

Berrien County established the Mental Health Justice System Navigation process as a way to divert and/or minimize the involvement of youth, who have behavioral health issues, in the court system.



**1<sup>st</sup> Approach:** Divert your child from any type of court involvement and work with you to gain access to mental health services and treatment.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Approach:** If diversion is not possible, the objective is to minimize court involvement, by strengthening your connection to pro-social and community networks and access to resources for mental health services and/or treatment.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Approach:** Continue to work with you and your child on an as needed basis to help keep your child from cycling back through the justice system.

Berrien County Mental Health and Justice System Navigation is funded by the Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance and was developed and is managed by the Berrien County Trial Court and Riverwood Center.

## Keeping Kids Healthy



**Vision:** All children with serious emotional disturbances and their families in Berrien County will have support of a collaborative group of public and private agencies which promotes healthy individual and family functioning.

**Mission:** Establish a comprehensive and interconnected network of care to improve outcomes for children with emotional disturbances that is family-centered, community-based, as well as culturally/linguistically competent.

For more information contact  
Jean Lawrence, Intake Manager at:

**269-983-7111 ext. 8354**

or call the Crisis Line: 800-336-0341

# BERRIEN COUNTY Navigating the Mental Health and Justice System

The challenges of having a child with behavioral health issues who comes in contact with the police or the court system is extremely difficult and is oftentimes the beginning of a long, confusing and very painful journey.



**The good news? You do not have to make that journey alone.**

With support from a [Mental Health Justice System Navigator](#), your family will receive a common sense, straightforward approach to navigate both the legal/court and mental health systems.

## Who is a Mental Health Justice System Navigator?

A volunteer with the expertise and desire to help your family figure out how to manage the challenges associated with your child violating the law:

- Will provide your family with support and insight.
- Are sensitive to and aware of issues you will face.
- Their supports are non-clinical and strength-based.
- Will advise and assist your family in identifying solutions to problems and challenges.
- Works with you to establish a step-by-step action plan to divert your child away from the justice system.



### Step 1: Screening

- Review and discuss concerns regarding your child's behavioral health.
- Review and discuss interaction your child has had with law enforcement.
- Identify possible behavioral health and legal needs.

### Step 2: Dialogue & Plan

- Provide an overview of screening results.
- Answer your questions about the justice system, legal proceedings and possible court outcomes.
- Identify possible community-based and legal service options.
- Brainstorm possible next steps.
- Develop an outcome-specific plan of action.

### Step 3: Care Coordination

- Will conduct meetings with you and your child.
- Begin implementing action steps that were identified in a Family Action Plan.
- Support and provide strategic advice about various legal and mental health resources.



### Step 4: Care Continuity

- Continue to work with you on an as needed basis.
- Provide support and advice to keep your child from cycling back through the justice system.

*The purpose of the Mental Health Justice Navigation process is to improve the outcomes of the interactions between law enforcement officers and juveniles with mental needs and their families in Berrien County.*