

Recovery with Justice Program
SPRINGFIELD SPECIALTY COURT:
MENTAL HEALTH SESSION

Information Handbook



What is the Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session?

The **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** is a special session of the Springfield District Court. Participation will be for individuals who are competent to stand trial and have disposed of their criminal case by an admission to sufficient facts or guilty plea and have been placed on post-disposition probation. The Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session is a court imposed condition of probation for defendants before the court who have serious mental illness or co-occurring mental health and alcohol/substance abuse issues.

What do I have to do?

This condition of probation will be explained to me by my Attorney and I will be asked to sign releases of information. A referral will be made to the program and a brief screening will be completed. If I am determined appropriate for the program, and I decide to enter the program, then my attorney will tell the Court, and the Court may order my participation in the Springfield Mental Health Session as a condition of my probation. If I am allowed to participate, then I will sign the participant agreement contract and a comprehensive assessment of my treatment needs will be completed. From the assessment an individual service plan will be designed. In order to participate in this program, I must agree to comply with this Service Plan, and with all of the terms and conditions of this aspect of my probation

How long will I be involved in the Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session?

It is a condition of probation running between 3 and 12 months. While I am participating in the program, the team will monitor my participation and progress in treatment through regular status hearing updates from a Specialty Court case manager assigned to work with me. Failure to comply with any of the conditions of probation may result in requirements to participate in more intensive treatment, extension of participation in the Mental Health Session, a violation of probation, the probationer's arrest, revocation of probation, and/or imposition of sentence to the House of Correction.

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate, a participant needs to be involved in the Mental Health Session for at least 3 months. The individual needs to have remained alcohol/drug free for 3 months, compliant with medication, compliant with treatment, attending all scheduled Mental Health Sessions scheduled appearances, and attending at least 90% of scheduled treatment appointments.

Extension of Participation

Prior to the end of the initial 3 month period, the court may extend my participation in the program based on the Mental Health Session Team members' recommendation in light of my progress and service planning needs. The Judge will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis. Extensions must be approved by the Court.

What's in it for me?

Services: I will get case management services, referrals to mental health treatment, and if my service plans calls for it, referrals to substance abuse treatment. The program will also help

connect me to educational and/or employment opportunities.

Recognition of progress: As I progress my achievements will be recognized during Court sessions.

Opportunity: The Program offers me a chance to avoid jail on my current charges and to move forward in my life, based upon full compliance with all conditions of probation.

What are the rules of the Springfield Specialty Court Mental Health Session?

Appear in Court as scheduled

I will be required to appear in front of the **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** Judge in Springfield District Court on a regular basis. My Specialty Court case manager will give progress reports regarding my attendance and participation in my treatment program, and the other components of my service plan. I know that the Judge, and members of the Team, will ask me about my progress and discuss any problems I may be having.

Follow My Service Plan

My service plan will include some or all of the following components, depending on my treatment needs:

- ⌘ Medications
- ⌘ Regular appointments with a psychiatrist
- ⌘ Participation in mental health treatment
- ⌘ Participation in substance abuse treatment
- ⌘ Intensive case management services
- ⌘ Referrals to programs offering education and/or supported employment opportunities
- ⌘ No new arrests
- ⌘ No alcohol or drugs (except with a valid prescription)
- ⌘ Pay restitution if ordered by the court
- ⌘ Remain away/ have no contact with _____ (if ordered by the Court)

My service plan may change as my needs change. Specific rules about some Service Plan components are discussed below.

Medications

I know that it is extremely important that I take the medications that my treating psychiatrist prescribes for me. For most participants in the program, medications will be essential for managing symptoms of their mental health difficulties and living successfully in the community. I understand that if I have complaints about my medications, I must tell my psychiatrist and case manager. My psychiatrist may be able to prescribe a different medication or additional medications to treat side effects. I also understand that refusal or repeated failure to take my medications will result in sanctions being imposed by the Judge. I know that before any sanctions are imposed, I will have the opportunity to explain my reasons for not taking medications to the **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** Team.

Mental Health Treatment

My service plan will require that I participate in mental health treatment programming.

My treatment provider(s) will tell my court case manager when I am attending, when I am absent, and how I am doing in my program. I must attend all scheduled treatment appointments and follow all the rules of my treatment program.

Substance Abuse or Alcohol Treatment

All candidates for the program are asked about their history of substance abuse, and all participants may be required to give urine samples on a random basis during their participation in the program. Participants may be required to attend drug or alcohol treatment as part of their individualized service plan. As with my mental health treatment, I must attend all scheduled substance abuse treatment appointments and follow all the rules of my treatment program. My substance abuse treatment provider(s) will tell my court case manager how my attendance is and how well I am doing.

Case Management Services

I will be assigned a Specialty Court case manager who will assess my needs for services, develop my service plan and coordinate services with me in the community. I am required to cooperate with my case manager, meet with her as recommended and sign all releases. My case manager will provide information to the **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** concerning my progress. I may also be referred to additional community-based intensive and supportive case managers (e.g., DMH, CRP, CBFS) that help consumers coordinate the services they need in the community. My service plan may require me to accept the services of a community-based case manager, who will visit me at my home and my treatment program and assist me with getting a variety of services.

Rewards, Infractions and Sanctions

I understand that all the rules and requirements of my participation in the **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** are conditions of my probation and that there are consequences – both good and bad – for my conduct while I am a participant in the program. If I comply with my service plan, all Court Orders and live a crime-free life in the community, I will be acknowledged and rewarded in a number of different ways. If I fail to comply with my service plan, Orders from the Court, or commit any new offenses, I will be sanctioned. Ultimately, good participation and compliance with treatment will be rewarded, and non compliance will result in sanctions, and possibly jail time.

Rewards

Potential rewards for cooperation and progress include:

- ⌘ Recognition of progress in Court
- ⌘ Reduced frequency of appearances before the Court
- ⌘ Avoidance of Jail
- ⌘ Certificate of completion
- ⌘ Potential waiver of probationary fees

Infractions

The following events will be treated as infractions:

- ⌘ Missed treatment appointments
- ⌘ Missed court appearances

- ⌘ Failure/refusal to take medications
- ⌘ Refusal to give urine sample
- ⌘ Positive urine sample
- ⌘ Violation of rules of treatment program
- ⌘ Threatening behavior, including verbal threat of violence
- ⌘ Other noncompliance with service plan
- ⌘ Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- ⌘ Running away from treatment program or supervised housing
- ⌘ Failure to abide by Restraining Orders
- ⌘ New criminal offenses

Clinical Responses

I understand that the **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** Judge will respond to all infractions. Sometimes the Judge will require me to increase my treatment-related activities and my service plan will change accordingly.

Sanctions

Other times, the Judge may impose a sanction, including, but not limited to:

- ⌘ Increased frequency of appearances before the Court
- ⌘ Increased treatment intensity (e.g., residential/inpatient treatment)
- ⌘ Imposition, or increase in frequency, of urine testing
- ⌘ Extend my length of stay in the program beyond the 3-month period.
- ⌘ Jail
- ⌘ Discharge from the program

In the event that an infraction might lead to a possible loss of liberty due to detention, the Court will appoint an attorney to represent me.

The **Springfield Specialty Court: Mental Health Session** is an open court, and my case will be discussed in front of other defendants and any members of the public who may be in attendance.

I have read this entire information handbook and have discussed it with my lawyer. I understand what is expected of me, what will happen if I do not follow the rules, and what I must do to stay in the program.