large amounts of alcohol or the chemical dextromethorphan (DXM).
    - Pain relievers, OTC pain relievers that contain acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be toxic when taken too frequently or in larger-than-recommended doses.
    - Diet pills and various types of OTC diet medications may be abused for their stimulating effects, as well as their ability to suppress appetite.
    - Homeopathic preparations, vitamins and other supplements may be used to alter drug testing and must be approved before use while in VTC.
  - You must be alert to ingredients in OTC drugs to ensure you are properly using the medication and to prevent potential relapse. The first, and best, rule is to talk to the pharmacist. A pharmacist who understands addiction can guide you to medications that are safe and effective.
  - If you have to sign anything at the pharmacy counter to get a product it is something you should not be taking. You should carefully read medication labels to look for potential intoxicating ingredients.
  - Once you have determined an OTC drug that will work best for you, you will also need to get permission from VTC to take the medication. All medications that are being taken, whether OTC or prescribed, should be discussed with VTC. You are responsible for the substances you consume and how they affect a urine analysis.
  - Always ask the VTC case manager before buying and using any medications!
9. Report to Probation Officer as directed (Felony Offenders Only)
- You must report to a probation officer (PO) during the first week of each month. You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at each visit. If you have any problem making an appointment, you are to call your probation officer at 904-448-4335. Failure to report as required to a probation officer or failing to attend a schedule appointment/visit may result in sanctions and/or fines.
    - 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 to leave Duval County (for day travel only).
      - Overnight travel requires submission of a travel form and approval from VTC.
10. You are subject to a search of your person, possessions, residence, and vehicle as determined by the PO or any other member of the VTC team.
- VTC conducts random searches in addition to planned searches. Searches can take place at any time and any location. If you refuse to submit to such 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 programmatic status, participant/courtroom/treatment session photos, or other unapproved dissemination of VTC/PSC materials shall be a violation of VTC.
11. Remain in County of residence.
- You are required to remain in the county in which you reside. You may be given permission to leave your county for day trips by your case manager, treatment provider, probation officer, or veteran mentor. Overnight travel that requires you to leave your county is not permitted unless approved by the VTC judge. 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 continental United States be authorized.

## 12. Travel Requests.

- If you endeavor to travel overnight to a location outside of your county of residence, you must submit a travel request form and receive written approval.
  - Travel request forms are included in your handbook and are available at the PSC Main Office.
  - Travel requests forms must be completed in their entirety and submitted to your Case Manager for processing.
  - Travel request forms must be submitted at least 5 days prior to your requested travel time-frame. Exceptions to this rule will be made for emergency travel requests only. All other requests not submitted as required will be denied.

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

## 14. Attend all treatment sessions.

- This includes individual and group counseling sessions, mental health appointments, educational sessions, and sober-support meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session/appointment, you must contact your treatment provider/counselor. Failure to attend treatment or missing scheduled appointments will result in sanctions, fines, or may result in termination from VTC. All of 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.

## 15. Be on time.

- If you are late for court sessions, 12-Step/sober-support meetings, 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 should contact your case manager if there is a possibility you will be late or have an emergency that will cause you to miss your court appearance.
  - You should contact your assigned provider/counselor 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 case manager 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.

16. Do not make threats toward other participants or staff or behave in a violent manner.
  - Violent or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Court. This will result in termination from VTC.
17. No weapons.
  - You may not possess any firearms or weapons on your person or in your home or vehicle.
18. 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/Judicial Officer, you are to be respectful and use the terms “Your Honor,” “Judge,” or “Sir.” In the absence of the judge, the courtroom security officers are in charge of 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 not behaving in an acceptable manner. Such behavior shall be documented and reported to the VTC team and considered as a missed treatment session.
19. 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.
20. Dress appropriately for court and treatment sessions.
  - You will be expected to wear a button down or collared shirt or blouse, pants, dress, or skirt. Shoes must be worn at all times. 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, and/or hats when appearing for court. Clothing bearing drug or alcohol related themes or promoting/advertising alcohol or drug use is considered inappropriate. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside court or at treatment centers unless medically approved. You should speak with the treatment team if assistance with clothing is needed.
  - 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.
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 the treatment team know and the treatment team will see what assistance can be provided once you have demonstrated progress in VTC.
22. Associations.
  - 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 case manager and PO, prior to associating with such individuals. This does not necessarily mean that contact will be prohibited. However, you are expected to avoid affiliation with non-law-abiding individuals, violence prone individuals, or individuals whom are actively using drugs or alcohol.

