

**Southwest Regional HSJCC Commissioned:**

# CMHA Court Support Program Review; Southwestern Ontario (2014)

**Beth Anne Currie, Research and Evaluation Facilitator,  
Southern Network of Specialized Care  
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## **Executive Summary**

The SW Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee contracted the Southern Network of Specialized Care to conduct a program evaluation of the effectiveness of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) administered Mental Health Court Support Programs and the Regional Support Associates (RSA) administered Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager Program in SW Ontario. The CMHA Court Support Programs were located in Woodstock (CMHA Oxford County Branch), St. Thomas (CMHA Elgin Branch), London (CMHA Middlesex), Sarnia and Chatham (CMHA Lambton Kent), Windsor (CMHA Windsor-Essex Branch), Stratford (CMHA Huron Perth Branch) and Owen Sound (CMHA Grey Bruce). The Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management program serves parts of SW Ontario geography bordered these jurisdictions.

A court support program evaluation steering committee was struck in July 2013 and the program review was completed in June 2014. Members of the steering committee were selected from each of the CMHA court support programs in the review area. Members contributed to the development of the evaluation framework, the selection of instruments and provided lists and contact information toward constituents that would be engaged in the review. The project was conducted in two phases that included both an on-line survey aimed at cross-sector stakeholders unique to each of the CMHA-based regions as well as a series of semi-structure telephone interviews that were arranged with key justice professionals.

### **Summary of Survey Findings**

The survey was distributed via an imbedded survey link to key stakeholders in early February 2014 and closed for analysis on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. There were fifty-four (54) respondents from the following sectors: health care (14), justice sector (25), developmental services (5) community mental health (3) legal aide Ontario (2) children and youth (1) victim services (1) social services (1) and, ABI rehabilitation outreach (1). The respondents came from Huron Perth (15), Grey Bruce (10), Oxford Elgin (8), Middlesex (8) Lambton Kent (6) and Windsor (7).

A copy of the survey report was requested by 15 of the 54 respondents.

Respondents were in high agreement that the court support program is effective in their role toward supporting people with mental health issues both in court and in their communities. The respondents highly valued their role(s) in helping to plan diversion and release planning, as well as helping people understand court etiquette and proceedings. Another valuable role function is their role in system navigation toward other sectors such as the developmental and health care sectors.

### **Summary of Key Informant Interview Findings**

A semi-structured interview guide was administered via telephone to a broad sample of (26) justice professionals including: Justices, Barrister/Solicitors, Crowns, Assistant Crowns, Defense Counsel, Legal Aide, Probation and Parole, Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager, Youth Mental Health Court Support, Detention Centre professionals and Youth Mental Health within each of the six regions. There was strong agreement among interviewees that the MH Court Support programs provides strong support and advocacy for people with MH needs, that they are timely, collaborative, helpful, knowledgeable about adult services in community, integral to the court system, professional and that they go above and beyond to help people. Similarly there was an overall sense expressed that the court system today would not function without these professionals as they are well-committed to their work in assisting defense council and crowns and maintain an unbiased view in their presentation to the court.

### **Summary of Dual Diagnosis Case Management Program**

The on-line survey and the key informant interviews supported a diverse understanding about the scope and nature of the DDJCM program. The majority of respondents on the survey reported they do not work with the program and have limited familiarity with it. Both survey respondents and key informant interviewees signaled that they would like to know more about the program and derive a sense of how to make contact with the program especially in regions outside of London and Windsor. Survey and key informant respondents from London and Windsor had great familiarity with the DDJCM program.

### **Future Considerations for Court Support Program in SW Ontario**

The overall impression of stakeholders in this review was that the CMHA Court Support program is an essential, integral and highly valued service for both people with MH issues who come in contact with the law as well as the justice professionals who work to support the system

A recurring theme shared by interviewees was that it would be helpful if CMHA court support teams create intentional opportunities (at least yearly) for regular stakeholder (justice professionals) updates. These updates would serve to enhance communication and understanding about CMHA administered roles, the scope of practice within roles as well as relevant program information and referral processes within CMHA. Respondents offered that the updates could occur through 'lunch and learns' as well as in face-to-face meetings within professional practice groups (i.e. Crowns).

## **Introduction to the Study**

The research facilitator from the Southern Network of Specialized Care was contracted by the SW Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee to conduct a program evaluation of the CMHA administered Mental Health Court Support Programs and the Regional Support Associates administered Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager Program in SW Ontario. The CMHA Court Support Programs were based in main offices located in Woodstock (CMHA Oxford County Branch), St. Thomas (CMHA Elgin Branch), London (CMHA Middlesex), Sarnia and Chatham (CMHA Lambton Kent), Windsor (CMHA Windsor-Essex Branch), Stratford (CMHA Huron Perth Branch) and Owen Sound (CMHA Grey Bruce). The Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management program serves the entire geography bordered these jurisdictions. The review commenced in summer 2013 and was completed by May 2014.

## **Method**

Members of the Court Support Program Review steering committee were selected from each of the CMHA court support programs in the review area. Members of the steering committee contributed to the development of a logic model (a road map of goals and expected outcomes) as well as to an evaluation framework (i.e. a process to guide the review including the provision of data) to assist the facilitator's review of each program across the six regions. The project was conducted in two phases as described below. The Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management Program review was supported by management at Regional Support Associates.

**Phase 1** – an on-line survey was pre-tested and distributed to a wide sample of key stakeholder invitees located throughout the six regions. The invitees were derived from lists of cross-sector professionals who were most likely to have direct and indirect experience with the court support programs, and included participants from police services, developmental services, healthcare services, housing and social services, education and related justice professionals.

**Phase 2** – A semi-structured interview guide was administered via telephone to a broad sample of (26) justice professionals including: Justices, Barrister/Solicitors, Crowns, Assistant Crowns, Defense Counsel, Legal Aide, Probation and Parole, Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager, Youth Mental Health Court Support, Detention Centre professionals and Youth Mental Health within each of the six regions.

A summary from each phases of the evaluation has been prepared in the next section of this report.

## **Phase 1: On-Line Survey Summary of Findings**

The on-line survey was pre-tested and then distributed via survey monkey to key stakeholders in February and closed for analysis on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

## Survey Respondents

The on-line survey was completed by fifty-four (54) participants as was derived from the following sectors: health care (14), justice sector (25), developmental services (5) community mental health (3) legal aide Ontario (2) children and youth (1) victim services (1) social services (1) and, ABI rehabilitation outreach (1).

## Survey Respondents by Region

The respondents by region were: Huron Perth (15), Grey Bruce (10), Oxford Elgin (8), Middlesex (8) Lambton Kent (6) and Windsor (7).

## Connection with Court Support Program

The main way that respondents connect with the Court Support program is through service collaboration for clients with mental health (MH) issues (38/54), followed by either accepting (6/54) and providing (5/54) referrals to Court Support. A couple of respondents (2) indicated they did not work directly with Court Support and three (3) indicated they would like to work more closely with Court Support.

