Supporting Health Activation and Health Literacy in The Criminal Justice System

The Broward Mental Health Court

Presenters

Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren – Broward Mental Health Court
Adam Slosberg, Managing Director – Beyond Today International
"The social power to define and categorize another person’s experience is not a power to be ignored..."

McGruder (2001)
Empowerment & Recovery Mental Illness, Canadian MHA, Manitoba Div.
The Intersection of Health Literacy and Health Activation within The Broward Mental Health Court

- Peer Support the emergence of a new workforce
- Health activation the bridge between a lived-experience workforce
- Goal to break the cycle of poverty affecting individuals with mental health, addictions and physical health challenges

Goals to divert persons with mental illness in need of psychiatric stabilization and intervention out of inappropriate jail environment to therapeutic setting

Enhance access to community mental health/substance abuse and other services and supports

The desire to interrupt revolving door

Reduce incarceration and recidivism based on ill-equipped criminal justice system

Promote mental health wellness, recovery, prevention and empowerment
Standing Up Against the Criminalization of Persons With Mental Illness

- 1995 Broward County criminal justice/mental Health Task Force
- Formed to seek solutions to streamline persons with mental illness in Broward County Jail
- Over-representation in local jail
- Overcrowding and lack of access to mental health treatment
- Deaths in local jail system
- Reduce length of jail stays
- High profile case of Aaron Wynn
Consensus to Develop Specialized Court

- 1997, The Broward County Mental Health Court opens as “Court of Conscious”.
- Florida Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren, rookie judge, appointed to pioneer new problem solving diversionary court.
- Builds upon Drug Court model, offers treatment over jail
- Applies Therapeutic Jurisprudence.
- A human rights court to promote recovery and access to community mental health care.
Broward Mental Health Court – Principles and Values

- Voluntary and human rights focused
- Promotion of recovery, choice and dignity
- Public safety and civil rights prioritized
- Do no harm philosophy
- Supported by existing community based collaborative of mental health, substance abuse and human service providers
- Highly individualized approach
- Problem-solving and therapeutic technologies
Mental Health Court Milestones

- Showcased best practice by U.S. Department of Justice
- White House Conference on Mental Health, 1999
- Model for America’s Law Enforcement and Mental Health Project. President Clinton signed into law, 2000
- Judge Lerner-Wren appointed President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health
- Driving hundreds of mental Health courts in U.S. and international model
The Integration of Health Activation in Court Process

- Mental Health Court a consumer approach
- Promotion of Recovery, Empowerment and Wellness
- Florida ranks at bottom of ladder, mental health funding in U.S.
- Reduction of stigma and promotion of growth and self-sufficiency
- Break revolving door
- Promote personal responsibility for treatment planning health management
Live Your Best Life: Activating Your Health and Dreams

- What are your dreams and passions?
- Recovery is more than medication compliance
- Everyone has unique strengths and gifts
- Someone to believe in you
- Live your best life
The Role of Mental Health Consumer Peers in the Criminal Justice System

- Mental health court participants as peer mental health case managers
- The story of Katherine
- Life experience and recovery is essential in criminal justice system
- A need for further structure and evidence base in criminal justice system
- A pathway to liberty, civil rights and the pursuit of happiness