



Veterans Treatment Court

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Judicial District 39 ~ Lawrence, Stone,
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Veterans Justice Outreach Program (VJO)

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Working with the Sequential Model

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Veterans Treatment Courts

Started in Buffalo NY in February 2008





Some Quick Facts:

- More than a half of the 2.6 million who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan return with mental health conditions related to their service.
- 1 in 6 struggle with addiction
- 1 in 5 have PTSD
- 700,000 vets in the criminal justice system right now. Many were arrested for charges directly related to trauma, addiction, or mental illness.

➤ *Justice For Vets*

If all this is left untreated these issues make it difficult to adjust to life after they return and can lead to unemployment, homelessness, and arrest.



Why A Specialized Court?

- VTC Courts are not your average drug or mental health court. Members of the team such as the judge, prosecutor, probation, treatment, and law enforcement must wear different hats.
- VTC's offer coordination with federal, state, and community agencies
- VTC's are specialized in dealing with PTSD, military trauma, and TBI
- Veterans are better served when separated because they share military culture and a common bond with each other.

COURT AND DIVERSION PROGRAMMING

- **Veterans Treatment Courts**
601 courts operating in 47 states and one territory
- **Accountability**
- **Treatment / therapy requirements**
- **Frequently seen by either P.O., Judge, Therapist**
- **Random U.A. (2-3 a week)**
- **Program is 18 months minimum**
- **Not FREE – has fees associated with it**
- **14 established VTCs or Veteran Dockets in Missouri which serve 37 counties**
- **73% Graduation Rate**
- **Most participants do NOT reoffend**





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Jail and Homelessness

- Most recent United States Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) data, indicates approximately 9 - 10% of people incarcerated are veterans.
- Incarceration as an adult male is the single highest risk factor of ever being homeless (NSHAPC/Burt, 1996)
- Historically, reports of Vietnam and Post-Vietnam era veterans with histories of civilian and military trauma suggest an association between trauma and subsequent contact with the legal system.
- Justice For Vets most recent report indicates there are 181,500 incarcerated Veterans in the U.S. Berzofsky, M., Bronson, J., & Noonan, M. (2015). Veterans in Prison and Jail, 2011-12. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vpj1112.pdf>.
- 460,000 Veterans who served in Iraq/Afghanistan are listed as suffering from PTSD and or depression₁
- 345,000 Veterans who served in Iraq/Afghanistan are listed as struggling with substance use disorder 1.Tanielan, T. & Jaycox, L. (2008). Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery. Washington, DC: RAND Ctr. For Military Health Policy and Research.



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Veteran Justice Outreach Initiative

“The purpose of the VJO Initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to:

VHA mental health and substance abuse services when clinically indicated , and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.”

Department of Veteran Affairs, April 30, 2009, Under Secretary for Health’s Information Letter

Mission:

- To identify justice-involved Veterans and contact them through outreach, in order to facilitate access to VA services at the earliest possible point. Veterans Justice Programs accomplish this by building and maintaining partnerships between VA and key elements of the criminal justice system.

Vision:

- Every justice-involved Veteran will have access to the care, services and other benefits to help him or her maximize their potential for success and stability in the community, including by avoiding homelessness and ending their involvement in the justice system.



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Limits on VA Services for Incarcerated Veterans

Can provide:

- Outreach, assessment, referral and linkage to services
- Treatment for justice-involved Veterans who are not incarcerated

Congressional mandate dictates:

Title 38 CFR 17.38 (C)(5) does not allow VHA to provide:

- ☐ Hospital and outpatient care for a Veteran who is
 - Either a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency
 - If that agency has a duty to give that care or services



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VJP Outreach Services

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

- Conduct outreach, assessment, and case management for Veterans in local courts and jails
 - Identify veterans and determine V.A. eligibility
 - Provide/coordinate training for law enforcement personnel (C.I.T.)
 - Linkage to VA and community services/resources
-
- Number of VJO Specialists funded: **383**
 - Number of local jail facilities serviced: **1,876**
 - Number of Veterans receiving VJO services (FY 2020): **42,398**

