JUSTICE ★ CENTER
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety

BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

DEVELOPING A MENTAL HEALTH COURT
An Interdisciplinary Curriculum

learning.csgjusticecenter.org

What is *Developing a Mental Health Court?* It's a **free online multimedia curriculum** for individuals and teams seeking to start, maintain, or just learn more about mental health courts.

Developing a Mental Health Court **is the first single resource with the information teams need to translate current research and best practices into program design and operation**. It includes a series of self-paced presentations and accompanying quizzes, individual and group activities, and access to additional resources that translate the experience of dozens of experts and practitioners into an accessible resource for diverse audiences.

Organized into freestanding modules, the curriculum **can easily be customized** for users' specific needs and time considerations. Its multimedia content includes interviews with a wide range of experts, including researchers, judges, court coordinators, treatment providers, probation officers, and more. A multi-part video case study with a discussion guide follows a real mental health court team through many common situations faced by teams.

The curriculum was developed by the Council of State Governments Justice Center with the support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance in partnership with the National Center for State Courts, SAMHSA's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation, the National Judicial College, and the Center for Court Innovation and with the guidance of a steering committee of national experts.

Who is it for? It's for anyone interested in learning about mental health courts and other collaborations between courts and mental health systems, including:

Module 3
The Mental Health Team

- ★ Judges
- ★ Prosecutors and defense attorneys
- ★ Mental health and substance use treatment providers and administrators
- ★ Court managers and judicial educators
- ★ Probation, pretrial services, and law enforcement officers
- ★ Case managers

The Bonneville County (ID) Mental Health Court Team, pictured above, appears throughout the curriculum addressing fictional but realistic situations.

The curriculum can be used by sites interested in starting new mental health courts or retooling existing programs. It can also be used by individuals joining existing teams.

How do I use it? Sites should consider working with their states' judicial educators or problem-solving court coordinators, who can customize the curriculum based on state-specific guidelines. Alternately, the curriculum can be used locally with facilitation by a team member. While the full curriculum is designed to take about 32 hours to complete, groups can also use individual modules to complement their existing knowledge. Available entirely online, *Developing a Mental Health Court* is accessible to users wherever they are.

What does it cover?

Developing a Mental Health Court:

- ★ Introduces mental health courts in the context of the criminal justice and mental health systems
- ★ Helps users decide whether to start a mental health court based on their jurisdictions' needs and resources
- ★ Describes best practices for designing a program, including how to identify the population the program will serve and set the terms of program participation
- ★ Provides guidance on developing and monitoring individualized treatment and supervision plans
- ★ Offers insights on maintaining a program, including managing public expectations and sustaining funding

Curriculum Module Contents

Module	Learning Objectives
Introduction to Behavioral Health	1. Describe the components of the mental health and substance abuse systems 2. Understand the symptoms and basic terminology of mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders (CODs) 3. Describe the principles of effective treatment for mental illnesses and CODs
Introduction to Criminal Justice	1. Identify the common stakeholders in the criminal justice system 2. Describe how a criminal case proceeds through a typical criminal justice system 3. Understand certain legal concepts, types of cases, and principles for recidivism reduction
Module 1: *Understanding Mental Health Courts*	1. Articulate why a community may decide to start a mental health court 2. Describe the mental health court model and the state of research on program outcomes 3. Identify program models other than mental health courts that have been shown to improve outcomes for individuals with mental illnesses involved in the criminal justice system
Module 2: *Your Community, Your Mental Health Court*	1. Identify local- and state-level stakeholders who should help plan your mental health court 2. Articulate common mental health court goals and ways of measuring these goals 3. Understand how to build on local resources and priorities to shape your program
Module 3: *The Mental Health Court Team*	1. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the core mental health court team members 2. Identify ethical issues that mental health courts present for yourself and other team members 3. Develop approaches for handling conflict within your mental health court team
Module 4: *Target Population*	1. Understand the current state of research on who benefits from mental health courts 2. Understand how local conditions can shape criminal justice and clinical eligibility criteria 3. Analyze factors for and against requiring a plea for program participation
Module 5: *Designing Policies and Procedures for Program Participation*	1. Understand how a mental health court program can be designed to protect legal rights 2. Describe how to design a referral process for your program 3. Identify considerations for determining the duration of an individual's participation
Module 6: *Case Planning*	1. Understand what a case plan and its main components are 2. Describe the relationship between the treatment plan and supervision conditions 3. Understand how to develop treatment plans and supervision conditions based on comprehensive assessments and available supports
Module 7: *Facilitating the Success of Mental Health Court Participants*	1. Articulate principles that research shows are effective in modifying behavior 2. Describe how these principles inform your role on the mental health court team 3. Develop policies and procedures that apply these principles to your mental health court
Module 8: *Launching and Sustaining Your Program*	1. Identify common strategies for funding your program at the outset 2. Describe the role of data collection and evaluation in managing and sustaining your program 3. Describe strategies for engaging your advisory group and team members in continuously improving the program

Module 1: Understanding Mental Health Courts features an audio interview with Judge Tamara Curry of the Charleston (SC) Mental Health Court.

How do I access it?

Developing a Mental Health Court is available at learning.csgjusticecenter.org.

Users will need Internet access and Adobe Flash Player to play the curriculum's audio and video features.

*Visit the CSG Justice Center's Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project website (**www.consensusproject.org**) to subscribe to our newsletter for updates on the curriculum.*