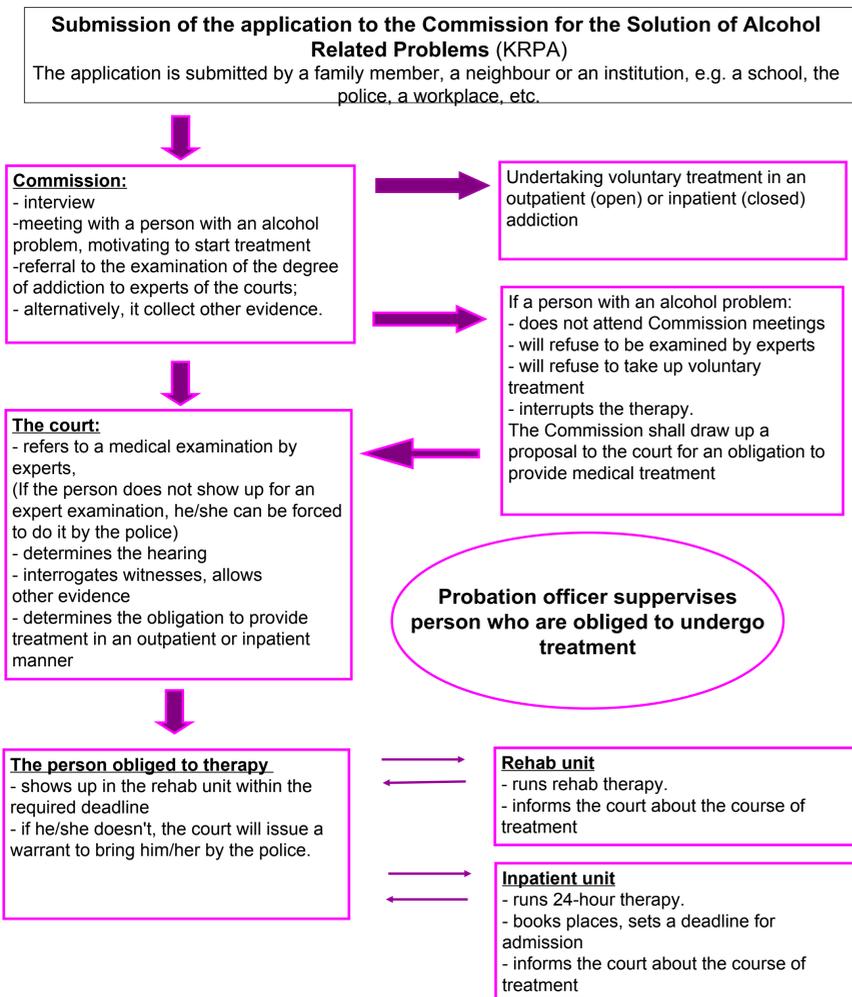


## Court proceedings and actions taken by a probation officer in work with people addicted to alcohol

### INTRODUCTION

Drinking alcohol is not harmful in itself, it becomes a problem when a person is found to be mentally or socially harmed as a result of substance abuse. The most dramatic effect of drinking involves alcohol dependence. Often, addicts do not want to be treated, they activate the defense mechanisms without seeing the problem of their addiction and need to change. If the addicted person does not voluntarily start the therapy, the court decides that he/she will be required to undergo treatment in a rehab center. Persons who are required by the court to be treated may have a probation officer appointed. The purpose of such supervision is to supervise and care for an addict to perform the duty imposed by the court and, consequently, to change his or her personal and health situation. Practice indicates that the implementation of the routine treatment commitment is a long lasting thing, resulting in low effectiveness of addiction treatment. Therefore, there is a need to seek new solutions in this area, to develop tools to increase the effectiveness of activities undertaken with addicts and to share experiences in the international arena. Currently in Poland, activities are underway to change the behavior of people addicted to alcohol

### PROCEDURE OF COMMITMENT TO ALCOHOLIC TREATMENT IN POLAND



Source: own study

The obligation to undergo treatment may last until the purpose of treatment is met. Its maximum length is 2 years from the time the decision becomes valid. The court may order the earlier cessation of the treatment upon request of:  
- the patient, - the rehab unit, - the curator, - the prosecutor or ex officio, after consultation with the unit where the person being treated is staying.  
The court may, at the request of:  
- the curator, after consultation with the rehab unit,  
- the rehab unit  
Amend the provisions on the type of rehab unit.

The person for whom the supervision of a probation officer has been established is obliged to appear at the summons of the court or the probation officer and to follow their instructions regarding such proceedings during the supervision period, which may contribute to reducing the duration of the obligation to undergo treatment.

