



Behavioral Health Court Participant Handbook

*This handbook is intended to be used as a general guide for Centre County Behavioral Health Court Participants. It is not intended to answer specific questions regarding your case, your Conditions of Supervision, or your treatment obligations. Please contact the Behavioral Health Court Probation Officer or the Specialty Court Coordinator if you have specific questions.

Adopted March 2023

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What is Behavioral Health Court?

The Centre County Behavioral Health Court is a Specialty Treatment Court Program for criminal offenders diagnosed with a Serious Mental Illness who need long-term, highly structured Mental Health Treatment and Intensive Supervision.

Behavioral Health Court is a collaboration between the criminal justice system and the mental health system to address the growing number of individuals diagnosed with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Behavioral Health Court is a non-adversarial program addressing the specific treatment and ancillary needs of individuals placed in the program, while at the same time holding Participants accountable for their actions and assisting them to achieve long-term stability, enhance public safety and reduce recidivism.

Participation in Behavioral Health Court is voluntary, and a Participant can decide not to be involved at any time. However, if the Participant chooses to remove themselves from the program (or is terminated) the traditional Court process will resume.

Behavioral Health Court Team

An essential component of mental health courts is the establishment of a multidisciplinary, non-adversarial and collaborative team. The Centre County Behavioral Health Court has established a team to ensure coordination of supervision and treatment, while preserving a Defendant's right to due process.

The Behavioral Health Court Team is comprised of the following core team members:

- Judge
- Assistant District Attorney
- Assistant Public Defender/Defense Bar Representative
- Specialty Court Coordinator
- Behavioral Health Court Probation/Parole Officer
- Blended Case Manager
- Representative from Centre County Mental Health

Eligibility Requirements

A Defendant must meet legal and clinical criteria to be considered for Behavioral Health Court.

Legal Criteria

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a resident of Centre County for the duration of the program.
- Have no unresolved charges in any jurisdiction.
- Criminal charges must meet all eligibility guidelines.
- The sentence of court supervision must be a minimum of 12 months, which can include new criminal offenses and/or a revocation of Parole/Probation/Probation with Restrictive Conditions (PRC) sentence.
- The conduct giving rise to the crime must be attributable to characteristics of the Defendant's

Serious Mental Illness (SMI).

- The Defendant will be recommended for the Behavioral Health Court only at the discretion of the District Attorney's Office.
- The Behavioral Health Court Team will consider the Defendant's prior record when determining eligibility. Final eligibility shall be at the discretion of the Behavioral Health Court Team and the presiding Behavioral Health Court Judge.

Clinical Criteria:

- Current (within the last 2 years) primary diagnosis of at least one of the following Major Mental Health Diagnoses (a Serious Mental Illness) as defined by the DSM V-TR:
 - Schizophrenia
 - Bipolar Disorder
 - Major Depressive Disorder
 - Psychotic Disorder due to a Mental Illness (Schizoaffective Disorder)
 - Borderline Personality Disorder
- If a Defendant does not have a current diagnosis, the Defendant must be evaluated by a psychiatrist, psychologist or qualified professional to determine if the Defendant has a SMI.
- The Defendant must meet the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' criteria for blended case management services.

*A diagnosis of a co-occurring Substance Use Disorder is not an exclusionary factor for Behavioral Health Court.

Disqualification Criteria

Automatic Exclusion-Current Offense

Murder

Homicide

Assault by Life Prisoner (18 Pa. C.S. § 2704)

DUI (without another eligible offense)

SORNA Crime(s) requiring the registration of sexual offenders including Rape, Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse, Statutory Sexual Assault, Incest and Possession of Child Pornography (42 Pa. C.S. § 97, subchapter H)

Automatic Exclusion-Criminal History

Murder

Homicide

Assault by Life Prisoner (18 Pa. C.S. § 2704)

SORNA Crime(s) for which an individual continues to have Sexual Offender Registration requirements per 42 Pa. C.S. § 97, subchapter H.

Disqualifying Diagnosis

Intellectual Disability

Alzheimer's Disease

Dementia

Organic Brain Injury

Drug/Alcohol Induced Diagnosis

*A Defendant who used or possessed a firearm during the commission of an offense is not eligible for Behavioral Health Court.

