



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD

Chesterfield County Jail Diversion Program

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Chesterfield County, VA instituted a post-booking jail diversion program in March 2003. This program was funded through SAMHSA's Targeted Capacity Expansion Grant. The DTT was developed after research found that the local jail had a number of people that were suffering from a dual-diagnosis.

The decision was made to modify current programming that existed with the local mental health and criminal justice system to meet the needs of this population. The current programming that was modified included the day reporting center, pretrial services and the mental health center.

The Chesterfield County/City of Colonial Heights Day Reporting Center (DRC) is a unit of Chesterfield County/City of Colonial Heights Community Corrections Services. The DRC program provides treatment for the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, intensive drug testing, intensive supervision, and an automatic graduated jail based sanctioning system.

Chesterfield County Mental Health (CMH) provides various services to a wide range of clients. These services include both case management and clinical services to substance abusing clients, psychiatric clients, and clients in crisis. Although they did a fine job in the delivery of these services, there was a gap in delivering these services to individuals involved with the criminal justice system.

The DRC and CMH joined together to develop a program that would utilize each of their strengths to provide these services to offenders suffering from a co-occurring disorder. The DRC had a strong reputation of providing substance abuse services combined with intensive criminal justice supervision to offenders. This reputation and experience was a key ingredient to gaining credibility with the court system. This service, now combined with the psychiatric services provided by CMH, created a program the judges could trust and was now capable of working effectively with dually diagnosed offenders.

The modifications to the existing resources included pretrial services playing a role in the identification of potential clients. The DRC was modified to more effectively serve those with co-occurring disorders. The severity of the jail based sanctioning system softened, the availability to transportation was increased and the types of counseling that are offered were modified. The CMH was extremely flexible in meeting the needs of DTT. They committed clinical staff to the

DTT and created a new offsite mental health office. These modifications have been difficult, challenging and exciting.

This DTT was conceived by two agencies, it was then submitted to a newly created steering committee for review and modification. This board was chaired by a General District Court Judge and included several Judges, client representative and other key leaders in both the criminal justice and mental health arena. This group met regularly to discuss policy and mold the program into the most effective tool for the local criminal justice system.

The DTT has been in operation since March 2003. The program has proven beneficial in cost savings and delivering of services that ultimately, positively affect clients' quality of life. The program is funded through June 2007.