

RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

The Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project

<http://consensusproject.org>

This is the website for the Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project, coordinated by the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments. The original Consensus Project Report contains information on improving response to persons with mental illness at all levels of the criminal justice system. The Mental Health Courts page on this site <http://consensusproject.org/mhcp/> has information on BJA court learning sites, downloadable reports, research and other resources. Publications available for download include (descriptions from webpage):

[*Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses under Community Corrections Supervision: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice*](#), which was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the National Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice. The Guide reviews the body of recent research on community corrections supervision for people with mental illnesses and translates the findings to help officials develop effective interventions. March 31, 2009

[*Mental Health Court Primer*](#) As many more communities will consider developing a mental health court in the coming years, this guide is intended to provide an introductory overview of this approach for policymakers, practitioners, and advocates, and to link interested readers to additional resources.

[*The Essential Elements of a Mental Health Court*](#) As the commonalities among mental health courts begin to emerge, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and others have become interested in developing consensus not only on what a mental health court is, but on what a mental health court should be. The most recent draft edition of *The Essential Elements of a Mental Health Court*, currently under review by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, articulates this consensus in the form of ten essential elements.

[*A Guide to Mental Health Court Design and Implementation*](#) Addresses issues such as identifying stakeholders to plan and administer court, screening defendants to participate in the court, and sustaining a court's operation and enables new and existing courts to benefit from some of the lessons learned from the BJA grantee courts and some of the many other courts that have sprouted across the country in recent years.

[*A Guide to Collecting Mental Health Court Outcome Data*](#) Provides practical strategies for deciding which data to collect, for obtaining, evaluating, and comparing the data. Identifies challenges that typically discourage courts from collecting and analyzing data and explains how to clear these hurdles. Positions courts to demonstrate the value of their initiatives and to improve the broader understanding of the effectiveness of mental health courts.

[*Navigating the Mental Health Maze*](#) Intended for criminal justice practitioners who know little about mental illness or the mental health system, but now must take a "crash course" because they are part of an initiative that serves people with mental illness involved in the justice system. Offers a basic overview of mental illnesses, including symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment and discusses the coordination of treatment provided by community-based systems of care and court-based services.

Criminal Justice/Mental Health Information Network

<http://cjmh-infonet.org/>

Also coordinated by the Justice Center, this is a repository of information on programs addressing the needs of persons with mental illness that come in contact with the criminal justice system. The site is designed to be a resource for policy makers, program administrators, practitioners and advocates. On this site you can add information about your program or search for information on other programs.

Judges Criminal Justice/Mental Health Leadership Initiative

<http://consensusproject.org/JLI/>

This initiative is coordinated by the National GAINS Center and the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments. From the website:

The JLI's mission is to support and enhance the efforts of judges who have already taken leadership roles on criminal justice / mental health issues and promote leadership among more judges to address the overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system.

The Center for Mental Health Services' National GAINS Center

<http://gainscenter.samhsa.gov/html/>

From the website-*The work of the National GAINS Center in the Justice System and the Technical Assistance and Policy Analysis (TAPA) Center for Jail Diversion are informed by the National GAINS Center, which has operated since 1995 as a national locus for the collection and dissemination of information about effective mental health and substance abuse services for people with co-occurring disorders in contact with the justice system. The TAPA Center for Jail Diversion and the Center for Evidence-Based Programs in the Justice System, funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) in 2001 and 2004 respectively, comprise the National GAINS Center.*

The Center for Court Innovation

<http://www.courtinnovation.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=511&documentTopicID=25>

This site provides an overview of mental health courts, information on the Brooklyn Mental Health Court, and several fact sheets and articles with tips for planning, implementing and evaluating mental health court programs.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Mental Health Courts Program

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/mentalhealth.html>

This program funds mental health court projects. The webpage gives information about the program, projects it has funded and provides links to numerous fact sheets and resources.

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

<http://www.bazelon.org/issues/criminalization/publications/mentalhealthcourts/> *The Role of Mental Health Courts in System Reform*-this paper is somewhat critical of mental health courts—but very thoughtful.

Mental Health America <http://www1.nmha.org/position/mentalhealthcourts.cfm> *Mental Health Court Position statement*-this paper is also critical of mental health courts.

Psychology, Public Policy & Law Volume 11 (4) 2005The entire issue of the journal was devoted to Mental Health Courts. The Foreword is a discussion of the controversies surrounding Mental Health Courts by legal scholars Susan Stefan and Bruce Winick. Abstracts are available online for free. Full text can be purchased or accessed through most academic libraries.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=browsePA.volumes&jcode=law&vol=11&issue=4&monthSeason=Dec&year=>

"Patterns of Practice in Mental Health Courts: A National Survey" AD Redlich, HJ Steadman, J. Monahan, P Robbins,& J Petrila *Law and Human Behavior* 30(3):347-362, 2006.