

2015 Education Conference



New Challenges, New Opportunities, New Hopes

November 13-15 | Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany

Friday Award Winners and Featured Speakers



Thomas Dart,
Sheriff,
Cook County, Illinois
*Criminal Justice
Visionary Award
Recipient*



Judge Robert T Russell,
Buffalo Veteran's
Treatment Court
*Max Gabriel Veterans
Awareness Award
Recipient*

Focus Track on Improving the Mental Illness-Criminal Justice Interface

The Criminal Justice Track at the 2015 NAMI-NYS Education Conference will be taking place on Friday, November 13th.

Friday's plenary session scheduled from 12:15-2:15 will feature two national champions demonstrating how the criminal justice system can help drive recovery.

Cook County Sheriff Thomas Dart has continued to draw accolades and media attention for his incredible work of reforming Chicago's prison system to be able to properly address and rehabilitate inmates living with a mental illness. As the state of Illinois continues to cut-back mental health services Sheriff Dart's prisons have become Chicago's leading provider of long-term psychiatric care. His crusade has shown a spotlight on the disturbing fact that too many people living with a mental illness are in the correctional system as well as demonstrating the proactive steps that must be taken to address this epidemic. His transformative vision has been

featured by [60 Minutes](#), [Vice News](#), [The Atlantic](#) and Time Magazine has named Sheriff Dart as one of the “[Top 100 Most Influential People in the World](#).”

Buffalo’s own Judge Robert Russell revolutionized the court’s role in advancing recovery by creating the nation’s first veteran, mental health and drug courts. Judge Russell’s innovative work has been replicated throughout the country and is ensuring that people with mental health and addiction issues are guided towards the appropriate the jail diversion services and are provided the proper tools to advance their recovery.

The Criminal Justice Track Will Also Feature the Following Workshops:

10:30-11:30am Exploring Mental Health in Prison and Forensic Units

The session will explore how mental health services are delivered (or not delivered) within New York State’s prison and forensic psychiatric units. Among the topics discussed will be: How to train correction officers in CIT like training to teach them how to recognize and properly handle inmates with mental health issues; How families can be more involved in advocating for the care of a loved one within the correctional system; How potential trauma inflicted in the correction system impacts people’s long-term mental health and; The necessary services to properly reintegrate people living with a mental illness upon their release from the correctional system.

[Jack Beck](#), Director of Prison Visiting Program, Correction Association of New York

[Jayette Lansbury](#), Criminal Justice Chair, NAMI-NYS

[Facilitated by Sigfrido Benitez](#), NAMI-NYS

2:30-3:45pm How Jail Diversion Programs Can be a Tool to Guide Recovery

Programs that identify people living with a mental illness who enter the criminal justice system can be effective both in keeping people out of jails and prisons but can also be a powerful tool to guide people towards the proper services to progress their recovery. Programs detailed in this session include the [Sequential Intercept Model](#), [Crisis Intervention Teams](#), the [Stepping Up Initiative](#) and the NYS Defenders Association [Veteran’s Defense Program](#).

[Dan Abreu](#), Policy Research Associates

[Gary Horton](#), Director, Veterans Defense Program, New York State Defenders Association

[Don Kamin](#), Ph.D, Director, Institute for Police, Mental Health & Community Collaboration

[Phoebe Potter](#), Council for State Governments

4:15-5:15pm Understanding the Mental Health Impact of Solitary Confinement

The use of solitary confinement within the corrections system continues to expand. As solitary confinement has become more common, so have questions about its psychological impacts. Chief among those questions: What really happens to people deprived of social contact for months or years on end? These vital questions will be explored in this session, which will also feature the first-hand account of someone who has a mental illness and was put into solitary confinement.

[Barbara Kirwin](#), Ph.D

[Johnny Perez](#), Mental Health Project, Urban Justice Center

NAMI-NYS welcomes and encourages law enforcement and criminal justice personal to attend this session to learn this information and better address the needs of people with mental health issues. Contact Matthew Shapiro 518-462-2000, Matthew@naminys.org for a complimentary registration.