



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Ottawa
Mental health for all

**Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale**
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Supporting Mental Health in the Judicial System

CIAJ Annual Conference
October 17-19, 2018

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CMHA Ottawa

- CMHA provides support to individuals with serious and persistent mental illness and addictions through outreach services (court, housing and hospital) and case management
- Team of 14 court support workers-partner in mental health court and with other community agencies

Court Outreach

**Transitional Case Managers (NCR)-
2 FTE
-partnership with ROH**

Release from Custody-2 FTE

Court Outreach Team

**Mental Health Court-8 FTE
Dual Diagnosis (1)
OPS/Embedded crown (1)
Bail beds (1)**

Referrals:
Mental health court (lawyers, duty
counsel, crowns)
Self, family
Probation officers, hospitals

Court Outreach

- Meeting clients in the community
- Navigate community resources and supports
- Address social determinants of health-OW/ODSP, finding GP, housing, employment
- Address mental health
- Advocate in legal matters-attend CPT
- Increase coping skills



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Challenges in the court system

- Difficult to navigate:
 - limited knowledge of court proceedings
 - protocol of the courts (eg. etiquette)
 - language (eg. terminology)
- Court process is stressful

Impact on mental health

- Court proceedings, whether civil or criminal, can be stressful (family court, loss of wages/employment, financial burden)
- Stress can lead to or exacerbate mood disorders, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, cognitive difficulties, personality changes and problem behaviours.*

*H. Mills, N. Reiss, M. Dombeck. "Mental and Emotional Impact of Stress."
www.MentalHelp.net.

Impact on mental health

- Other symptoms can also manifest, such as trauma or psychosis
- Increased substance use as a way to manage symptomology or stress

Strategies

- Educate court staff (lawyers, clerks, etc.) on mental health and the impact of stress
- Be aware of resources clients can access at the court house (eg. Efry, John Howard Society, Salvation Army Chaplain)
- Ask the client what they need
- Use your knowledge of the court system (eg. does the client need to attend all proceedings?)

Questions?

Thank You/Merci!



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