

Mental Health Court Handbook

Charlotte Behavioral Health Care



Twentieth Judicial Circuit Court
State of Florida
Charlotte County

CHARLOTTE
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Behavioral Health Care



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Mission Statement

It is the mission of Charlotte County Mental Health Court to increase the safety of the public as well as improve the quality of life for individuals that reside in Charlotte County with a serious and persistent mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorder that have involvement with the criminal justice system by providing accessible and quality treatment and support services at an affordable cost to the individual.

Eligibility Criteria

1. You must have a diagnosed severe and persistent mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorder.
2. You must have stable, drug-free housing in Charlotte County. It is your responsibility to find, arrange for, pay for, and maintain your own housing prior to admission into the program and for the entire duration of the program.
3. You must have access to reliable transportation to get to all of your appointments. You must be able to arrange to get to short notice appointments including random call-ins for drug testing. It is your responsibility to find, arrange for, pay for, and maintain your own transportation for the duration of the program.
4. You must test negative for all substances, including alcohol and all controlled and/or illegal substances, at the time of admission into the program.
5. You must sign releases of information and authorize release of records for all medical and/or behavioral providers that you have been a patient with within two years.

Introduction to Mental Health Court

You were arrested for a crime in Charlotte County have been identified as an individual who may have a mental illness. Therefore, you have an opportunity to participate in Charlotte County's Mental Health Court.

This Handbook is designed to answer questions, address your concerns, and provide an overview of the Mental Health Court program. As a participant, you must follow the instructions given in Mental Health Court by the Judge and comply with the initial Intervention Plan developed with you. All participants are encouraged to share this handbook with 3 their family and friends.

Program Objectives & Treatment Services

Offenders with a diagnosed mental illness often spend unnecessary time in jail, lack access to mental health treatment services, and often become repeat offenders and cycle through the justice system again.



The Mental Health Court program represents an effort to identify and address the unique needs of this population. The Mental Health Court program represents an effort to increase effective cooperation between the criminal justice system and the mental health treatment system, and hopes to achieve the following results for the benefit of the mentally ill offenders: faster case processing time, improved access to mental health treatment services, improved well-being, and reduced recidivism. Another important outcome is improved public safety.

This is a voluntary program, which includes regular court appearances before a designated Mental Health Court Judge, as well as mental health treatment in accordance with a Proposed Intervention Plan, developed by you and a mental health professional, individualized to your needs in accordance with available resources.

Mental Health Court is an intensive outpatient program. An individualized temporary Intervention Plan will be created with you according to your individual needs.

Services available to you may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Psychiatric evaluation
- Psychotropic medication and medication clinic with monitoring
- Life skills counseling
- Substance abuse treatment
- Drug testing
- Anger management
- Case Management to assist you with housing, transportation, reinstatement or application of SSI/SSDI, food stamps, or any other community assistance that may be appropriate to fit your needs

Program Description

This is a voluntary program. Following arrest, if you are eligible for the Mental Health Court program, the Public Defender or private counsel will discuss the Mental Health Court Program with you and advise you in making a decision.

Development of a temporary Intervention Plan occurs at the time of your clinical screening. The temporary Intervention Plan will specifically address your needs and problems, taking into consideration your history, severity, and possible co-occurring substance abuse issues, in accordance with available resources existing in our community until your initial comprehensive assessment. You will be able to review these initial recommendations with your attorney and he or she will be able to advise you in making your choice. Entry into the Mental Health Court program is voluntary, and your defense counsel will continue to represent you throughout your participation. If you have entered into the program with a private attorney and can no longer afford this expense, you may request a court-appointed attorney to represent you.

After intake, you will schedule an appointment to meet with Mental Health Court program staff for a comprehensive assessment. You and the assessing counselor will develop a treatment plan based on your individual needs. Mental Health Court is a four-level program with all participants beginning at Level One. Advancement depends on each person's progress along with input from treatment team. As you comply with the expectations of your Intervention Plan and Treatment Plan, you will be advancing upward by levels in the program up to Level 4 and graduation. As you advance through each level, court hearings before the Judge become less frequent.

Successful completion of the treatment plan will result in graduation from the Mental Health Court program. Failure to complete the Intervention Plan or unsuccessful discharge from the program will result in prosecution on the pending charges or violation of probation and/or community control.

