



The Link Provides Community With Ready Early Diversion Services for People Experiencing Behavioral Health Crises

“It’s deeply gratifying to see this long-studied and planned concept by so many key stakeholders in Minnehaha County realized and helping those who need it,” says Policy Research Program Area Director Travis Parker, MS, LIMHP, CPC, who has been involved in the project since its planning phase.

After less than 2 months in operation, a community triage center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has already established new paths toward recovery for many individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. The Link was established to serve people who would otherwise frequently end up in the emergency room or jail, neither of which is equipped to effectively meet behavioral health needs. The facility provides services appropriate for a person amid an acute behavioral health crisis: observation in a safe environment for those who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, medically monitored management for those experiencing symptoms of withdrawal, and crisis stabilization support for critical mental health concerns.

All of these services end with a forward-looking component, from treatment referrals following discharge to follow-up and safety planning, giving The Link’s short-term intervention the chance to develop into long-term recovery.

Since opening its doors, the center has helped a steady flow of individuals in crisis. Some have come to The Link voluntarily, while others were brought there by first responders or law enforcement. The Link is now replacing the Minnehaha County Jail and, in many instances, local emergency rooms as the place where law enforcement and emergency medical services personnel take individuals in crisis or who are under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or both. The Link operates under a model utilizing speedy drop-off practices, so first responders can quickly return to service in the community. So far, an encouraging number of those who have gone through observation while under the influence or monitored withdrawal at the facility have expressed interest in ongoing treatment. “If this place wasn’t here,” one patient told the staff, “I would have just kept drinking myself to death.”

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ARDRAW Announces Fifth Research Cohort

The fifth cohort of student researchers in the Social Security Administration’s (SSA’s) Analyzing the Relationship between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW) Small Grant Program has been selected. SSA’s ARDRAW Small Grant Program is a 1-year \$10,000 stipend program awarded to graduate-level students to conduct supervised independent research designed to foster new analysis of work, rehabilitation, and disability issues, which may develop innovative and fresh perspectives on disability. ARDRAW focuses on research relevant to SSA’s work incentives and employment supports—specifically rehabilitation, work, and the disability program.

Fifteen students have been selected to conduct independent research projects to assist Social Security policymakers in better understanding the relationship between disability, rehabilitation, and return to work. Teams of researchers from Policy Research, Inc., partner universities, and SSA reviewed students’ proposals on a range of criteria, including relevance to SSA’s programs and policies, research methodology, and feasibility.

[See Research Topics](#)

The MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge Behavioral Health-Focused Expansion, the IMPACT Network, Announces Members

Building on significant momentum for evidence-based reforms to local justice systems, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has announced a behavioral health-focused expansion of its Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) called the SJC IMPACT Network. Eleven cities and counties participating in the SJC IMPACT Network expansion will utilize a peer-to-peer model to maximize what SJC sites have learned about how to accelerate behavioral health reform and diversion across the criminal justice system. The SJC IMPACT Network will focus on community interventions that achieve both public health and public safety goals to minimize the number of people with behavioral health conditions in the criminal justice system, including community-driven race-conscious solutions to reduce harm to populations overrepresented in, or disparately impacted by, the criminal justice system.

The SJC is a \$258 million national initiative funded by the MacArthur Foundation to support collaboration among local leaders and communities to reduce over-incarceration and eliminate racial disparities in local criminal justice systems by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails. More than 5 years after its launch, the Safety and Justice Challenge Network has grown to 57 sites across 32 states modeling reform. Participating cities and counties are using data to identify key drivers of incarceration and racial inequities and working with diverse groups of community members, individuals who work in the justice system, and people with lived experience to develop impactful reforms.

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Upcoming Events

[The Future of Teleservices in Drug Courts \(Part 3\): Implementing Teleservices for Court Proceedings and Treatment](#)

July 21, 2021, 1:00–2:00 p.m. ET; discussion group 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET
SAMHSA’s GAINS Center

This webinar will provide detailed guidance on the many considerations for effective implementation of treatment court services delivered in virtual formats, including both court proceedings and treatment services. This event will feature a brief review of essential service elements, policies, and procedures necessary to support effective delivery; strategies for ongoing quality assurance that will inform necessary refinements; and suggestions for tracking appropriate outcomes.

[Early Diversion Virtual Learning Community \(Part 5\): Supporting Safety through 911 and Crisis Call Line Integration](#)

July 22, 2021, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET; discussion group 3:00–4:00 p.m. ET
SAMHSA’s GAINS Center

While the majority of communities have a crisis call line, calls for mental health assistance are most often made to 911 call centers, resulting in an over-reliance on law enforcement to respond first. Various strategies have emerged to integrate 911 call centers with crisis lines to engage crisis care resources as a first resort, the National Suicide Hot Line Designation Act (2020) established a three-digit phone number (988), directing callers to trained mental health counselors, to address calls regarding suicide and crisis. This law requires all phone providers to implement the 988 call service by July 2022. The earlier that conversations take place between existing 911 call centers and crisis service providers, the more smoothly the transition and coordination of response will be. Presenters will discuss current integration strategies as well as the implications for the implementation of 988 nationwide.

[Taking a Trauma-Informed Approach with Events of Escalation](#)

July 29, 2021, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET
SAMHSA’s Homeless and Housing Resource Center

Among individuals experiencing homelessness, there is a high prevalence of complex trauma, chronic health conditions, and serious mental illness. Trauma, compounded with acute health conditions, often impacts an individual’s ability to manage their distress. Join SAMHSA’s Homeless and Housing Resource Center as panelists explore using trauma-informed, compassionate, and respectful de-escalation techniques when aiding participants and staff during and after events of escalation.

[Virtual Crisis Intervention Teams for Youth Train-the-Trainer](#)

August 30–October 22, 2021
National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice

Crisis Intervention Teams for Youth (CIT-Y) is a law-enforcement-based strategy for crisis response and diversion in which specially trained law enforcement officers respond to calls involving adolescents experiencing behavioral health crises. The standard CIT training offered to most police officers focuses primarily on response techniques for adults. While there are some general similarities between adults and youth, there are important and unique distinctions that require specialized knowledge and training. CIT-Y trains police officers on response techniques that are appropriate for youth with behavioral health needs.

PRA @ an Event Near You

2021 NADCP Conference

Headed to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals’ (NADCP’s) [RISF21 conference](#) being held August 15–18, 2021, in National Harbor, Maryland? SAMHSA’s GAINS Center, operated by PRA, will be organizing three panels. Join them at one of the following sessions:

- **Addressing Vicarious Trauma Among Treatment Court Professionals**
Monday, August 16, 2021, 7:45–9:00 a.m.
- **Using the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) as a Strategic Planning Tool**
Monday, August 16, 2021, 11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- **Fostering Trauma-Informed Practices in Your Courtroom**
Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

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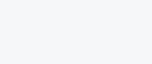
The Day I Didn't Think About Politics



Bring on the Randos



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