Housing First for the Criminal Justice Population

Leah Vail Compton, MA, MBA
State Community Forensic Liaison
Florida Department of Children and Families
Leah Vail Compton, MA, MBA

Department of Children and Families
State Community Forensic Liaison
Department of Children and Families
State Mental Health Treatment Facilities
Agenda

• Homelessness in the Criminal Justice Population
• Criminal Justice System and Housing First Basics
• Sequential Intercept Model
• Statewide Criminal Justice Initiatives
• Discussion
Housing First and Criminal Justice?

- Communities across Florida have made significant progress implementing Housing First approaches along with other strategies.

- However, criminal justice involvement among people experiencing homelessness remains a significant problem.
EMERGENCY SHELTERS AND OTHER HOMELESS SERVICES HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS DISCHARGED FROM JAILS OR PRISONS.

LOCAL POLICIES DRIVE THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS SUCH AS SLEEPING OUTDOORS. SUCH POLICIES PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT AND HOMELESSNESS.
Homelessness in Criminal Justice Population

• High prevalence of past criminal justice involvement among people experiencing homelessness.

• The risk of criminal justice system involvement is higher for people experiencing homeless.
Breaking the Cycle

- Collateral Consequences
- Inadequate Reentry Planning and Services
- Homelessness
- Criminal Justice Involvement
- Criminalization of Homelessness
- Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and Sentencing Policies
### High Prevalence of Past Criminal Justice

- Anywhere from 25 to 50% of people experiencing homelessness have a history of incarceration. (Metraux & Culhane, 2006)

- Nearly 50,000 people, or 5% of all adults who enter shelters annually, come from correctional facilities. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013)

- Homelessness is 7.5 to 11.3 times more prevalent among jail inmates than the general population (Greenberg & Rosen, 2008)
The Risk of Criminal Justice System Involvement is Higher

- As many as 15.3% of all people in jail in the U.S. report experiencing homelessness in the year prior to incarceration. (Ferguson, Bender, Thompson, Xie and Pollio, 2012)

- The rate is higher for people with serious mental illness. Nearly one million adults with serious mental illness are booked into jails annually and many of these individuals have histories of homelessness. (Morrissey, Cuddeback, Cuellar & Steadman, 2007)
**HOMELESS INMATES**

- **64.2%** vs. **48.4%**
  - of homeless inmates reported a mental illness
  - of non-homeless inmates

- **54.9%** vs. **44.3%**
  - of homeless inmates met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD
  - of non-homeless inmates

- **45.9%** vs. **35.3%**
  - of homeless inmates reported having been diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder
  - of non-homeless inmates

- **52.0%** vs. **21.0%**
  - of homeless inmates reported that they expected to be homeless upon leaving jail
  - of those who were not homeless

- **31.4%** vs. **53.0%**
  - of homeless inmates reported that they had a job secured after jail
  - of those who were not homeless

Percentages are from "A Study of Homelessness in Secure Correctional Jails," a report published by the Criminal Justice Institute in June, 2003. Rates are for residents of Larimer County, the City and County of Denver, El Paso County, Larimer County, Mesa County, and Pitkin County jails. The percentages are estimates as in any sample, some inmates may be left out or may not answer the questions. Of the inmates who were homeless, 48% of the respondents were homeless.

Note: "Homeless" means they experienced homelessness in the 30 days prior to coming to jail.
What is the “Criminal Justice system”?

- A complicated, confusing system to enforce our criminal laws.
- It is the official process whereby accused persons are:
  - Arrested
  - Prosecuted
  - Convicted
  - Sentenced
  - Punished
Housing First Basics

- Prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness.

- People need basic necessities like food and place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use and/or mental health issues.

- Giving individuals choice in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.
Two Common Models of Housing First

- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) – targeted to individuals with chronic illnesses, disabilities, mental health issues, or substance use disorders. It provides long-term rental assistance.

- Rapid Re-Housing – provides short-term rental assistance and services
Basics of the Sequential Intercept Model

• A community framework for Criminal Justice and Mental Health.

