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ONE JAIL AT A TIME.

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JAIL REFORM TOOLKIT & RESOURCE GUIDE

EPISODE 8

In Miami, Jailing Fewer, Treating More

A PODCAST BY

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MacArthur
Foundation

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Hello!

Thanks for listening to 70 Million. Whether you're a seasoned criminal justice reform advocate, private citizen, educator, public or private sector leader, we appreciate your interest in finding solutions to the incarceration quagmire.

We've assembled this 70 Million Criminal Justice Toolkit for those ready to turn interest into action.

This resource guide draws from practical tactics shared by those who launched the initiatives chronicled in our episodes, including:

-- How to access and deploy public and private sector databases and legislative bodies to build reform solutions.

-- How to highlight individual stories of the incarcerated in order to drive organizational and grassroots action.

--How to harness citizens' willingness to engage in methodical, trial-and-error pilot efforts in order to build effective reform programs and movements.

Our hope is that this Toolkit can help get you started. Keep in mind that steps do not have to happen strictly chronologically. Use them and the questions to frame and shape change in your community and let us know about it.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TOOLKIT

Using the SMART model

The SMART model of program development and evaluation is an open-sourced method used by public sector, nonprofit and citizen/community groups to organize solutions-oriented projects.

Specific (Steps 1-4)

Measurable (Steps 5-6)

Achievable (Steps 7-8)

Relevant (Steps 9-10)

Timebound (Step 11)

STEP 1

Identify & Analyze Concerns

Be specific about what you are trying to achieve

Case Study -- Episode 8 of 70 Million Podcast: At least [400,000 people in jails](#) suffer from a severe mental illness. Without access to a range of support services and individualized treatment plans, people with severe mental illness can cycle in and out of jail for years.

The [Criminal Mental Health Project](#) of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida was established in 2000 as a jail diversion program for people with serious mental health problems who commit misdemeanors and some non-violent felonies, like theft or drug possession.



“Our community mental health system and our laws are antiquated systems, terribly fragmented and horribly under-resourced.”

Judge Steven Leifman of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, who created the Criminal Mental Health Project. Photo: Daniel Rivero

STEP 2

Identify and Convene Internal Division Representatives and External Stakeholders

What is the minimum personnel needed?

- List Must-Have Roles
- List Potential Ideal Individuals to Assume Must-Have Roles

Example: In 2000, Judge Steven Leifman of the Eleventh Judicial Court of Florida, created the Criminal Mental Health Project after a mentally ill man's parents begged him to find help for their son. The project now employs eight peer specialists, half of whom graduated from the project themselves.



“[The peer specialist is] part mentor, part case manager. He regularly checks in with the people in the program and makes sure they’re sticking to their wellness treatment plan.”

Reporter Nadege Green.

In the photo: Justin Volpe, peer specialist.

Photo: Daniel Rivero

STEP 3

Itemize Resources, Inputs, and Assets Needed to Achieve Solutions/Outcomes

What do we want to accomplish?

- Why is this goal important?
- Who should be involved?
- What resources are needed?

Example: Not long ago, defendants with severe mental illness in Miami-Dade County were housed in the jail's "Forgotten Floor," a psychiatric ward so notorious that the U.S. Department of Justice investigated its unsafe and deadly conditions. Judge Leifman's goal with the Criminal Mental Health Project was to keep those people out of jail and get them the help they need by:

- Addressing the underlying needs that lead people with mental illness into the court system
- Making hospitals, public housing agencies, nonprofits and the courts talk to each other and work as a team



"I stopped doing drugs, and I started taking my medicine and I started to feel better. It was like a miracle."

Justin Volpe, a peer specialist and former participant at the Criminal Mental Health Project, on how completing the program changed his life. Photo: Daniel Rivero.

STEP 4

Action Planning

Develop Framework & Timeline for Achieving Goals

Example: Working with doctors and mental health professionals who partner with the Criminal Mental Health Project, each participant receives a court-ordered wellness treatment plan designed specifically for their needs:

- Participants check in with the court at least once a month to make sure they're following their treatment plan, which lasts between six months and a year.
- Peer specialists also keep track of the participants and help them stay on track.
- The project has an agreement with pharmacies to be able to pick up and deliver medicine for participants.



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“Poverty sucks, man. You don’t have a phone, you’re running around trying to hustle up money. It’s tough out there. We’re trying to fix fragmented pieces of the system here.”

