

Behavioral Health Court Mission

The mission of the Behavioral Health Court of Douglas County is to connect defendants with community support services and reduce criminal involvement of defendants who experience serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders, thereby enhancing public health and safety.

Additional Information and Referrals

dgcoks.org/bhc

Douglas County Behavioral Health Court

Judge Sally Pokorny

The Douglas County Behavioral Health Court was established to more effectively address the needs of defendants with serious mental illness who cycle through the court, detention, and mental health systems.

The Behavioral Health Court is a collaboration among the Court, Douglas County District Attorney's Office, Criminal Justice Services, Defense Attorneys, Local law enforcement, Bert Nash Behavioral Health, DCCCA, substance abuse treatment providers and other community-based treatment providers.

Prospective program participants should consult with their attorneys, who in turn will contact the District Attorney's Office.



Douglas County Behavioral Health Court

Structure/Model

- Behavioral Health Court will accept referrals after criminal charges and the case has been forwarded to the Douglas County District Court for further disposition.
- **Participants are required to:**
 1. **Follow a treatment plan.**
 2. **Comply with all court ordered conditions.**
 3. **Obey the terms of supervision.**
 4. **Attend regular court appearances.**
- Upon successful completion of the Behavioral Health Court program, the Court will expunge the participant's charges.

Eligibility

- The defendant must be a resident of Douglas County, Kansas.
- The defendant must be 18 years of age or older.
- The defendant meets the criteria for having a mental health disorder and this disorder contributes to the defendant's criminal behavior.
- Eligible defendants with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance abuse) will be evaluated for the Behavioral Health Court.
- The Court prioritizes serving defendants with non-violent offenses, but defendants with other offenses will be considered for the BHC on a case-by-case basis.

Goals

- Connect defendants who experience serious mental illness to treatment and support services in the community.
- Improve coordination between the mental health and justice systems for persons with mental illness.
- Reduce participant days spent in jail and reduce the potential for further interactions with the criminal justice system.
- Improve the quality of life for people with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

Exclusions

While each case is considered individually, people with the following offenses will typically be excluded from the court:

1. Felony sex offenses.
2. Unresolved out of county charges (depending on circumstances)
3. Murder and Manslaughter charges.
4. DUI charge