## Perceived Role of Court Support Program

Most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the role provided by the court support program:

- help the court system understand people with mental disorders;
- help people with mental health disorders understand court etiquette and proceedings;
- help people get charges reduced or withdrawn;
- help with release planning;
- help people get connected to the health care they need;
- help people connect to the developmental sector;
- help people access court diversion and court support; and,
- help people get specialized developmental services.

## Opportunity for Reflection

- About 56% (n=30/54) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the court support program could do more to help justice professional understand people with MH issues while 37% or (n=20/54) respondents agreed or strong agreed with this statement.

- About 26% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that court support program could do more to help families and caregivers understand more about the court system while 21% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

### Exploring Effectiveness of Court Support Program

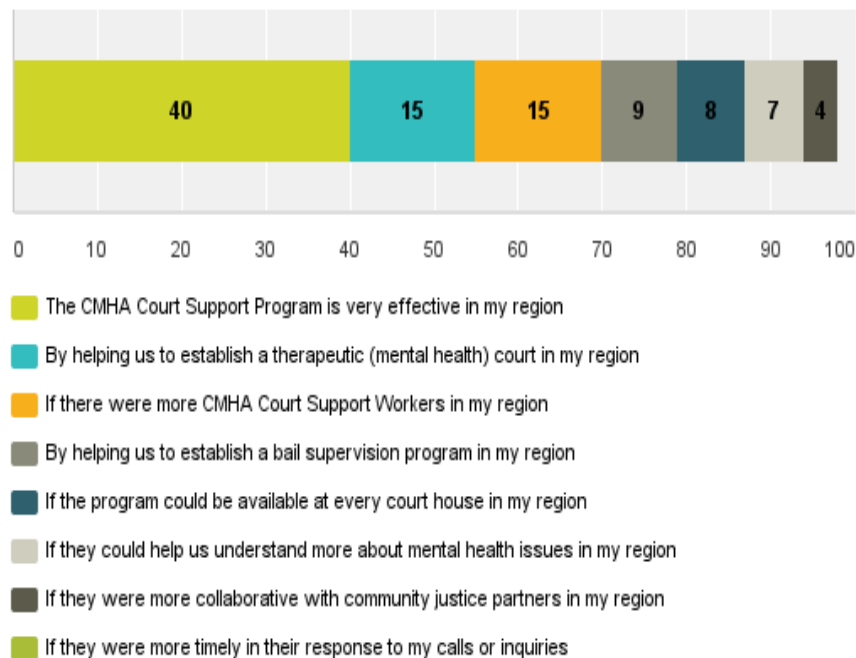
When asked to reflect on statements about the effectiveness of the Court Support Program in their region, (40/54 or 74%) of respondents felt the program was already effective in their region.

- About 30% of respondents reflected that they would appreciate help to establish a therapeutic (mental health) court in their region, and an equal number would appreciate more Court Support Workers in their region. A few (n=9) respondents reflected a desire for a bail supervision program, while n=8 hoped the program could be in every court in the region, and n=7 reflected a desire for more help in understanding MH issues, and n=4 desired more collaboration with justice partners.

In the chart below, the number of respondents and the percentage of agreement with each statement are provided.

### Q6 Exploring Effectiveness

Answered: 54 Skipped: 0





## Exploring Efficiencies of the MH Court Support Program

Survey participants (N=54) were asked to report on their agreement with statements about the MH Court Support program, with overall results pointing toward agreement and strong agreement that the MH Court support program:

- Acts on referrals and call backs in a timely way (76%-85%);
- Provides service for an effective length of time (74%);
- Provides adequate community case management service (71%) and Neutral (24%); and,
- The Court Support Program is perceived as a service system strength (96%)

## Other comments about the CMHA Court Support Programs (N=13 respondents)

- Addiction component must be taken into consideration, not dismissed and therefore deemed not a MH issue by some higher up;
- The program has been an excellent program, as the person who had been in the position was an excellent support provider. The person in the current role doesn't appear to have the same dedication to the job and therefore our Agency's involvement was not as positive as previously;
- I have had to work with the CMHA mental health support court support program on several occasions and it has been a very positive experience. The workers knowledge and rapport that is built within the courthouse is invaluable. Their relationships make going through the court process with individuals with mental health issues so much easier and efficient;
- More info and collaboration would be good;
- I have been working very closely with 2 specific workers -and have been beyond impressed with their compassion for their clients; they are well educated and speak up for clients. They have great rapport with the clients that we collaborate on;
- Any matters marked not applicable or neutral are as a result of not being aware of the CMHA worker roles/responsibilities;
- We work closely with Mental Health Court worker. Not aware that they are mandated for "case management" it has only been court accompaniment;
- They do an excellent job in the London Court;

- The court workers are doing an excellent job and are an integral part of the justice system and access to justice for individuals with mental health, developmental and other issues (FASD, dementia, etc.);
- Our Court Support Worker is a very dedicated individual, but with the recent closures of many mental health services, we require more support for the court support worker as it is difficult for her to do all the work on her own. More bodies would make the job that much more efficient;
- Current worker is proactive and has a strong effective relationship with our office in case planning;
- The Court Support Worker is great to work with and excellent at explaining to the client and family members what is happening with the courts; and,
- We have an active committed team of professionals in Oxford County who support MH clients, understand the court system and follow through with their sentencing obligations. One concern is that new staff members do not seem to have the same level of professionalism as the current team.

**The following Word Cloud (represents the most common words or phrases provided by respondents in this section)**

Clients CMHA Excellent Job (21%) Mental Health (29%)  
Support (36%)

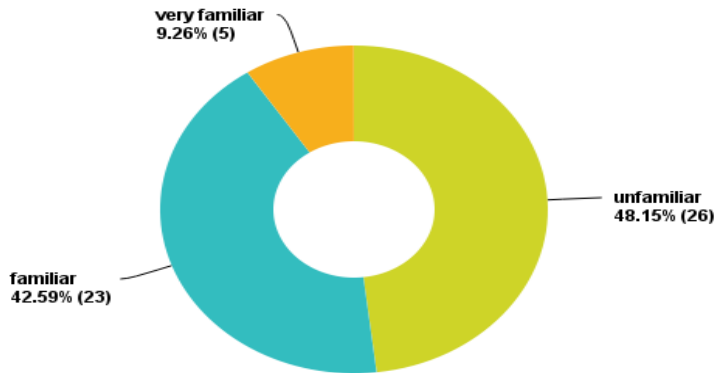
### **Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management in SW Region**

Survey respondents (N=54) were asked about their familiarity with the Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management program in SW region. Figure 1 below illustrates that about 50% of respondents are unfamiliar with the program while the others were familiar or very familiar with the program.

