

# **Developing a Mental Health Court: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum Handbook for Facilitators**

## **Appendix A: Curriculum at a Glance**

## Appendix A. Curriculum at a Glance

The chart on the following pages gives you an overview, or “menu,” of the entire curriculum and what it offers, including summaries of its content and materials. You can use it to pinpoint relevant topic areas and resources as you are working to plan the delivery of your training.

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance	
Introductory Lessons	
<h3>Introduction to Behavioral Health</h3> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the components of the mental health and substance use systems</li> <li>• Understand the symptoms and basic terminology of mental disorders and co-occurring substance use disorders (CODs)</li> <li>• Describe the principles of effective treatment for mental disorders and CODs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Content Areas:</b></p> <p>Three presentation sections: Introduction to Behavioral Health; the Behavioral Health System and People Who Work in It; and Behavioral Health Concepts and Principles. Discusses diagnoses as defined in the DSM, principles associated with positive outcomes, and evidence-based treatment options. Brief discussion of the science of behavioral health, and closing the gap between science and service.</p>	<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation (includes text, audio, pictures, graphs)</li> <li>• Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs</li> </ul>
<h3>Introduction to Criminal Justice</h3> <p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the common stakeholders in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• Understand how a criminal case proceeds through a typical criminal justice system</li> <li>• Understand certain legal concepts, types of cases, and principles for recidivism reduction</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Content Areas:</b></p> <p>Three presentation sections: Introduction; The Criminal Justice System; People Who Work in It; and Criminal Justice Concept and Principles. Includes description of the various components of the criminal justice system, and individuals’ roles in the process. Informative graphics/ animation explaining the steps in a case as it proceeds through the criminal justice system. Describes cultural considerations, constitutional protections for defendants, reducing recidivism rates, risk of re-offense and the importance for a program to identify and target the highest risk individuals; what the program should include; and responsiveness of the program to the population being served.</p>	<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation (includes text, audio, video, diagrams with animation of the judicial process)</li> <li>• Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs</li> </ul>

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance

Modules

**Module 1: Understanding Mental Health Courts**

**Learning Objectives:**

- Articulate why a community may decide to start a mental health court
- Describe the mental health court model and the state of research on program outcomes
- Identify program models other than mental health courts that have been shown to improve outcomes for individuals with mental disorders involved in the criminal justice system

**Summary of Content Areas:**

Three presentation sections: Introduction; Mental Health Court Fundamentals; and Mental Health Courts in Context. The first two sections address defining mental health courts, members, and purpose of a mental health court (MHC); improving outcomes for individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system; why a community may want to start a MHC; and 10 “Essential Elements” of a MHC. Also describes models that have been used successfully; addresses concerns/ dispels myths that stakeholders may have about MHCs; and research on impact/effects of MHCs. The third section describes resources such as the Criminal Justice/ Mental Health Consensus Project (this project provides strategies and program examples); and shows different program models or court-based approaches used.

**Materials:**

- Prep work (three readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module’s concepts)
- Activities Guide:
  - Activity 1, *Systems Mapping*, assists in conducting basic systems mapping in a community. The Activity includes conducting a step-by-step examination of (and creating a map for) how people with mental disorders generally proceed through the criminal justice system in one’s area. Also includes developing a list of interventions that currently exist in a community to connect individuals within the criminal justice system with appropriate behavioral health treatment.
  - Activity 2, *Meet the Bonneville County (ID) Mental Health Court Team*, introduces the participant to a real mental health court team (this team will be used throughout the curriculum). Results in an understanding of which professions are represented on a mental health court team and how these professionals on the team interact.
  - Activity 3, *Should Our Community Plan a Mental Health Court*, focuses on creating conversations with primary MHC champions and people who would participate on a mental health court team about whether or not participants want to plan a MHC in their community. Participants will develop a preliminary list of reasons for and against starting a mental health court in their jurisdiction.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

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## Module 2: Your Community, Your Mental Health Court

