

CJS 311:

Criminalizing Mental Illness



Coined the criminalization of the mentally ill, the criminal justice system has become the de facto mental health care system in the United States.

As a result, there are more persons with mental illness residing in prisons and jails today than in public psychiatric hospitals. Once incarcerated, the mentally ill offender faces higher rates of victimization, imposed isolation, and even new charges for prosecution in the system.

This class will explore the historical precedents to the current predicament, innovations that CJS has adopted such as Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), the Sequential Intercept Model, and Mental Health Courts to deal with the rising number of mentally ill in the system, and current issues and challenges for the future of the criminalization of the mentally ill.