Program Tracks

Track 1: Diversion and resembles a modified version of the typical ARD Program

Track 2: Post-conviction

Track 3: Revocation of a Parole, Probation and/or PRC sentence

Application and Approval Process

Behavioral Health Court applications and program information are available at the District Attorney's Office, Probation/Parole Department, Office of the Public Defender, and the Centre County Government website.

If the Defendant wishes to apply for Behavioral Health Court, immediately following their preliminary hearing or waiver thereof, or as soon thereafter as is practical, the Defendant will obtain a Behavioral Health Court application, which is to be completed and returned to the Specialty Court Coordinator (Probation/Parole Department).

The application process should be completed by counsel for the Defendant (or Defendant if unrepresented). When submitting an application for Behavioral Health Court, the following documents must be included in the application packet:

- Behavioral Health Court application
- Release of Information for the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team
- Release of Information for Centre County MH/ID/EI and Drug and Alcohol
- Confirmation of a qualifying diagnosis (within the past 2 years).
 - If available: psychiatric evaluation(s), psychological evaluation(s), progress notes from a treating physician, a letter from a treating psychologist/psychiatrist indicating the diagnosis, period of treatment and level of compliance.

All required documents listed above must be submitted to the Specialty Court Coordinator within three business days of signing. Failure to complete the necessary forms may delay the review and/or acceptance of the referral into the program.

After the application packet is received, the Defendant will have a mental health assessment conducted by the Centre County MH/ID Office. The assessment will include a comprehensive bio-psycho-social evaluation for mental illness, trauma, drug and alcohol abuse, and medical issues. The assessment process will determine the extent of the client's mental illness, level of maturity and their readiness for treatment, co-existing problems, needed community resources and will begin to engage the client in the treatment process.

If a SMI is identified, an immediate referral for care may be made. If emergent care is indicated (i.e. acute mental health crisis), the client will be offered immediate placement in an appropriate setting.

Upon the completion of the mental health assessment, the Behavioral Health Court Team will review the Defendant's application.

If approved, the Defendant voluntarily agrees to participate in Behavioral Health Court and agrees to complete the requirements set forth by the Court. It is the responsibility of defense counsel to notify the applicant of the date and time they are to appear to be admitted into the program.

At the time of admission, defense counsel along with his/her/their approved client, must have the following forms completed:

- Behavioral Health Court Colloquy/Colloquies
- Behavioral Health Court Participant Contract
- Consent for Release of Confidential Information

If an applicant is deemed ineligible/not appropriate for Behavioral Health Court, he/she/they will continue in the traditional criminal process. The District Attorney's Office will notify defense counsel (or the Defendant if unrepresented) of the denial and reason for rejection in writing.

Program Length

Program length is dependent on the Participant's track assignment and the Participant's ability to successfully achieve program goals, remain compliant with mental health services, medication management and with the Participant's Individualized Service Plan. The overall length of the program will range from 12-24 months for most Participants.

Track 1: Target Completion Time: 12 months

Track 2: Target Completion Time: 18-24 months

Track 3: Target Completion Time: 18-24 months

Program Costs/Fees

In some cases, a Participant may be placed on Electronic Monitoring which has a \$50 installation fee plus a fee of \$15/day.

Phases of Behavioral Health Court

Behavioral Health Court consists of four phases that Participants must progress through, with the last phase being a pre-graduation phase. The length of time in each phase depends on the Participant's ability to successfully achieve program goals and comply with his/her/their Individualized Service Plan. Each phase consists of specific goals and requirements that must be met before moving to the next phase. Following successful completion of Phase 4, Participants will graduate from Behavioral Health Court.

*Time spent in inpatient hospitals (voluntary or involuntary), detox, residential treatment, halfway house and/or incarcerated might not count toward the required length of participation in any of the Behavioral Health Court phases.

*Phase advancement is not automatic. Advancement occurs after all phase requirements are completed and the Behavioral Health Court Team approves the application for advancement. Phase advancement is not based solely on time requirements.