### Learning Objectives

- Identify local- and state-level stakeholders who should help plan your mental health court
- Articulate common mental health court goals and ways of measuring these goals
- Understand how to build on local resources and priorities to shape your program

### Summary of Content Areas:

Four presentation sections: Introduction; Identifying Stakeholders; Identifying Goals; and Building on What You Have. Introduction explains that the MHC needs to be tailored to the needs and resources in a community; importance of identifying best practices and applying emerging and available research. *Identifying Stakeholders* discusses building consensus and why this is important; working through language barriers of different professions; identifying who should be at the table; incorporating consumer input; roles of partners; and *emphasizes* relationship building. *Identifying Goals* discusses building consensus on priorities, concerns, a mission statement, concrete goals and objectives, and collecting data to assess progress. *Building on What You Have* highlights creating an inventory of current services and supports, community mapping to identify gaps, linking resources to the MHC, different MHC settings/environments; and formalizing relationships.

### Materials:

- Prep work (two readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module’s concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Thinking About Your Team*, helps participants think about how to involve appropriate stakeholders in the planning process and to understand the difference between the advisory group and mental health court team. Participants will develop a list of individuals or organizations who could potentially serve on your advisory group and mental health court team, as well as their roles and responsibilities. Participants also outline expectations for the roles and time commitment of each team member in the planning process.
  - Activity 2, *Your Mission, Goals, and Data*, helps participants develop a customized mission statement and articulate measurable goals for their mental health court. Participants will also gain an understanding of where and how to gather baseline data.
  - Activity 3, *Building on What You Have*, focuses on developing an inventory of services and resources available in the community that would be useful for MHC program participants, creating linkages between resources and the MHC, and identifying resource gaps that need to be addressed.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance

### Module 3: The Mental Health Court Team

**Learning Objectives:**

- Describe roles and responsibilities of the core MHC team members
- Identify common ethical issues that MHCs may present for members of the team
- Develop approaches for handling conflict within the MHC team

**Summary of Content Areas:**

Two presentation sections: *Introduction* and *The Mental Health Court Team*. *Introduction* discusses this concept of an interdisciplinary initiative with profession-based collaboration. *The Mental Health Court Team* section describes different roles of team members and who on the team fills each role: judges; prosecutors; defense attorneys; program coordinators (liaisons between the criminal justice and MH systems, coordinating apps to the court, and conducting data collection); case managers (keeping participants engaged in the MHC program); community corrections officers (supervising program participants); clinicians (medication and therapy for participants); and peer specialists (mentors for participants). Stresses the overall case management piece that is quite different from other court processes. This section of the presentation also discusses motivations and challenges for different professions on the team and team dynamics. Ends with some thought provoking questions around the target population and referrals, and mental health court policies within a community, developing treatment plans, and motivating compliance.

**Materials:**

- Prep work (two readings). Participants have the option of five different articles based on their role within the MHC
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module’s concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Defining Your Role on the Team*, helps participants think about, and create a description of each person’s role on the mental health court team and how it relates to others’ roles and to the overall functioning of the program.
  - Activity 2, *Exploring Ethical Issues*, has participants think through and describe their ethical obligations based on their professional role. They also describe another team member’s ethical obligations based on his/her professional role, and they work to develop strategies that allow them to work effectively with people from other professional disciplines.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

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## Module 4: Target Population

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the current research on who benefits from mental health courts
- Understand how local conditions can shape criminal justice and clinical eligibility criteria
- Analyze factors for and against requiring a plea for program participation

### Summary of Content Areas:

Three presentation sections: *Introduction*, *Understanding Who Benefits from Mental Health Courts*, and *Adapting Eligibility Criteria for Local Conditions*. *Introduction* discusses recognizing limited resources and the importance of defining the population that will most likely benefit from the services. *Understanding Who Benefits from Mental Health Courts* describes the MHC's eligibility criteria, including criminal justice and behavioral health criteria (e.g., charge level, diagnosis), and considerations around the relationship between criminal activity and mental health needs. *Adapting Eligibility Criteria for Local Conditions* discusses state and local legal standards, supervision resources, behavioral health resources, and stakeholder priorities