• Points of inceptions to prevent individuals from entering or falling deeper into the criminal justice system.
More Basics of the Sequential Intercept Model

• People with mental disorders should not “penetrate” the criminal justice system at a greater frequency than people in the same community without mental disorders.

• Ideally, most people will be intercepted at early points, with decreasing numbers at each subsequent point.
• The deeper that people enter into the system costs more time, money, and energy.

• And the harder it is to exit them from the system.

• Think of the model as a funnel.
Intercept 0

Community Services

- Specialized law enforcement and provider based interventions
- Alternatives to criminalization of homelessness and seamless systems of care
- Collaborate with law enforcement and treatment agencies
Intercept 0

Community Services

- Adopt constructive alternative policies and practices that don’t criminalize homelessness such as camping, public sleeping, sitting on sidewalks, or soliciting money

- Existing Permanent Supportive Housing

- Existing Rapid Rehousing
Intercept 1: Law Enforcement

- Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)
- Specialized Law Enforcement Training
- Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety
- Intervening with super-utilizers and providing follow-up after the crisis
Care Coordination

Figure 1:
Intercept 2

Initial detention/Initial court hearings

Post-Booking Diversion Options
After arrest has been made

Arrest

Initial Detention
First Appearance Court
Initial Hearing and Initial Detention

• Post arrest diversion points of contact:
  • Booking-in staff
  • Classification officers
  • Arresting and jail officers
  • Jail medical
Intercept 2

- Data matching initiatives between jail and community homeless service providers
- Pretrial release programs
- First appearance staff
Jail Screening

• Who screens?
• What questions?
• For what?
• Who gets the screening?

• Do they assess risk?
• Why is it important to know the answers to these questions?
Intercept 2 Diversion Opportunities

• Brief Jail Screening

• Motivational Interviewing

• Peer Services

• Benefit Coordination

• Pretrial Release Services
Intercept 3  Jails / Courts

Specialty Courts?
Other Court Programs

Jail-Based Diversion Programs
&
Jail Mental Health Services

Courts

Jails
Intercept 3: Problem Solving Courts

• Specialized courts to address the needs of persons with needs.

• Limit punishment focusing on problem solving strategies to avoid further involvement in the criminal justice system.
Problem Solving Courts

- Reduce jail time
- Smooth transition to community treatment and services
- Collaboration with all agencies
- Diversion from criminal justice system
- Specialized monitoring
Note: This map depicts the more commonly known problem-solving courts identified by the Office of the State Courts Administrator as of September 2018. Other types of problem-solving courts may be in operation in Florida.
Community Courts

• A problem solving court that addresses quality of life or “nuisance” cases and takes a more proactive approach to public safety.

• Several national models.
Florida’s First Community Court

• 17th Judicial Circuit - Fort Lauderdale, Florida

• January 2019

• Court team includes the City of Lauderdale, Broward County, the Chief Judge, the State Attorney’s Office, the Office of the Public Defender, Broward Sheriff’s Office, public and private service providers.

• The City of Fort Lauderdale was one of five jurisdictions in the nation to receive a federal grant to implement the specialized court.
Broward Community Court Goals

- Action Cooperative
- Combine punishment with help
- Give the community a voice in shaping sanctions
- Recognize that communities are victims
- Use punishment to pay back the community
- Open social services at the court to residents
Broward Community Court Cases

• Trespass
• Disorderly Conduct
• Public Intoxication
• Sleeping on the Beach
• Public Indecency
• Health Safety Violations
• Vandalism
• Obstructing Traffic
• Panhandling

• Misdemeanor drug possession
• Resisting arrest
• Simple assault
• Simple battery
• Petit Theft
• Loitering and Prowling
• Defrauding an Innkeeper
Jails

• Screening at booking
• Benefit Coordination
• Classification/Discharge
• VA Jail Programs
• Mentorship Programs
• Faith Based
• Volunteers!!
Intercept 4
Reentry

Prison

Jail
Re-entry
Reentry/Reintegration

• Re-entry from Prison, Jail, and State Hospital.

• There is little continuity of care or communication between corrections and community for individuals who are homeless leaving correctional settings.

• Homeless individuals being released may be unaware of services.
Assess Housing at Re-entry

• Were they experiencing homelessness before they were incarcerated?