Justin Volpe, peer specialist at the Criminal Mental Health Project.

In the photo: Guerda Jean, who has had trouble starting the program. Photo: Nadege Green.

STEP 5

Measuring Progress & Efficacy

- Set evaluation criteria to determine progress & success rate
- Assess Legislative/Funding/Regulatory Barriers & Opportunities

Example: The goal of the Criminal Mental Health Project is to keep people with mental illness from cycling in and out of jail. Right away, Judge Leifman identified gaps in support services and a lack of communication between traditional and non-traditional stakeholders as major obstacles to this goal and worked to address these issues.

STEP 6

Support Desired Outcomes with Data and/or Metrics

Example: The program began seeing results within a few years. The recidivism rate dropped to a third of what it used to be and the daily number of people in local jails went down substantially. By 2014, the county was able to close one of its jails.

Recidivism rates among the
misdemeanor population



From 72% to 20% within a
few years.

STEP 7

Achievability Review

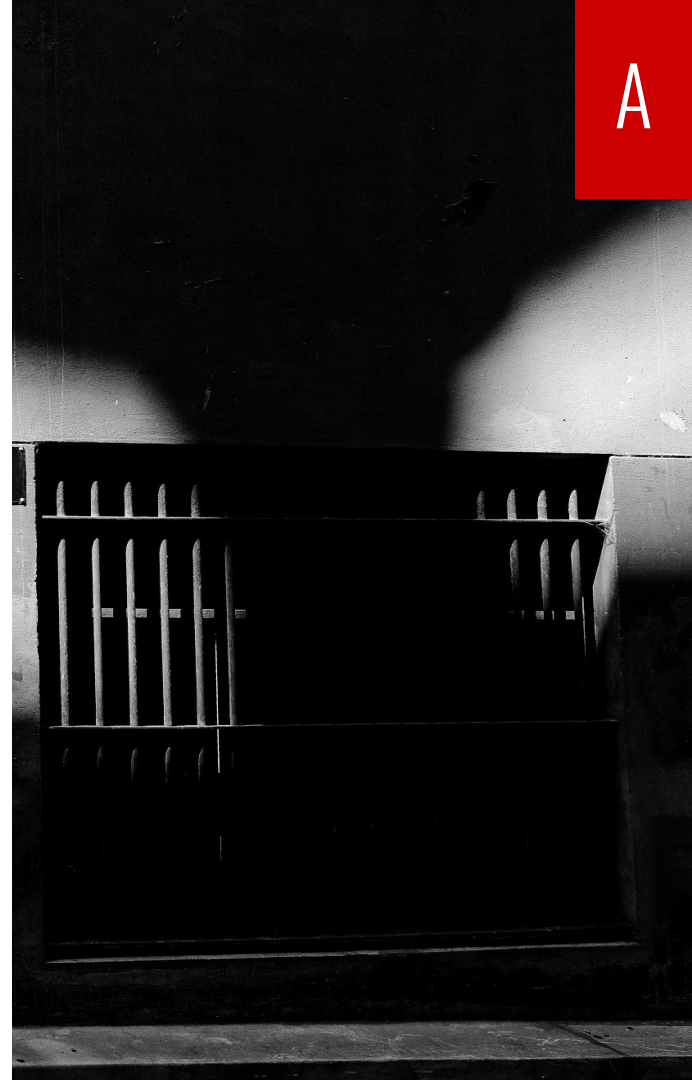
- Revisit whether goals are realistic and introduce flexibility in goal-setting
- Operational Oversight Assessment

Example: While 80 percent of the people who go through the Criminal Mental Health Project complete the program and graduate, the program doesn't work for everyone. Miami-Dade County has one of the most expensive rental markets in the country and housing is a serious concern for many who struggle to finish the program.

STEP 8

Program(s) and Asset Resource Monitoring

Example: To address the problem of homelessness among participants, the Criminal Mental Health Project is partnering with the Miami-Dade County and Jackson Memorial Hospital to transform an abandoned psychiatric treatment facility into a “one-stop-shop” for mental health and jail diversion. When it opens in two years, it will have offices for mental health and medical care providers, a courthouse and temporary housing for homeless people to live in up to a year.