### Materials:

- Prep work (two readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module's concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Describing Your Target Population*, assists participants in defining their target population based on the resources of their community and the research on who benefits from mental health courts. This includes gaining an understanding of how decisions on target population can present challenges for the team on whom to enroll in the program.
  - Activity 2, *Target Population in Action*, assists the team in better understanding how the decisions they make regarding target population have an impact which applicants are eligible for the program.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance

## Module 5: Designing Policies and Procedures for Program Participation

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand how a mental health court program can be designed to protect legal rights
- Describe how to design a referral process for your program
- Identify considerations for determining the duration of an individual's participation

### Summary of Content Areas:

Four presentation sections: *Introduction*, *Program Entrance*, *Program Participation*, and *Program Completion*. *Introduction* focuses on terms of program participation, MHC program policies and procedures, legal rights related to information sharing and constitutional rights of criminal defendants, health information privacy, and the rights of crime victims. *Program Entrance* discusses decision making related to referrals, screening for eligibility and assessment of individual needs, and providing information to potential participants so they can determine whether they want to participate. *Program Participation* delineates what activities occur, such as case planning, information sharing within the team, status updates, and program phases (which often include different levels of supervision). *Program Completion* covers defining success, which is often engagement in treatment and law abiding behavior; program graduation; unsuccessful program completion, which likely means return to the regular criminal justice system; and continued access to supports after program completion.

### Materials:

- Prep work (three readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module's concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - *Activity 1, Screening, Assessment, and Referral Sources*, focuses on planning referral processes, including development of screening and assessment protocols, determining who will be responsible for different aspects of the process, what instruments will be used, and how the effectiveness of the process will be measured and evaluated. In addition, it covers identifying potential program participants based on the mental health court's target population. The Activity also helps to create a deeper understanding of the challenges involved in identifying appropriate program participants and addressing concerns related to sensitive information.
  - *Activity 2, Facilitating Informed Consent*, focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the importance of privacy and due process in court policies and procedures, and strategies to manage the functioning of the court while protecting privacy.
  - *Activity 3, Defining Participant "Success,"* addresses developing criteria for successful program completion and the process of leaving or graduating from the program.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

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## Module 6: Case Planning

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand what a case plan is and what its main components are
- Describe the relationship between the treatment plan and supervision conditions
- Understand how to develop treatment plans and supervision conditions based on comprehensive assessments and available supports

### Summary of Content Areas:

Three presentation sections: *Introduction*, *Principles of Effective Case Planning*, and *Designing the Case Plan*. *Introduction* discusses providing treatment and supervision and defining a case plan, which includes a treatment plan and supervision conditions. *Principles of Effective Case Planning* describes who does what and characteristics of a case plan—individualized, integrated, flexible, informed by participants. *Designing the Case Plan* describes components of a case plan—assessment, clear goals, interventions, services/supports, progress benchmarks, and transition planning.

### Materials:

- Prep work (three readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module's concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Developing and Coordinating Case Plans*, includes developing an understanding of the components of a case plan and strategies for coordinating the implementation, monitoring, review, and revision of case plans.
  - Activity 2, *Transition Planning*, focuses on incorporating transition planning into case plans to connect individuals with services and supports to increase the likelihood that they remain engaged in treatment after leaving the mental health court program. Training participants will gain an understanding of how to develop a transition plan, and develop a preliminary sketch of a transition plan.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance

## Module 7: Facilitating the Success of Mental Health Court Participants

### Learning Objectives:

- Articulate principles that research shows are effective in modifying behavior
- Describe how these principles inform your role on the mental health court team
- Develop policies and procedures that apply these principles to your mental health court

### Summary of Content Areas:

Three presentation sections: *Introduction*, *Setting the Context for Success*, and *Responding to Positive and Negative Events*. *Introduction* describes creating conditions for success. *Setting the Context for Success* highlights understanding behavioral change, maintaining openness to learning, increasing motivation to change (e.g., Motivational Interviewing techniques), and developing and maintaining a program that is perceived as fair. *Responding to Positive and Negative Events* describes responses that promote behavioral change, including incentives and sanctions; increasing positive to negative feedback; clarifying expectations and consequences; responding promptly to events, and making responses (positive and negative) meaningful.