Additionally, VTC may specifically prohibit associations with any individual deemed non-conducive to a life of recovery.

- 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 and sober lifestyle. However, these people may also prevent you from reaching your goals and staying drug free. If the important people in your life use/abuse mood-altering substances, 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 the subject.

23. Participate in services with a case manager.

- You will be assigned to a specially trained case manager. Case managers can be advocates and allies but will also be required to hold you responsible for your actions. You must maintain weekly contact with your case manager, by phone and through in-person visits. Case managers may request things from you, such as schedules and proof of services. 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. Case managers 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.

24. Maintain contact with a veteran mentor.

- The Veteran’s organizations/volunteers attached to VTC constitute a significant component of the treatment team. VTC mentors are veterans of the armed services willing to volunteer a significant amount of time to you and the VTC program. You must maintain weekly contact with a mentor, by phone and through in-person visits. Mentors will also maintain contact and will provide advice, personal experiences, guidance and recommendations to you to assist in the recovery process. Mentors will also attend court hearings when necessary.

25. You must satisfy program related fees and cost prior to completion.

26. Follow the rules/follow instructions as they are given.

- It is very important to follow all of the VTC rules. The judge will frequently remind you that “trying” is not “doing” and that just “trying” may result in termination from VTC. Examples of violations which could result in termination include multiple missed drug tests, consistently demonstrating a lack of program participation and/or continuously failing to follow instructions of the treatment provider, probation officer, case manager or the Court. Additionally, there are behaviors that you may choose to engage in that will subject you to immediate termination after only one offense.
- Participation in VTC is a privilege. It is not a place to waste time and “fake it until you make it.” Doing so will likely 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 program violation jail time served while in VTC.
- You will undergo a review of progress after six (6) months of participation in VTC to determine if the level of participation is meeting expectations.
- The rules in this handbook apply to all facilities, treatment providers and/or housing programs. The rules of the treatment provider/housing program apply as if they were issued directly by the VTC judge.
- Following the rules is in your best interest. As you progress, consistently follow the rules and achieve goals, you will receive incentives from VTC. These incentives are described further in



this handbook. In the same manner that poor behavior/choices are to be sanctioned, good behavior/choices are to be rewarded.

## 2.3 Program Fees

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- As a participant in VTC you are required to pay certain fees as listed below.
- If you are under any level of felony probation supervision, you are required to pay the Department of Corrections a Drug Testing Fee of up to \$65.00.
    - Payment will be made directly to the probation office in money order form and must be paid prior to completion of VTC.
      - You may also be responsible for a monthly cost of supervision if on formal probation. Speak to your PO regarding this fee and your obligations.
  - 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 VTC
    - Payment of this fee is to be made to the Clerk of Court prior to completion of VTC.
  - You may also be responsible for victim restitution if you stole from or caused damage or injury to another person/entity. Restitution must be paid in full prior to successful completion of VTC, unless otherwise approved by the VTC judge.

## *Chapter Three: Treatment Services*

### 3.1 Treatment Procedures

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Your treatment will be provided through a team approach with the combined resources of the Court, probation office, VA, veteran mentors, and the assigned treatment staff. The treatment providers will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to VTC that you receive either outpatient or residential treatment. 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 all depends on your individual needs. Regardless of when you complete residential treatment services (if applicable) 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 your primary VTC provider and the other(s) being therapists and physicians at the VA. Additionally, upon release from residential treatment you will automatically be placed in phase 2 of the VTC program, regardless of prior program progress. If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, a multi-component, outpatient program will be developed for you which includes:

#### 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 phase 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 and case manager for assistance.