Figure 1

### Q8 Familiarity with DDJCM Program

Answered: 54 Skipped: 0



### Interactions with DDJCM Program

When asked how respondents interact with the DDJCM program about 66% of respondents report that they do not interact with the program. About 11% of respondents suggested they refer clients who have dual diagnosis to the program and another 11% shared that they work together to make court services work for people with dual diagnosis. Others report that they work together to access court diversion and court support.

### Effectiveness of the DDJCM Program

When asked to respond to a list of statements that described the DDJCM program in their region. The (N=43) respondent replied as follows:

- *I have never heard of the DDJCM Program* (N=15) were neutral while (N=20 or 46%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and (N=9) agreed or strongly agreed;
- *Program makes the court experience better for people with dual diagnosis* (N=26 or 61%) were neutral while (N= 16 or 39%) said agree or strongly agree while the others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program helps people who may lack a formal diagnosis* (N=28 or 65%) were neutral while (N=11 or 25%) said or agree or strongly agree while the others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program returns calls and inquiries in a timely way* (N=30) were neutral while (N=11) said agree or strongly agree while the others disagreed or strongly disagreed;

- *Program helps people with dual diagnosis avoid court, jail and/or detention in my region* (N=26) were neutral and (N=12) said agreed or strongly agree while the others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program maintains long wait lists in my region* (N=35) were neutral and (N=2) agreed or strongly agreed while the others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Programs seems restricted by distance to serve clients with dual diagnosis in my region* (N=32) were neutral while N=4 agreed or strongly agreed while others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program helps people with dual diagnosis get the court services they need in my region* (N=24) were neutral and (N=14) were agree or strongly agree while others disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program currently meets the needs of people with dual diagnosis who make contact with the CJS in my region* (N=29) were neutral and (N=9) were agree or strongly agree while the rest either disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- *Program currently does not meet the needs of people with dual diagnosis who make contact with the CJS in my region* (N=29) were neutral and (N=9) disagreed or strongly disagreed while (N=4) either agreed or strongly agreed.
- *Do not encounter people with dual diagnosis in my region* (N=16) were neutral and N=25) were disagreed or strongly disagreed while (N=0) agreed.

### **Other Comments about the DDJCM Program (N=14 respondents)**

- No involvement with this program;
- Do not know the person or program; they cover a large region and do not come to Oxford;
- We don't have one that I am aware of;
- I would like to know more about this program;
- Don't know about the program ;
- Not sure if the clients that I see are dual diagnosis as most referrals say court support;

- Most of my clients have dual diagnosis - and it would be handy if on referrals, there was a note from court support specifically about their dual diagnosis;
- I have no idea what Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management means ;
- Had one contact with the DDJCM program - not sure why they were involved and still do not understand what their role is;
- I am aware of the program but don't work with them compared to the Mental Health Court Support program. More information sessions and awareness training would be helpful for those of us involved in the court system;
- We have little to do with RSA at the present time; since the program went to DSO, it is very difficult to access;
- Do not know this program;
- Just recently heard of this program. I have had no experience/involvement with the program to date;
- More court workers and justice case managers needed in the Windsor-Essex County Region; and,
- I have had limited involvement with this program; and, my experience has not been positive. I had a client complete the court process and his sentencing obligation before his "referral" to the program got to the top of their waitlist. Not an effective program if the waitlist outlasts court appearances.

**NOTE: Copies of the Phase 1 on-line survey summary were requested by (N=15) respondents**

## **Phase 2 Key Informant Interview**

### **Summary of Findings**

A key informant interview template was created to guide the evaluator and key informant through a consistent series of questions that were used during each of the pre-arranged telephone interviews with key stakeholders from the justice sector across the six regions. A total of 26 key informant interviews were completed with a varied number from each region depending on availability and willingness to be interviewed.

Each key stakeholder was invited to participate through a series of email invitations and/or direct phone calls to office assistants who helped arrange a convenient telephone interview time.

The next section of the Phase 2 key informant interview report is organized by region.

## **Windsor Essex Region**

**A series of 11 key informant interviews were completed from the following sectors:**

Police services 2  
Justice 1  
Barrister/Solicitor 1  
Probation/Parole 1  
DDJCM 1  
Youth Court Support 1  
Assistant Crowns 2  
Legal Aide 1  
Jail Professional 1

### **Overall impressions of the Court Support Program**

***Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion***

All of the Windsor-Essex justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship as professional, cooperative, positive and effective.

### **General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program:**

- They provide strong support and advocacy for people with MH needs (9), timely (6), collaborative (4), helpful (4), knowledgeable about adult services in community (4), integral to court system (2), very professional (2), we rely on them heavily (2), go above and beyond to help people, court wouldn't work without them, very committed and work well with defense council and the crowns, , well informed, documents in order, reliable, "despite our somewhat adversarial role, the 672 court works collaboratively on a continual basis."

## Main Impacts of the CMHA Court Support Program

### *Impact on Clients and Families*

- They are a resource for the Crown and the courts; courts need their expertise to help with diversion planning (3);
- Clients are supported by CMHA to be in relationship with the “court professionals” and be more at ease in court (3);
- Think less jail time. They help reduce recidivism; they provide a connection to treatment; clients don’t getting lost in the process; (2)
- We are kept in touch through these MH professionals – whether they be the MH workers or a psychologist or psychiatrist; primary goal and outcome is to re-connect the client to services if they’ve lost contact;
- They’re in a supportive role and help to explain what’s going to be happening to the client; CMHA works with who’s ever there (i.e. the family) and they connect them to services; they talk to the Crown about what’s happening so that MH is taken into account in the ruling;
- They stream clients toward psychiatry services including nurse practitioners or doctors; also connect them to a CMHA worker if they don’t already have one; this helps get clients to appointments and streamline them;
- Helps when they are at court as they pick up client that may not have known about the service ; they provide client/family information about what is out there....as well as how to act in court;
- They are advocates for people with MH issues; keeps them from pleading to something that they haven’t done; someone explains the “system to them” and looks at other options;
- They’ve offered a more streamlined to access for youth and health services; they are the gate keepers into MH support/services; they are a great resource; easier for Justice professionals to “send them down” as they have an office in our court building; get them connected sooner; people with MH problems can deteriorate quickly; the program expedites people toward help, and they help justice folks learn about MH issues including treatment, medication, and options;
- They uphold “fairness”; without the 672 court people with MH issues wouldn’t even be identified; we wouldn’t be able to deal with their MH issues and their sentence wouldn’t reflect it either;

- Information sharing is so much better as we want to make meaningful “conditions” and they act as a go between; when CMHA intervenes they get a safe bed, or an apartment for the clients; my ethical obligations are that people do not serve time in jail for something unwarranted; and,
- They speak on behalf of people with MH issues; they are vulnerable people and CMHA ensures they get fair representation; assist with treatment plans; make sure they don’t slip through the cracks.

