

Problem-Solving justice through a human rights lens

Ginger Lerner-Wren

17th Judicial Circuit, United States



Abstract

Describing the problems experienced in Broward County's criminal justice system pertaining to the over-representation of persons arrested with serious mental illness, and co-occurring substance use disorders. She will discuss the trend known as the criminalization of persons with mental illness, and a legal system ill-equipped to respond to the complexities of this population.

Judge Wren will describe the conditions which led to the creation of a specialized problem-solving mental health court, including the failures of mental health policy, discrimination surrounding mental illness, and barriers to community-based mental health care. Judge Wren will discuss the high prevalence of persons with mental illness in U.S. jails and prisons and the need to develop a new system of justice for persons with mental illness, including other neuro-cognitive disorders. This presentation will discuss the evolution of problem-solving justice, court innovation, and the law reform science of therapeutic jurisprudence (TJ).

Judge Wren will identify the key elements of Broward's Mental Health Court and describe a problem-solving and diversionary court process from criminal law, psychosocial and clinical perspectives. Judge Wren will further review the integration of criminal justice and collaborative partnership communities, treatment, and social service providers.



Biography:

Judge Lerner-Wren is a County Court Judge in the criminal division at the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida (Broward County), and pioneer of the first specialized problem-solving mental health court in the United States. She will provide an overview of the establishment of the first mental health court established in the United States in 1997.

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