### **3.1.2 Counseling**

Substance abuse 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. 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 discussions in these sessions are confidential and will not be discussed with the judge or VTC team.

### **3.1.3 Dual Diagnosis Services**

If it was determined during your assessment process that you have a co-occurring disorder (substance abuse and mental health disorder) or if you have self-reported an untreated mental health disorder a program to address these issues will be developed and incorporated into your treatment plan. If medication is required to adequately treat your condition, your physician will need to consult with the VTC team so that you are provided with approved medication. If you see a physician not associated with VTC, you will need to discuss this with your physician and obtain permission to take the medication from your case manager before you fill any prescriptions.

## **3.2 Sober Support Meetings**

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### **Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Rational Recovery**

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, Rational Recovery, or other sober-support meetings throughout VTC. The frequency of attendance requirement is determined by your progress in the program. 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. 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. DO NOT attempt to submit falsified 'fake' meeting attendance slips to the court as you will be sanctioned and may be terminated from VTC.

## 4.1 Program Phases

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VTC is a five-phase, highly structured court-supervised treatment program lasting for a minimum of one year. Completion of all requirements is necessary before you may graduate and this may take significantly more than one year. 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. 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 one week 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. 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. Thus, the following phase criteria are simply guidelines.

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

In Phase 1, you will be assigned to a probation officer (felony offenders only) and case manager. Your problems and needs will be assessed 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.

- Phase 1 requirements include:
  - Sign formal agreement to enter VTC
  - Attend new participant orientation with case manager
  - Complete all new participant information forms
  - Sign a waiver of liability
  - Sign a release allowing receipt and disbursement of medical/treatment records and communication within/between the VTC team and providers
  - Sign a prohibited substances agreement
  - Sign an acknowledgement of the drug testing rules and procedures
  - Receive participant handbook/binder
  - Receive drug testing color
  - Begin calling drug testing color line daily (7 days per week)
  - Appear for drug/alcohol testing as required/requested
  - Begin attending daily sober-support meetings (1 meeting per day) (as applicable)
  - Meet with VA Justice Outreach Specialist to review history and schedule medical and other appointments
  - Complete treatment assessment to determine appropriate level of care
  - Complete initial report to probation officer (felony offenders only)
  - Attend VTC court sessions every other Friday and remain present for the entire session
  - Review a webinar on the Use of Creatinine Measurements in Drug Testing and submit a short essay on what was learned (attach to phase-up petition)

- Prepare a list of personal goals that you wish to achieve over the next 12 months
- Achieve a minimum of five (5) consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol
  - This includes no missed, diluted, altered or otherwise positive tests
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements are met

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.

- Phase 2 requirements include:
  - Receive and sign your formal treatment plan
  - Attend and participate in group and individual services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan
  - Attend and participate in at least one (1) individual counseling session per month
  - Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner
  - Follow directives of the court, probation officer (felony offenders only), treatment counselors, and case manager
  - Attend a minimum of two (2) sober-support meetings per week (as applicable)
  - Report to a probation officer monthly or as instructed (felony offenders only)
  - Appear for drug/alcohol testing as required/requested
  - Receive assigned veteran mentor
  - Begin, at minimum, weekly contact with your veteran mentor
  - Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested
  - Attend all scheduled VA appointments/services
  - Attend VTC court sessions every other Friday or as instructed
  - Achieve a minimum of fifteen (15) consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol
    - This includes no missed, diluted, altered or otherwise positive tests
  - Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements are met

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.

- Phase 3 requirements include:
  - Attend and participate in group and individual services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan
  - Attend and participate in at least one (1) individual counseling session per month
  - Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner
  - Follow directives of the court, probation officer (felony offenders only), treatment counselors, and case manager
  - Attend a minimum of three (3) sober-support meetings per week (as applicable)
  - Obtain a verifiable sponsor (as applicable)
  - Report to a probation officer monthly or as instructed (felony offenders only)

- Appear for drug/alcohol testing as required/requested
- Maintain compliance with weekly contact with your veteran mentor
- Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested
- Attend all scheduled VA appointments/services
- Attend VTC court sessions every other Friday or as instructed
- Search for/obtain employment or engage in pursuit of vocational/educational goals
- Prepare a list of personal goals that you wish to achieve over the next 5 years
- Achieve a minimum of thirty (30) consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol
  - This includes no missed, diluted, altered or otherwise positive tests
- Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements are met

4. Phase 4: Relapse Prevention/Treatment Completion  
Length: 12 Weeks (minimum)

Phase 4 will continue focus on relapse prevention/identifying ways of coping with stress.