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

- Gain access to the prison
 - Educate Veterans' groups about VA and VA services
 - Identify Veterans and Determine Eligibility
 - Reentry Planning
 - Linkage to VA and Community Services
-
- Number of HCRV Specialists funded: **44**
 - Number of state and federal prisons serviced: **1,001**
 - Number of incarcerated Veterans receiving reentry services (FY 2020): **7,413**



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The VJO Specialist:

- Provides direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved Veterans in local courts and jail.
- Advocates on behalf of justice-involved Veterans and serves as a liaison between the criminal justice system and VA
- Assists with eligibility determination, enrollment, and referral to both VA and non-VA services upon release, in particular assisting in SUD and MH referrals as well as housing as needed.
- Provides training to local law enforcement and various criminal justice partners on Veterans' issues and *give strategies to help work with Veterans*
- Provides information and education to courts, attorneys and other criminal justice partners about Veterans' issues and services available.
- Collaborates with judges and specialty courts to connect Veterans to VA treatment services and homeless programs. Particularly Veterans Treatment Court; serves as a member of the VTC court team.
- Provides clinical services to justice-involved Veterans, such as MRT, aftercare support groups, brief therapeutic support



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VA Eligibility

- ❖ Ask: Have you ever served in the United States Armed Forces or Military?

- ❖ Why not ask: Are you a Veteran?

- Many Veterans mistakenly think this applies only to Veterans who served in combat.



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VA Specialists/Healthcare service programs: beginning “Cans/Cant's” for realists

Can...

- Reach out to law enforcement, jails, and courts;
- Provide comprehensive healthcare services;
- With Veteran consent, communicate essentials to treatment court (attendance, progress, tx testing, d/c plan);
- Serve all veteran eras;
- Function as court team member;
- Meet with incarcerated Veterans for an initial assessment and recommendation
- Refer and link veteran to services;
- Provide evidenced based treatment for court-monitored veterans.

Can't...

- Write lengthy court reports, complete Diversion paperwork;
- Serve only OEF/OIF veterans;
- Decide criminal justice criteria for veteran court participation or decide who gains admission to specialty treatment court;
- Perform forensic psychiatric or psychological evaluation for the court;
- Accept custody;
- Guarantee program acceptance;
- Advocate for legislation;
- Serve VHA ineligible Veterans. (this is changing)



VA Health Care Services Include:

- Hospital and outpatient medical care
- Domiciliary and nursing home care
- Military Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women Veterans
- Homeless programs
- Suicide Prevention
- Readjustment counseling
- *Mental health services*



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TREATMENT AND PROGRAMS

- *Evidence-based Therapy (example of a few)*
 - *Prolonged Exposure*
 - *Cognitive Processing Therapy*
 - *Acceptance Commitment Therapy*
 - *Motivational Interviewing*
 - *Pharmacotherapy*
 - *Anger management*
 - *MRT (Moral Recognition Therapy)*
- *Substance Abuse Treatment*
 - *RRTP*
 - *Medication assisted treatment*
 - *CBT and Motivational interviewing*
 - *DOM/Fresh Start*
- *Vocational Programs*
 - *Transitional Work*
 - *DVOP*
- *Homeless Programs*
 - *HCHV, GPD, TR, DOM, VASH*
- *Suicide Prevention*
- *Veteran Justice Outreach*
- *Vet Centers*
- *Peer support*

•Crisis Services

To help a homeless Veteran, call:



If a Veteran who expresses thoughts of hurting themselves text 838255 or call:





VA Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Operations and Management

May 27, 2009

“Law Enforcement Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are another promising avenue for connecting justice-involved Veterans with needed mental health and other services. In Memphis, Tennessee, and other communities using the Memphis Model, VA clinicians train law enforcement personnel on Veteran-specific issues, including PTSD and TBI, to inform encounters with Veterans in crisis.”



CIT is a partnership

Community Providers

- community mental health, hospitals, substance abuse treatment (no clinical barrier to care)

Law Enforcement

- police, sheriff, jail administration, emergency services

Advocacy Groups

- NAMI

Consumers and families

Community Leaders





Law Enforcement Training

- Helping CIT, probation/parole, and other law enforcement officers understand unique veteran challenges and needs.
- Using that knowledge to intervene more safely and effectively with veterans in crisis.
- Improving outcomes for veterans and avoiding unnecessary criminalization of behavioral health disorders.