### *Impact on Justice Professionals*

- they are a resource; extra support for us; they educate us on every single case we do (i.e. more understanding of the MH system); we are not MH experts; we are experts on the law; (6)
- CMHA gives us a better idea of what community resources are there for a person; excellent collaboration ;(2)
- CMHA provides the summary of the person’s difficulties and problems and that leads to the lawyers being better prepared to ask for certain things on sentences; and,
- They benefit high risk clients we all need to get on board and bring a team together to work collaboratively for community safety; these services benefit the offender and the community by dealing with the risks.

### *Impact on Court Proceedings*

- They help with the flow and court processes in general; (4)
- They make the proceedings move along more smoothly... the support worker helps clients navigate through the system and ensure the right information is presented in court; (2)
- They have impacted us through the Therapeutic Court (CMHA was the spear-head in developing this court); now certain justice professionals are “assigned to the MH court” as they have the knowledge..... so offenders see the same group and this good for clients; CMHA was the lead in getting this court including some champions in our justice system; and, (2)
- They influence the amount of patience we show or have and shape the ultimate sentence we give...it’s a factor to consider in terms of what conditions occur i.e. duration of probation....all things are considered; they are concerned with the rightness of things.



### **Impact if CMHA Court Support Program was ceased**

- Clients would end up in jail more often; higher rate of recidivism; (7)
- We'd be lost; it would be terrible for clients and families and justice professionals; (3)
- Not good at all because there is such a need; there are so many MH issues in the community and MH offenders are a huge issue; there are already people that don't get into the MH court that should be there;
- We rely significantly on them; it would be disastrous for clients with MH issues; they would not have a "voice"; we need CMHA perspective to advocate on their behalf; it was a tragedy that brought the HSJCC to the justice system; the errors of the past could resurface again; predict that 90% of people with MH disorders would go untreated and not get conditions;
- We'd lose the connection CMHA provides to community MH services; and there would be less education for all justice professionals; it would lead to more custody and more punitive sentencing, their probation orders would be influenced;
- We'd be putting "dates over" because clients wouldn't attend appointments ....maybe wouldn't be well enough (health wise) to attend court as they may not be on their meds; and,
- We take pride in MAG about making "meaningful court appearances".....it could lead to many needless court appearances and we'd have many adjournments, or, clients would fall through the cracks.....things would bog down.

### **Improvements or Suggestions for CMHA Court Support Program**

- Can't think of one improvement they could make; (4)
- We need to know more about CMHA; it would be great if we went to their office – a lunch a learn – walk us through the process - show us the flow processes i.e. what's a day look like for a CMHA court support worker ?; we could better represent CMHA to "people" or to family members who have MH issues;
- Don't think there is a way to do the job any better; they are available and are on call all the time; they have at least one worker there every day; they go to court and meet their regular clients too;
- Developing a way or a new form to have waivers or releases that go both ways; there's a sub-committee through JOT taking a look at how to get releases signed (e.g. SW signed on behalf of client); this is especially needed with high risk offenders...they need a circle of care for their own safety;

- They have recently divided up their program into Release from Custody and Court Support; there is some confusion about what the differences are and if they are practicing these differences; it appears there are 5 court support workers and they can all appear to be doing the same thing; it's about education and awareness and delineating roles more clearly; and,
- CMHA is very much needed in family courts; there are no supports there and families see lawyers who are not social workers and are not well connected to community resources and have no time to do this.

### **Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management Program**

About 8/11 (72%) of justice professionals were familiar with the DDJCM Program in this region.

### **Trends or Observations about Developmental Disabilities in Windsor**

- We are seeing a few more people with developmental disabilities; community living has more involvement lately and we are seeing a few people that are dually diagnosed; we are lucky to have strategies to put in place to help these people (2)
- Because of the MH court we are more aware of people with developmental disabilities in our court;
- Currently we have several clients with Dual Diagnosis and this fluctuates throughout the year;
- Seeing about the same number of people with Dual Diagnosis overall;
- About the same average (10-15 referrals for Dual Diagnosis) in our agency;
- Seeing a few more people with disabilities; they are very vulnerable. More difficult for them to stay away from the law; we contact RSA for help; and,
- DDJCM reports they are seeing “a lot more” clients with Dual Diagnosis each quarter; referrals coming from defense council, CL Windsor, CMHA (court workers because they are in court every day), and the youth court workers.

## Oxford Elgin Region

A series of 3 interviews were completed with the following justice professionals:

Duty Council 1  
Defense Counsel 1  
Crown Attorney 1

### Overall impressions of the Court Support Program

**Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion**

All of the Oxford Elgin justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship as professional, positive and effective.

### General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program

Reliable; excellent; very knowledgeable; punch above their weight; we have MH diversion and that is really where they've hit their stride; our MH diversion program is important and "one of our prides"...something that has evolved into a technical and detailed evaluation program with reports and detailed assessments; our strength is the people; they are supportive, present on the ground and close by and a phone call away;

### Main Impacts or Outcomes of the CMHA Court Support Program

#### *Impact on Clients, Justice Professionals and the Court Process*

- CMHA has helped us reduce fear among Counsel and provide us with a sense of relief and that what's going on will be communicated to the client accurately; also that somebody is working on behalf of the "client" (2)
- Clients have better understanding of the justice system and have less fear;
- Clients get the help they need with MH services (families too);
- CMHA becomes the comforting face of someone who "isn't a lawyer" but one who knows how to 'talk to the talk';
- CMHA moves diversion along and makes it happen; as of June 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 we will have a community treatment court; CMHA is a main player;

- We (justice professionals) know what they do with people who have MH illness and can represent them better;
- CMHA has helped us understand mental illness ...the kinds, the meds, the way it presents in the court room;
- CMHA has taught us how to communicate with people who have MH issues in a way that is less intimidating;
- -CMHA ensures the diversion program is a smooth process for the court to deal with; everything that can be done is being done; and,
- -CMHA plays an important role in helping to ensure people do not end up in Detention.

### *Impact if CMHA Court Support Program were ceased*

- People with MH issues would be marooned and it would be hard for them; they could not navigate the system;
- Highly detrimental for people with MH issues; the CJS is not a good place for many people in particular people with MH issues; if I had a family member with MH issues, I would hope they would not be going to EMDC...
- It would be upsetting; it would be wrong; we need those people; it's a very regular part of our system now;
- Duty council will not be able to help people with MH issues alone; there would be no ongoing support;
- There would be anguish; and much screaming, hollering and angry judges;
- Would slow down the system because we would spin our wheels; people with MH issues would take longer to be processed and may not get things well explained to them; and,
- Terrible for the administration of justice (JOT)...and bad for people and a backward step...i.e. back to the bad old days.