- Phase 4 requirements include:
  - Attend and participate in group and individual services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan
  - Attend and participate in at least one (1) individual counseling session per month
  - Submit idea/plan for a community project to be completed by the end of phase 5
  - Complete all treatment assignments in a timely manner
  - Follow directives of the court, probation officer (felony offenders only), treatment counselors, and case manager
  - Attend a minimum of four (4) sober-support meetings per week (as applicable)
  - Maintain relationship with and/or obtain a verifiable sponsor (as applicable)
  - Report to a probation officer monthly or as instructed (felony offenders only)
  - Maintain compliance with weekly contact with your veteran mentor
  - Attend veteran functions with your veteran mentor as requested
  - Attend all scheduled VA appointments/services
  - Appear for drug/alcohol testing as required/requested
  - Attend VTC court sessions every other Friday or as instructed
  - Continue to search for/maintain employment/be engaged in vocational/educational program
  - Achieve a minimum of forty-five (45) consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol
    - This includes no missed, diluted, altered or otherwise positive tests
  - Complete and submit a petition for phase advancement after all requirements are met

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 no less than 8 weeks. Over 12 months in VTC, 8 weeks minimum participation 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 unsupervised community as a productive, successful person able to care for yourself and others.

- Phase 5 requirements include:
  - Attend and participate in group and individual services as outlined by your treatment provider and treatment plan/aftercare plan
  - Attend and participate in at least one (1) individual counseling session per month
  - Complete all treatment/aftercare assignments in a timely manner
  - Submit proof of completing the community project approved in phase 4
  - Follow directives of the court, probation officer (felony offenders only), treatment counselors, and case manager
  - Attend a minimum of four (4) sober-support meetings per week (as applicable)
  - Maintain relationship with and/or obtain a verifiable sponsor (as applicable)
  - Report to a probation officer monthly or as instructed (felony offenders only)
  - Appear for drug/alcohol testing as required/requested
  - Attend VTC court sessions monthly on a Friday or as instructed
  - Maintain employment or be engaged in a vocational/educational program
  - Achieve a minimum of ninety (90) consecutive days of documented abstinence from drugs/alcohol
    - This includes no missed, diluted, altered or otherwise positive tests
  - Pay \$50.00 to the Clerk of Court for the Public Defender application fee
  - Pay the Department of Corrections for a drug testing fee (felony offenders only)
  - Pay full probation balance and/or restitution balance and any remaining fine balance
  - Complete and submit petition for graduation after all requirements are met

## 4.2 General Phase Requirements

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In addition to all of the individual phase requirements listed in the previous section, there are overall requirements that apply to each phase of VTC. **You must submit your phase advancement petition at least one week prior to your next scheduled court appearance. You may submit your petition to phase-up only after you have completed each individual phase requirement and can initial each task on your phase-up petition.** 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 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
- Have not completed a sanction that was ordered during your current phase
- Have not been communicating or participating in services with your mentor or case manager
- Are disrespectful toward VTC and/or VTC staff
- Are requesting to phase up on a day that VTC court hearings are not being held
  - Phase-ups/Graduations will take place on the earliest available court date after eligibility has been reached

## *Chapter Five: Program Responses*

### 5.1 Program Responses

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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 or not you are capable of meeting a certain goal at the current time. The VTC team will ascertain whether or not 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 items that can and should be expected immediately and distal for those items that can and should be expected as you progress in services.

### 5.1.1 Incentives

The VTC program 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, the Fourth Judicial Circuit VTC program recognizes all markers of success even if in a small way. Examples of behaviors/accomplishments that lead to incentives are included below.