Police Training continued

- VJOs may present segments of CIT basic training sessions, and/or...
- VJOs may organize advanced police trainings specifically on veterans' issues.
- Typical topics include PTSD, TBI, veteran-specific issues, and VA services.



Outreach to Police-Involved Veterans

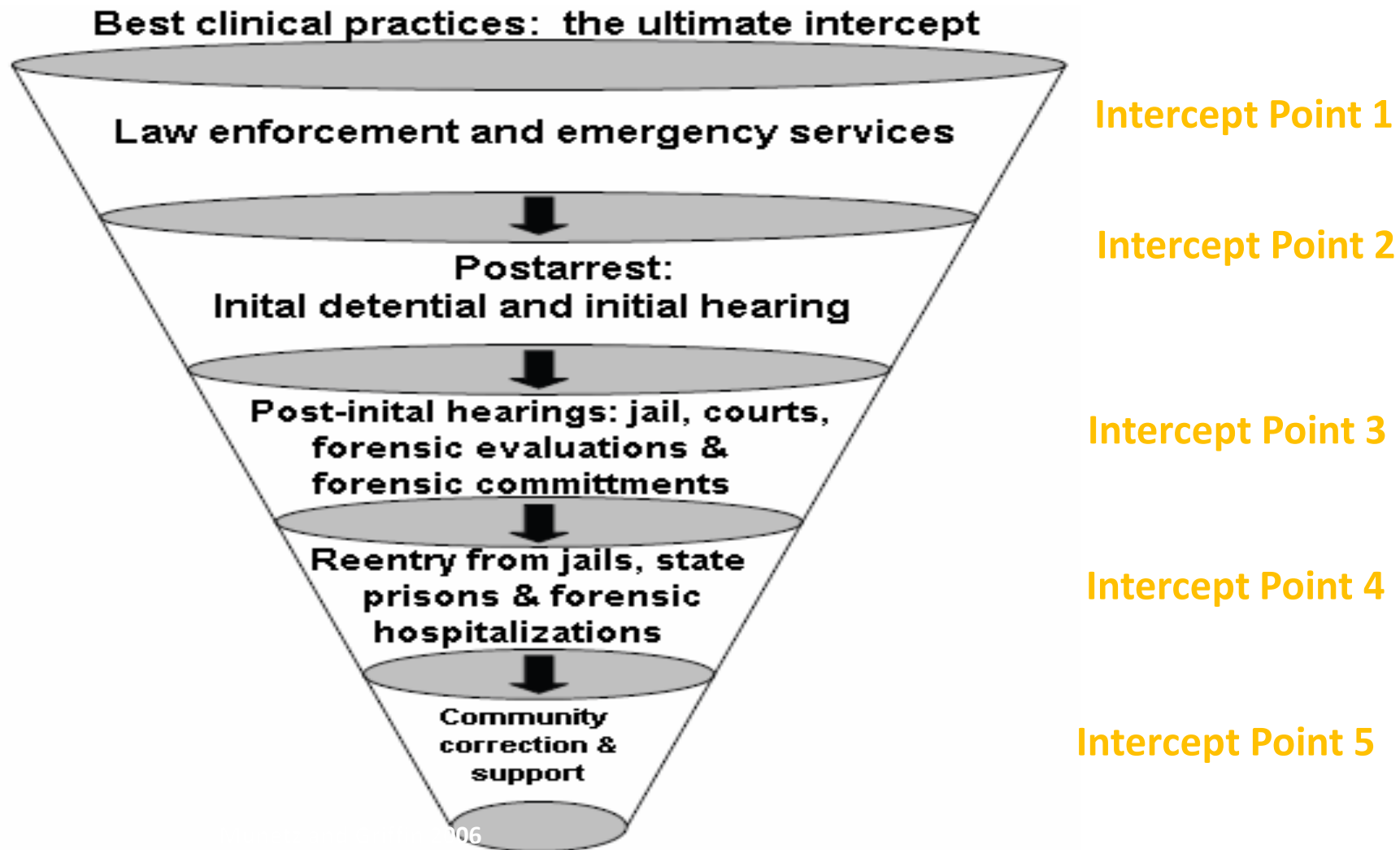
- Police and CBHLs reach out to VJOs to help individual veterans in crisis.
- Veterans or families may ask for help advocating or communicating with police.
- VJOs sit on CIT Coordinating Councils.



