



NORIX

Critical Diversion

– Davidson County

Evaluation of Mental Health in Justice

Properly evaluating mental health early in the detention process is essential. When mental health is appropriately considered, individuals can be immediately placed into carefully designed environments and possibly medicated to avoid further stress and possible disruption.

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Properly diverting those with mental health issues into treatment rather than punishment provides a clear benefit to communities. Nationwide, the Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported in the past that as many as 64% of people in U.S. jails suffer from some form of mental health issue, and 31% have a major depressive disorder. Too often, the easy and short-term solution of putting mentally-ill individuals behind bars comes at a long-term societal cost. The justice system suffers when punishments for committing crimes are not calculated and understood within the context of our mental health crisis. Two questions are

imperative in addressing this issue: at what point does the diversion occur, and to what environment is the person diverted.

Diverting these individuals into an appropriate environment can happen at various stages after the arrest. Too often, the diversion happens days or weeks after the arrest, or not at all. Diversion can happen after being booked into the facility, photographed, fingerprinted, and placed into multi-person cells. This late-term diversion can facilitate further mental decline, disruptions, or discipline for breaking facility rules or laws.

NASHVILLE OPTS FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

Many calls for help from police respond to a mental health crisis, and some municipalities dispatch expert teams to address the situation at the scene. While Nashville has not yet implemented such a program, the next best thing is to evaluate individuals at intake. This intake evaluation is what Nashville is now doing, according to Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall.

"People who belong in here are the ones who really wouldn't have committed their crime had they been stabilized on their medication," said Hall. "If not medication, their treatment. Because we incarcerate people for being ill, we're the only modern country in the world that does that."

TRADING PUNISHMENT FOR TREATMENT ENVIRONMENTS

Similarities between the treatment and detention areas in Nashville include safe and secured environments with durable goods, but the resemblance ends there. The Nashville Behavioral Care Center design puts patients at ease. Norix rotomolded rocking chairs, colorful fabric seating, bright natural light, and artistic murals set the

scene for a calm and healing environment. "The new Behavioral Care Center was designed to put people at ease, said Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall. "Unlike a jail, the environment will reduce stress for those with a mental illness." Staff in the Nashville treatment center will be trading uniforms for hospital scrubs, and patients will not be wearing orange jumpsuits.

Norix furniture plays a large part in helping create a non-institutional environment. "The move to humanize environments for improved mental health starts with color," says Brad Karl, Marketing Director at Norix Furniture. "Institutional grey, metal, and concrete are replaced in favor of carefully selected warm and inviting color, highly durably plastics, and fabrics."

Non-institutional looking behavioral healthcare furniture must accomplish two goals. The first goal is to remain safe, tamper-resistant, and easy to clean. The second is to create a relaxed and home-like environment for the mental well-being of staff and patients.

While experts are calling for a shift in funds to better support mental health, Nashville's changes offer a playbook to other municipalities. There is high hope for substantial results between the early intervention model and carefully designed, humanized environments. By adequately evaluating and helping those in need, facilities will better serve the community and ultimately reduce the tax-payers' burden.

Read more about the efforts to divert the mentally-ill in Nashville.

<https://wpln.org/post/nashville-swaps-jail-cells-for-mental-healthcare-at-new-behavioral-health-center/>

US Department of Justice report on Mental-health
<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhppji.pdf>

Non-institutional looking special needs furniture must accomplish two goals. The first goal is to remain safe, tamper-resistant, and easy to clean. The second is to create a relaxed and homelike environment for the mental well-being of staff and patients.

Norix designs innovative, robust furniture that meets the real-world need for humanizing challenging environments. For more than 35 years, the company has served the behavioral healthcare, corrections, fire/rescue, military, transitional housing, public safety and variety of commercial industries by providing uniquely reliable furnishings for every application. All furniture is designed for safety, security and extreme durability. Norix furniture is extraordinary by design, surpassing industry standards for strength, safety and long-term performance. Aside from its durability, Norix products also come in aesthetically pleasing designs and colors and are made especially for facilities that require furniture that can humanize their environments.

Norix is a privately held company is headquartered in West Chicago, IL with consultative sales representatives and dealers throughout the U.S.

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