Phase 1: Stabilization

Time Frame: 3-6 months (length of time differs based upon individual track and progress)

Phase 1 Requirements:

- Appear for Behavioral Health Court every other week
- Comply with all recommended treatment, mental health services, and all treatment related goals
- Meet with Behavioral Health Court Probation/Parole Officer and Blended Case Manager as directed
- Cooperate with Blended Case Manager to develop periodically updated Individual Service Plan (ISP)
- Attend all appointments with required agencies
- Medication compliance
- Attend 12-Step and/or other support meetings if deemed appropriate
- Comply with drug/alcohol testing, as requested
- Complete mandatory journal entries
- Comply with payment contract
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and make progress towards meeting one's basic needs

Advancement Criteria:

- ✓ Complete a minimum of three months in Phase 1
- ✓ 14 days violation/sanction free at the time of application
- ✓ Complete application for phase advancement

Phase 2: Early Recovery and Responsibility to Self

Time Frame: 3-6 months (length of time differs based upon individual track and progress)

Phase 2 Requirements:

- Appear for Behavioral Health Court every other week
- Comply with all recommended treatment, mental health services, and all treatment related goals
- Meet with Probation/Parole Officer and Blended Case Manager as directed
- Cooperate with Blended Case Manager to develop periodically updated ISP
- Attend all appointments with required agencies
- Medication compliance
- Attend 12-Step and/or other support meetings if deemed appropriate
- Comply with drug/alcohol testing, as requested
- Complete mandatory journal entries
- Comply with payment contract
- Demonstrate progress in ability to provide for one's basic needs
- Comply with pro-social requirement if deemed appropriate in ISP
- No new misdemeanor or felony charges

Advancement Criteria:

- ✓ Complete a minimum of three months in Phase 2
- ✓ 14 days violation/sanction free at time of application
- ✓ Complete application for phase advancement

Phase 3: Strengthening Recovery and Responsibility to Others

Time Frame: 3-6 months (length of time differs based upon individual track and progress)

Phase 3 Requirements:

- Appear for Behavioral Health Court every other week
- Comply with all recommended treatment, mental health services, and all treatment related goals
- Meet with Probation/Parole Officer and Blended Case Manager as directed
- Cooperate with Blended Case Manager to develop periodically updated ISP
- Attend all appointments with required agencies
- Medication compliance
- Attend 12-Step and/or other support meetings if deemed appropriate
- Comply with drug/alcohol testing, as requested
- Complete mandatory journal entries
- Comply with payment contract
- Demonstrate the ability to provide for one's basic needs
- Comply with pro-social requirement if deemed appropriate in ISP
- No new misdemeanor or felony charges

Advancement Criteria:

- ✓ Complete a minimum of three months in Phase 3
- ✓ 14 days violation/sanction free at time of application
- ✓ Complete application for phase advancement

Phase 4: Maintaining Recovery

Time Frame: Minimum of 3 months (length of time differs based upon individual track and progress)

Phase 4 Requirements:

- Appear for Behavioral Health Court: first session of the month unless otherwise instructed
- Comply with all recommended treatment, mental health services, and all treatment related goals
- Meet with Probation/Parole Officer and Blended Case Manager as directed
- Cooperate with Blended Case Manager to develop periodically updated ISP
- Attend all appointments with required agencies
- Medication compliance
- Attend 12-Step and/or other support meetings if deemed appropriate
- Comply with drug/alcohol testing, as requested
- Complete mandatory journal entries
- Comply with payment contract
- Demonstrate the ability to provide for one's basic needs
- Comply with pro-social requirement if deemed appropriate in ISP
- No new misdemeanor or felony charges

Graduation Criteria:

- ✓ Complete a minimum of three months in Phase 4
- ✓ 60 days violation/sanction free
- ✓ Complete application for Graduation including an on-going Mental Health Treatment Plan from treatment provider

Incentives and Sanctions

Behavioral Health Court utilizes a variety of incentives and sanctions to promote positive change and modify Participant behavior.

Incentives: The Behavioral Health Court Team has developed incentives/rewards to encourage Participants as they progress through the Behavioral Health Court.

Potential incentives may include but are not limited to the following:

- In-court praise, encouragement and applause
- Books or workbooks
- Travel permission
- Gift cards
- Personal rewards related to interests
- Phase advancement
- Certificates

Sanctions: Behavioral Health Court Participants are expected to comply with all aspects of the program. Failure to follow the rules of Behavioral Health Court will result in progressive sanctions, which ultimately could lead to termination from the program.