### **Improvements to Court Support Program**

- Beneficial for CMHA to be in Family Court; they could really help kids and families as well;

- Nothing specific beyond if you ever hear from staff that they feel “overworked or not enough resources” ....then they probably really need more resources;
- They do a good job for us - it appears seamless;
- Generally they make it to help us within 30 minutes but 15 might would be better; other than that, there is nothing to suggest that would be more helpful;
- They need more resources and if they had more local options it would be better for the people of Oxford (i.e. housing opportunities; and,
- CMHA spend a lot of time making arrangements to occur for clients in other jurisdictions because we do not have enough resources in Oxford; they have developed a physical presence in the building that is needed i.e., they represent a conciliation format.

### **Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management Program**

Of the three key informant interviewees none had heard of the Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management Program or the role defined as a court support resource to help facilitate people who have developmental disabilities or dual diagnosis who make contact with the CJS.

### **Trends or Observations about Developmental Disabilities in Oxford Elgin**

- See these people and we are concerned about the number of people that cannot read; not sure if they are developmentally disabled. Not seeing more than other years, but thinks there is an improved overall understanding of brain disorders like FASD...as we are all more aware of these illnesses;
- Have some experience (was on the Board of WDDS) and probably see about the same number of these clients as other years but seeing a lot more folks with MH issues; and,
- Oxford County is getting better at diversion ...so that may mean that some of these folks with Dual Diagnosis are not in the system and are getting diverted.

## Huron Perth Region

**A series of 6 interviews were completed with the following justice professionals:**

Duty Council 2  
Crown Attorney 2  
Defense lawyer 1  
Justice 1

## Overall impressions of the Court Support Program in Huron Perth

***Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion***

All of the Huron Perth justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship as professional, positive and effective.

## General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program:

- They are invaluable (3); it's a very good program (one stakeholder used the word fabulous) with knowledgeable people working in the program (3); they put the client in touch with community resources and write good reports to/for us Crowns (2); "excellent workers who personify the program in Perth with grace and efficiency"; they walk a tight rope between the MH system and the judicial system – not easy; "I'm in shock about the number of MH clients we see here in this jurisdiction"; the worker is so professional and goes further than they need to;

## Regional Concerns expressed by Stakeholders

- We are busy jurisdiction with MH cases;
- Have very few conditional charges (denied);
- Some level of perception that these cases shouldn't be in court;
- Our people with MH issues spend time in jail or detention (Stratford Jail is full) i.e. if sentences are less than 3 months they stay in community but many times they should not be getting custody orders;
- More should/could be diverted in a town of only 50,000 people;
- There are different perceptions/understandings of MH issues held by the justices at the Ontario Court compared with the Superior Court in this jurisdiction; and,
- Some lawyers find Perth a challenging jurisdiction to work in.

## Main Impacts of Court Support Program

### *Impact on Clients and Families*

- CMHA is indispensable as a support program and follow up for MH clients who have no one; they are a go-to person and can make referrals to appropriate programming; it helps clients stay on track i.e. with taking their meds, managing court dates, and making human connections to talk to someone that will help them;
- CMHA bridges the gap and keeps the client informed; acknowledging their concerns that are outside the court system; gaps in community service is indispensable; peace of mind for clients ; and,
- While we don't exactly see what happens when they leave court, we believe that clients get the advocacy that they wouldn't get normally.

### *Impact on Justice Professionals*

- CMHA is an educational tool for everyone;
- Ensures that clients are seeing the right medical professionals and going to the right institutions and they keep them from falling through the cracks;
- It's a gentle-handed approach to getting what clients need; they need to understand they've crossed a line but that the community system appreciates that the reason they did that was because of challenges or difficulties and that these will be respected and acknowledged;
- We have less people in jail; the CMHA worker meets with me and we work toward diversion or get the charge withdrawn on the commencement of something suitable and/or we look for community services; jail does not work for these people;
- They assist in ensuring that MH issues are not criminalized beyond what they need to be e.g. Diversion – they say we can work with this person;
- CMHA can pinpoint the stressors for the MH client and understand their conditions; they act as a mediator between us and the client;
- They just help us make better decisions in our job and we stand behind them; they help us back up decisions i.e. what and where will person "x" go and what supports are available there; CMHA provides advice about supports in the community or custody; my decision making is that much easier; and,

- They save me hours of time in trying to deal with matters; also appreciate the emotion that is saved from me; hence, I can approach a case from a clinical point of view because someone else has done the heavy lifting of listening, engaging and spending hours with the client.

### *Impact on Court Processes*

- CMHA often emails the crown with updated reports so that diversion can occur and it saves us time in court; (2)
- The Justice system in Perth has a healthy respect for Court Support and realizes the efficiencies that result from the Court support program; CMHA saves court time, hours, resources, and money; and,
- CMHA is treated like an expert witness – ideally viewed as a balanced witness; in fact we do not engage in an adversarial processes; CMHA makes it collaborative and is the instigator of collaboration.

### *Impact if CMHA Court Support Program were ceased*

- It would add to the number of the court appearances and increase MAG budget, add more court days and bog the system down; (2)
- More stress for clients due to added appearance dates and no one there who understands them; (2)
- Crowns could not canvass for client information in advance; this would impact JOT because its mandate is for the Crown to make every court appearance meaningful for the client....so we aren't to put it over because we didn't have time to review everything; so without CMHA trying to advocate for the MH client, it adds time;
- MH clients wouldn't get help or supports and this would spiral them into getting back into the CJS in shorter order which would result in more costs for the CJS; and,
- Police would be impacted in a couple of ways, firstly, when we can get the person to see the CMHA worker...the (client) is out of everyone else's hands and is stabilized under the wing of someone that is effective for that case but also they become an advocate in an ongoing basis and secondly it is better to avoid a trial (impacts police resources) and better to have a resolution.

### *Improvements to CMHA Court Support Program*

- In a perfect world we'd have more of their (CMHA) resources; it's one of the last programs that should ever be cut or changed;
- Would like to understand more about CMHA programs in particular, a descriptor that explains exactly what role the court support worker can and can't do in the justice



system; for example, will they assist on a release plan or not? Never seen it done...and know they will do diversion but not sure how that process really works; what other services do they provide outside of this;

- Crowns would value a “data base” or some type of document that refers to a description of the program and who does what (stakeholders suggest they have no idea what some of the community agencies do and what MH problems they treat e.g. do they help with depression/schizophrenia or what type of MH disorder.
- Some suggest they would like a PDF document that could be carried with them at all times with contact details and names of the right people to contact at CMHA;
- Recommend that the CMHA workers speak to the “court”...either in the form of reading a written report or by making an oral report; suggests that things are lost in translation when a CMHA court support worker speaks to a justice professional; suggests that if a probation officer can speak to the court why can’t CMHA Court Support. Suggest this change in practice be explored and implemented. One advantage is that the victim would “hear” their advocate speaking on their behalf in the court and reflect both positive things and -negative things that are fair and balanced; CMHA workers have the expertise;
- Recommend that CMHA go into the jail to see people in remand; the court support worker is one person and currently is too busy as they are sometimes needed to appear in Listowel and in bail court and in trial court all at the same time on the same day;
- Recommend starting a MH Court (drug court) that would save our system time and money here; they could be combined....justice would be served better...1 court every two weeks; there is Crown support for this idea; and,
- Court support workers are ingenious and wracking their brains all the time; they need more resources and access to housing shelters and money to do this job.