• Do they have family members or social supports?

• Do they have income to pay for rent?

• What kind of tailored approach?
Reentry/Reintegration

• Working together to stop the cycle.
• **Assess-Plan-Identify-Coordinate** – APIC Model
• GAIN Reentry Checklist
GAINS Re-Entry Checklist

- Based on APIC
- Assist jails in re-entry planning
- Predicts potential needs
- Steps taken
SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)

• A nationwide training designed for case managers who assist persons who are homeless through the application and disability determination process.

• Approval rates of 60-95% on INITIAL applications for homeless applicants in an average of 87 days.
Intercept 5
Community corrections / Community support

Violation

Parole

Violation

Probation

COMMUNITY
Community Corrections

- Specialized Probation
- Forensic Intensive Case Management
- Trauma-Informed Treatment
- SAMHSA Tool Kits:
  - Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Supportive Employment
  - Illness Management & Recovery (i.e., WRAP)
Challenges to Collaboration

• Understanding funding – “silos”
• Limited history of true collaboration or community problem-solving
• Limited resources create a competitive and/or protective environment
• System “cultures”
• Local relationship building
Keys to Success

- Task Force (shared leadership)
- Consumer & Family Involvement
- Communication & Information Sharing
- Boundary Spanners
- Champions
- Create Momentum or Traction
Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Programs

- Planning Grants
- Implementation Grants
- University of South Florida Mental Health Institute
- www.usf.edu/cbcs/mhlp/tac/about-us/centerhistory.aspx
Reinvestment Grants

• Must be used to “a problem-solving model and strategic plan for treating adults and juveniles who are in, or at risk of entering, the criminal justice system and include strategies to divert individuals from judicial commitment to community-based programs”.
Polk County

Accomplishments

↑ Established three new forensic programs since 2016
↑ Completed SIM in 2017
↑ Began housing initiative; New permanent supportive housing to open in 2020
↑ Received NACo 2019 Achievement Award in Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Challenges

↓ Data sharing and Release of Info agreements
↓ Getting buy-in from Public Defender for jail transition program
↓ Data collection; Deciding what to track and who is responsible

Next Steps:

→ Continue following SIM action steps/ Update SIM
→ Secure grant funding for continuation and expansion of forensic programs
→ Continue refining Helping HANDS program
Polk County – Helping Hand Roots Program

• Offers supportive housing linking to safe, affordable, community-based housing with flexible, voluntary support services

• Participants can access, at their option, services designed to build independent living and tenancy skills, assistance with integrating into the community, and connections to community-based health care, treatment, and employment services
Promising Strategies

• Wilwaukee County, Wisconsin
• Implemented Housing First to reduce reentry to jail
• One year outcomes:
  - municipal violations decreased by 82%
  - people experiencing homelessness decreased from 1,521 to 900
  - Instituted homelessness outreach teams
Promising Strategies

• Returning Home-Ohio
• Pilot project
• Designed for disabled prisoners returning from state prison to five Ohio cities
• Participants were 40% less likely to be rearrested or reincarcerated within one year of release compared to a comparison group
Summary

• Two decades of criminal justice reforms

• Decriminalization of homelessness

• Housing and criminal justice is complex and can vary

• Housing strategies for the most vulnerable populations reduce criminal behavior among subpopulations

• When people are stably housed, they have fewer non-violent offenses (survival crimes such as theft, robbery, trespassing, loitering and prostitution)

• Exiting jail or prison is a major risk factor to housing stability, creating a revolving door
• Questions?

• Comments?
Resources

• www.myflfamilies.com/ – DCF/SAMH - go to Mental Health then Forensic

• https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/fmhi/ – Florida Mental Health Institute

• https://www.samhsa.gov/gains-center – SIM, APIC, GAINS checklist, Trauma

• www.citinternational.org/ - CIT

• www.prainc.com – SOAR

• https://stepuptogether.org/ - Stepping Up Initiative

• www.faada.org – Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association – info/training

• http://justicecenter.csg.org – The Justice Center
References


Leah Vail Compton, MA, MBA
Leah.vailcompton@myflfamilies.com
(850) 491-8048