



# Berrien County Mental Health Court Participant Handbook



The Berrien County Mental Health Court (MHC) is a grant funded cooperative specialty court project between the State of Michigan, Berrien County, and The Berrien Mental Health Authority, the Riverwood Center.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Hello and Welcome to the Berrien County Mental Health Court (MHC) program. By choosing to be a participant in MHC program, you have already begun making positive choices that will affect your life in good ways. Through the MHC program you will have the rare opportunity to have strong communication and coordination between the Trial Court and your mental healthcare providers. This will help the court to make more appropriate decisions related to your case, monitor your probation compliance more effectively, and in short help you in helping yourself.

We are pleased to have you as a participant in the Mental Health Court, but remember, participating in this program is a privilege, not a right, so please act accordingly. This Handbook is designed to answer questions, address your concerns, and provide an overview of the Mental Health Court program. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given in Mental Health Court by the Judge and agree with the Intervention Plan developed for you. All participants are encouraged to share this handbook with his or her family and friends.

Good luck and remember even the longest journey begins with a small step. The MHC Team is here to support you in your journey on the road to success. Please let us know if you have any questions or if there is anything else we may do to assist you.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

You have the right to confidentiality throughout your involvement with the MHC Program. You will be required to sign a release of information which allows your treatment provider(s) to give information to the MHC Team.

The MHC shall assure that health information shall remain confidential. Such information shall be held confidential and shall not be revealed without a HIPPA- compliant, written and dated consent of the MHC participant, or a person authorized to act on behalf of the MHC participant; except as may be otherwise required by applicable law or regulation. Such information may be disclosed in summary, statistical, or other form; if the disclosure does not directly or indirectly identify individuals. No information may be released without your written consent.

## **MHC AGREEMENT**

### **I agree to:**

1. Complete any evaluations or assessments as directed by the mental health court and follow the recommendations thereof. The treatment recommendations will be shared with the mental health court team.
2. Work with treatment staff to develop a treatment plan and follow the plan accordingly, including aftercare and continuing care recommendations.
3. Not use, possess, or consume alcohol and/or other illegal or controlled substances, nor be in the presence of any person using, possessing, or consuming said substances; nor enter premises where alcohol is the primary source of revenue. I understand if I am found to be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medication not prescribed to me I may be sanctioned and/or terminated from the program.
4. Submit to PBT's, electronic alcohol monitoring, and/or drug and alcohol screenings as directed.
5. Seek employment, enrollment in an educational program, or participation in another positive activity as directed.
6. Notify the mental health court of any changes in phone number within 24 hours.
7. Not change my place of residence without first notifying the mental health court.
8. Notify the mental health court of any police contact, arrest or criminal charge within 24 hours of event or of release from jail.
9. Make full and truthful reports to the mental health court as directed by any team member.
10. Not engage in any antisocial, assaultive, threatening, or aggressive behavior.
11. Not leave the state without the prior consent of the mental health court.
12. Maintain the confidentiality of other mental health court participants.
13. Pay all outstanding debts/fees resulting from my conviction including but not limited to: court fines, court costs, court fees, restitution, and assessments; and pay all, or make substantial contributions toward payment of the costs of the treatment and the mental health court program services provided to the participant, including, but not limited to, the costs of drug or alcohol testing or counseling. However, if the court determines that the payment of court fines,

- court fees, or drug or alcohol testing expenses would be a substantial hardship for me or would interfere with my treatment, the court may waive all or part of those fines, the fee, or costs of drug or alcohol testing.
14. Appear in court on all scheduled court dates and to attend all appointments with my probation officer, case manager, and/or treatment provider.
  15. Comply with the program's policies and conditions discussed within the Berrien County Mental Health Court Participant Handbook.

**I waive the following rights:**

1. The right to a speedy trial.
2. With the agreement of the prosecutor, the right to a preliminary hearing.
3. To be present at the team staffing meetings.

### **PROGRESSION THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH COURT**

The approximate length of the Mental Health Court program is from 12-24 months. The length of the program differs for each participant and is directly related to individual progress toward treatment recommendations.