## Dual Diagnosis Case Management Program

Of the 6 key stakeholders that were interviewed in this region, none were familiar with the DDJCM program or the role of the worker.

## Trends and Observations in Dual Diagnosis in Huron Perth

- Not seeing any more of these folks in court in Huron Perth; and,
- Not aware of that many people with Dual Diagnosis but wouldn’t be surprised if there’s more than we know or recognize.

## London Middlesex Region

**A series of 6 interviews were completed with the following justice professionals:**

Legal Aide 1  
EM Detention Centre 1  
Duty Counsel 1  
Criminal Lawyer 1  
Probation and Parole 1  
Crown Attorney 1

## Overall impressions of the Court Support Program

***Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion***

The London Middlesex justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship is strong, professional, timely, positive and effective.

## General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program:

- They are extremely helpful and very knowledgeable (3); collaborative (3); navigation experts; the building would not run without a CMHA court support worker (2); having a point person “right there in court helps manage my nerves and anxiety”; helpful and wonderful in terms of helping people with MH problems; approachable; good rapport building skills; excellent team approach;
- Very professional; very timely; they are up here first thing in the morning; have an office downstairs and we call the office at 07:30; “an awesome person”; we don’t deal with the Therapeutic Court; worker got an Award from the criminal lawyers here; and,
- It works really well; they are always available; we call them at their office...they are prompt; if someone has been arrested....they get into the cells right away.

## Main Impacts of the CMHA Court Support Program

### *Impact on Clients and Families*

- They have a real face to talk to and hear their concerns;

- They have support in court and in some communities the same worker is available when they get out of the CJS; these clients get lost quickly and reappear later and they know who their worker is...so connection is valuable;
- The court support program's advocacy piece in this court is key; they do a lot of talking with crowns and defense councils to make sure the person with MH issues is treated fairly and supported in the system; these individuals report feeling supported;
- The Special Needs Unit (SNU) at EMDC works with court support very closely especially with certain individuals; we know there are no SNUs in other facilities so we hold on to them a bit longer;
- Familiarity with the overall court system; to know some of these people by name (they remembers people's names)...there is a connection and when they are scared they go that extra mile to help people; that personal touch is invaluable;
- The biggest thing is connecting clients and families with community services; otherwise people might fall through the cracks; it really helps the court system; we are not social workers and we don't know what programs are out there or where to send people ...or what ideas would work for people; CMHA tracks people and helps them;
- People and families get the help they need on sight and that is key for us. When an agency doesn't come to court to support their members it's not good; we need CMHA there as many have profound challenges; clients need support after court appearances too; on sight guidance is important emotionally; also need connections to the hospital and the community because they cannot self-advocate; countless times CMHA has gone with the client to hospital and made a difference by advocating;
- CMHA assists in system navigation and helps people understand terms; they assist council and explain things in a meaningful way; if they weren't there it would be detrimental to clients; they are critical as client advocates; and help clients develop "self- efficacy skills"; and,
- CMHA assists clients who are going through the court system by providing supports in community (this helps reduce recidivism); help with finding beds in community.

### *Impact on Justice Professionals*

- Everybody knows they can depend on the court worker to know about community resources and who's out there; e.g. one lawyer needed to know if the client could get housing...and the worker made things happen; (3)
- The local criminal lawyers were so impressed with contributions from Court Support that an Award was created and given; (3)

- We remember life and times before the T-court and the court worker; there is someone to manage client behavior and there are a lot more lawyers comfortable going into the court because of this support; we know that a client is getting the help they need. When we started this court the “window” for getting in was very narrow.....but now more and more things are able to go into that court and barriers are coming down; (3)
- CMHA is extremely helpful for us and we couldn't do our job with these MH experts....how would we give our ideas on sentencing and provide bail proceedings without them? They are respected and trusted by the Crowns; they tell us about resources and find out things about client's background ...especially when we have a busy day with 30 people on our list; they can give and get information that we would spend all day on; (2)
- Just knowing there is a professional in court that can address needs; a voice for the offenders; advocating for the client informs a more realistic sentence such that they may not come back to court; we know that court or jail is not the right place for them; and if you have a client that can stay out for a month - we celebrate those accomplishments; and,
- That sense of community; being able to learn and lean on others; being able to identify that we're not criminalizing MH nor other disorders like FASD or IDD issues; we're saying it's ok if this isn't a perfect “fit” but what can we do together.....if we lost this program...it would be a huge blow for the population and there would be more money spent on policing for one thing.

### *Impact on Court Processes or Proceedings*

- Huge impact, for e.g. in Therapeutic court we have a compassionate judge and they have advocated for better discharge planning; they make the court see that thinking about a release plan is important; they have a worker that can hand-hold the client to the shelter and get them settled; community safety is increased with this program;
- There has been a big impact on court processes because they are so effective and it saves time and steps;
- They are integral to adult Therapeutic Court; we would not function without the program; they provide counsel and layers with information on fitness hearings which speeds things up; provides judges with information; provide updates to all members;
- They help reduce unnecessary bench warrants...and the court worker finds out why a client has missed their dates;

- Even if the person is found guilty we want to connect them to supports and get proper mitigation...even for clients with an NCR finding; if the reports are ordered and it's a friendly hearing....then we do it in that court room.
- We are lucky to have an effective judge so just the moral suasion of others connected to the community is recognized as important;
- The program is integral to the Therapeutic Court; it was set up years ago with no money and the court worked well and gradually funding arrived and people were good about sharing their time; the court relies on the expertise of the court support workers; the court (judge) will turn to the support worker and get input from them;
- We have stopped criminalizing MH with better understanding; they've impacted the whole court; and,
- CMHA is the quarterback to other community stakeholders because they are the first group in....including care about people with IDD...they are a hub.

### **Improvements to CMHA Court Support Program**

- While justice professionals feel that they "know" about the Court Support Program - when someone leaves their position it is difficult to get a handle on things because they all perform their roles differently; it would be helpful to know how to get ahold of them and to formally meet everyone individually and hear about how "they" plan to do the role.