<b>Behaviors/Accomplishments</b>		<b>Possible Incentives/Responses</b>	
• 1 day clean/sober	• Obtaining employment	• Applause	• Gift Certificate
• Assisting others	• Obtaining GED/degree	• VTC outings (game days)	• Lunch with the VTC team
• Increased contact with child	• Outstanding accomplishment	• Books	• Praise from Judge
• Infraction/Violation free for 60+ days	• Perfect attendance	• Candy	• Recognition certificate
• Maintaining employment	• Phase completion/advancement	• Coffee with the VTC team	• Recommendation letter for job
• Monthly report of being clean/sober	• Recognition of investment in program	• Curfew extension/removal	• Reduction of community service hours
• Multi-day clean/sober		• Decreased court appearances	• Reduction of supervision
• Obtaining driver's license		• Early dismissal from court	• Sobriety tokens
		• Early phase advancement	• Standing Ovation
		• Fishbowl drawings	• 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 device may be a GPS ankle monitor, an alcohol monitoring device, or a drug testing patch. VTC has established policies and procedures pertaining to the application and removal of such devices as indicted 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 the VTC program 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 the program. 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.

### 5.1.3 Sanctions

If you fail to comply with the VTC program, 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, 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 detailed discussion among the team and between you and the judge occurs.

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.

Examples of infractions that lead to sanctions 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 follow court instructions and/or orders           | • Missing mental health appointments                        |
| • Providing a dilute/altered drug test                      | • Failing to submit community service hours                    | • Missing probation check-in                                |
| • Failing to abide by curfew                                | • Failing to submit AA/NA meeting slips                        | • Missing treatment group sessions                          |
| • Failing to attend scheduled events                        | • Filling prescribed medication without authorization          | • Non-compliance with approved medications                  |
| • Failing to complete community service hours               | • Lying or deliberately omitting information to/from the court | • Positive drug test  |
| • Failing to engage in services                             | • Missing drug test  | • Tardiness to and/or absence from court                    |
| • Failing to follow counselor/case manager instruction      | • Missing treatment appointments                               | • Tardiness to and/or absence from treatment group sessions |
|   |  | • Use of drugs and/or alcohol                               |
|   |  | • 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 | • Possession and/or Use of synthetic and/or replacement drugs | • Threats of violence or violent behavior |
| • New criminal arrest/offense                                       | • Tampering/Falsifying drug test                              | • Submitting falsified documents          |

## Examples of Possible Sanctions/Responses

### 1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence:

- 4-24 hours of community service
- Admonishment from Judge
- Curfew
- 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

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Occurrence:

- 10-40 hours of community service
- Admonishment from Judge
- Court observation days
- Curfew
- Educational workbooks
- Essay on topic related to infraction
- Fines
- Incarceration
- Increased court appearances
- Increased drug testing
- Increased supervision
- Phase extension
- Removal of privileges
- Return to lower phase
- Round table with VTC team

### 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or Multiple Occurrences:

- 50-100 hours of community service
- Admonishment from Judge
- Fines
- Incarceration
- Increased court appearances
- Increased drug testing
- Increased supervision
- Peer review
- Phase extension
- Program removal
- 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

If you are honest about any 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 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 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.

## 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 meeting treatment plan goals
- Known use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Positive drug test

### Examples of Treatment Responses

- Educational workbooks
- Essay on topic related to infraction
- Increased sober-support meetings
- Increased contact with treatment
- Increased level of treatment
- Increased drug testing
- Phase extension
- Residential treatment
- Return to lower phase in VTC

### 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 probation officer 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.

## *Chapter Six: Conclusion & Contacts*

### 6.1 Conclusion

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The VTC Program has been developed to help you achieve total abstinence from illicit and illegal drugs and all criminal activity. 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 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 in 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 the 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 case manager, you decide that you do not want help, please speak with your attorney about your options before you complete phase 1.

Remember, the rules outlined in this handbook apply to all facilities, treatment providers and/or housing programs. These rules 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

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### NASSAU VETERANS TREATMENT COURT CONTACT INFORMATION DRUG SCREEN COLOR LINE (7 days a week): (904) 255-2455

Phone line opens at 6:00 am.

