

Mental health court

Law



According to one of the court reporters that I sat with, the case I heard occurs every day in 95b. One of the reasons mentioned in the hearing was that the defendant did not finish his treatment because he opted to work instead of attending treatment and was not dissuaded from doing so by his parents. It made me realize that though there are already significant channels being provided for mental health by the judicial system for those who need it, they are not being fully utilized. The danger is that these conditions can escalate the offense committed that is disincentive both to offenders who have conditions and those the crimes are committed against. When the court-appointed one of its own officers to oversee the treatment of the defendant who was still a minor, I realized the degree by which the courts have had to take a more active role in rehabilitating offenders. According to the UK based Democratic Health Network, health services should have a greater responsibility in ensuring that courts be enlightened regarding the condition of individuals who have mental illness who have committed crimes. This is viewed not to absolve or lessen the responsibility of the offenders for what they have done but to ensure that they receive the care they need with the supervision of the state if needed. The greatest realization of the day was that the critical issue of the day is not whether mental health conditions are being recognized by the courts but rather whether these programs are appreciated and maximized (Tarolla 142-143). Though undeniably a noble objective, the reality is that neither the local courts nor health institutions have the historical infrastructure or sufficient capabilities to coordinate all these efforts at the current scale that it is needed (Happell and Platania-Phung 466). Thus, a conscious and coordinated effort is needed to be able to respond to the mental health needs of

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offenders regardless of the outcome of their case. The efforts by the Los Angeles Superior Court is already considered as among the best programs in the world but they have themselves are facing resistance from the people that they are trying to rehabilitate and treat. The recognition of the significance of mental health conditions into the prevalence of crime is becoming one of the major concerns worldwide and will undoubtedly rise even more in the future. The concern is not just centered on the prevention of crime but also is focusing on the reintegration of offenders so that they can still be productive in society.