

***Changing Lives and Changing Outcomes:
A treatment program for justice involved persons with mental illness***

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Purpose of the Intervention

People with mental illness are more likely than people without mental illness to be in conflict with the law and encounter probation, jail, prison or parole. Historically, criminal justice agencies, correctional facilities, and mental health programs have not known how best to treat these individuals. When in mental health settings the treatment was geared toward reducing symptoms of mental illness. When in criminal justice settings the treatment has tended toward offender management.

As a person diagnosed with a mental illness and based on your placement on probation, you are part of our target audience. Based on research and years of clinical experience we believe you will be more successful (that is have more successful outcomes) if you have the opportunity to participate in a holistic treatment program that targets your issues of mental illness, but also targets factors that contributed to your involvement in crime. Thus, we developed the *Changing Lives and Changing Outcomes* treatment program to help you with both your mental illness and your involvement in crime. Our goal is that you will have more good days than bad days and that you will remain crime free while living in the community as you manage your symptoms.

Summary of the Intervention

Changing Lives and Changing Outcomes includes a comprehensive and structured treatment manual that provides your therapist a guide for each session. The manual includes a treatment plan for each session with specific structured exercises (for both in-group and out of group work) designed to teach objectives each session. The treatment program consists of nine treatment modules delivered over 74 sessions. Each session, as outlined in the manual, will last between 1.5 and 2 hours. Each treatment module targets a specific problem or concern related to issues of mental illness or crime or both. The treatment modules and primary therapy components are summarized below and presented in the order to be facilitated:

- 1) **Preparing for Change module** (3 sessions). The *Preparing for Change* module is designed to motivate participants to assume responsibility for change and attainment of goals. Prior to

participating in the treatment modules, you will complete three sessions specifically assessing your readiness to change and enhancing your commitment to change. In these three sessions your life goals are articulated and quantified, benefits of the *Changing Lives and Changing Outcomes* intervention are outlined, benefits of improved mental health and desistance from crime emphasized, and stages of change are outlined.

- 2) **Mental Illness and Criminalness Awareness module** (eight sessions). This module helps you recognize your psychiatric symptoms and criminal propensity. By developing awareness of psychiatric symptoms and your specific mental illness, as well as your criminal propensities, you will be able to utilize subsequent modules aimed at reducing mental health problems and criminal behavior.
- 3) **Thoughts and Attitudes module** (13 sessions). In this module we teach you how to identify, evaluate, and modify your thinking and general attitudes that contribute to your involvement in crime and that also impacts your ability to manage your illness. People that break the law typically think differently about the world and their role in the world than do people that do not break the law, and in this module we show you that how you think will impact how you act. We will then challenge you to develop new ways of thinking about the world so that you can achieve your life goals.
- 4) **Medication Adherence module** (five sessions). The *Medication Adherence* module will educate you about how your psychotropic medications help you and the importance of you taking your medication at a regular time and as prescribed by your doctor. To do this we will educate you about the physical aspects of severe mental illnesses such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and Major Depressive Disorder, and the importance of medication in the treatment of these disorders. We also will discuss with you the benefits and side effects of various types of medications. In this module we will also educate you about how to communicate with your doctor regarding your medications especially when you experience bad side-effects. Lastly, we will teach you coping strategies for dealing with undesirable side-effects.
- 5) **Coping with Mental Illness and Criminalness module** (eight sessions). This module will educate you on how to manage your problems, including problems related to mental health functioning and criminal behavior. The focus of this module is on teaching you to identify early warning signs of symptom and criminal relapse, developing a relapse prevention plan for mental illness and criminal behavior, and how to cope with persistent symptoms of mental illness (such as hallucinations, delusions, depressed mood) and risk for committing crime (such as proneness to boredom, thoughts and attitudes associated with criminal behavior), and developing healthy and pro-social habits.
- 6) **Emotions Management module** (10 sessions). The *Emotions Management* module covers the emotions of anxiety, depression, and anger. The content of the module deals with these content areas as both antecedents of criminal behavior and as a disorder in which the status can be improved. Areas of depression and anxiety have shown an association with violence among patients, but anger made an independent contribution to the prediction of future violence (Skeem et al., 2006). Although anger is not a formal diagnosis, this area has

repeatedly been associated with violence and negative outcomes (Novaco, 1994; McNiel, Eisner, & Binder, 2003; Monahan & Steadman, 2001). Emphasis is placed on skill development for managing one's emotions.

- 7) **Associates module** (10 sessions). In this module we teach you the important role that your family and friends play in your daily behavior. That is, the people that you associate with will either help you or hinder you in reaching your goals. We then help you evaluate who you spend your time with (your associates) so you can identify antisocial versus prosocial people in your social network. Specifically, we will teach you the role your associates have in your ability to manage your illness and remain crime free, as well as teach you skills for developing new associates that will improve your situation and help you achieve your goals.
- 8) **Skill Development module** (10 sessions). The *Skill Development* module will help you develop better problem-solving skills, social and recreational skills, and vocational/housing skills. Specially, we will teach you a five-stage problem-solving strategy, teach you about expected forms of social behavior, work to improve your basic communication skills, and help you identify pro-social recreational activities. In this module we will also review with you basic job/house finding skills (including where to obtain information about available jobs/housing, applying for employment/housing, etc.) as housing and job skills are of critical importance to your long-term success.
- 9) **Substance abuse module** (10 sessions). In the substance abuse module we will assess your level of substance use, examine factors that lead to your use, and help you identify strategies to reduce substance use. This module will conclude with the development of a relapse plan.

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