



**For Immediate Release**

June 5, 2020

***Judge Kathryn Michael  
Summit County Common Pleas Court General Division  
Awarded Grant to bring ACTV Training to Summit County***

*Summit County, Ohio:* Judge Kathryn Michael, Presiding Judge of the Summit County Domestic Violence Intervention Court, an Ohio Supreme Court certified specialized docket, has received grant funding from the State to implement specialized training for the Domestic Violence Intervention Court staff and treatment team.

Under Judge Michael's leadership, Domestic Violence Intervention Court was awarded the Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) through the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services. JAG funds are designed as seed money to establish new and promising programs that improve the criminal justice system.

"Since I began my role as Presiding Judge of Domestic Violence Intervention Court last year, I have identified several program enhancements my team is working on to better serve participants and improve outcomes," stated Michael.

Judge Michael had seen research regarding success of the Achieving Change through Value-based Behavior (ACTV) program, developed and tested over the past decade.

The ACTV curriculum was co-developed by Dr. Erika Lawrence, Northwestern University and Dr. Amie Zarling, Iowa State University. Dr. Lawrence will provide the training aimed at reducing recidivism for domestic violence offenders in Summit County.

Domestic Violence Intervention Court staff and representatives from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, Summit Psychological Associates, and Battered Women's Shelter will participate in the training.

Terri Heckman, CEO of the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties supports Judge Michael's innovative efforts in addressing domestic violence in Summit County. "Summit County Domestic Violence Intervention Court's efforts to build a robust program to help break the cycle of violence aligns with our mission," stated Heckman.

ACTV is a new curriculum for men who have been court-mandated to complete a Batterers Education Program (BEP) following a domestic violence conviction. The goals of ACTV are to reduce/end men's use of psychologically/emotionally and physically abusive and controlling

behaviors and to increase men's use of respectful, adaptive, healthy behaviors in their relationships. ACTV is intended to be implemented in a group format with two facilitators. It is a 24-week program with each session lasting 90 minutes.

"The purpose of ACTV is to guide group members to make different choices than they have made in the past," explained Judge Michael.

ACTV is adapted from Acceptance and Commitment Training techniques. ACTV facilitators work with participants to increase their awareness of the factors that influence their behavior (e.g., past experiences, unwanted feelings and thoughts) and, building on that awareness, to learn and practice new, adaptive behaviors. ACTV facilitators try to achieve these goals by helping participants learn new skills through experiences during sessions rather than through instruction or lecture.

Two controlled clinical trials have been completed, demonstrating that ACTV significantly reduces physical, psychological and sexual aggression pre- to post-treatment (whereas standard BEP curricula did not yield change) and reduces recidivism by one-third compared to the standard BEP treatment.

"ACTV training will allow us to implement an effective and sustainable program adapted to the specific needs of our participants and further our goal of reducing occurrences of domestic violence in Summit County," concluded Judge Michael.

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