

*Nova Southeastern University & Broward Sheriff's Office
Board of Advisors
December 11, 2009
President's Boardroom, Horvitz Building (3:00pm-5:00pm)*

Please join us as we showcase an important joint research project between Nova Southeastern University & Broward Sheriff's Office! Quality of Life FY 2008 award winners: James Pann, Ph.D., Lenore Walker, Ed.D. (Co-Principal Investigators), David Shapiro, Ph.D., Vincent Van Hasselt, Ph.D., and representatives from Broward Sheriff's Office will be presenting findings of their study entitled:

Needs Assessment of the Mentally Ill Involved in the Judicial System in Broward County

An NSU Quality of Life Grant and funded by the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO).



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Background

A recent Department of Justice report indicated that over 50% of people in jails and prisons across the nation have been treated for a mental illness and/or substance abuse problem prior to their being detained. Given the incarceration of people with serious mental health needs accused of committing a crime in Broward County, Florida is not very different from those around the country although some studies suggest that Florida may even be higher than the national average. A recent study by the Broward Sheriff's Office indicates that 18% of the 5,500 inmates currently held in their five facilities are known to have a serious mental illness.

Objectives

- To identify the needs of the organizations providing services to these individuals
- To provide recommendations regarding changes to the social services and judicial systems in Broward County
- To generate a comprehensive report of the literature review, findings, and recommendations

Methodology

A comprehensive literature review was conducted on all of the several elements in the best practices model we proposed should be in place to insure that individuals receive appropriate care including: pre-arrest diversion, diversion into treatment or problem-solving courts, problem-solving court diversion with monitoring in the community, mental health treatment while in jail, competency restoration programs in hospitals and in the community, and long-term mental health treatment in the community. The research group conducted semi-structured interviews with key community stakeholders representing the criminal justice and mental health systems in Broward County