Your progression will be broken down into three phases, which will relate to your court schedule. Your progression through these phases will be based upon the recommendations of Riverwood staff, your probation officer, and other MHC Team Members, with the judge making the final decision on phase movement.

#### **Phase I *Orientation and Treatment Phase 90 Days Minimum***

1. Complete a minimum 90 days in Phase 1, with a minimum 30 consecutive days drug and alcohol free prior to promotion. (A missed test counts as a positive test for the Participant.)
2. Take all prescribed medications, as directed.
3. Submit to all drug and alcohol testing, as directed
4. Achieve 100% attendance at assessment, treatment, reporting to Probation Officer, meeting with case manager, and any other recommended appointment as directed, for at least 30 consecutive days prior to promotion.
5. Attend all scheduled court review sessions (generally twice per month).
6. Remain in the courtroom until all graduations, phase advancements, and Phase 2 and 3 Participants' review hearings are completed, unless otherwise excused.
7. Obtain a healthy relationship with an outside support person if recommended
8. Obtain and provide a copy of Social Security Card and/or State ID card (or Driver's License).
9. Agree to follow all MHC program rules.
10. Pay imposed court fines, costs, fees, and restitution.
11. For those in AFC homes or other group residential setting, Participant must remain compliant with all residency rules and conditions for 30 consecutive days prior to promotion.
12. Remain crime-free.

13. No formal PV/sanctions for at least 30 consecutive days prior to promotion.

During this phase the participant establishes a therapeutic relationship with the mental health therapy team and with judicial team members. Participant will also commit to a plan for active treatment both through the community mental health provider, as well as the Mental Health Court.

### **Phase II - *Intensive Therapy* (180 Days Minimum)**

1. Complete a minimum 180 days in Phase 1, with a minimum 90 consecutive days drug and alcohol free prior to promotion. (A missed test counts as a positive test for the Participant.)
2. Take all prescribed medications, as directed.
3. Submit to all drug and alcohol testing, as directed
4. Achieve 100% attendance at any recommended appointment as directed, for at least 90 consecutive days prior to promotion.
5. Attend all scheduled court review sessions (generally once per month).
6. Remain in the courtroom until all review hearings are completed, unless otherwise excused.
7. Obtain a healthy relationship with an outside support person if recommended
8. Follow all MHC program rules.
9. Be actively working toward employment and/or educational requirements, as directed.
10. Seek and/or maintain reliable transportation, as directed.
11. Pay imposed court fines, costs, fees, and restitution.
12. Maintain stable housing for minimum 90 consecutive days.
13. For those in AFC homes or other group residential setting, Participant must remain compliant with all residency rules and conditions for at least 90 consecutive days
14. Remain crime-free.
15. No formal PV/sanctions for at least 90 consecutive days.

In this Phase, the Participant continues to maintain a therapeutic relationship with all MHC team members and attends therapeutic appointments as recommended. Participant is working on accepting his/her life roles and responsibilities as an individual. Participant begins identifying criminal thinking and behaviors which need to be changed and begins developing natural support systems.

### **Phase III *Transition & Community Engagement* (90 Days Minimum)**

For completion of Phase 3, Participants must complete the following:

1. Complete a minimum 90 days in Phase 3, with a minimum 180 consecutive days drug and alcohol free prior to promotion. (A missed test counts as a positive test for the Participant.)
2. Take all prescribed medications, as directed.
3. Submit to all drug and alcohol testing, as directed
4. Achieve 100% attendance for any recommended appointment as directed, for at least 180 consecutive days prior to graduation.
5. Attend scheduled court review sessions upon request.
6. Remain in the courtroom until all other graduations, phase advancements, and review hearings are completed, unless otherwise excused.
7. Maintain a healthy outside support person for minimum 90 days.
8. Follow and cooperate with all MHC program rules.
9. Maintain employment and/or complete educational requirements, as directed.
10. Have established/reliable transportation method.
11. Pay imposed court fines, costs, fees, and restitution off for MHC case; payoff or with approval set up payment plan on any other cases with unpaid balances.
12. Maintain stable housing for minimum 90 consecutive days.
13. For those in AFC homes or other group residential setting, Participant must remain compliant with all residency rules and conditions for at least 90 consecutive days
14. Remain crime-free.
15. No formal PV/sanctions for at least 180 consecutive days

In this phase, the Participant continues treatment with the MHC and attends regular meetings with his/her probation officer/DOC agent. Participant continues to identify coping skills for negative emotions, feelings and behaviors. Participant continues to take more responsibility for his/her actions. Participant begins to reach baseline levels with both behavior and coping with mental illness. Participant begins examining ways to prepare for graduation from the MHC and identifies means of following through on independent treatment post-graduation.