Mental Health Court Staffing & Supervision

As a Mental Health Court participant, you are required to appear in Mental Health Court on a regular basis. This is for monitoring your compliance with the treatment plan developed to help you.



Prior to your appearance in court, the Mental Health Court committee, consisting of MHC Treatment team, Presiding Judge, County Probation, Pretrial Services, Department of Corrections, State Attorney, and Public Defender will meet and discuss your case. At this time your progress will be reviewed and, if applicable, possible changes, sanctions, modifications, and other legal obligations relevant to your case.

At each appearance, the Judge receives a progress report prepared by the mental health treatment provider regarding your participation in the Mental Health Court treatment plan. The Judge will ask you questions about your progress and discuss any specific problems you may be experiencing. If you are doing well, you will be encouraged to continue with the program and work with your treatment provider towards successful completion of the Intervention Plan. If you are not doing well, the Judge will discuss this with you and the treatment provider to determine further action. This may result in charges to your treatment plan and/or service plan.

Confidentiality

Protection of your identity and privacy is consistent with Florida law, and CBHC has procedures to safeguard these rights. Please be aware that your participation in treatment processes means that you will also be responsible for ensuring the privacy of information about others in your group.

You will sign a release authorizing the transfer of information among all participating Mental Health Court agencies; as such, you waive your right to confidentiality for the purposes of staffing and court proceedings. In some instances, your employment may be terminated if contacted by the probation officer. If you think this may happen, talk to your probation officer and the Mental Health Court Judge.

Mental Health Court Program Rules

As a Mental Health Court Program participant, you are required to abide by the following rules:

1. Comply with the treatment plan and service plan developed with your input. Based on progress or lack thereof, revisions may occur throughout your course of treatment.
2. Attend all status review hearings before the designated Mental Health Court Judge.
3. Be on time. If you are late for a counseling session, you may not be allowed to attend, and it will be considered an unexcused absence. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session, you must contact your counselor at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment.
4. Attend all ordered treatment sessions. This includes individual and group counseling, educational sessions, and 12 step meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session, you must contact your counselor.
5. Dress appropriately for Court and treatment sessions (shorts, tank or halter tops, undershirts, caps and hats are forbidden as well as clothing bearing drug or alcohol related themes. No sunglasses inside court or treatment sessions unless medically approved.) Speak with your treatment team if you need assistance with clothing. In consideration that your attendance may be directly before or after hours of employment you may wear jeans, uniforms, or other appropriate work related dress.
6. While in Court, remain seated and quiet until called upon to speak. Parties do not talk unless directed by the Judge or lawyer to speak. Do not bring children and/or family members in the courtroom.
7. Do not make threats toward other participants or staff or behave in a violent manner. Violent or inappropriate behavior is not tolerated and will be reported to the court.
8. Do not use or possess any illegal drugs and/or alcohol. Do not visit any place where the primary business is the sale of alcoholic beverages or any place where people are using illegal drugs and/or controlled substances. Any alcohol consumption including but not limited to mouthwash, cold remedies, food preparations, "nonalcoholic beers", etc. is considered a relapse and will be handled accordingly. Wellness is the primary focus of this program and maintaining a drug-free lifestyle is very important for your recovery.

Mental Health Court Program Rules

9. Do not use, possess, or fill prescriptions for prescription medications and/or controlled substances; this includes prescriptions and controlled substances or which you have lawful prescriptions. The Mental Health Court Program Manager is required to approve any substances including but not limited to: controlled substances, prescription medicine, vitamin, herbal, energy, or diet supplements, inhalants, solvents, designer drugs, synthetic drugs, and over-the-counter medicines before you are allowed to possess or take them. You will refrain from consumption of poppy seeds, and you cannot possess or consume any substance not meant for human consumption. You will refrain from use or possession of any products containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine.
10. Charlotte Behavioral Health Care requires a paper copy of every prescription written to you, if you plan to fill it or not. You must obtain permission from the Mental Health Court program manager prior to filling any prescription. In an emergency, if you are unsuccessful in reaching Mental Health Court program staff members and your probation officer and if the prescription is not a controlled substance, then follow doctor's orders and inform your treatment team and probation officer immediately. Any approved prescriptions must be ingested as prescribed, i.e. by mouth only.
11. You will not change your residence or employment or leave the county of your residence without first procuring the consent of your probation officer.
12. You must adhere to Mental Health Court Group Rules and Expectations during the course of your treatment. It is very important that your behavior and language remain appropriate and courteous at all times.