Potential sanctions may include but are not limited to the following:

- Reading/writing assignment
- Warnings/reprimands from the Judge during Court
- Community service
- Restart phase/phase demotion
- Enhanced Curfew Compliance/In-Home Detention
- Postponement of graduation
- Incarceration

Behavioral Health Court Sessions

Behavioral Health Court status hearings are held every other Thursday at 2pm in Courtroom #3 at the Centre County Courthouse, unless otherwise instructed.

Prior to the Court session, the Behavioral Health Court Team will review Participants' progress. This review includes testing results, attendance, participation and cooperation with treatment and other program requirements. The Judge may ask Participants questions about progress and discuss any problems during the court session.

During the first three phases, Participants are required to appear for status hearings every other week. During Phase 4, Participants will be required to appear for the first session of each month, unless instructed otherwise. Behavioral Health Court proceedings will not be held on the record unless there is a sentencing, revocation hearing and/or when a sanction is imposed.

*Children that require immediate supervision are not to be brought to Court sessions. Exceptions will be made for special events and graduations.

Courtroom Behavior and Conduct

During Court sessions, Participants shall:

- Be on time; reporting late may result in a sanction
- Stand when the Judge enters the courtroom
- Address the Judge as “Judge” or “Your Honor”
- Be respectful of the Judge, team members, court staff and other Participants
- Maintain a respectful attitude
- Dress appropriately: no hats/bandanas, sleeveless shirts, crop-tops, low-cut shirts, short dresses/skirts/shorts, inappropriate wording and/or images of drugs/alcohol
- Refrain from disruptive behavior such as talking, laughing and/or shouting
- Refrain from swearing/the use of profanity or foul language
- Refrain from sleeping
- Turn off all cell phones/electronic devices prior to entering the courtroom
- Refrain from eating, drinking and/or chewing gum (no food or beverages in the courtroom)
- Refrain from using tobacco, smoking and/or vaping

*Any violation of the above listed courtroom conduct will be reviewed by the Behavioral Health Court Team and may result in a sanction.

Attendance and Absence

Participants are required to be on time and attend all scheduled appointments, treatment/counseling sessions, Court sessions and any other Behavioral Health Court requirements in their entirety (must arrive on time and can't leave early). In the event of an emergency, Participants must inform their Probation/Parole Officer, Blended Case Manager, Counselor, etc. If Participants are late, they may not be allowed to attend and may be considered absent, which could result in a sanction.

*It is the Participant's responsibility to maintain a schedule and attend all requirements. If a Participant is not on time or misses a requirement, they must report this information to their Probation/Parole Officer within 24 hours.

Transportation

It is the Participant's responsibility to find transportation in order to meet their Behavioral Health Court requirements. Participants may not drive if their driver's license is cancelled, expired, revoked, suspended or if they never had a license.

Public transportation is limited in Centre County and is provided by the Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA). Information on CATA fares and schedules is available at: <https://catabus.com>.

Behavioral Health Court may be able to provide Participants with bus passes if they are unable to afford the bus fare. Participants should talk to their Blended Case Manager to see if they qualify.

Pro-Social Activities

Participants may be required to obtain/maintain employment, schooling and/or participate in community service. Participants will work with their Blended Case Manager to develop a plan for education, employment and/or life skills, if deemed appropriate in their Individual Service Plan.

Pro-Social Activity Plans may include:

- Life Skills: budgeting, problem-solving, decision making, parenting skills, etc.
- GED (General Education Degree)
- Vocation: job training
- Education: returning to school or beginning higher education
- Employment: finding and maintaining employment

Behavioral Health Court Probation/Parole Supervision

Participants are required to abide by all rules/conditions/protocols of the Centre County Probation/Parole Department and Behavioral Health Court. Participants will review these rules/conditions/protocols prior to entering the program.

Behavioral Health Court is an intensive supervision program where Participants have frequent contact with their Probation/Parole Officer. The frequency with which Participants meet with their Probation/Parole Officer depends on the phase of the program. The Probation/Parole Department monitors Participants' compliance with Behavioral Health Court requirements such as medication compliance, employment, community service, meetings, appointments, and abstinence from illegal/non-prescribed substances. Probation/Parole Officers may make random, unannounced and/or scheduled checks to a Participant's residence and/or workplace.

