



JUSTICE AND RECOVERY GUIDE

**A PROJECT OF
COMMUNITY ADVOCATES OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
AND
NAMI PA OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Acknowledgements

Many organizations and individuals provided input as this guide was developed. We wish to thank them all, and apologize if we have omitted anyone. Our workgroup reviewed many other guides which served as models and sources of information and inspiration. Please see the Online Resources section at the end of this guide for links to selected guides from other organization and states.

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This Guide Does Not Contain Legal Advice

This Guide is intended to provide introductory non-technical information about the Montgomery County, Pennsylvania criminal justice and mental health systems. It does not contain legal advice.

The Pennsylvania criminal justice system can vary considerably from county to county. Each jurisdiction can have distinct local police enforcement, laws, courts, jails, and post-incarceration services. Your city or county may determine whether criminal justice personnel are trained to handle mental health crisis or treatment, whether there is jail diversion at different points in the system, and what rules and structure apply in jail and other stages of the system. In addition, the types of available public psychiatric services, procedures for their access, and pertinent legal provisions also vary widely. All of the information in this guide will not be applicable to each specific jurisdiction. Please consult appropriate mental health, advocacy, and/or legal resources to learn about the applicable service mechanisms, procedures, and laws for the jurisdiction with which the person with mental illness has encountered.

Justice and Recovery Guide

A resource guide for people experiencing justice related issues and mental illness

Introduction

This guide is designed for anyone with a mental illness who may be involved in the criminal justice system or their family members or friends to provide information and resources to navigate the justice system that will help divert people from jail into treatment and support.

Frequently when individuals with mental illness get in trouble with the law it is a direct result of psychiatric symptoms. When this happens, the response should be a mental health response such as referral to crisis services, outreach or hospitalization, rather than a criminal justice response that could include filing charges, arrest and incarceration.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, many individuals end up arrested and incarcerated in jails or prisons. In an ideal world, with the best clinical practices in place, people with mental illnesses would rarely encounter the criminal justice system.

In Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, programs have been established to support people involved in the criminal justice system by building an infrastructure of diversion programs to help people stay out of jail and engage in treatment that promotes recovery.

The Sequential Intercept Model was developed by Drs. Mark R. Munetz and Patricia A. Griffin of the GAINS Center in Florida. It is a concept for communities to use which identifies points of interception in the criminal justice system where interventions can be made to prevent people with mental illnesses from going to jail because of their symptoms or to reduce the length of time individuals remain incarcerated.

The Sequential Intercept Model was used as a format for this guide, which is specific to Montgomery County. The model has five intercepts which will be explained in this guide. But before we proceed, we must define the Ultimate Intercept, that is, to have an accessible, comprehensive, effective mental health treatment system that would:

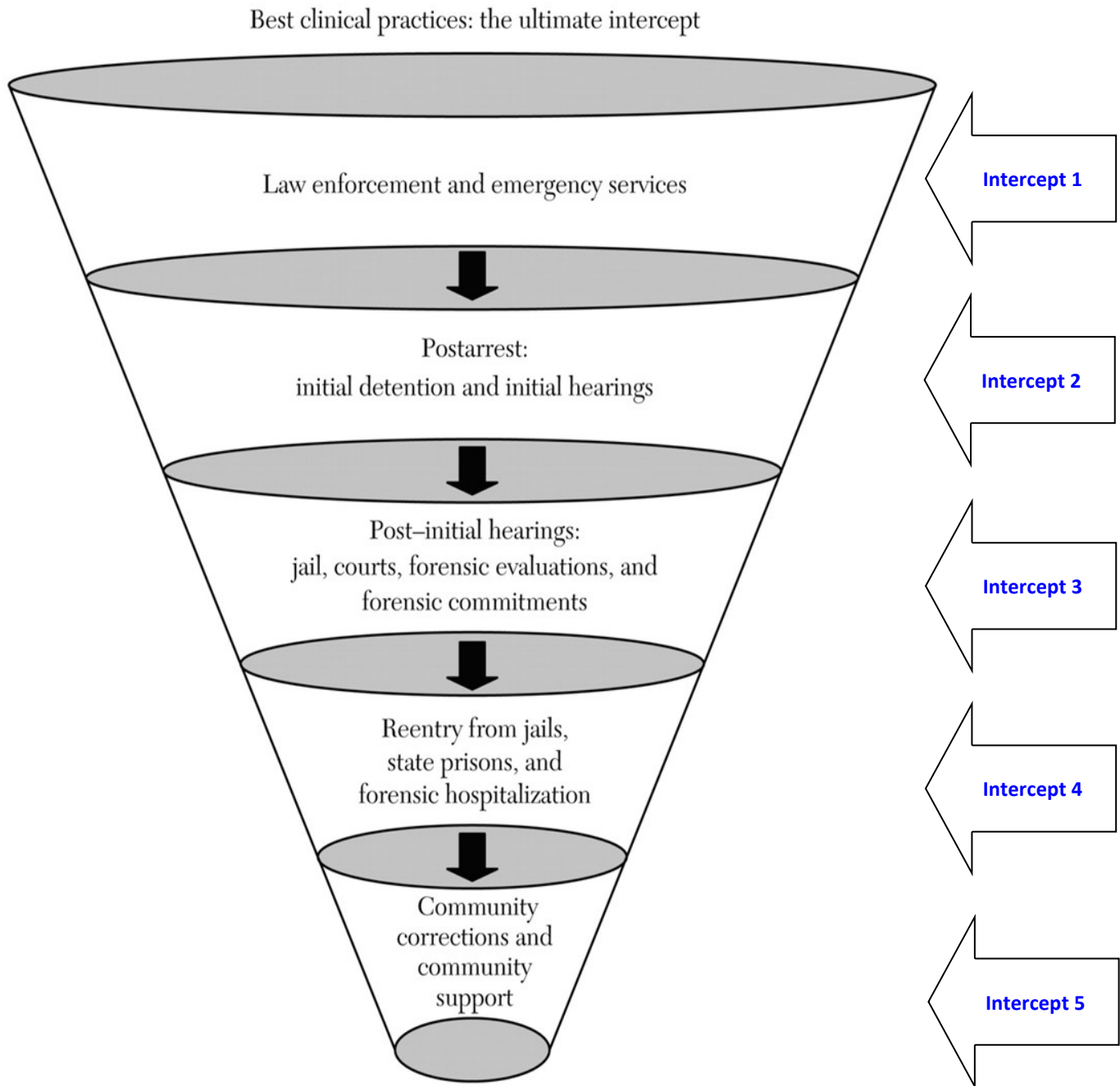
- Focus on the needs of individuals with serious and persistent mental challenges
- Have an effective base of services that includes competent, supportive clinicians
- Provide Community Support Services such as case management, medication, vocational, educational, peer support and other resources
- Provide safe and affordable housing
- Offer crisis services

