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**The College for Behavioral Health – Summit 2015**  
**March 24 – 26 • St. Louis, Missouri**



# **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



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“

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.



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## 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

(Hardin, Padron, Manderscheid, “White Paper: US Peer Leadership & Workforce Development”)



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- 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



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# **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



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## 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.



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## 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



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## 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





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## 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



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# **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



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# 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