Drug/Alcohol Testing Protocol

All Participants are required to submit to random drug/alcohol testing which may consist of urine tests, blood tests, breath tests, saliva tests, sweat/perspiration tests and any other tests as utilized by the Centre County Probation/Parole Department.

Urine tests will be observed by a Probation/Parole Officer to ensure that there is no tampering with the sample provided. Any attempts by a Participant to dilute or adulterate a urine specimen, or to otherwise attempt to hinder or impede any drug test will be considered a serious violation. Participants may not drink any fluid in excess prior to testing. Flushed or adulterated urines are unacceptable. Participants shall not obtain and/or possess any device or product that may assist in changing, altering or modifying a urine sample. Any violations of these types, at a minimum, will result in a significant sanction, up to and including a period of incarceration or termination from the program.

When asked for a urine sample, Participants are required to produce a urine specimen of **sufficient quantity (at least 30ml/2 tablespoons) and quality for testing within a one-hour time period.** Failure to do so will be considered a violation. Additionally, Participants are responsible for the cost of all test cup(s) opened when an unacceptable sample is provided (\$6 per cup).

Samples may be submitted for analytical confirmation testing by a qualified laboratory, as deemed necessary by the Probation/Parole Department. Participants may request a positive sample be sent for

confirmatory testing. If the test is positive, the cost of that test is the responsibility of the Participant. Confirmation testing costs a minimum of \$16 per substance tested.

Establishment of Services

The Mental Health Representative will conduct an assessment(s) to determine a starting point for mental health treatment. This may include any of the following:

- Individual Therapy
- Psychiatric Care
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation (Clubhouse, Site Based Psych Rehab, Mobile Psych Rehab)
- Peer Support/Recovery Specialist
- Drug and Alcohol Therapy (Individual or Intensive Outpatient Therapy)

*Unless special circumstances exist, time spent in detox, residential treatment and/or hospital-based treatment will not count toward the required length of participation in any of the Behavioral Health Court phases.

Case Management

Centre County Mental Health has a designated Blended Case Manager, who provides comprehensive case management services to Participants in Behavioral Health Court. Participants have frequent contact and meetings with their Blended Case Manager. The frequency with which Participants meet with their Case Manager depends on the phase of the program and the Participant's level of need.

Primary Goal of Case Management:

- Increase Participants' ability to obtain long-term stability through appropriate treatment and recovery programs
- Increase Participants' ability to maintain stability by addressing treatment-related needs and working with Participants to meet those needs
- Provide the Participants with a central point of contact for multiple systems (judicial, mental health treatment, social services, etc.).

Services provided by Blended Case Manager:

- Assessments
- Service Planning
- Service Linkage/Referrals
- Monitoring
- Client Advocacy (does not include legal representation)

Prescription Drug and Medical Certification Policy

Participants seeking entry into the Centre County Behavioral Health Court are strongly encouraged, due to the nature of the disease of addiction and the effects of medication on the brain, to consult with their treating physician and/or psychiatrist to seek non-addictive medications with no abuse potential to treat conditions such as chronic pain and anxiety. The following are procedures that Participants must follow to be placed and remain on prescription medications or medical marijuana.

Centre County Behavioral Health Court Participants must provide written notification from a qualified physician if a prescription medication or medical marijuana is medically required. Participants may treat with the health care provider of their choice, but will identify one primary health care provider (PHCP) to coordinate health care needs and sign appropriate releases for the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team. The PHCP should know all prescription and over the counter medications being taken by the client and will be responsible for managing all the prescription medications, with the exception of those Participants being treated by a psychiatrist.

Participants must notify the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team within 72 hours if they are prescribed or administered a mood altering or controlled substance. They must also provide a copy of the prescription to the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team by their next scheduled court date and keep the medication in its original prescription container. In addition, the Participant should expect pill counts to be completed by the Probation/Parole Department, either at random or if the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team feels it is necessary.

Participants must fill all of their prescription medications at one pharmacy. The Participant must provide a quarterly printout documenting new prescriptions and/or refills from that pharmacy to the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team.

Participants must obtain their medical marijuana from one dispensary. The participant must provide a quarterly printout documenting medical marijuana purchases from that dispensary to the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team. Participants must consume and store medical marijuana in a manner provided by statute. Participants should expect compliance checks of their medical marijuana by the Probation/Parole Department, either at random or if the Centre County Behavioral Health Court Team feels it is necessary.

