Successful Mental Health Court Without Much Court
as presented at the 35th Annual Conference of the Forensic Mental Health Association of California

- Honorable Coleen Toy White
- Gilbert McFarlane, PhD, Ventura County Behavioral Health
- Jean Farley, Esq, Ventura County Public Defender’s Office
- Michael Lief, Esq, Ventura County District Attorney’s Office
- John Schipper, PhD, Ventura County Behavioral Health
- Commander Linda Oksner, MPA, Ventura County Sheriff’s Office
- Thad Ackley, MA, Ventura County Probation Agency

A Brief History of Ventura County’s Mental Health, Forensic Efforts
- Ventura County has a long tradition of multi-agency, forensic endeavors that began in 1989 with a program called Forensic Alternative Community Treatment (FACT) which provided judges with a sentencing alternative for misdemeanants.
- The first Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) grant gave rise to a Multi-Agency Referral and Treatment (MART) which operated with a true experimental design from 2001 to 2004.
- The second MIOCR grant gave rise to the Multi-Agency Referral and Recovery Team (MARRT) which operated with grant funding for 18 months beginning in 2007 and since October of 2008 with multi-agency support.

Some of What Has Our History Taught Us...
- Misdemeanants & felons both warrant consideration.
- Public safety and personal recovery are actually intertwined.
- The evolution of inter-agency trust can make the unthinkable possible.
- A robust mental health court exists without special grant-funding and without being dependent upon the contribution of any individual team member.
- There is no predicting successes or failures: if anything, that kind of mindset interferes with the work.

Ventura County’s Mental Health Court Mission
- The primary mission of Ventura County’s Mental Health Court is to encourage treatment-resistant clients with serious mental illness and corresponding legal issues to engage in appropriate mental health services.

Mental Health Court Interagency Partners and their Primary Responsibilities

Ventura County Mental Health Court Process
Basic Stats on the Program

- Currently enrolled: 30
- Gender: 50/50
- Ethnicity: 40% Latino, 55% Caucasian, 5% Asian/other
- Average Age: 41
- Mental Illness with Substance abuse: 94%
- Mental Illness:
  - 60% Thought disorders
  - 30% Bi-Polar Disorders
  - 10% Other

Average Number of Arrests in year prior to and then after the MHC program

(These following stats are for persons admitted during 2009 that completed a substantial portion of the program)

Average Number of Days in Jail – Year Prior and Year Post MHC Program

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- Questions & Comments
- Contact with any of the Ventura County panel participants can be facilitated via email:
  john.schipper@ventura.org