Supervision is exercised by the officer who has adequate preparation in the field of dealing with alcohol addicts, organizes and conducts activities aimed at helping the obligated person in achieving treatment goals.

### PROBATION OFFICERS WORKING WITH ADDICTS

- undertakes actions necessary for the person obliged to undergo alcohol therapy to comply with the court's decision;
- becomes acquainted with the results of the treatment and cooperates with the therapeutic center in order to achieve the goals of the therapy;
- motivates the person undergoing addiction treatment to establish contacts with relevant treatment facilities and self-help organizations or groups of people addicted to alcohol;
- has an impact on the environment in which a person obliged to undergo the treatment stays or to which he or she is to return, in particular, shapes the right attitude towards that person;
- if necessary, cooperates with the employer to carry out the obligations imposed on the person obliged to undergo the treatment.

#### The role of a probation officer in assisting the treatment process may include:

- providing the problem person with basic information on addiction and the course of the healing process
- motivating to get involved in the therapeutic process
- providing practical guidelines for the prevention of "accidents" and short-term coping with alcohol hunger
- motivating a person with an alcohol problem to change their lifestyle, undertake treatment and withdraw from high-risk situations conducive to alcohol consumption
- help in searching for and co-creating a constructive personal environment that can support abstinence, influence/cooperation on the family of the drinking person (see Mellibruda and Sobolewska 2006, p. 163).

### RESOURCES AND COMPETENCES OF THE OFFICER THAT ARE USEFUL IN WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH ALCOHOL PROBLEM

- absolute consistency and not taking responsibility for the consequences of drinking person
- systematically checking whether the actions taken in the framework of assistance do not increase the comfort of drinking of the addict
- providing the addicted person with reliable, complete and truthful information
- using the assistance of specialists in the scope of addict's own reactions and problems caused by professional activities for the benefit of persons with alcohol problems and their families,
- control by the officer, especially in a situation of frustration, of such feelings and emotions as: aversion, rejection, helplessness, mercy, fear or condemnation.
- the probation officer should show the supervised person kindness and acceptance and provide emotional support, especially in the initial period of treatment;
- never contact persons in intoxicated condition; also protect yourself against undesirable behavior of drunk persons, especially against aggression.
- the probation officer should check the information provided and ensure that there is a good flow of information between the persons and institutions providing the assistance (preferably in writing) (see Mellibruda 1996, pp. 50-51).

Family probation officers		Adult probation officers	
Court proceedings	Executive proceedings	Preparation	Executive proceedings
-community interviews	-community interviews	community interviews	-supervision
-temporary supervision	<b>Supervision among other with addicts</b> -control tasks -participation in parents contact with children -collecting an individual under parental authority -participation in meetings of an interdisciplinary team		-electronic supervision -non-custodial sentence -providing aid from Victim Support and Post-Penitentiary Aid Fund -duty control without supervision -participation in meetings of an interdisciplinary team

The primary task of a probation officer is to support the development of his/her charges, providing supervisors with the opportunity to find the meaning of their own lives, rather than punishing or repressing them. The officer supporting the recovery process of a person addicted to alcohol must correctly assess not only the effects of drinking, but also the reasons for using addictive substances. Only a proper understanding of the addict's life situation gives a solid basis for the participation of the officer in building the motivation of the addict to stop drinking. A supervised person will want to take advantage of the help offered only if they experience a sense of security, trust, kindness, respect, empathic understanding, care and reliable support in relations with the officer.

### CONCLUSIONS

Practice indicates that the implementation of the routine treatment commitment is a long lasting thing, resulting in low effectiveness of addiction treatment. Therefore, there is a need to seek new solutions in this area, to develop tools to increase the effectiveness of activities undertaken with addicts and to share experiences in the international arena. The help offered to the addict and his / her family must be personalized, focused on supporting the primary problem of addiction, generating other difficulties in the functioning of the person in need of support (poverty, insecurity, emotional and mental disorders, etc.). Support can take the non-material form (diagnostics, treatment, therapy, counseling, social work with the addicted, family, the environment) as well as the payment of statutory benefits provided to meet the basic needs, if specific statutory conditions are met. It must be individualized and multi-faceted, based on respect for the free will and dignity of people with addiction and their families.  
The role of the probation officer is two-dimensional:  
- on the one hand, the probation officer has an influence on the motivation of the addict to take and continue treatment,  
- on the other hand, the probation officer should also look for institutions, people, organizations that can help addicts to solve their problems and difficulties. The probation officer performs a control, therapeutic, preventative and help function.