Mental Health Court Program Rules

13. It is important that members use the opportunity during treatment to focus on sobriety, healthy living, and developing safe, healthy, and honest relationships with people in the Recovery community. Thus, socializing with Drug Court and Mental Health Court members outside of scheduled program activities may occur within the Recovery community, in the course of developing healthy, legal, and safe substance free recreational activities. Members will be open and honest about activities outside of treatment, taking responsibility for their own compliance with probation and treatment expectations. All members have an ethical obligation to report honestly to treatment providers and probation their own or others' activities that may interfere with treatment including a substance free lifestyle. All interactions between Mental Health Court members and Drug Court members are subject to the discretion of your treatment team and probation officer.
14. Sexual and/or romantic relationships between Mental Health Court and/or Drug Court members are not permitted. The destructive effects on newly clean and sober individuals and on the group process far outweigh the right of people to form new relationships during their year in treatment. Violation of this element of the contract may result in termination from the program.
15. You must report to your probation officer as directed. You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at each visit. If you have any problem making an appointment, you are to call your probation officer. You will live and remain at liberty without violating any law. A conviction in a court of law shall not be necessary in order for such a violation to constitute a violation of your Mental Health Court Contract.
16. You will not possess, carry, or own any weapons or firearms.

Abstinence & Recovery

Mental Health Court requires that individuals remain substance-free while participating in the program. Unapproved use of substances while in the program may result in dismissal from the program, a modification of your treatment plan, or a sanction as determined by the Mental Health Court treatment team and the Judge.

To that end, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care commits to make every effort to prescribe substances that are not controlled for individuals recovering or in remission from a substance abuse problem or addiction. Prescription of controlled substances or use of unapproved substances while in the program will require staffing with and approval from the Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director.

Mental Health Court participants receiving medication or treatment from other medical providers in the community, including but not limited to, Pain Management Specialist or their Primary Care Provider (PCP) will be required to sign releases of information, so that Charlotte Behavioral Health Care may be directly in contact with the provider. Charlotte Behavioral Health Care will contact the medical provider via phone or letter to inform the provider of the participant's addiction issues and discuss treatment alternatives.

Mental Health Court clinical staff will provide education to participants about the risks inherent in use of controlled substances.

Mental Health Court participants' continued use of prescribed controlled substances that interferes with their ongoing recovery or poses a risk to the participant and/or community may result in a possible sanction at the discretion of the Mental Health Court Judge or dismissal from the program and subsequent legal action.



Sanctions

If you fail to comply with the Mental Health Court Contract or treatment plan or if you are arrested or a warrant is issued for your arrest for another charge, the Mental Health Court Judge may, at his or her discretion, impose sanctions to include, but are not limited to:

1. Modification of your treatment plan, which can include but is not limited to, an increase in services to possibly include more counseling, inpatient treatment, substance abuse treatment, increased drug testing, increased attendance at AA/NA meetings, parenting classes, increased court appearances, returning to an earlier phase of treatment
2. Community service hours
3. Essays
4. Fines
5. Curfew
6. Incarceration at Charlotte County jail
7. Termination of your participation in the Mental Health Court Program. Noncompliance may result in prosecution on the original pending charges and/or violation of probation/community control.



Program Fees & Intake

Your income determines the fees for services at Charlotte Behavioral Health Care. Costs are determined using a sliding fee scale, based on federal poverty guidelines. We will verify your income when you come for your initial intake appointment. You must provide proof of income at your first intake appointment. When applicable, we also accept private insurances, Medicaid, and Medicare. Copayments are due at the time of service. Please request a payment plan if you are unable to pay for services. We accept cash, personal checks, money orders, and Visa or MasterCard. If you do not inform us of new insurance or provide updated financial information and charges are incurred we may not be able to get authorization for past appointments and you will be responsible for any incurred charges.

