

# TEAM MISA

---

MENTAL ILLNESS SUBSTANCE ABUSE

WORKING TOGETHER TO  
ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

# PURPOSE:

To develop intervention strategies and individualized action plans for the disposition of criminal cases and safe reentry into our community for selected special needs defendants.

# DEVELOPMENT STAGE

- Team MISA was developed as an offshoot of MISA/CJAB to divert low risk mental health (MH) offenders from prison in the very early stages of incarceration.
- The meetings were scheduled weekly as a “think tank” for the involved parties to streamline processes and expedite appropriate releases.

**Key party involvement is critical to the success of this initiative.**

Each representative should have a strong interest in improving the Criminal Justice System's handling of persons with special needs and have the authority to influence change within their respective departments.

# TEAM MEMBERS:

- PROSECUTORS
- DEFENSE COUNSEL
- PRETRIAL SERVICES
- MH/ID, D&A, CRISIS
- JAIL STAFF
- JAIL MEDICAL STAFF
- PROBATION



*But we did not speak the same language...*

- Client
- Inmate
- Defendant
- Offender
- Consumer
- Patient
- And for some, “that crazy guy”

# **In the initial meetings, the committee identified the following priorities:**

- Develop effective working relationships and processes between the systems
- Reduce jail time for special needs defendants
- Expand community treatment options
- Educate team members about mental illness and substance abuse
- Increase early diversion of D&A and MH/ID defendants

# The Start Up

- Developed a data sharing mechanism between Lehigh County Jail and MH/ID to identify defendants with mental illness
- Added a mental health coordinator to Lehigh County Jail's contract for medical services
- Identified primary point persons for each system
- Conducted in-service training about Team MISA for Lehigh County Judiciary, Prosecutors and Defenders



# REFERRAL SOURCES

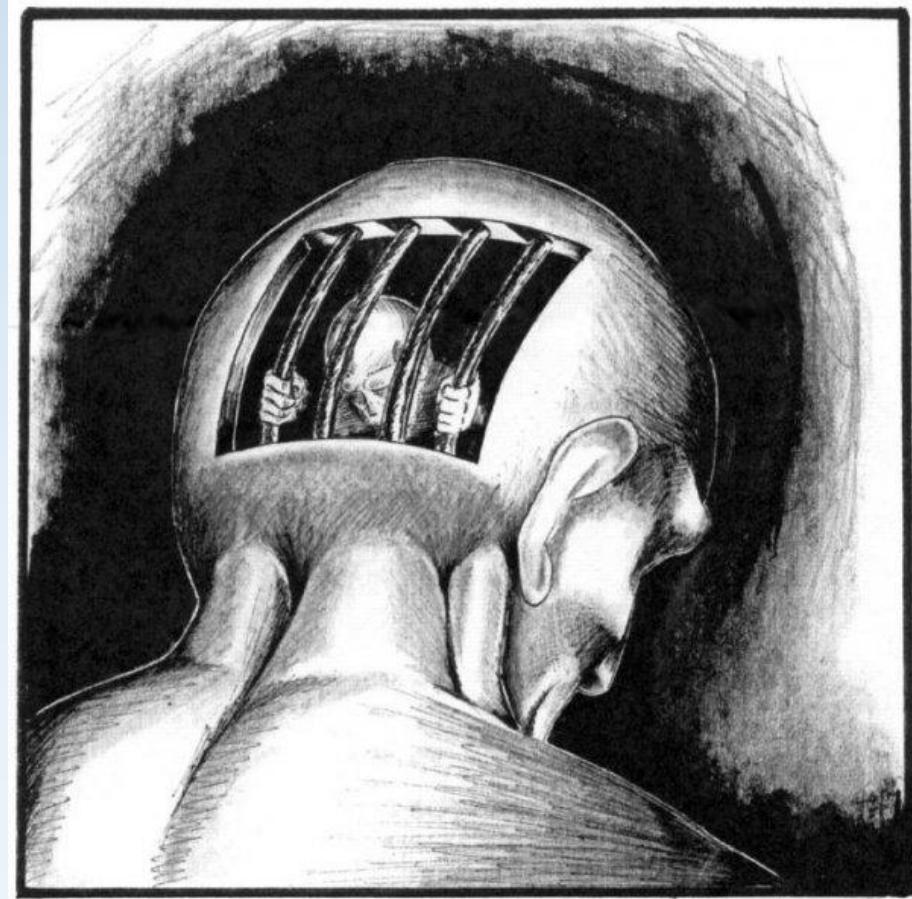
- POLICE
- MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGES
- PRETRIAL SERVICES
- JAIL STAFF
- PUBLIC DEFENDERS
- ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEYS
- PROBATION
- PRIVATE COUNCIL
- JUDGES
- FAMILY

# Team MISA Meetings:

- Members engage in a rapid dialogue
- Often deal with 15 or more cases per session
- Weekly meetings last an hour and a half
- Agendas are generated and minutes are kept for each meeting
- **Having the appropriate disciplines & personnel together to discuss and to implement treatment options/plans allows for successful outcomes**