STEP 9

Relevancy Check-Up

- Examine whether each milestone supports the overall vision
- Preliminary Outcomes Evaluation & Process Updates

Example: The daily jail population in Miami-Dade County has dropped from 7,000 to 4,000 since the Criminal Mental Health Project began. Judge Leifman says that the program has also saved the government millions of dollars by reducing criminal justice system involvement and emergency room visits for people with serious mental illness. Police officers who have been trained as part of the Crisis Intervention Team component of the program now bring people having psychotic episodes to mental health facilities that work with the project, instead of arresting them.

STEP 10

Full Program Review

Example: Now in its eighteenth year, the Criminal Mental Health Project is considered a model for other courts around the country. By bringing together everyone from medical providers to pharmacies to police officers, the program was able to reduce participant recidivism significantly. Judge Leifman is now looking to make the program even more efficient by creating a centralized location for participants to receive services, attend court and live.

“If you do it right, it actually saves money. It improves public safety. It spends tax dollars in a much more appropriate way. And it gives people their lives back and gives them an opportunity to recover.”

Judge Steven Leifman of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida

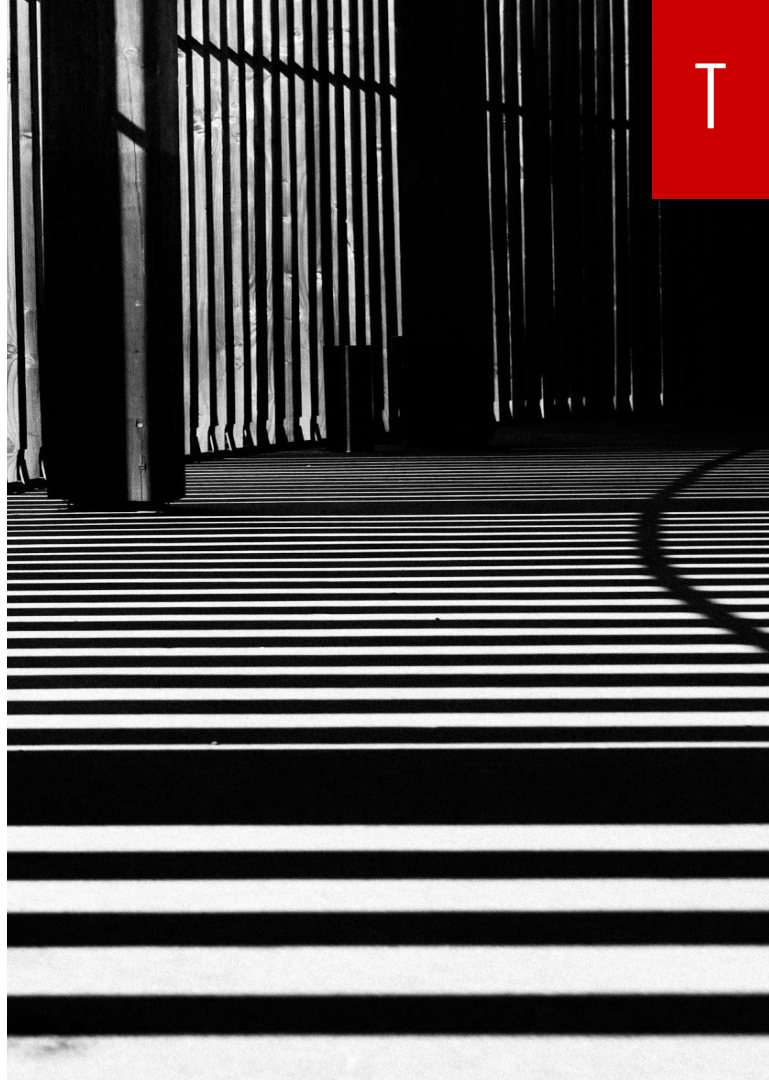
STEP 11

Ensure Reform Efforts Are Time-bound

How long does it take to achieve goals?

→ Are established deadlines realistic?

Example: The Criminal Mental Health Project began seeing drops in recidivism and jail populations within a few years of operating. The program began by serving only defendants with serious mental illness or co-occurring serious mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Since then, the program has expanded to serve defendants that have been arrested for less serious felonies.



RESOURCES

To get started developing a reform project on issues similar to those addressed by the Criminal Mental Health Project:

- Learn more about the Criminal Mental Health Project [here](#).
- Learn more the [Crisis Intervention Team](#) training for law enforcement officers that the project runs.
- Learn more how the [jail diversion program](#) works.
- Connect to others working on these issues with the [National Association of Drug Court Professionals](#).

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