If you are reading this guide then we assume that you may be in a crisis or know someone who is, and need assistance as soon as possible. With that in mind, we have created a “user friendly” guide that will provide quick reference information for assistance in a crisis or emergency. We have compiled an extensive list of resources and information for you to access and review when you have time to educate yourself about the more technical aspects of navigating the justice system and finding supports that will promote recovery.

Disclaimer: This is not a substitute for legal advice.

Figure 1

The Sequential Intercept Model viewed as a series of filters



Mark R. Munetz and Patricia A. Griffin
Use of the Sequential Intercept Model as an Approach to Decriminalization of People With Serious Mental Illness
Psychiatr Serv, Apr 2006; 57: 544 - 549.

What to Do If You or a Loved One Encounters the Legal System

Quick Guide – Find the box which corresponds to where you are in the process. For more detail, go to the corresponding section below.

<p>Intercept 1</p> <p>Law Enforcement & Emergency Services</p> <p>Police or emergency services are needed or have been called. You may be about to be arrested, have just arrived at the police station or jail, or are at MCES.</p> <p>CALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCES 610-279-6100 or (800) 452-4189 • 911 – ask for an officer with special training in mental illness • A friend or family to let them know where you are • Access Mobile Crisis Support 855-634-4673 <p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite and respectful • Follow instructions • Keep your hands where they can be seen • Do not struggle with police • Exercise your right to remain silent <p>See Section 1 for more information.</p>	<p>Intercept 2</p> <p>Initial detention & court hearing</p> <p>You have been arrested, are in detention, at a mental health facility or released on bail facing a hearing.</p> <p>CALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Advocates 610-270-0375 • Public Defender 610-278-3295 • Montgomery County Bar Assn. 610-279-9660 • NAMI 215-361-7784 • MCES Justice Related Services 610-279-6100 • BHC & VC Coordinator 610-324-4902 <p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get legal advice • Talk with recovery coach or therapist if you have one • Enlist help and support of peers, family, clergy, others • Contact advocates to discuss options <p>See Section 2 for more information.</p>	<p>Intercept 3</p> <p>Jail, Court, Forensic Evaluation & Hospitalization</p> <p>You are in jail, committed to a hospital or in the community waiting for a court hearing.</p> <p>CALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker at jail or hospital • Call BHC & VC Coordinator 610-324-4902 • Community Advocates 610-270-0375 <p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions • Learn about resources that can help you • Join groups at jail or hospital • Enlist help of family and friends • Contact advocates to discuss options • Contact Court Administrator's Office 610-278-3224 <p>See Section 3 for more information.</p>	<p>Intercept 4</p> <p>Re-entry</p> <p>You have been or will be released to the community.</p> <p>CALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits such as Social Security Office, Welfare Office • County Assistance Office • Community Advocates 610-270-0375 • NAMI 215-361-7784 <p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in benefits • Meet with probation officer • Follow conditions of release • Find peer support • Join support groups • Secure safe and supportive housing <p>See Section 4 for more information.</p>	<p>Intercept 5</p> <p>Community Corrections/Community Support</p> <p>You are back in the community. What to do in a crisis:</p> <p>CALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Mobile Crisis Support 855-634-4673 • MCES – Crisis Line 610-279-6100 or (800) 452-4189 • Therapist or doctor • Peer Specialist • Recovery Coach • Advocates • NAMI • 911 – Ask for officer trained in mental health <p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared for a crisis or relapse • Have a support network • Consider a WRAP • Join support groups • Volunteer • Find a job • Go to school • If needed, go to a hospital <p>See Section 5 for more information.</p>
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Community



Legal System



Community

CRISIS

“Crisis is a perception or experiencing of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person’s current resources and coping mechanisms. Unless the person obtains relief, the crisis has the potential to cause severe affective, behavioral, and cognitive malfunctioning.”

(James, Richard K. Crisis Intervention Strategies 6th edition, 2008)

Crisis is an unfortunate part of the human experience and is experienced differently by each person. Most crisis situations can be resolved with the help of natural supports (family, friends, spiritual and other community supports) or the help of mental health professionals (psychiatrists, counselors, mobile crisis) and peer support.

If there is not appropriate intervention, a crisis can become a *Psychiatric Emergency*, which involves immediate danger to self and/or others. In the event of immediate danger, you should call 911!