

HSJCC INFO GUIDE

Strategies for Community Service Providers for Enhancing Communication with Correctional Facilities in Ontario

SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATING WITH CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

Building TRUST between community organizations and correctional facilities is the KEY to facilitating communication to better coordinate the care of individuals. Community agencies should establish contact with the Senior Manager of the correctional facilities to engage in a working relationship to facilitate communication.

TIPS TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION WITH CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Host information or educational sessions for correctional staff to understand:

- The function of community organizations
- The role agencies play in assisting individuals with mental health conditions, developmental disabilities, acquired brain injury, addictions and other human service needs

Host meetings with both community agencies and correctional staff to:

- Ensure meetings take place regularly
- Discuss individuals' progress and new cases
- Keep detailed documentation of all procedures and actions taken by both the community agency and correctional facility

Avoiding communication challenges:

- At each facility, establish a working relationship with senior management to understand specific protocols
- Both community partners and corrections staff should make it a priority to understand the protocols related to communication with external parties

KEY COMPONENTS FOR SHARING

- Establishing a clear channel of communication with the senior manager of the correctional facility
- In the event of an emergency or where critical information needs to be shared, contact can be made outside of regular business hours
- The operational manager should be contacted if a person has information about an individual as it relates to suicide ideation or other health/safety issues
- Best way to share information is through email or fax, followed by a phone call
- Follow-up calls should be made to the person who is involved at the correctional facility to ensure efficient communication and follow up
- Additional key personnel to connect with: Superintendent, Security Manager and Health Department of each facility

CONFIDENTIALITY

- In Ontario, health information is protected by the Personal Health Information and Protection Act
- When communicating with correctional centres, consent is needed from the client before healthcare providers can share mental health information, unless the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of eliminating or reducing a significant risk or serious bodily harm to the individual or others
- Information sharing pertaining to youth (under 18 years of age) who are involved with the criminal justices system is restricted under the parameters of the Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- Health care records requested for other than health care of treatment purposes shall require the written consent of the young person or their substitute decision-maker prior to being released