

## Goals of Mental Health Court are

- Create effective interactions between the Criminal Justice and Mental Health systems.
- Ensure legal advocacy for the mentally ill defendant.
- Ensure that mentally ill defendants do not languish in jail because of mental illness.
- Balance the rights of the defendant and the public safety by recommending the least restrictive, most appropriate and most workable disposition.
- Divert mentally ill defendants with minor criminal charges to community based mental health services.
- Monitor the delivery and receipt of mental health services and treatment.
- Reduce the contact of the mentally ill defendant with the criminal justice system by creating a bridge between them.
- Solicit participation from consumers and family members in court decisions.



### *Mental Health Court Team:*

*The Mental Health Court Team will closely monitor and intensively manage each participant involved in Mental Health Court. The Committee is composed of the following:*

*Judge*

*Mental Health Court Program Manager*

*CBHC Treatment Team*

*Defense Counsel*

*State Attorney*

*Department of Corrections*

*County Probation Officer*



Behavioral Health Care

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## Charlotte County Mental Health Court



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## What is the Mental Health Court Program?

If you have been arrested and you have a serious mental illness or co-occurring (mental illness and substance abuse) disorder, you may have an opportunity to participate in the Mental Health Court Program in Charlotte County. It is a collaborative effort between the State Attorney, Defense Counsel, Judicial System, Criminal System and Charlotte Behavioral Health Care (CBHC).

The program is designed to identify and address the unique needs of the mentally ill criminal offender. Mental Health Court represents an effort to increase effective cooperation between the criminal justice system and the mental health system. Positive results are seen with faster processing time, improved access to mental health treatment services and reducing recidivism.

This is a voluntary program which includes regular court appearances before a designated Mental Health Court Judge, along with mental health treatment in accordance to an individualized Intervention Plan developed for you by mental health court professionals.



## Who is Appropriate for this Program?

If you meet the clinical and legal criteria as determined by the Charlotte County Mental Health Court Committee, you might be eligible to participate. You can ask your attorney, judge or family members to refer you for consideration to Mental Health Court, if the following applies:

- ◆ certain criminal charges
- ◆ resident of Charlotte County
- ◆ serious mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse

Some examples of serious mental illness include:

- ◆ schizophrenia
- ◆ schizo-affective disorder
- ◆ psychotic disorder
- ◆ bipolar disorder
- ◆ delusional disorder
- ◆ major depressive disorder
- ◆ post traumatic stress disorder



## What do we do to help?

Mental Health Court offers treatment alternatives in place of traditional court and jail time.

Mentally ill offenders are connected with treatment services, regardless of their ability to pay, through :

- psychiatric evaluation
- medication management
- individual & group therapy
- life skills counseling
- substance abuse education & treatment
- appropriate assistance and referrals with:
  - housing
  - vocational assistance
  - case management
  - peer support
  - supported employment

### Purpose:

*To help the mentally ill or dually diagnosed defendant through the Criminal Justice system by balancing the needs of both the defendant and the community.*