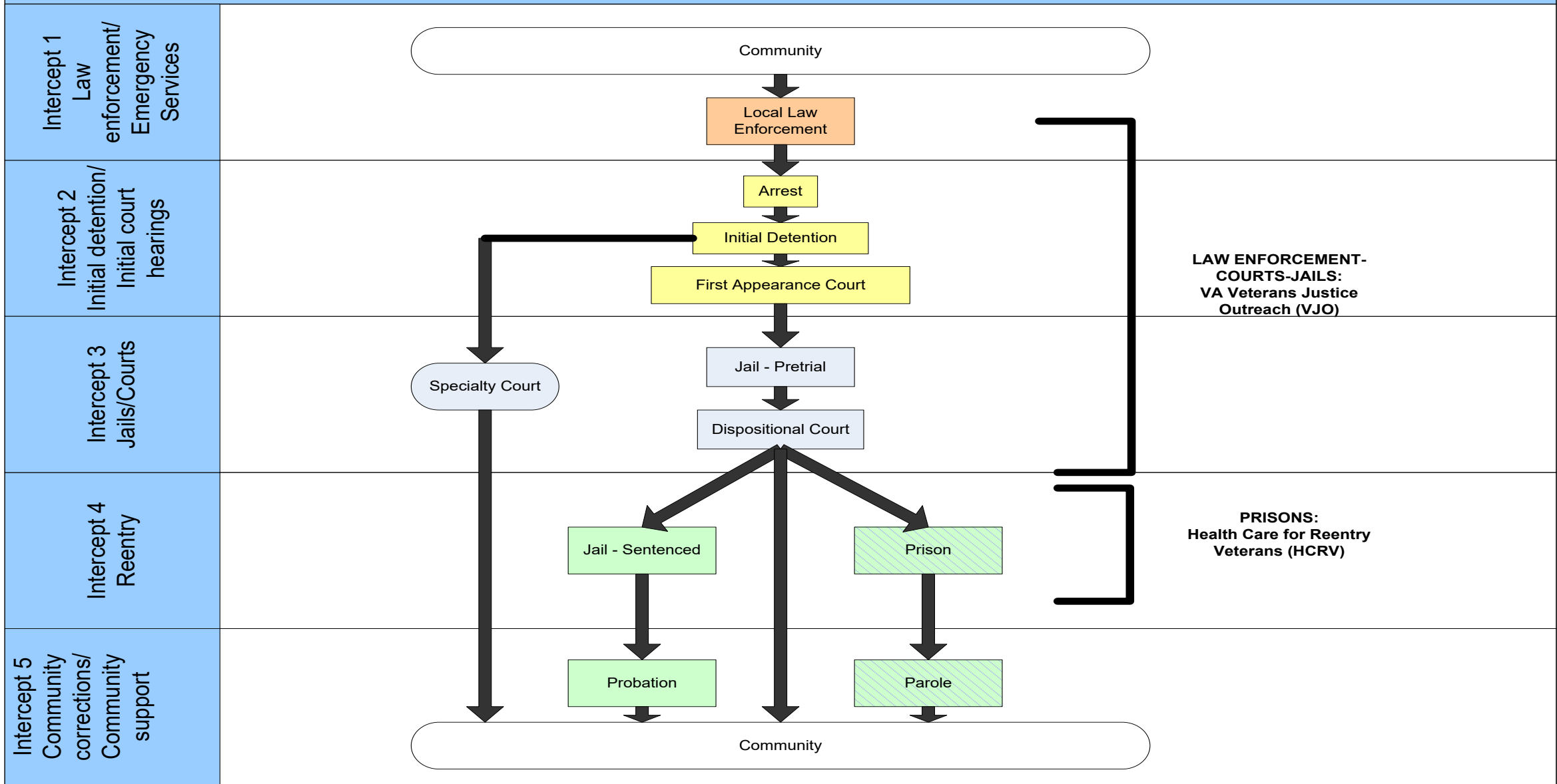
CIT References

- **CIT International:**
 - www.citinternational.org
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness:**
 - www.nami.org/cit
- **CIT Center:**
 - cit.memphis.edu/
- **St. Louis Area Crisis Intervention Team:**