### **Discharge, Maintenance, & Aftercare (Completion of Phases I-III)**

1. Satisfy all financial obligations with the Court.
2. Make appointments with community mental health to aide in aftercare.
3. Successfully complete all terms and conditions of probation order, sentencing, and MHC contract.
4. Formal recognition for program completion will occur at a Discharge Hearing.

At this stage the participant has met all required conditions of probation and MHC. Participant has identified that they have understood the MHC program and the lessons learned from it. Participant has demonstrated an ability to use their recovery skills with less structure/direct support from the MHC program and is ready to continue treatment on his or her own.

### **Additional Information:**

Participant will be placed into each phase at the discretion of the presiding MHC judge considering recommendations from appropriate MHC Team Members. Participants may move up or down a phase at review hearings based upon the recommendations of Riverwood staff, the probation officer, and other MHC Team Members, with the judge making the final decision on phase movement. Participants will be reviewed for phase change at least once per quarter, but may receive phase change at any time at the discretion of the judge. Additional conditions may also apply to any participant regardless of phase level as ordered by the Court.



## COURTROOM PROCESS AND BEHAVIOR

Remember when you come to the courthouse for either court or your probation appointments you may not bring electronic devices into the building with you, this includes cell phones and pagers. After your case is transferred to the MHC, you will be assigned a probation officer who will meet with you as your court contact. This person can often set up probation appointments with you to correspond with review hearing dates. In addition to meeting with your probation officer and your treatment team at Riverwood, you will have review hearings every other week. Your case will be assigned to the MHC judge.

On review hearing days when you come to the courthouse you will have to go through the metal detector at the first-floor entrance. If scheduled, meet with your probation officer (misdemeanor probation offices are on the first floor, and felony probation offices are on the third floor). Proceed to the courtroom of your assigned judge. Come to court prepared to talk to the judge about your progress since your last review hearing. During that time your probation officer and your mental health therapist will report on your progress, and if you have a lawyer present he or she may also speak on your behalf, but the judge wants to hear from you as well. Remember these hearings are tools for the judge to evaluate your progress and compliance, so let the judge know how well you are doing.

### **In addition, while in court please observe the following:**

1. Take a seat in the *gallery*, the rows of benches in the courtroom, and wait to be called forward for your case. Once court has begun, remain silent in your seat.
2. When the judge enters the room, everyone will be asked to stand, please do so when appropriate.
3. Wear nice clothes; come with your shirt tucked in and with your basic hygiene taken care of. Be sure you are showered, your hair is combed, you've shaved if needed, and look your best. Practicing good hygiene shows the judge you are taking care of yourself.
4. Don't bring any food, drinks, or gum into court with you. These things should never be in the courtroom whether court is in session or not.
5. Don't talk or interrupt unless addressed by the judge or another member of the court. You will have an opportunity to speak to the court, but it's important that you respect others by waiting your turn.
6. When speaking to the court, use the microphone and/or podium when appropriate. Have good posture (sit/stand up straight) and look the judge in the eye. This demonstrates good communication skills and shows that you are interested in listening to what the judge has to say to you.

Following these simple steps will help you to succeed in court and will help show the judge how in control and respectful you are of yourself and others.

## **INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS**

To achieve the maximum effectiveness, the MHC Court has adopted a graduated strategy for incentives and sanctions. Graduated incentives encourage continuous positive behavior shown by a Participant. Graduated sanctions are used to discourage repetitive negative behaviors. The MHC Court has developed a range of incentives and sanctions to better respond to the magnitude of the behavior. In addition, the MHC Team remains open to allow a more personalized incentive or sanction for a particular Participant.

