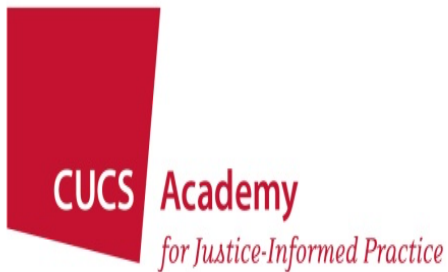




NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF TREATMENT COURT PROFESSIONALS



This program is provided through a partnership of the New York State Unified Court System's Office for Justice Initiatives, the CUCS Academy for Justice-Informed Practice and the New York Association of Treatment Court Professionals

[RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES - Registration Link](#)

Session Date/Time: Friday, February 9, 2024 -1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

This is a virtual presentation.

Session Title: RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

This 90-minute program will include short presentations by the panelists and a moderated discussion on the following topics:

1. How treatment court team members and behavioral health providers define mental health crises.
2. What behaviors on the part of treatment court participants might indicate an emerging mental health crisis, and how treatment court team members can assess the severity of a mental health crisis
3. What mental health services are available to respond to mental health crises, including 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, mobile crisis programs, crisis residential programs, crisis stabilization centers, and comprehensive psychiatric emergency programs (CPEPs, or psychiatric emergency rooms)
4. Strategies for coordination among treatment court teams, crisis service providers, and other community stakeholders

5. Strategies and practice tips for treatment court team members to help de-escalate crisis situations and make appropriate referrals for crisis services.

1.25 CPP/CPS Initial Section 2, CASAC/ CPP/CPS/Gambling Renewal (pending)
1.5 credit hours - CLE Professional Practice (approved)

Presenter Bios:

Denise Balzer, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the Director of the Bureau of Crisis, Emergency and Stabilization Initiatives at NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH). The Bureau is responsible for implementation of statewide crisis services including 988, Mobile Crisis, Crisis Residence Programs, Crisis Stabilization, Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Programs, Inpatient and Partial Hospitalization programs. Denise received a master's degree from Smith College School for Social Work and worked in residential treatment centers with children, adolescents, adults and families, community mental health centers and managed care organizations in New York and Ohio.

Carol Fisler, JD, is a consultant specializing in criminal justice and mental health collaborations and nonprofit management. Ms. Fisler was previously the director of Mental Health Court Programs at the Center for Court Innovation (now the Center for Justice Innovation), a New York City-based nonprofit that seeks to help create a more effective and humane justice system by designing and implementing operating programs, performing original research, and providing reformers around the world with the tools they need to launch new strategies. In that capacity, Ms. Fisler oversaw initiatives that addressed mental illness and the courts, which included the planning and implementation of the Brooklyn Mental Health Court (the first specialized court for offenders with mental illness in New York) and training and technical assistance to more than a hundred mental health court planning teams around the country. She also directed the planning and implementation of a juvenile justice/mental health initiative for young people in delinquency proceedings and managed youth development and alternative-to-detention programs. Ms. Fisler speaks frequently at national and regional conferences and has extensive public and private sector legal and managerial experience, serving as the president of a start-up welfare-to-work staffing company, deputy general counsel of the New York City Housing Authority, assistant commissioner for legal affairs of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and an associate at a major New York City law firm. Ms. Fisler graduated from Harvard University and Stanford Law School.

Colleen King, JD, is Supervising Attorney – Mental Health Unit at Brooklyn Defender Services. Ms. King joined Brooklyn Defender Services in 2013 as a specialized mental health criminal defense attorney. As part of the Mental Health Unit at BDS, Ms. King represents clients in Brooklyn Mental Health Court and mental health competency proceedings. She also advises staff attorneys on best practices for the representation and advocacy for clients with mental health issues. Prior to joining Brooklyn Defender Services, Ms. King practiced at the Legal Aid Society, first as a staff attorney and later as a specialized attorney for clients with mental health and substance use issues. Ms. King frequently participates in training programs, committees, and task forces on problem-solving justice, mental health, and criminal justice issues.

Toni Mardirossian, JD, currently serves as the Deputy Division Chief of the Pathways to Public Safety Division at the New York County District Attorney's Office. In this role, she oversees day to day operations in the Division which screens, refers, and monitors hundreds of participants each year in Manhattan's felony problem-solving courts including the Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Part, Felony Drug Court, Manhattan Mental Health Court, and Veterans Treatment Court. She joined the District Attorney's Office in 2007 and served for several years as a trial assistant prosecuting general misdemeanors and felonies before transitioning into Drug Court in 2013. She has previously served as

Attorney-in-Charge of Drug Courts and Chief of the Alternatives to Incarceration Unit. She was promoted to Deputy Division Chief of the newly created Pathways to Public Safety Division under DA Bragg in 2022. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the New York Association of Treatment Court Professionals. Prior to attending law school, she was a New York City public school teacher. She received her undergraduate degree from Boston College, her Master of Science in Teaching from Pace University, and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame. Deputy Chief Mardirossian believes that effective programming dispositions promote public safety and reduce the harmful consequences of incarceration by addressing the underlying behavioral health needs that contribute to criminal behavior.

Robyn Wiktorski-Reynolds, LMSW, is the Vice President of Clinical Operations at Crisis Services of Erie County. Ms. Wiktorski-Reynolds began her work in the social work field in 1999. She was heavily involved in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault in the beginning of her career, culminating in the oversight of Crisis Services Advocate Department in Buffalo, NY for over 10 years. In 2017, she was promoted to her current role, where she serves as Vice President of Clinical Operations for the organization. Her primary focus is on departmental direction, alignment, and support of the organization's 3 main departments: Crisis Counseling Program (24 Hour hotlines, 988); Emergency Mental Health Response Services (Mobile Outreach Response, Mobile Transitional Services and CIT) and the Advocate Department. In this role, she works to implement strategic goals, collaborating with an array of internal and external stakeholders and managing day to day operational needs of the 24-hour crisis center. An area of much emphasis in her work time is the collaboration and planning with key programs and initiatives that support consumer crisis response diversion towards mental health services and away from higher levels of intervention. This includes programs such as Mobile Outreach, 988, 911 Dispatch Diversion and planning work on Erie County's crisis continuum response. Ms. Wiktorski-Reynolds received her BA in English and a Women's Studies minor in 1997 from SUNY College at Buffalo and her master's degree in social work from the University of Texas at Austin in 2001. Ms. Wiktorski-Reynolds also currently serves as an adjunct instructor at the University at Buffalo's Graduate School of Social Work program.