### Materials:

- Prep work (one reading)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module's concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Setting the Conditions for Success*, includes developing strategies for creating the conditions for participant success in a program, and understanding how the team applies research into what enhances motivation to engage in treatment and comply with court conditions.
  - Activity 2, *Responding to Positive and Negative Events*, helps training participants gain an understanding how to use research to design responses to positive and negative events, and to gain understanding on how different teams craft their responses to positive and negative events.
  - Activity 3, *Identifying Potential Responses to Events*, has training participants identify potential responses to positive and negative events.
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

Table A.1 – Curriculum at a Glance

## Module 8: Launching and Sustaining Your Program

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify common strategies for funding your program at the outset
- Describe the role of data collection and evaluation in managing and sustaining your program
- Describe strategies for engaging your advisory group and team members in continuously improving the program

### Summary of Content Areas:

Three presentation sections: *Introduction*, *Managing a New Mental Health Court*, and *Sustaining a Mental Health Court*. *Introduction* emphasizes the importance of collecting basic descriptive data, and sustainability. *Managing a New Mental Health Court* describes the use of pilot programs; preparing for implementation, such as developing MOUs; types of data to collect and strategies for data collection; identifying initial program funding and other resources; and publicizing the program. *Sustaining a Mental Health Court* describes engaging stakeholders in program development, including an advisory team and the MHC team; succession planning and orienting new members; alumni groups and peer specialists; and continuous program improvement, including keeping stakeholders engaged, using evaluation data, and spreading the word about the program and its successes.

### Materials:

- Prep work (two readings)
- Presentation (includes text, audio, video)
- Quiz (five questions to test knowledge on this module's concepts)
- Activities Guide
  - Activity 1, *Communicating Program Information to Different Audiences*, provides training participants with a set of role-playing exercises to develop strategies to use when communicating with different constituencies about the program. Participants also develop topics and phrasing to incorporate into informational products (e.g., brochures) and other materials about the program designed for different audiences.
  - Activity 2, *Adverse Event Planning*, helps training participants understand how a mental health court team addresses events that can threaten the sustainability of the program, such as a high profile negative incident involving a program participant or graduate and how the mental health court team considers the needs of different stakeholders in planning its response to a negative event. Participants also begin to understand the roles mental health court team members play in addressing negative events and a list of stakeholder concerns that will need to be addressed if there is a negative event.
  - Activity 3, *Creating a Program Manual*, helps training participants create a manual describing their program's policies and procedures and includes elements of a program manual for a mental health court.
- Handout (program manual from a community implementing a MHC)
- Resource list for the trainees that includes articles, books, websites, and sample programs

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<p><b>Other Materials (Not module-specific)</b></p>	<p><b>Mental Health Courts: An Introduction to the Curriculum (Video)</b>  Four-minute teaser video that provides an overview of the overrepresentation of individuals with mental disorders in the criminal justice system, explains what mental health courts (MHCs) are, and introduces the curriculum as a tool for new and existing teams interested in MHCs to explore. Helpful also to share with stakeholders and other relevant groups.</p> <p><b>Users Guide (Webpage and PDF)</b>  Intended to be read first by anyone using the curriculum. It provides instructions on how to use the curriculum and gives an overview of its components and available materials.</p> <p><b>Frequently Asked Questions (Webpage)</b></p> <p><b>Resources for Facilitators</b>  Resources and materials for those facilitating trainings using the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Acknowledgments</b>  A list of everyone who contributed to the development of the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b>  Information about the process and learning principles that were used to develop the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Webinar</b>  Features a tour of the curriculum and a presentation by a pilot site coordinator on her experience using it in her state.</p>
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