

## Mission Statement

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### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Mental Health Court is to enhance public safety and improve the mental health and quality of life of persons with mental disorders, which have contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system, by assisting them to access treatment and service.

Court participants, in accepting responsibility for their actions which lead to criminal offending, agree to adhere to recommended treatment and supports, enabling them to make positive changes in their lives.

### **The Goals of the Mental Health Court include:**

Reducing the involvement of persons with mental disorders in the criminal justice system thereby addressing public safety concerns;

Improving health outcomes and quality of life of persons living with mental disorders by increasing their capacity to successfully live in the community; and

Facilitating access to mental health and social services/supports by connecting, or reconnecting, participants with needed services/supports

### **Underlying Principles:**

**Safety and security** are key considerations for all Courts. Balancing public safety and security with the needs of the court participant is the first priority of services and supports.

**Timeliness of Assessments** is essential to the well being of the court participant.

**Confidentiality:** Mental Health Court processes require that considerable information about participants be collected and shared at all points of the court process, from the initial screening to the eligibility determination and throughout the entire period of judicial supervision.

Information shall be shared in a way that protects participants' confidentiality rights as mental health clients and their constitutional rights as defendants, including their right to solicitor-client privilege.

To comply with confidentiality requirements, the Mental Health Court Program assures that the court participants provide their written consent to release information on a form that specifically identifies what information will be released and the parties to whom it will be released.

**Informed decision-making:** The participant will be provided with all the information necessary to make informed decisions through the process.

**Accessible and appropriate services:** The Mental Health Court team will facilitate the delivery of appropriate services and supports.

## *Nova Scotia's Mental Health Court Program*

**Service collaboration:** The Mental Health Court team will encourage collaboration amongst service providers, government departments and community partners in identifying services and supports that are accessible, linked, and coordinated across, and within, the mental health, criminal justice and broader social service systems. Formal partnerships with service providers will be developed whenever possible.

**Recovery focused:** The recovery approach underlies the delivery of mental health services and supports and emphasizes client choice, flexibility in services, individualized supports, and the importance of peers, families, significant others and communities in supporting people with mental health needs. Such an approach also considers the impact of factors such as poverty, poor housing, unemployment and stigmatization.

**Education and support:** Education and support are available to address the needs of the court participants, their families and other social supports and service providers. Public education is also important to address public awareness and acceptance of individuals with mental health needs involved with the criminal justice system.

**Evaluation:** Timely monitoring of court processes and participants' outcomes are essential to ensure that the Mental Health Court Program is responding appropriately to persons with mental disorders.