Additionally, no Participant of the Centre County Behavioral Health Court may take any dietary supplements as they may contain substances that would alter the normal color of urine or cause a positive drug test for illegal substances. This includes but is not limited to weight loss aids, or any other dietary supplement. The consumption of poppy seeds is strictly prohibited while in the program. Lastly, salvia, Kratom, morning glory seeds, K2/Spice, bath salts and/or any or all designer drugs legal or illegal are strictly prohibited. All mood altering or hallucinogenic substances are prohibited. All cough medicines must be pre-approved by the Probation/Parole Department.

Medication-Assisted Treatment

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) is the use of medication(s), in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of certain substance use disorders (www.samhsa.gov). MAT is an evidence-based, effective strategy in meeting the needs of individuals with substance use disorders. Individuals who are on a MAT protocol through an approved clinical program will not be denied application to Behavioral Health Court. Participants will also not be required to receive MAT as a condition of being in the program. All decisions related to the use of MAT will occur between the individual and their prescribing physician. If you are interested in MAT and need financial assistance, please discuss this with your Blended Case Manager.

Termination from the Program

In the event of serious and/or continuous violations, Participants are subject to termination from Behavioral Health Court. Serious violations include but are not limited to absconding (AWOL), continual or

repeated refusal/absence from treatment, non-compliance with conditions of the program/sentence, and/or new arrest/conviction while in the program. Termination will occur when it is determined that the Participant is no longer appropriate for Behavioral Health Court. Upon termination, the individual's case will be scheduled for an appropriate court hearing in accordance with the applicable criminal procedural rules. This may include further prosecution of charges, revocation of a Parole, Probation or PRC sentence, and/or re-sentencing by the Court.

Post-Graduation Supervision

After graduating from Behavioral Health Court, some Participants will continue under the supervision of the Centre County Probation/Parole Department until their maximum sentence has ended. Any violations during that time may result in a revocation proceeding.

Post-Behavioral Health Court Services

Individuals who are in need of treatment, case management, and/or support services after they complete their participation in Behavioral Health Court may continue to access those services through support from the Centre County Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention and Drug and Alcohol Office. Help is only a phone call away.

Sober Support Meetings

In some cases, Participants will be required to participate in 12-Step or other sober support meetings. These meetings are peer-led and are designed to provide individuals with a recovery-oriented support network with others who are also working a path to long-term recovery.

There are several sober support meeting options available throughout Centre, Clinton and Clearfield Counties. These programs include, but are not limited to, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART Recovery and Celebrate Recovery. Each program offers a different approach to behavioral changes that support a life without the use of drugs/alcohol and other substances.

Alcoholics Anonymous-Centre County & Clinton County: <http://www.district43.com>

Alcoholics Anonymous-Clearfield County: <https://district15wpa.com/meetings.html>

Narcotics Anonymous-State College Area: <https://sites.google.com/site/statecollegena/home>

Narcotics Anonymous-Lock Haven Area: <https://lockhavenareaofna.org/>

Narcotics Anonymous-Clearfield County: https://findrecovery.com/na_meetings/pa/clearfield/

Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART Recovery): <https://www.smartrecovery.org>

Celebrate Recovery <https://www.celebraterecovery.com/crgroups>

Confidential Informant Policy

While participating in Behavioral Health Court and/or for the duration of supervision, Participants may not act as a confidential informant for any law enforcement agencies.

Ethics and Confidentiality Statement

Pennsylvania's confidentiality laws are more stringent than federal requirements and restrict the transfer of certain types of information between treatment agencies and the criminal justice system. Participants will need to sign appropriate release of information forms in order to participate in

Behavioral Health Court. Additionally, providers and program staff will be required to sign an Acknowledgement of Confidentiality with regard to Participant records.

Although Behavioral Health Court proceedings are open to the public, safeguards will be implemented to ensure the privacy and security of records and Participant information. Participants are encouraged not to break anonymity or disclose any information obtained during Behavioral Health Court proceedings.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to complete Behavioral Health Court?

The overall length of Behavioral Health Court will range from 12-24 months for most Participants.

Do I have to attend treatment?

