

Lee County, Florida:

Taking Action for Change

Transforming Services for Persons with Mental Illness in Contact with the Criminal Justice System

Introduction

This report summarizes the Cross-Systems Mapping & Taking Action for Change workshop held in Le

Police Department. It is estimated that 210 law enforcement officers throughout Lee County

Within 24 hours of arrival

There are some resources within the jail designed to prepare inmates for release however there are two FACT teams that conduct in-reach in the jail. There is currently no wait list for FACT assistance. The two teams have 10 staff members and an average of 100 clients.

If inmates are part of a program that provides case management then entitlement and other discharge planning is provided. However, inmates that are not part of a program do not receive any transitional assistance. Jail administration and staff do not have the resources to assist with housing, support services, treatment or reestablishment of benefits for the population that is not part of a specialized jail program. Several attendees at the workshop did acknowledge that Lorata Brady, a jail staff member, had made a packet of services for inmates.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Summary

A process such as the Cross-Systems Mapping & Taking Action for Change workshop can result in the acknowledgment of a somewhat daunting list of service gaps. In this respect, Lee County is much like most Florida counties and indeed like many jurisdictions in the United States. At the same time, Lee County is very unique and has important strengths.

- ™ First, the individuals who participated in this workshop represented all of the major stakeholders necessary to accomplish change in this area.
- ™ Second, participants were enthusiastic and frank in their comments and observations. This spirit of collegiality and willingness to discuss limitations as well as strengths is an important part of being able to work across systems, as is necessary in improving the lives of people with mental disorders in or at risk for entering the criminal justice system.

As Lee County moves forward in addressing the issues identified during this process, there are three issues in particular that may be of particular importance.

- ™ First, the planning process over time needs to identify the specific points in the process where intervention is possible and might have the biggest impact. It is impossible within existing resources to resolve every problem identified in a planning process, but it is possible to identify the potential points where an intervention might make the most difference.
- ™ Second, it is worth inventorying the data that are currently available in making this judgment and identifying what types of data that could be useful but either are not collected or not retained in an accessible data base. The USF-FMHI CJMHSAs Technical Assistance Center can assist in this task.
- ™ Third, it is critical that the planning process not lose the momentum created to date. Planning meetings involving all relevant stakeholders should be conducted on a regular basis and assigned priority by stakeholders. In addition, there are a number of resources available to Lee County to accomplish some of the tasks identified during the workshop as next steps. Those resources should be utilized whenever possible to expand the capacity of the planning group.

In closing, we would like to thank Lee County for allowing the CJMHSAs Technical Assistance Center to facilitate this workshop. In particular we would like to thank Ann Arnall for her work in handling the local arrangements and for providing community leadership. Finally, a great gratitude to all the local stakeholders who took the time to share their experiences throughout the two day visit. We look forward to continuing to work with Lee County.

Resources

