

IDAHO

Clearwater County - Idaho County - Latah County - Lewis County - Nez Perce County

Second Judicial District Court



VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT

Here is a brief history:

You may be familiar with problem solving courts such as DUI, Drug, and Mental Health courts; a few years ago, a prosecutor in Buffalo got the idea, because there were so many Gulf Conflict veterans appearing before the courts, and the suicide rates were abnormally high, to start a specialty court strictly for veterans, in an attempt to help some of these veterans get their lives on track and hopefully reduce recidivism and suicide rates. However, the defenders had trouble getting these veterans to open up to them, but some noticed that the detainees would talk to the law enforcement people who transported them. Further investigation revealed that the guards, deputies, etc. were ex-military and could identify with the veteran detainees, which gave one public defender the idea to create a mentorship program for these defendants. The mentor volunteers are not counselors, doctors, lawyers, marriage counselors, or financial advisors. They are just sort of like "war buddies" who walk through the system of court and treatment with their "clients". The mentor is part of the court team, but not in an adversarial relationship, just someone encouraging to talk with while negotiating the court, VA, and community services systems. Since the first court's inception in 2005, over 500 Veterans Courts and 155 Veterans' Treatment Courts have begun, and they have been experiencing a higher than average success rate.