#### **Problem-Solving Court Office**

501 W. Adams St., # 2321  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Phone: (904) 255-1040  
Fax: (904) 255-1051

Teri Hamlyn, Director  
Phone: (904) 255-1046  
Cell: (904) 412-5808  
[thamlyn@coj.net](mailto:thamlyn@coj.net)

Chantal Prescott, Case Manager  
Phone: (904) 255-1040  
Cell: (904) 885-2361  
[cprescott@coj.net](mailto:cprescott@coj.net)

#### **Florida Department of Corrections**

Scott Bleicken  
Correctional Probation Senior Officer  
86058 Pages Dairy Rd  
Yulee, FL 32097  
904-548-9380  
[richard.bleicken@fdc.myflorida.com](mailto:richard.bleicken@fdc.myflorida.com)

#### **Veterans Administration**

Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist  
Phone: (352) 538-5418  
[charlotte.matthews@va.gov](mailto:charlotte.matthews@va.gov)

#### **Veterans Services Office**

Nassau County  
117 West Nassau Street, Suite 175  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Phone: (904) 630-3680

#### **Veterans Legal Clinic**

Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic  
1536 N. Jefferson Street, Room 2L103  
Held on the 2nd and 4th Fridays,  
11:30AM-1:00 PM

#### **Housing Authority**

1300 Hickory Street  
Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034  
Phone: (904) 261-5051

#### **Veterans Service Office**

Nassau County  
76347 Veterans Way Suite 4200  
Yulee, FL 32097  
Phone: (904) 548-4670

#### **Florida Psychological Associates**

1903 Island Walkway  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

#### **Kerrie L. Albert**

Registered Intern #8769  
Director of Veteran Services and  
Community Mental Health  
Phone (904) 277-0027  
[albert@floridapsy.com](mailto:albert@floridapsy.com)

#### **Veterans Clinics**

VA SouthPoint Clinic  
6900 Southpoint Drive North  
Jacksonville, FL 32209  
Phone: (904) 470-6900

North Florida/South Georgia  
Veterans Health System  
Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic  
1536 N Jefferson Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32209  
[www.northflorida.va.gov](http://www.northflorida.va.gov)

Malcom Randall VA  
Medical Center  
1601 SW Archer Road  
Gainesville, FL 32608  
Phone: (352) 376-1611 or  
1-800-324-8387  
[www.northflorida.va.gov](http://www.northflorida.va.gov)

#### **Jacksonville Veterans Center**

3728 Phillips Highway, Suite 31  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
Phone: (904) 399-8351  
Marianne Chapman  
[Marianne.chapman@va.gov](mailto:Marianne.chapman@va.gov)

#### **State Attorney's Office**

Ann Marie Johnson, Assistant State  
Attorney  
311 W. Monroe Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Phone: (904) 255-2667  
[amjohnson@coj.net](mailto:amjohnson@coj.net)

#### **Public Defender's Office**

407 N. Laura St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Melina Buncome, Assistant Public  
Defender  
Director of Problem-Solving Courts,  
Public Defender's Office  
Phone: (904)255-4614  
[mbw@pd4.coj.net](mailto:mbw@pd4.coj.net)

Jeanine Sasser  
[jsasser@pd4.coj.net](mailto:jsasser@pd4.coj.net)

#### **Five Star Veterans Center**

40 Acme Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32211  
Phone: (904) 723-5950  
[www.5starveteranscenter.org](http://www.5starveteranscenter.org)  
[Info@5starveteranscenter.org](mailto:Info@5starveteranscenter.org)

#### **Nassau County Department of Health**

Administration  
30 South Fourth Street  
Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034  
Phone: (904) 530-6800  
<http://nassau.floridahealth.gov>

Clinics  
86014 Pages Dairy Road  
Yulee, Florida 32097

45377 Mickler Street  
Callahan, Florida 32011

1620 Nectarine Street  
Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034

37203 Pecan Street  
Hilliard, Florida 32046

86207 Felmor Road  
Yulee, Florida 32097