

STREET CRIME FORUM - JUNE 23, 2004

SESSION 2 - DISCUSSION GROUP A

PEOPLE CHARGED WITH STREET CRIMES SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY ASSESSED FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

PARTICIPANTS

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- Pilot project could try this and determine the extent to which earlier mental health intervention reduced recidivism
- Now, police do refer to mental health professions where mental health issues apparent
- Diversion program for ill
- “Orlando” study showed very high numbers of youth involved in gang activity had mental health issues: putting them in touch with services reduced recidivism dramatically
- Mental health issues to be defined to include drug issues?
- Systems (police, health, etc.) must work together
- Drug involvement can prevent assessment and provision of help under current system; this should change
- Police can be involved in information gathering
- Percentage of offenders with mental health issues much higher than generally thought
- Goals may be different for assessment/treatment of youth versus adults
- Diversion programs graduates fare better
- Police resources now directed towards crisis management
- Without proper assessment, treatment resources are misdirected
- Early intervention very important – the younger the youth, the more effective intervention can be
- Schools, including elementary schools should be involved in assessments, not just of mental health issues, but of anti-social behaviour generally
- Concerned community groups should focus more on long term solutions
- Well before charges ever laid, youth being diverted under YCJA, but supportive resources inadequate
- 2 systems
 1. Crown-based restorative justice
 2. Police-based restorative justiceCompete instead of cooperate
- Police restorative justice needs more \$\$ - their recidivism rates show they’re very successful