

Incorporating Restorative Justice into Mental Health Court and Diversion Programs

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Track: Legal

CE: CPA/BBS/BRN, MCLE (1.5)

POST TBD

Narrative

Restorative Justice has seen worldwide growth since the 1990s and is currently being used in criminal cases, prisons, and schools. Restorative Justice is an alternative theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior, compared to traditional theories of justice which emphasize retribution. It requires offenders to take accountability for their actions and the harm they have caused. This presentation will be an overview of the Restorative Justice process. Potential barriers of implementing Restorative Justice with the Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) target population will be examined. The presenters will discuss how they have incorporated Restorative Justice into Yolo County's Mental Health Court (MHC) and Proposition 47-funded Steps to Success Mental Health Diversion program, and how these differ from more traditional Restorative Justice programs.

BIO

Kristi Abbott, LCSW, MSW

Clinical Supervisor, Yolo County Forensic Mental Health

Kristi is the Clinical Supervisor of Yolo County's Forensic Mental Health team. She provides clinical support and program supervision of the agency's Mental Health Court, Addiction Intervention Court, and the Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) Misdemeanor program. In this role, she also collaborates with the Public Guardian and County Counsel regarding LPS and Murphy Conservatorships. Prior to her current position, Kristi worked for Contra Costa County's Forensic Mental Health Department and helped launch their Mental Health Evaluation Team (MHET). She also served as the clinician on Contra Costa County SWAT's Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT). Kristi helped design and facilitate the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to all 23 law enforcement agencies in the County. Kristi also served as a board member for the County's MHSAs Consolidated Planning and Advisory Board (CPAW). Kristi graduated from University of California, Davis in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and received her Master of Social Work from San Diego State University in 2009.

Christopher Bulkeley, JD

Supervising Deputy District Attorney, Yolo County District Attorney's Office

Christopher has been a member of the Yolo County District Attorney's Office since graduating from McGeorge School of Law in 1992. During the more than two decades since joining that office, he has held a wide variety of assignments. He has successfully prosecuted cases resulting in convictions for murder, child molestation, arson, and numerous other felony charges. As the original member of the Mental Health Court team, he assisted in the design of

that program and has been the District Attorney representative on the team since the program's inception. In 2013, he coordinated the establishment of the innovative Yolo County Neighborhood Court which is the first adult restorative justice program using the facilitated conference model in the State of California. This model has been adopted by other offices to include the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. In 2015, he spearheaded a new initiative creating a Homeless Diversion Program that uses restorative justice to resolve criminal cases involving homeless offenders emphasizing non-punitive services focused case resolutions. The Homeless Diversion Program is a collaboration between the District Attorney and Health and Human Services Agency due to the high level of mental health and substance abuse in the homeless offender population. He currently supervises the Neighborhood Court Division while also participating in the Mental Health Court, Mentally Disordered Offender and Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity treatment extensions and appeals and writes for his office.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe Restorative Justice.
2. Analyze how Restorative Justice can be used with a Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) target population.
3. Differentiate how Restorative Justice has traditionally been applied and how it can be applied to Mental Health Courts and Mental Health Diversion programs.