### **Trends or Observations about Dual Diagnosis in London**

- People with intellectual and/or developmental disability and MH disorders are being seen in increasing numbers including those that don't have the formal diagnosis but would qualify; many don't make it to the Special Needs Offender Unit (SNU) because of their peer associations; despite being picked on some still refuse to go to the SNU; they are not forced to go. They tell us the stigma is too strong to go to the SNU; however, once their peers [who are looking out for them] go to the SNU they are more likely to go willingly;
- There are a lot more people with Dual Diagnosis, Alzheimer's and Dementia getting arrested and we want this to stop because it's unfortunate;
- We are seeing more people with Dementia, FASD and Alzheimer's and the court doesn't know what to do with them; at least there is the DDJCM program to help people with Dual Diagnosis;

- We have a huge population of these people; many are low functioning but the testing shows they are on the borderline; hence, we see a lot of Dual Diagnosis in court;
- We know more about people with Dual Diagnosis now compared to 25 years ago when we didn't look at responsive issues and mitigating factors; we know Dual Diagnosis offenders don't want to tell us what they "have"...[maybe they don't know]; we must enlist assessments on these offenders so they can get the help they need; overall we have earlier identifiers and more people on the justice side of the equation with training/education on FASD and Dual Diagnosis; and,
- Seeing about the same number of Dual Diagnosis but seeing a lot more MH issues.

### Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager Program

- Haven't had a lot of contact with this program since the DSO system came into place; really haven't accessed them as a resource and can't even tell you who is in that role since one professional left;
- Have not handed anything off to the program; our point of contact is the CMHA Court Support program and they know more than we do but we would hand off to DDJCM as needed;
- We know about the DDJCM program and we know about this pathway to service but we are more concerned about senior's with dementia ...and we are trying to figure out creative solutions; currently there is no one to send them to; same thing with FASD....they have charges and they have disabilities and comprehension issues; no easy pathways exist;
- DDJCM program is a very good one and we work well together; RSA is great; we are seeing more child pornography issues with this population due to easy access to the internet; we're dealing with mandatory minimum sentences now as well; one client changed the crown's mind to re-elect summary conviction (90 days) with RSA in the supported plan and a proper Psychologist assessment; indictment is more serious...and more porn cases proceeded by indictment require a mandatory minimum of 1 year;
- Worked with 2 client's through the DDJCM Program recently; we know who to call; and,
- There is someone in our court currently who has this.

## Grey Bruce Region

A series of 3 interviews were completed with the following justice professionals:

Justice 1

Crown Attorney 1

Assistant Crown Attorney 1

## Overall impressions of the Court Support Program

**Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion**

All of the Grey Bruce justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship as professional, positive and effective.

### General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program:

They are reliable; highly trained; very knowledgeable about community resources; supportive to clients with MH issues, provide very helpful reports they are only a phone call away.

## Impacts of the CMHA Court Support Program

### *Impact on Clients and Families*

- About 75% of the clients we see are related to issues of addiction including MH issues such as personality disorders; we know clients are driven to do things by their life circumstances and things that are not always within their control; anything that MOHLTC can do to reduce the stress that these people experience in court is a good thing; poverty is a driving factor as well and these people have had miserable lives; the CMHA workers are very effective in the court and in the community for this group;
- The court support program provides a chance for getting people's MH issues addressed as opposed to them being penalized for their criminal justice offences; they make a big difference;
- In court they provide the crown, the defense counsel and the judge with a MH context for the person before us (alleged to have committed an offense); they do this with knowledge of the technical and psychology terminology and they also make it all acceptable to the court; this is important because people with varying degrees of MH issues cannot articulate their issues due to an organic inability; and,

- They work like an ACT team in the community with follow up to make sure that clients continue to meet their appointments (especially in a large geographic area like Grey Bruce...e.g. getting transportation); they help keep their medical professionals updated; and facilitate the ongoing communication between everyone in the court system.

### *Impact on Justice Professionals*

- We (Justices) are very appreciative of the program; professionally it gave me a sense of accomplishment that we were finally addressing these MH issues;
- Helps to open my eyes about MH issues that aren't always highlighted from the police side of things;
- CMHA allows us to truly do our work as we all have an interest in supporting a safe community; CMHA gives us tools to work on re-habilitating people as they help to provide information to probation from the very first meeting including a full psychiatric summary page; we remember that probation doesn't have the resources to track this kind of stuff down. For example, if the person has delusions and won't be able to deal with probation CMHA gives them access to a smaller 1:1 counsellor;
- They help to increase the efficacy of sentencing and the carrying out of the sentencing and allow us to understand the context for how they are acting in community; "it's a radical thing for us Crowns to think about why someone would cold-cock someone on the street....and when we find out they are hearing voices as opposed to things like they (continued) doesn't like the colour of a person's hat...it gives us something to think about because we only see their "record"; CMHA pulls the rest of their lives together to present the whole person; they hold up the antecedent and make the person look human in a 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional kind of way; the client is more "alive to us" so that we can fully try to measure the criminality of their act versus symptomology....this is invaluable; and,
- Their role in the MH diversion piece is extremely important for us because we have a high degree of MH illness in Grey County; here we can do something for people and build less criminalized consequences so clients are better served; we trust the quality of the information we receive from CMHA.

### *Impact on Court Process or Proceedings*

- Makes it much better (streamline the approach) for us to work with people who have MH issues; (2)
- CMHA allows us to deal with long adjournments and uphold Justice on Target expectations; and,



- In Walkerton we attempt to have a separate day for MH issues so that people who are being monitored by CMHA are not lumped in with the full list. We are now living in the “interim” of losing a progressive Justice so now using “visiting judges” and it’s not quite as easy as it was before.

### *Impact if the CMHA Court Support Program was ceased*

- It would slow down the justice system; (3)
- We would be downloading things to probation i.e. pre-sentence reports and more; the advent of CMHA has allowed us to have upfront MH pre-sentence reports for the bail system, for screening and sentencing;
- People with MH issues wouldn’t be understood and would be directed improperly and less adequately; without CMHA people would be ‘at sea’ and be abandoned; they’d be involved in something else that would bring them back to the CJS;
- If CMHA stopped we would all be disappointed and frustrated; we all recognize that people need support and that most people want to be held accountable for what they’ve done and want someone to give them hope; we try to imagine how it feels to live with no literacy skills; we recognize that MH is an illness; and,
- We would be incarcerating more mentally ill people because our ability to understand and rehabilitate offenders would be decreased. Added to this, the societal protection - role of our sentencing would be increased which translates into far greater incarceration rates for the mentally ill within an expensive custodial system.

### **Improvements to CMHA Court Support Program**

- Perhaps provide more resources for this program;
- People can always improve what they do but we have no complaints and think their visibility is good; people get the information they need easily; access is consistent across the counties; reports are timely for the most part (sometimes they come the afternoon before)and are professionally done and respectful toward the fact that certain “offences” cannot be diverted; they share good information about the individual when we need it;
- We appreciate how visible they are in court; and at bail court as needed; not sure if the lack of “an office space” in court has been an issue before; perhaps they could get an office in Walkerton;
- It would be great if CMHA could afford another “field worker” for the peninsula as they could be a resource to the ACT team and the police up there; they could be proactive and check in on folks at their homes and see how they are doing; this might help decrease recidivism; and,

- Need more supportive housing for mentally ill in Grey Bruce -a big issue here.