Upon admission to Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, you will first meet with one of our intake personnel who will review intake paperwork and set you up in our system. Please provide necessary demographic and financial information at this time. Please be prepared to provide necessary paperwork. You will then meet with Mental Health Court staff and complete a comprehensive assessment and orientation to the program. Information about your symptoms, substance use, treatment history, and other relevant topics is included in the assessment. We ask that you be open and honest during this assessment process. Please anticipate this initial appointment to last at least three hours.

Treatment Procedures

CBHC provides treatment through a team approach with the combined resources of the probation office and the assigned treatment staff. The treatment team will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to the Mental Health Court Judge that you receive outpatient or residential treatment.

If admitted to a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. If not admitted into a residential treatment program, a multi component, outpatient program is available which includes: group therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, monitored drug testing, life skills, and case management.

Treatment Plans

You and your treatment team will develop a treatment plan following a comprehensive assessment of your problems and needs. The plan will act as a guide for your initial treatment phase and within it, you will set goals, select methods for meeting those goals, and develop target dates for achieving those goals. Treatment plans will be updated every six months, upon changes in services, and otherwise as necessary.

Your case manager will develop a service plan after the case management assessment.

Drug Testing

You will be drug tested throughout the entire treatment process. You will be randomly tested a minimum of one time per week. The Mental Health Court Judge will have access to all drug test results including any failures to test and may order a drug test at any time. Tampering with the drug/urine test, including but not limited to flushing, diluting, devices, cleansers, and using substitute urine, will be deemed a positive test and may result in your expulsion from the program. However, a positive test will not automatically disqualify you from the Mental Health Court Program. The Judge will be reviewing your overall performance in the program.

You may be subject to, at your own expense, random chemical tests including but not limited to blood, urine, saliva, and polygraph testing.

Honesty is a cornerstone of this program and required in all aspects of your treatment and recovery. As such, your honesty regarding drug & chemical testing and substance use, as well as your overall progress in the program is considered in any sanctions given by the court.

Drug Test Report

SITE (Hospital / Ward / Unit)		Date of Error DD MM	
TYPE OF TEST/SPECIMEN: <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Hematology <input type="checkbox"/> Microbiology		(please print and <input type="checkbox"/> ology <input type="checkbox"/> Transfusion PHN # (o	
PATIENT ID		ACQUISITION ERROR TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> Misspelled	

Counseling

Counseling comprises two separate formats: individual and group. As part of your treatment plan, you will be required to participate in both types of counseling. Together they help you develop self-awareness, realize self-worth, and develop the strength to practice self-discipline. The individual and group counseling sessions will include problem identification and alternative solutions.

Attendance is reported to the Judge as part of your progress report. You must have prior permission from your counselor to be excused from a counseling session (an acceptable reason for absence is hospitalization and documentation from the hospital will be required).



Medication Management

Charlotte Behavioral Health Care provides psychiatric assessment and pharmacological treatment for psychiatric disorders. Your first appointment will be approximately 1 hour & 15 minutes. Following appointments are approximately 30 minutes long.

Prior to meeting with a psychiatric nurse or psychiatrist, the nurse will measure your vitals (blood pressure, weight, waist circumference). At your appointment, your provider will let you know when they would like to see you again and provide a prescription for that time only. We will not provide phone refills for medication; you must schedule an appointment when you need a refill or change of medication.

Patients who take psychotropic medications should not discontinue medications without consultation with their medication provider and the treatment team prior to making any changes. Any changes should be done with the permission and assistance from medication provider and the treatment team.

Please report any side effects to the nurse.

12-Step Meetings

Attendance will be required at 12-Step meetings such as Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and/or Cocaine Anonymous at the discretion of your treatment team. The frequency of attendance requirement is determined by your progress in the program and your phase level. Attendance is an important part of your recovery process to help you become familiar with the 12-Step philosophy, help you develop levels of trust, and help you earn and create social bonds with other recovering addicts. Your treatment team will provide you with information regarding the time and location of 12-Step meetings and will direct you to special interest and recovery events in the community. You must provide proof of attendance to your case manager each week.

Education, Vocation, & Employment Programs

Recovery means developing self-sufficiency and becoming a productive and responsible member of the community. During the treatment program, you must be employed or involved in an educational, volunteer, or vocational training program. Your case manager will work to assist you in obtaining an assessment of your needs and skills and will refer you to the proper agencies for education, training and job placement.