 - www.stlouisco.com/lawandpublicsafety/crisisinterventionteam

Sequential Intercept Model



Sequential Intercept Model



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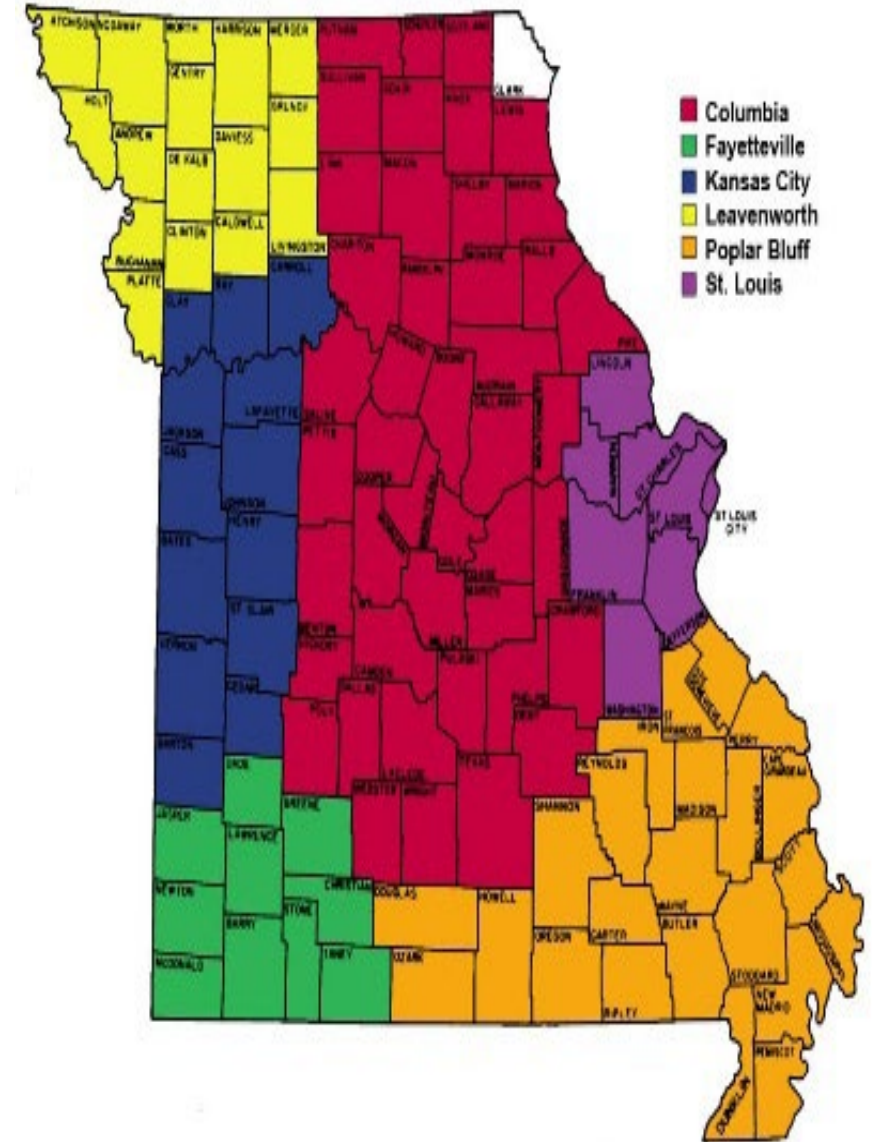
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QUESTIONS?