To effectively serve defendants, there needs to be an understanding of all aspects of treatment, which include:

- Evaluations
- Medications
- Treatment options
- Housing options
- Family dynamics
- Peer support



# Team MISA facilitates:

- Drug and alcohol evaluation
- Psych evaluation
- Competency evaluation
- Specialized evaluation (Aging, ID, Arson, Neurological)
- CRR referral
- Inpatient hospitalization
- Inpatient dual diagnosis
- Housing
- Community-based case management
- Referral to home county

# The Process

- Information is gathered
- Treatment plan is formulated
- Treatment plan is brought before the court
- Treatment plan is executed

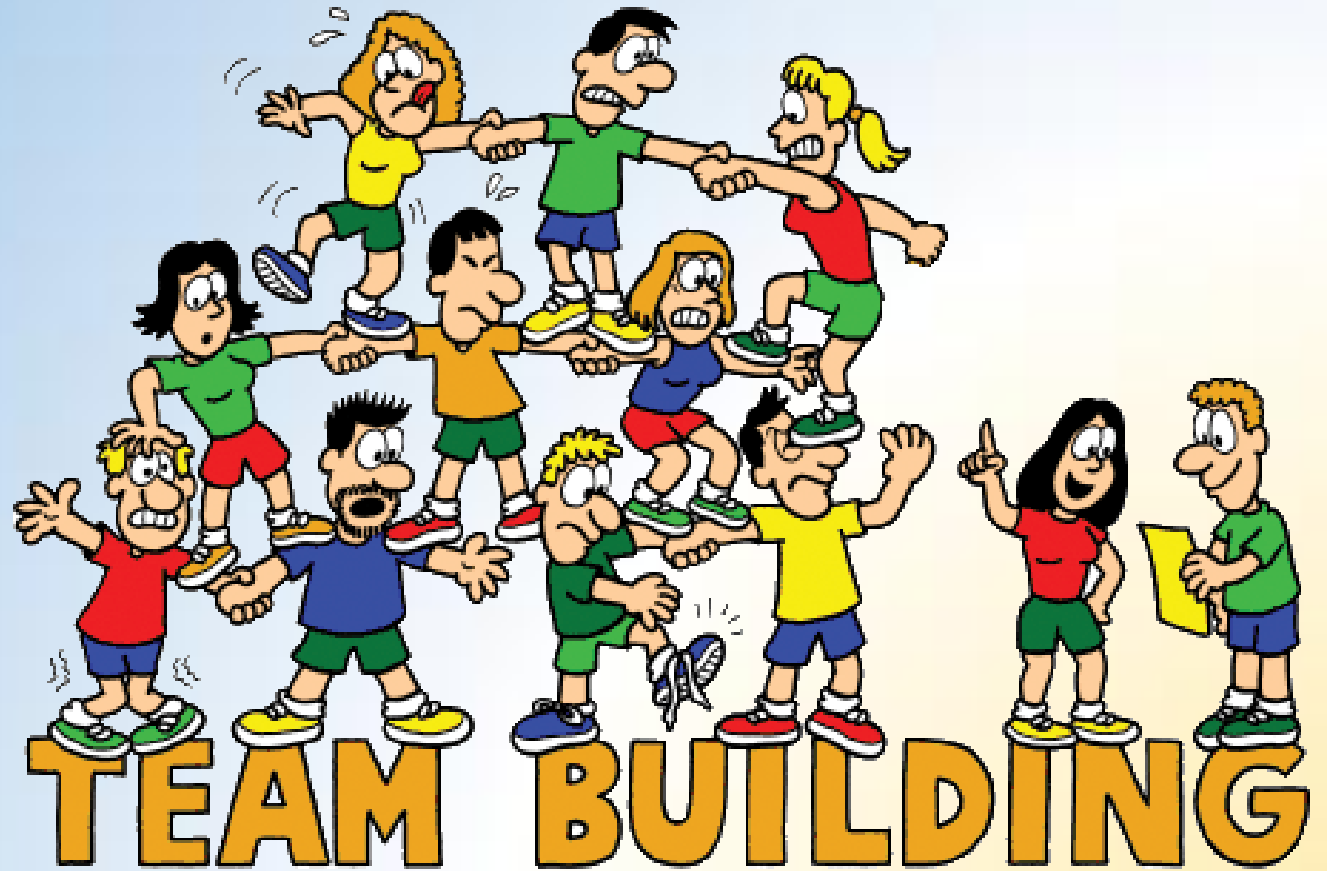
# Successes

- Improved systems approach
- Expanded treatment options
- Improved advocacy for the MH jail population
- Enhanced early diversion of D&A and MH/ID defendants
- Community Safety

And what is Team MISA's budget?

**\$0.000**

**A “we working together” rather than “us against them” philosophy continues to be Team MISA’s greatest accomplishment.**





**This chart reflects cases that have been handled using swift action plans, information only, or dismissal.**



**\*The last 3 years illustrate referral & commitment to the program**

# Team MISA

Winner of the CCAP Jail  
Overcrowding Best Practices  
Award