

Mental Health and Criminal Justice Intercept Project
Johnson County, Kansas
July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

The Problem: Significant numbers of individuals living with serious mental illness experience encounters with law enforcement agencies. The interface between the criminal justice and mental health systems could be strengthened in order to improve the response to people with mental health needs who are in contact (or at high risk for involvement) with the criminal justice system.

The Solution: A collaborative integrated plan among mental health and criminal justice entities in Johnson County in order to improve the response to adults with mental health needs who are in contact (or high risk of involvement) with the criminal justice system.

A 12-month collaborative planning process among the key partners* will result in a comprehensive plan for how to intervene at the earliest point possible in order to get mental health services to people before they enter the criminal justice system, or before they enter too far into the system; or once incarcerated, help prepare people for a safe and successful transition to the community. The plan will use the **Sequential Intercept Model** as a framework to develop targeted strategies that increase diversion of people with mental illness from the criminal justice system, and link them with community treatment.

The **Sequential Intercept Model** envisions a series of points of interception at which an intervention can be made to prevent individuals from entering or penetrating deeper into the criminal justice system. Ideally, most people will be intercepted at early points, with decreasing numbers at each subsequent point. The interception points are law enforcement and emergency services; initial detention and initial hearings; jail, courts, forensic evaluations, and forensic commitments; reentry from jails, state prisons, and forensic hospitalization; and community corrections and community support.

About the Project: United Community Services (UCS) of Johnson County was awarded a grant from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City to provide facilitative leadership over a 12-month period. Grant funds, which total \$49,915, will also pay for technical expertise on the Sequential Intercept Model provided by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. Key partners will provide staff time to attend quarterly leadership meetings and monthly work team meetings. Key activities include an assessment of the current system to identify gaps, examination of evidence-based approaches, prioritization and plan development. The plan will include policy and programmatic recommendations and an evaluation component. The project will conclude with a training conference in the spring.

***Key partner organizations:** District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, 10th Judicial District Court, Court Services, Corrections Department, Criminal Justice Coordinator, Johnson County Mental Health Center, Public Defender's Office, NAMI, Lenexa Police Department, and one additional police department to be named.