



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance use disorder services.

A Look Inside: Mental Illness and Our Criminal Justice System Session 3

Speaker Bios

Thank you to our speakers for sharing their time and expertise.

Michael Meulemans

Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) Program



Michael Meulemans is the Reentry Unit - Disability Treatment Director for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections – Office of the Secretary. His core responsibilities are managing the OARS Programs and Reentry Legal Services for the Department.

Michael received his Bachelors of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Northern Michigan University in 1994. He is a 2014 graduate of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Leadership Development Academy.

Michael has been employed with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections since 1996. In his nearly 26 years of public service, Michael has held positions of Probation and Parole Agent, Corrections Field Supervisor, and Program and Policy Analyst. He began his career and spent several years in Racine as a Probation Agent.

Now, with his focus on reentry services for those with serious mental health conditions, he promotes effective, evidence-based programming, formal correctional programming evaluations, and data driven program and policy decision making. His particular areas of interest include: mental health, substance use screening, cognitive behavioral therapy, and medication assisted treatment.

He is a co-chair of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Opioid Response Steering Committee and closely manages the statewide Department's Opioid Addiction Program and harm reduction related services.

Zachary Wisniewski

Corrections Field Supervisor – Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Community Corrections



Zachary is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (B.A., Social Work) and has worked for the Department of Corrections for 22 years. Zachary started his career with the Department as a Corrections Sergeant before accepting a position as a Probation & Parole Agent. Zachary has a number of specialty caseloads during his time as an agent, including clients convicted of sex offenses who also had severe mental health/cognitive issues. In November 2021 Zachary accepted a promotion to his current position supervising a sex offender unit. Outside of work Zachary enjoys spending time with his family, gardening, and watching the Brewers.

Ashley Johnson

Mental Health Unit and Mental Health Court Pilot

Ashley has been a Probation & Parole Agent with the Department of Corrections for 3 years, serving in the Mental Health Unit. She works with community programs such as Opening Avenues for Re-Entry Success, CARS, and the Mental Health Treatment Court Pilot Program. Prior to being an agent, Ashley worked with Re-Entry at Racine Correctional Institution and at residential facilities for clients with Substance Use Disorders as well as Dual-Diagnosis clients for Alternative to Revocations.

David Carlson

Founder/Co-Owner of C.C. WE ADAPT and Co-Founder/Co-Owner of Next Generation Properties. J.D. Candidate at Mitchell Hamline School of Law



David grew up in instability, experiencing and witnessing many traumatic events. He was incarcerated as a juvenile in Minnesota. After being adopted, David moved to Wisconsin. He eventually joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard. David was deployed to Iraq as an infantryman for two combat tours in Iraq. His transition home was difficult, and he made decisions that resulted in him being incarcerated in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. Since his final release, David has dedicated his focus to advocating for others who are dealing with unresolved trauma.

Chantell Jewell

Superintendent of House of Correction, Milwaukee County



Chantell Jewell is a values-based professional with over 25 years of experience serving her community. She spent most of her career with the Department of Corrections (DOC) where she gained a wide range of knowledge as a youth counselor, probation/parole agent and corrections field supervisor.

After retiring from the DOC in 2016, Ms. Jewell served as the Reentry Services Manager at Employ Milwaukee and as a Deputy Administrator at Milwaukee County's Division of Youth and Family Services. Both of those positions allowed her an opportunity to continue her commitment to creating long-term change within Milwaukee County and the Criminal Justice System.

On November 16, 2020, Ms. Jewell was appointed as Superintendent of the Milwaukee County House of Correction and became the first Black Woman to serve in this role.

Liz Schwartz

Case Manager with Wellpath, Milwaukee County House of Correction (HOC)



I have been a case manager at the HOC for 8 years. My role includes assisting our clients with re-entry planning, connecting them with agencies/services in the community specializing in mental health.

In addition to that, I am now a part of the Medically Assisted Treatment program which assists our population with those that have an opiate use disorder. We are able now to get them connected with in house AODA assistance and start them on Suboxone or Vivitrol prior to release with a direct connection to continuation of services. I am proud of how far we have come in assisting our clients.