



NAMI  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Santa Cruz County

## **What to do when your family member has been arrested.**

### SUPPORTING YOUR RELATIVE

- If your family member calls you and says that they have been arrested, help them stay calm and let them know you are there to help.
- Ask them to submit a request for Jail Behavioral Health Services. Request forms are available from the housing unit officers. Encourage them to talk about their physical and mental health condition, diagnosis, medications, etc.
- If you know that your family member is conserved through the Santa Cruz County Public Guardian office, notify the deputy Public Guardian. Call the Public Guardian's office at (831) 454-4160. Messages may be left on this phone 24 hours a day, even though the office hours are 8 to 5 during the week, someone will get the message. Provide them with the name of the mentally ill person, date incarcerated and plan for release (if known), your name, relationship and your telephone number.

### PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES and MEDICATION:

Jail Behavioral Health Services are provided only at the Main Jail on Water Street, which is a maximum-security facility.

Santa Cruz County Jail Behavioral Health Services

Phone: (831) 454-2865, Fax: (831) 454-5145, Email: CIT@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

The Jail Behavioral Health Team's focus of services is on those individuals who present with a stated or suspected risk to themselves, a persistent mental health disability and/or individuals who present with psychiatric symptoms. Jail Behavioral Health staff is available 7 days a week. Staff includes licensed mental health clinicians, Jail Discharge Planner, Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, a licensed Supervisor and graduate level interns who provide brief counseling.

To request psychiatric services for your loved one or provide medicine information:

1. Fill out the Jail Behavioral Health Team Referral Form and either drop it off with Jail Reception, fax it (831) 454-5145 or email it to the Jail Behavioral Health Team. (CIT@co.santa-cruz.ca.us) You can also call (831) 454-2865 and speak with a mental health clinician or leave a detailed message.

Please understand the staff is prohibited by law from giving anyone information without a signed release of information from the client.

The form can be found on the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health website under Adult Mental Health Services -> Coordinated Teams. It can also be found on the Crisis page of [namiscc.org](http://namiscc.org).

2. Follow up with a call to the Jail Behavioral Health Team to confirm they have received the referral and to give any more additional information. Please remember that Jail Behavioral Health Team can't release any information without a signed release of information from the client.
3. Encourage your loved one to submit a request for Jail Behavioral Health services. Request forms are available from the housing unit officers.

### COUNTY JAIL INFORMATION

How can I visit my loved one?

1. Call the Booking Office at (831) 454-2420 or visit [www.scssheriff.com](http://www.scssheriff.com) and click on Corrections.
2. All inmates are responsible for filling out a Visitor Clearance Form. The inmate will need each visitor's full name, address, phone number, date of birth and a Government ID.
3. Visiting hours on Saturdays, Sundays and some holidays and are scheduled ahead of time. You must call (831) 454-2420 to schedule the visit.
4. Any minor child (17 years and under) wishing to visit must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian appointed by the court.
5. All visitors will be screened for clearance.

Tips:

- Inmates are sometimes booked in with/without middle name. If you are unable to locate him/her, try any names your relative has used.
- When you visit the County Jail, always bring a few quarters for a locker to store your personal belongings while you visit your family member. A photo ID is required (California ID/Drivers license – Matricula (Mexico) - Adults only).

### JAIL MENTAL HEALTH DISCHARGE PLANNER

- Call the Jail Mental Health Discharge Planner, who is liaison to the courts, and may assist the defense attorney, prosecutor, and the judge in implementing an alternative sentence, from jail or prison, to a mental health treatment facility.
- Jail Discharge Planner Phone Number – (831) 454-5171
- Advise them of your family member's arrest and where he/she is being held.

How do I support my loved one if accessing mental health services once released from jail?

1. If an individual is going to be booked and released, request that your relative be screened for placement in the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Unit.
2. If an individual is interested in receiving mental health services they must be evaluated by the Access Team at County Mental Health. This service is provided between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except on holidays. This

team will determine if an individual meets eligibility criteria and / or direct the individual to appropriate services.

Call (800) 952-2335 24 hours a day. Urgent care can also be requested 24 hours per day by calling this number for existing consumers of County Mental Health.

## COURT

Most people charged with crimes are assigned a public defender. Here is what you should do:

- Call (831) 454-2420 to find out when your loved one is scheduled for court.
- Make contact with the attorney. This can be hard as attorneys are often in court all day, so call early in the morning or during lunch. If you can't reach her, call her office and ask for a fax number or email address.
- Attend the initial hearing. Introduce yourself to the public defender. Be brief, polite, and thank him/her. Let them know that you're happy to provide whatever information would be helpful to him. If your efforts are rebuffed, you can be more forceful and mail a brief summary (no more than three pages) of your loved one's medical information to the public defender's office.
- Ask the attorney to consider any jail diversion or pre-trial release programs. Maintaining Ongoing Stability through Treatment (MOST) team is a Forensic Assertive Community Treatment program (FACT) that combines an evidence-based program of wrap around mental health services inclusive of case management, psychiatry, psychotherapy, treatment support and access to community resources with additional supports specific to the criminal justice system involvement such as probation and Behavioral Health Court. Mental Health clinicians work in concert with Probation staff that are co-located at the mental health services offices. Detailed service delivery plans are developed to address the mental health needs of the consumer, as well as skill development to reduce and refrain from criminal activity and reduce recidivism within the criminal justice system. Eligibility for the MOST team has three criteria; the person must be part of the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health - Specialty Mental Health Services, they must be on formal Probation with mental health terms and must be willing to participate fully in the MOST program. For more information about the MOST team call the MOST team supervisor (831) 454-4797.
- Remember that the public defender works for your family member, not you. You can ask your loved one to sign a release that allows the attorney to share information with you. However, he may refuse and there's little the attorney can do.
- You can also hire a private defense attorney *who has experience working with clients with mental illness.*

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Resources:

- "Friends Outside" (831) 427-5070 are wonderful advocates.
- If your family member is being mistreated in jail, you should start by contacting <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org> or the American Civil Liberties Union - <http://www.santacruzclu.org>

Revised  
08/02/2017

Bail: Think carefully about posting bail for your family member. No one wants a loved one to remain incarcerated for any length of time. It is an unpleasant experience for them as well as the family. However, you must ask yourself the following question: Will your family member be able to comply with the terms of the bail and appear in court when required? Also, as hard as it may seem, jail may be a safer place for a person with severe mental illness who is in crisis rather than wandering the streets. At least in jail they will be fed, will have shelter, and be given access to medication treatments.

Supporting and coping with a loved one who suffers from a mental illness can be extremely challenging and stressful. Knowledge, as well as your love and fortitude, will be key in helping you to become a strong and effective support system for your family member. For information about support groups and educational programs provided free of charge in Santa Cruz County see [namiscc.org](http://namiscc.org) or call NAMI of Santa Cruz County at (831) 427-8020. If you live outside of Santa Cruz County contact NAMI California in Sacramento at (916) 567-0163 or on the internet at [namica.org](http://namica.org).

Outside of Santa Cruz County- NAMI National has a Help Line that can help you connect to advice and resources in your area (800) 950-6264.

This informational guide was written by NAMI volunteers based on their own personal experience to help families navigate the system. We are not attorneys, and this is not intended as a substitute for professional legal advice. Please assist your family member in obtaining proper legal representation.