Mental Health Treatment is required in Behavioral Health Court. The type and level/frequency of treatment is based on the individual's clinical needs. Also, if an individual is in need of drug and alcohol treatment this could be required.

Where are Behavioral Health Court status hearings are held?

Behavioral Health Court status hearings are held every other Thursday at 2pm in Courtroom #3 at the Centre County Courthouse, unless otherwise instructed.

What do I do if I don't have a driver's license?

It is the Participant's responsibility to find transportation for Behavioral Health Court requirements. Public transportation is provided by the Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA). Participants are encouraged to talk to their Blended Case Manager to determine if they qualify for a bus pass.

Do I have to live in Centre County?

Participants must reside in Centre County during the time they are in Behavioral Health Court.

Important Reminders for Participants

Requirements: You are required to be on time and attend all scheduled appointments, treatment/counseling sessions, Court sessions and any other Behavioral Health Court requirements in their entirety (must arrive on time and can't leave early). In the event of an emergency, you must inform your Probation/Parole Officer, Case Manager, Counselor, etc. If you are not on time or miss a requirement, you must report this information to your Probation/Parole Officer within 24 hours.

Personal Responsibility: You and you alone, are responsible for what goes into your body. Testing positive during a drug/alcohol test is not anyone's fault but your own.

Prescription Medication: All prescription medications must be prescribed by medical personnel and obtained through one pharmacy. You must take all prescription medications as directed. Never allow anyone else to use your prescription medication. Any new medication(s) and/or over the counter medication must be reported to your Probation/Parole Officer within 72 hours.

Other People's Medication: Never take any medication that has been prescribed for someone else. Using medication prescribed to another person is a violation of federal law and Behavioral Health Court.

Items You May Not Use or Consume: You may not use or consume any weight loss aids/other dietary supplements, poppy seeds, salvia, Kratom, morning glory seeds, K2/Spice, bath salts, designer drugs (legal or illegal) and/or mood altering or hallucinogenic substances. All over the counter vitamin and cough medicines must be pre-approved by the Probation/Parole Department.

Important Behavioral Health Court Contact Information

Julie Seroski

Specialty Court Coordinator
Courthouse Annex
Bellefonte, PA 16823
814-355-6771-Office
814-404-1573-Cell
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Kimberly Cheskey

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Courthouse Annex
Bellefonte, PA 16823
814-355-6771-Office
814-574-4020-Cell
krcheskey@centrecountypa.gov

Jessica Walizer

MH/ID Blended Case Manager
3500 E College Ave, Suite 1200
State College, PA 16801
814-355-6786-Office
814-574-3207-Cell
jwalizer@centrecountypa.gov

Call2Test/Reconnect Automated Testing Status Line: 814-402-8550

Centre County Communications: 1-800-479-0050 (on-call Probation/Parole Officer)
*Nights/weekends/holidays only. Regular Business hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm.

Centre County Courthouse

102 S. Allegheny Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823
814-355-6771-Office
*Behavioral Health Court Probation/Parole Officers are located in the Courthouse Annex

Centre County Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention and Drug & Alcohol

3500 E College Ave, Suite 1200
State College, PA 16801
814-355-6782-Office

24-Hour Support Services

Centre for Community Resources (crisis, mental health and/or drug and alcohol hotline)

1-800-643-5432

63288-Text

2100 E. College Avenue, Suite A

State College, PA 16801

*Walk-in center is also open 24/7

Center Helps

1-800-494-2500

814-237-5855

410 Fraser Street

State College, PA 16801

*Walk-in services are weekdays 9am-6pm)

Centre Safe (previously called Women’s Resource Center)

1-877-234-5050

814-234-5050

140 W. Nittany Avenue

State College, PA 16801

Lifeline Chat and Text (previously called National Suicide Prevention Line)

1-800-273-8255

988-Text

Additional Contact Information

Probation and Parole Department	814-355-6771
Centre County Transportation	814-355-6807
Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)	814-238-2282
Centre County Housing Authority	814-355-6750
Centre County Children & Youth	814-355-6755
Court Administration	814-355-6728
Centre County Correctional Facility	814-355-6794
Public Defender’s Office	814-355-6798
PA CareerLink-Centre County	814-272-5465
Centre County Assistance Office	814-863-6571