

H.E.A.T. Program Overview

H.E.A.T. is a therapy program designed for Black males age 18 to 29 who are involved in the criminal justice system. H.E.A.T. — which stands for **H**abilitation, **E**mpowerment and **A**ccountability **T**herapy — applies a holistic, culturally relevant and responsive, strength-based model that emphasizes a positive and engaging approach to treatment.ⁱ

Why H.E.A.T is Significant

Although incarceration rates for Black males appear to be on the decline in recent years as compared to other racial and ethnic groups, they continue to represent approximately 45 percent of state prison inmates convicted of drug offenses, despite the fact that they only comprise about 12 percent of the U.S. population and do not evidence any higher rates of involvement in substance abuse than other racial groups.ⁱⁱ Clearly, if the criminal justice system is to maximize their impact on rates of incarceration, they must find a way to engage young, Black males.

A Promising Approach

Despite the dismal outcomes for most young Black men enrolled in drug courts, there is cause for optimism. In a 1998 evaluation of the drug court in Jefferson County, Kentucky, independent researchers from the University of Louisville reported findings that demonstrated not only equivalent outcomes for young Black males, but superior outcomes for this particular demographic group.ⁱⁱⁱ In that study, African American participants, the large majority of whom were young and male, graduated at nearly twice the rate of white participants (42% vs. 22%). A substantial percentage of those young men were primary cannabis abusers, unemployed or under-employed, and had not completed high school. Despite having these serious risk factors for failure, they succeeded twice as often as other drug court participants. Researchers attributed this lone success story to the fact that the Jefferson County program was run by Darryl Turpin, an African American clinician, and he utilized a culturally proficient curriculum.^{iv} Also, during the same period Guy Wheeler developed and implemented an Afro-centric program with the Broward County Drug Court in South Florida. Then, in 2002, they set out to combine their ideas and expertise to “manualize” their promising approach.

Why traditional approaches so often fail with young, Black males

Treatment models used in the overwhelming majority of adult drug courts were developed with a population of seriously addicted, Caucasian, older adults in mind. Many of the earlier drug courts — such as those founded in Miami, Buffalo, San Francisco and Boston — were designed for offenders who were compulsively addicted to heroin, crack cocaine, or methamphetamine. Those individuals tended to be relatively older, to have experienced numerous prior run-ins with the law, and were often charged with simple drug possession or low-level dealing offenses that were primarily motivated by a need to sustain a drug habit.

In contrast, Black males between the ages of 18 and 29 years are more likely to be primary marijuana abusers; to have a history of fewer prior arrests; to be involved in drug sales; to have lesser family supports, damaging peer influences or gang involvement; to have poor anger management and negotiation skills; and to be in denial about the nature and level of their drug dependency.^y

In addition, drug courts typically require participants to be employed, attend school, complete a GED or train toward acquiring vocational skills. These requirements are likely to be an obstacle for young Black males entering drug courts. Many of these young men may never have held a legal “over-the-table” job, and thus may lack marketable job skills or a resume. As a result, they may be ill-prepared from the start to complete mandatory drug court requirements.

There may also be a shared perception among many of these young men that they were unjustly sentenced to begin with. Many may perceive their referral to drug court as “much ado about nothing” because they do not consider smoking marijuana to be a serious crime or view their usage as an addiction. As such, they may experience little incentive to participate in or complete the program. From the perspective of the field, drug court staff members consistently report difficulties getting these young Black males to “buy into” the program because they may view drug court as a waste of time that does not fit with their experiences, culture, needs or ambitions.

How H.E.A.T is different from other approaches

Three primary features of H.E.A.T. distinguish it from treatment approaches traditionally used by drug courts.