Social Services & Case Management

A case manager is assigned upon your entry into the Mental Health Court program. Your case manager will assess your housing, transportation, family, and general living needs.

Case management activities include: assessing needs; planning service strategies and supports; advocating for and linking you with needed resources; educating and informing you and your family if needed or requested about local and state resources, self-help and advocacy groups; coordinating and linking the delivery of services; monitoring services and outcomes; analyzing and evaluating service and supports all in reference to reducing the number of hospitalizations; and attaining your goals and long-term desired objectives designed for the best possible outcomes for Recovery and Resiliency of the consumer.

Case Management services require a minimum of monthly home appointments with each person served. Case management does not provide transportation to appointments but can help to link you to transportation services in the community. Case management can also work with your other treatment providers to coordinate services on your behalf and advocate for your needs; however, your case manager will not remind you to take medications or bring medications to your home.



Graduation

Once you have successfully completed the treatment plan developed for you, you will graduate from the Mental Health Court program. You and your family are invited to join the Court as the Mental Health Court Judge congratulates you on your successful completion of the Mental Health Court Contract and treatment plan and achieving your goals.

In order to graduate from the Mental Health Court program, you must meet the following criteria (or at the discretion of the Mental Health Court treatment team and committee). You must:

- be compliant with treatment recommendations.
- maintain acceptable level of sobriety (to include no positive and/or diluted drug tests) as determined by the Mental Health Court treatment team.
- obtain a reliable and adequate source of income and/or support.
- be up to date on your court fines & fees.
- complete required community service hours.
- complete a Plan for Ongoing Recovery.
- write an essay of a minimum of two full written pages explaining about your experience with Mental Health Court and how the program impacted your life.
- complete all court-ordered educational and/or counseling programs (Batterers Intervention Program, Shoplifters Alternative, parenting classes, substance abuse education, DUI class, etc.) as outlined in your Intervention Plan.
- demonstrate stability of your Mental Health symptoms and behavior as determined by a licensed mental health professional.



Conclusion

The Mental Health Court program has been developed to help you and to return you to the community as a productive and responsible member. The Program is voluntary and is your personal choice. The Judge, the Court staff, and the treatment team are present to guide you and assist you but the final responsibility and the pride in accomplishment is yours.

We hope this Handbook has been helpful to you and answered your questions. If you have additional questions or concerns about the Mental Health Court program, please feel free to ask them.

Important Addresses & Phone Numbers

Charlotte Behavioral Health Care

1700 Education Avenue, Building B
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 347-6439

Office of the Public Defender

350 E. Marion Avenue, 1st Floor
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 637-2181

Office of the State Attorney

350 E. Marion Avenue, 2nd Floor
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 637-2104



Charlotte County Court Administration

350 E. Marion Avenue
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 637-2281

Department of Corrections

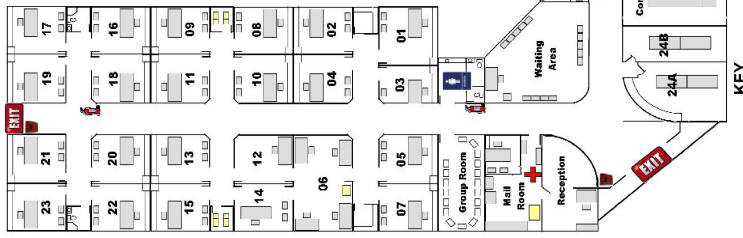
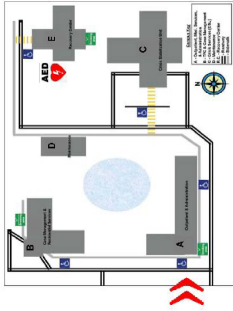
Office of State Probation
121 E. Marion Avenue
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 575-5740

Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY PLAN

In Case of Emergency Evacuate the Building using the Nearest Exit Away From Danger

Building A & Annex



KEY

- EXIT
- Alarm Pull
- AED (Defibrillator)
- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid
- Eye Wash Station
- Emergency Exit
- Furniture
- Equipment



Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to review your handbook.
Any questions or concerns may be
brought to your case manager.

We look forward to assisting you during your journey!



LEARN MORE AT [CBHCFL.ORG](https://www.cbhcfl.org)

(941) 639-8300
1700 Education Avenue
Punta Gorda, FL 33950