Participant behavior should be responded to using a *risk-needs* analysis, considering whether the positive or negative behavior being engaged in involves a close or distant goal. The focus of risk is prognosis. The focus of needs is diagnosis.

### **A. Incentives.**

Some examples of incentives generally utilized, if necessary funding is available:

- Praise from the Judge (low magnitude)
- Praise from the Team (lower magnitude)
- Applause at a review hearing from Team and Participants (lower magnitude)
- Gift cards to restaurants and other local service providers to support positive interaction in the community. (moderate magnitude)
- All-Star Board Recognition (moderate magnitude)
- Removal or lessening of curfew (moderate magnitude)
- Less community restrictions (moderate magnitude)
- Travel privileges (higher magnitude)
- Promotion to next Phase (higher magnitude)
- Graduation (higher magnitude)

### **B. Sanctions**

Sanctions must be predictable, controlled and consistent. The Judge should articulate why different people are receiving different responses. Treatment and treatment responses to Participant behavior shall not be a sanction and should not be negatively associated as a sanction. Some examples of generally utilized sanctions are listed below:

- Verbal reprimands from the judge (lower magnitude)
- Essays and letters (lower to moderate magnitude)
- Move back a phase (moderate magnitude)
- More frequent calls in with case manager/probation officer check in's (moderate magnitude)
- Curfew (moderate magnitude)
- Community Service (moderate magnitude)
- SCRAM or other electronic surveillance (higher magnitude)
- Jail (higher magnitude)

## **IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH COURT CONTACTS**

### **Riverwood Center Services**

Riverwood Center P.O. Box 547 Benton Harbor, MI 49023	Main: 269-925-0585 Niles: 269-684-4270 Fax: 269-927-6063
MHC Case Manager:	269-934-4084
MHC Coordinator	269-934-4084
24 Hour Crisis Line:	1-800-336-0341
24 Hour Children's Mobile Intensive Crisis Team (Ages 0-21)	269-934-0747
Customer Service:	269-934-3478
Customer Service Toll Free:	866-729-8716
Recipient's Rights:	269-934-3326

### **Berrien County Trial Court**

Berrien County Courthouse 811 Port Street Saint Joseph, MI 49085 269-983-7111	Berrien County - South County (Niles) 1205 Front Street Niles, MI 49120 269-684-5274
MHC Supervisor	269-926-5271
MHC Coordinator	269-934-3376
Felony Probation:	269-983-7111 ext. 8251
Misdemeanor Probation:	269-983-7111 ext. 8606
Sherriff's Department 919 Port St. Saint Joseph, MI 49085	269-983-7141

### **Emergency Numbers**

Police/Ambulance/Fire:	911
National Hopeline Network:	1-800-784-2433
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:	1-800-273-8255
Riverwood 24 Hour Crisis Line:	1-800-336-0341

**Other Useful Numbers**

Berrien Bus: 269-471-1100  
Runs Monday-Friday from 5:00am-5:00pm

Benton Harbor Dial-A-Ride: 269-927-4461  
Monday-Friday 6:00am-6:00pm, Saturday 8:00am-4:30pm (Flex Pickup)  
Monday-Friday 6:00am-10:00pm, Saturday 8:00am-10:00pm (Fixed Schedule)  
Serves St. Joseph/Benton Harbor and Townships

Buchanan Dial-A-Ride: 269-697-0600  
Monday-Friday 7:00am-9:30pm, Saturday 9:00am-3:30pm  
Serves Buchanan and Township

Niles Dial-A-Ride 269-684-5150  
Serves Niles and parts of Niles Charter Township

**❖ You should call at least 48 hours in advance for Berrien Bus and 24 hours for Dial-A-Ride. This will help you get to your appointments on time.**

**My Personal Important Numbers**

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## My Medication List

Date filled out

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My Psychiatrist is

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His/Her office phone number is

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My Mental Health Therapist is

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His/Her office phone number is

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## My Medications

Medication Name	Dosage	When I take it	When I started it

I am allergic to the following:

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Use this list to help you keep track of your therapist and psychiatrist information as well as the medications that you take and when they were prescribed to you.

**Notes**

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