- *H.E.A.T. highlights and values Black culture.* Respect, community, and trust represent longstanding, revered features of Black culture. An approach incorporating these features is essential for treating Black males who often experience a barrage of negative mainstream images of themselves as being untrustworthy individuals who are not deserving of respect. By communicating an expectation of reciprocal respect while promoting a sense of community and trust among participants, the H.E.A.T. approach diffuses defensive reactions to treatment.
- *H.E.A.T. emphasizes the historical strengths of African Americans.* Strength-based treatment models focus on the strength of African Americans, offering myriad examples of their community resilience in the face of historical injustices. Setting the stage for the treatment experience, the strength-based approach focuses on African Americans’ will, determination, spirit, and intellect to confront and overturn huge barriers to success and accomplishment. This approach is especially important for Black males who may have experienced racism, have low educational attainment, and low socioeconomic status. A model promoting a strength-based image may be the first time that these young men have been offered a socially sanctioned, positive view of themselves which tells them that they are competent, capable, smart, and worthy. This, in and of itself, may serve as the strongest incentive for program completion.
- *H.E.A.T. treats the whole person.* The curriculum addresses the spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, environmental, and experiential factors that influence the

participant's sense of self, behaviors and choices. In this way, it seeks to discover and treat the whole person by validating his life experiences and helping him to address and resolve emotional, psychological, environmental and experiential issues that have shaped his self-image, behavior and lifestyle choices.

The Target Group for this Curriculum

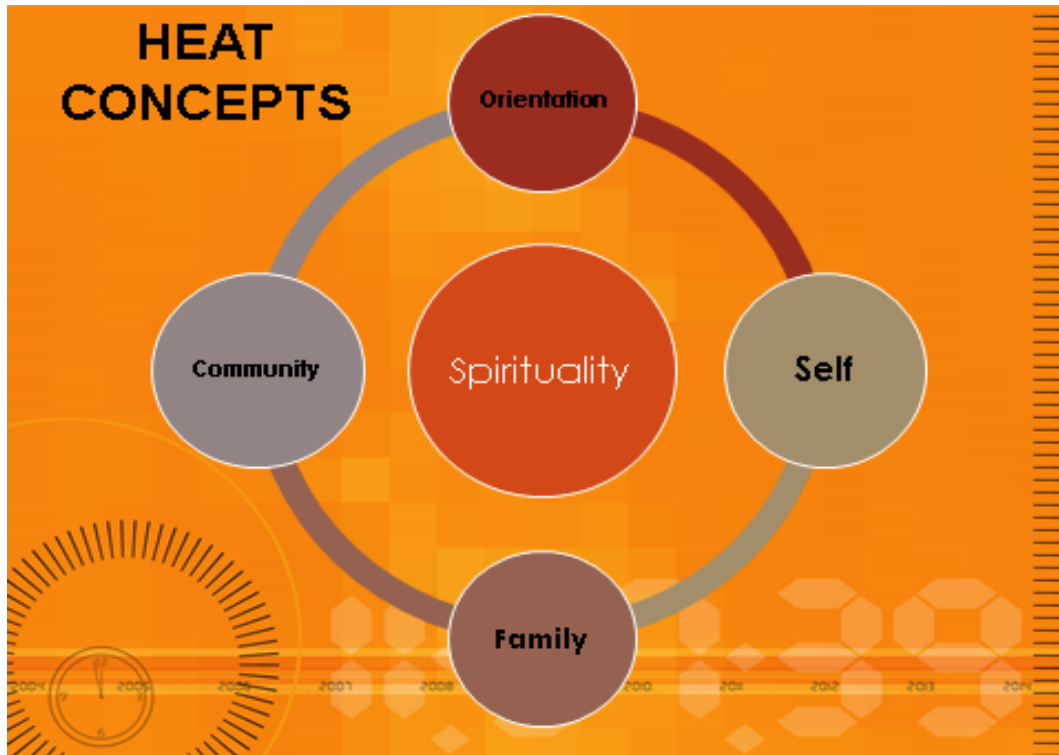
This 9 month curriculum is targeted to young men who have been failing in traditional interventions in criminal justice programs (e.g., pre-release, community supervision, and problem-solving courts). It is directed at Black males and other young men who are involved in the criminal justice system with drug abuse issues and affiliate with this culture. It is universally applicable to disenfranchised groups of young men.

Spirituality (Principles to Live By)

Participants do not have to accept a particular religious framework or a belief in God to enter the program. The program addresses spirituality as a sense of peace, purpose, and connection to others and an individual's chosen beliefs about the meaning of life. Many criminal-justice involved young men, particularly African-Americans believe in the concept of spirituality. We encourage facilitators to allow participants to use whatever language or concepts are most comfortable for themselves.

Overview of the H.E.A.T. Curriculum

The curriculum is organized into four major sections: *Orientation, Self, Family, and Community*- with *Spirituality* infused throughout the program.



