Individuals with Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System

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Health Planning Region I
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3 largest psychiatric facilities in the U.S.

- L.A. County Jail
- Cook County Jail (Chicago)
- Riker’s Island (NYC)
“Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”

- Involvement with CJ system is all too common for individuals with MI
  - 25-40% of all individuals with MI will become involved in the CJ system
  - Men w/ MI are 4X more likely to be incarcerated; women w/ MI, 6X

- Arrest rate for MI has increased since 1965, often for minor crimes (if at all)
“Criminalization of the Mentally Ill” (cont.)

- People w/ MI are overrepresented in the CJ system
  - The rate of MI in jails/prisons is at least 3X (to 10X) the rate in the general pop.

- Stay longer in jail/prison
  - In Fairfax, psychotic misdemeanorants stayed in jail 6.5X longer than non-MI offenders
  - In 2000 in PA, only 16% of all inmates served their maximum sentence. People w/ serious MI were 3X as likely to do so.
“Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”: Reasons???

- Changes in MH-civil commitment system
  - Deinstitutionalization
  - Changes in commitment laws
- Changes in societal attitudes about “criminals” and the mentally ill
Deinstitutionalization or Transinstitutionalization???

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>2000 (December)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of beds</td>
<td>559,000</td>
<td>59,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. population</td>
<td>165,000,000</td>
<td>273,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds/100,000 population</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>22</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of inmates</td>
<td>465,760</td>
<td>1,937,482</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. population</td>
<td>223,000,000</td>
<td>273,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inmates/100,000 population</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>708</td>
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</table>

95% decrease in hospital beds vs. over 400+% increase in jails/prisons!!

“Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”: Reasons???

- Complications of MI
  - Crimes more likely to be detected
  - More likely to escalate when police arrive
  - Presentation not recognized as MI
  - In jail longer b/c get in more trouble

- CJ System’s hands are tied
  - Police and jails can’t say no

- Revolving door
Why is it important for law enforcement to understand MI?

- 16% of the U.S. jail and prison population is estimated to have a serious mental illness.
- Reduces injury to other inmates (and the inmate with mental illness) → LIABILITY
- Reduces injury to staff
- Reduces suicides
- Positive interactions (e.g., respect) improve future interactions with law enforcement
- Higher rates of officer satisfaction regarding how to handle situations involving individuals with mental illness