### **Trends or Observations about Dual Diagnosis in Grey Bruce**

- Not seeing any more people with Dual Diagnosis in court; they are in there but not formally diagnosed yet and we need to deal with them; substance abuse and violence in the criminal court is increasing in Grey Bruce; and,
- Since 2005 there has been a steady increase in the number of people with MH issues...especially after we opened the methadone clinic in Owen Sound; people are relocating here to access the clinic and are self-medicating so we have people adding this extra dimension of drug addiction to their possible pre-existing MH issues; we are seeing a stable number of folks with Dual Diagnosis over the years.

### **Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Management Program**

Of the three people interviewed none of the justice professionals had heard of the program and were not familiar with the role nor the program

### **Lambton Region**

**A series of 4 interviews were completed with the following justice professionals:**

Justice 1  
Defense Counsel 1  
Duty Council 1  
Crown Attorney 1

### **Overall impressions of the Court Support Program**

***Note: a number in (brackets) represents the number of interviewees who shared this word or opinion***

All of the Lambton justice professionals were either familiar or very familiar with the CMHA Court Support Program in their region and describe their working relationship as professional, positive and effective.

## General impressions of CMHA Court Support Program:

They are very knowledgeable and supportive to clients with MH issues; they are proactive, seamless, helpful with diversions, invaluable and trustworthy. We are catching on to diversion now (better than 2 years ago even).

## Main Impacts of the CMHA Court Support Program

### *Impact on Clients and Families*

- The CMHA court worker coordinates the client's community services as opposed to letting people stumble through our system they get access to the resources they really need; (2)
- The outcomes have been better for clients at court; the results from their cases are more beneficial, for example, they get a diversion or a more lenient sentence;
- We have known and recognize that a significantly larger percentage of people come through the court system with MH problems than we can identify on our own; up until now we've had a CMHA representative; now we utilize 672 for (NCR regime) yet there are many others who don't qualify for help but really need it; and,
- In the absence of a CMHA court worker, people with MH issues wouldn't get as much attention or help as it would get left to a probation officer (post-conviction).

### *Impact on Justice Professionals*

- CMHA provides us with an education on MH issues as there are many of us who don't know much about MH and how it impacts people; we've learned a lot by listening; CMHA are a useful resource for the bench and crown because they provide insight into the MH problems and always have creative solutions; they provide structured sensible ways to divert clients or make the probation order more meaningful;
- CMHA provides us with useful options that we can suggest to the court or crown;
- CMHA has helped develop MH diversion;
- We need them for bail release planning as CMHA handles the client more carefully and thoroughly;
- CMHA makes dealing with this group of people that much easier for us and we have access to resources for help that we did not have before; our knowledge level has improved; the court worker doesn't pretend to be a psychologist or psychiatrist.....they are not about to proxy that role which is good; and,

- They provide us with additional information that we would never have if they weren't there every day; it would delay the sentencing and we'd make less helpful sentencing; these clients would be back through the CJS doors again; CMHA helps ensure our tax dollars go toward helping people...we all know how underfunded MH is in general.

### *Impact on court process or proceedings*

- As long as there have been MH court support workers in the court the outcomes for people with MH difficulties (outcomes) have been more beneficial and enlightened;
- Because they educate us we are more empathic; it's very easy for lawyers and judges and prosecutors to see things in black and white; for example, we could be thinking "that person is scary....so the best thing to do is isolate him from community and lock him up" ...and this is not the best way to deal with clients;
- CMHA gives people with MH issues someone to speak to that is more friend than foe; we have a lot of people with MH issues here and they allow us to craft an individualized sentence; CMHA gives us the ammunition we need to generate a sentence that is meaningful and helpful; anyone can say 30 days on probation...but let's make sure they are meeting with someone regularly in community and getting the help they need to keep them on the straight and narrow; more times than not when a client loses contact with the CMHA they lose their compass;
- CMHA's impact has been positive; a resource we didn't have before for a large segment of people that is now invaluable; and,
- The MH diversions have really increased over the last 2 years and this is a better option for people if it keeps them out of jail and off probation.

### *Impact if CMHA Court Support Program were ceased*

- Outcomes for people with MH issues would be bad; there would be more incarcerations and more costs incurred than there should be in our region; (3)
- People with MH issues would go unrecognized and undiagnosed and untreated and a lot would end up in jail;
- It would be potentially catastrophic as it would generate more business for the jails and police...and they are already too busy;
- The program would be missed; we would continue to be empathic and try to pass that along in the courts;
- We would continue to do what we do and ignore people with MH issues; so the impact would be that these clients would get warehoused instead of being diagnosed and would get criminal charges for benign reasons; and,

- We'd have to pick up what they do and we don't have time or resources; it would mean that the creative options for people with MH problems would no longer exist.

### **Improvements to Court Support Program**

- We have a relatively new person; all the transitioning over the past while has been disruptive i.e. amalgamation issues; continuity and sustainability of program issues; we were concerned about where the program was going; and think it's getting more clear now;
- Court support workers should have an office in the Court building; have not seen or met a court support worker in Sarnia as yet; recommend having court support workers available in all of the court buildings during court hours as the best model;
- Court support runs well in Chatham; couldn't craft appropriate terms of probation or a sentence without them;
- Haven't had a meeting about the current/new court support worker; would be helpful for the court support worker and supervisor to talk to us (as we used to do with the predecessor); recommend we have a 1 hour once a month; and,
- We could really use their help in the family law context; having someone to refer to for MH services and community connections would be so helpful.

### **Trends or Observations about Dual Diagnosis in Lambton**

- We don't see a lot of people with Dual Diagnosis here;
- There are no changes in the number we see here; very minimal and perhaps it relates to the fact that there is an under diagnosis of the Dual Diagnosis in this area;
- Not seeing too many people with Dual Diagnosis; can't quantify it at all; and,
- For us it's more about having people who can recognize and work with people who Dual Diagnosis have; we know they are here and we need help recognizing them.

### **Dual Diagnosis Justice Case Manager Program**

Of the four people interview none were familiar with the DDJCM program in Lambton.

## **Future Considerations for Court Support Program in SW Ontario**

The overall impression of stakeholders in this review was that the CMHA Court Support program is an essential, integral and highly valued service for both people with MH issues who come in contact with the law as well as the justice professionals who work to support the system

A recurring theme shared by interviewees was that it would be helpful if CMHA court support teams create intentional opportunities (at least yearly) for regular stakeholder (justice professionals) updates. These updates would serve to enhance communication and understanding about CMHA administered roles, the scope of practice within roles as well as relevant program information and referral processes within CMHA. Respondents offered that the updates could occur through 'lunch and learns' as well as in face-to-face meetings within professional practice groups (i.e. Crowns).

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