After a two-day Orientation, each section is made up of twelve modules, each dealing with a theme or principle.

Overview of the Orientation

Orientation is the foundation of the H.E.A.T. curriculum because it sets the tone for the program. Orientation is designed to give the facilitator the best opportunity to establish a culturally-sensitive atmosphere that is nurturing, safe and empowering. The order, sequence, presentation and format are intentionally design to foster an environment that encourages open dialog.

The Orientation Sessions are delivered over a span of two days and a total of 12 hours. Day One is a four hour session consisting of a group discussions and presentation. Day Two is also a four hour session consisting of discussions, presentations and written assignments, peer assignments, peer presentations and guest speakers. Orientation Session day two concludes with an overview of the "Principles to Live By" followed by a general overview of the H.E.A.T curriculum

Participants will be credited with an additional four hours for an independent Peer Learning assignment. Each participant chooses a drug or mental health issue to research on the internet and prepares to talk about what they learned. The purpose of this exercise is twofold: (1) to educate them on a subject of interest to them and dispel myths, (2) to teach them personal responsibility. Research shows that participants learn better from each other.

Outline of Orientation

Day 1- 4 hour program orientation

- Overview of the program Theoretical framework
- What is HEAT – empowerment and engagement throughout the process
- Peer Learning Homework Assignment (4 hours)

Day 2- 4 hour program orientation

- The brain and drugs
- The big picture of the concepts – self, family, community, spirituality – empowerment and engagement
- Physiological effects of alcohol and drugs
- Lifestyle
- Addiction – it's more than drugs, it's money
- Triggers
- Relapse Prevention
- Principles to Live By
 1. Strength
 2. Responsibility
 3. Faith
 4. Hope
 5. Love
 6. Honesty
 7. Acceptance
 8. Forgiveness
 9. Accountability
 10. Persistence
 11. Commitment
 12. Service

Self, Family and Community

For the Self, Family and Community sections, we recommend that two 90-minute sessions are held each week. The first is a content/concept session and the second is the corresponding Principle to Live By. For example on Tuesday you would facilitate Self Session #4: High Cost of Love Livin'. On Thursday of the same week you would facilitate the Principle to Live By session on Love. More detail about the structure of the sessions is provided after the chart listing the sessions.

Suggested Schedule for Implementation

9 month Program – weekly schedule

SELF

	Self	Principles to Live By
1.	Staying Out of the HEAT	Honesty
2.	Black Manhood	Responsibility
3.	Decisions	Commitment
4.	High Cost of Low Livin'	Love
5.	Messed Up Thinking	Perseverance
6.	F--- It	Hope
7.	Hip Hop	Strength
8.	Blame	Accountability
9.	Disrespect	Forgiveness
10.	Survival	Peace
11.	Hustlin'	Self-Control
12.	The Ideal Self	Acceptance

FAMILY

	Family	Principles to Live By
1.	Impact on the Family	Love
2.	Wounded	Faith
3.	Forgiveness	Hope
4.	Enabling and Entitlement	Acceptance
5.	Absent Father	Forgiveness
6.	Breaking the Cycle	Perseverance
7.	Love or Lust	Honesty
8.	Intimate Partner Violence	Self-Control
9.	Baby Momma Drama	Commitment
10.	Fatherhood	Responsibility
11.	Being an Involved Father	Accountability
12.	Strength of the Black Family	Strength

COMMUNITY

	Community	Principles to Live By
1.	Safe and Healthy Community	Responsibility
2.	Institutional Barriers to Equity	Humility
3.	Advocacy, Policy and Social Justice	Service
4.	Who Are Our Leaders	Gratitude
5.	My Hood	Peace and Joy
6.	Root Causes	Perseverance
7- 12.	Healing Voices	-----

ⁱ H.E.A.T is closely modeled after Afrocentric interventions that have previously been standardized and published in CSAP, CSAT and other publications (e.g., Burnett, 2008; Goddard, 1993; Philleo et al., 1997).

ⁱⁱ (Mauer, 2009).

ⁱⁱⁱ The results were published in the journal, *Federal Probation* (Vito & Tewksbury, 1998).

^{iv} Belenko (1999) and Finigan (2009)

^v (e.g., Institute of Applied Research, 2003).