

Some Key Findings from Vermont Group at May 2022 New England Mental Health Summit

- When people in Vermont with serious mental illness need help and ask for it, it can be hard to find.
- When people with serious mental illness arrive in Vermont criminal court, only some are given basic screening and advised to seek assessment and follow treatment recommendations.
- There are likely to be long waits for such assessments and follow-up treatment may not be available at all.
- The vast majority of crimes committed by people with serious mental illness are non-violent misdemeanors.

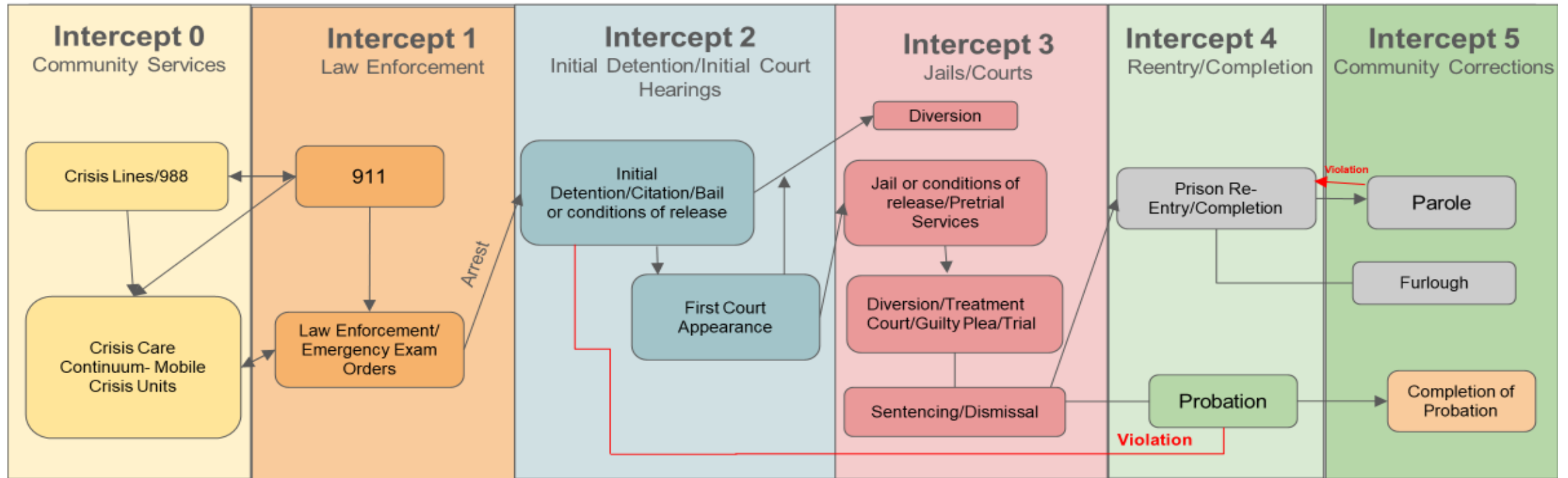
- Every interaction that a person with a mental illness has with a public entity, whether school, law enforcement, healthcare provider, DCF, or court, is an opportunity to intervene and provide help.
- The sooner a person with serious mental illness is offered and engages with treatment, the more likely it is that they will benefit, with fewer long-term negative consequences for themselves and others.

These findings were echoed in the charge and designation of the Mental Health Commission issued by the court later in 2022.

Mental Health Commission Charge

The Commission's overarching purpose shall be to advance the pursuit of equal justice under the law. The goal is to identify advances in our justice system that will positively impact the administration of justice where it intersects with mental health, evaluate solutions, and recommend changes. The Commission's work will address practices relating to mental-health-involved individuals prior to the initiation of court proceedings and once they have begun.

Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) Model



Why SIM? (from National Center for State Courts)

- The Sequential Intercept Model is designed to facilitate cross-system communication and collaboration. By convening and engaging justice and community partners to identify resources and opportunities to enhance diversion pathways at each sequential intercept, courts can take the lead in developing a shared responsibility for public safety and well-being.
- The Sequential Intercept Model can help communities understand the big picture of interactions between the criminal justice and mental health systems, suggest which populations might be the focus at each point of interception, and highlight the likely decisions that can reduce further penetration into the criminal justice system for individuals living with mental health and substance use disorders.