

Mission Statement:

The ASSERT Program seeks to provide an effective and meaningful alternative to the traditional criminal justice system for individuals with a mental illness. Our goal is to promote prompt intervention, education, treatment and recovery in order to improve the quality of the individual's life, reduce recidivism, and improve community safety.

ASSERT is a collaboration of many different community partnerships including:

- The 2nd Circuit Court - District Division - Littleton
- The 2nd Circuit Court - District Division - Haverhill
- Northern Human Services-White Mountain Mental Health
- Public Defender's Office
- NAMI NH
- Littleton Police Department
- Bethlehem Police Department
- Franconia Police Department
- Haverhill Police Department
- Lisbon Police Department
- Sugar Hill Police Department
- NH State Police, Troop F
- Participants
- Families and friends
- Faith based organizations

If you would like to learn more about the ASSERT Program, please call:

1-603-787-2291
for more information

ASSERT: Alternative Sentencing Solutions for Education, Recovery and Treatment

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Mental Health Court

2nd Circuit Court
District Division, Littleton
Grafton County, NH

What is ASSERT:

ASSERT was created by the court, mental health providers, prosecutors, defense counsel, law enforcement and other community stakeholders to provide sentencing alternatives to individuals with a mental illness who are involved in criminal matters. ASSERT is a Program based on accountability and designed to provide an alternative to incarceration.

The ASSERT Program integrates individualized treatment into the resolution of each case. The fundamental principal of the Program is to focus resources on people who engage in criminal behavior due to symptoms of mental illness and connect them with appropriate treatment in order to modify behavior and achieve recovery. Punishment, such as jail alone, has proven to be ineffective.

The Benefits of Mental Health Court:

Research has shown:

- Criminal behavior is reduced while clients are participating in Mental Health Courts
- Criminal behavior is eliminated or reduced after program participation
- Mental Health Courts generate cost savings from reduced jail/prison use
- Mental Health Courts bridge the gap between the courts and treatment systems, as well as, the criminal justice system and the community



Eligibility

- ASSERT is limited to referrals with Class A misdemeanor charges pending out of the 2nd Circuit Court, District Division, Littleton and Haverhill, NH
- Participants must have a psychiatric illness or dual diagnosis of substance abuse and mental illness
- Participants must be 18 years of age or older

The Process

- All referrals are made to the MH Court Coordinator for an initial screening
- An application to determine eligibility will be completed and submitted to the Coordinator
- If eligible, a referral is made to Northern Human Services-White Mountain Mental Health for an intake evaluation
- If the applicant is accepted into the ASSERT Program, a Treatment Plan is crafted
- A contract including an agreement to participate in Track 1 or Track 2 is submitted to the court for approval and signed by all necessary parties
- Participants will then work on his/her treatment goals as outlined in his/her Treatment Plan and attend monthly court hearings designed to monitor participant progress

The Tracks:

Track 1: Participants enter a “not guilty” plea and the case is continued for the duration of the Program. Upon successful completion of the ASSERT Program his/her charges are dismissed by the court.

Track 2: Participant enters a “guilty plea” and his/her sentence will be suspended or deferred based on compliance with the terms of his/her treatment plan. If a TRACK 2 participant has remained of good behavior and complied with the terms of his/her Treatment Plan, the sentence which had been suspended or deferred will not be imposed.

If the participant is found to be in noncompliance with Program expectations, then a modification may be ordered by the court or the participant may be terminated from the ASSERT Program. If a TRACK 1 participant is terminated from the Program, then a trial will be scheduled for the original charges. If a TRACK 2 participant is terminated from the Program, then a “Motion to Impose” hearing may be scheduled to see if the suspended/deferred sentence warrants imposition or other sanctions.

The Treatment Plan:

A Treatment Plan outlines the specific treatment a participant must comply with as part of the Program. It is created for each individual and typically includes counseling, case management, connection to community resources, compliance with prescribed medications, drug testing, educational and vocational rehabilitation, and substance abuse treatment, if deemed appropriate. The Treatment Plan is written and incorporated into the court orders.

**For more information call:
1-603-787-2291**