

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

MICA PROJECT

1. What Does MICA Mean?

Mentally Ill and Chemically Addicted (MICA) is a term which identifies when a person is living with a mental illness and a substance abuse issue.

2. What is the Purpose of the Enhanced Defense-MICA Project?

There are too many people with mental illness and/or substance abuse problems in our jails and prisons. Those living with mental illness are more likely to be arrested, sentenced more severely and detained longer in jail than those with similar charges. In New York City, a study of individuals arrested in Brooklyn found that

18% had a serious mental illness. For those with mental illness, the trauma of being in jail and serving time may actually make their symptoms worse and reduce the defendant's chance of achieving successful community integration upon release. Considering these staggering numbers, the MICA Project has demonstrated a measurable way to avoid wasting resources on jails and prisons, by investing in people.

3. The Enhanced-Defense MICA Project Overview:

Since 2002, the Legal Aid Society's Enhanced Defense-MICA Project has provided legal and community support services to some of the most vulnerable defendants in New York City's criminal justice system. These individuals, struggling to live with symptoms related to serious mental illness and addiction problems, are often underserved and victimized while incarcerated in our jails and prisons. The MICA Project's team model partners mental health attorneys with licensed clinical social workers to address the holistic needs of each client. In 2007, we added consumer peer advocate interns to our Queens County team to provide mentors to our clients.

Our main focus is to get or keep our clients out of jail/prison by helping them get into treatment. Once a defendant is receiving community treatment, our unique defense-based bridge case management approach enables us to provide 18-24 months of community social services and monitoring. This bridge case management model is based on three core values:

1. Defendants in our Project are dynamic people, not cases.
2. We recognize that there is a strong connection between legal problems and social problems.
3. The highly stigmatized and marginalized MICA population is often poorly served by our current mental health system, putting them at high risk for "falling through the cracks."
4. How Does a Person Get Help from the MICA Project?

The MICA Project can assist those people represented by the Legal Aid Society in a criminal matter. We have offices in Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens County trial offices. For more information speak with your assigned lawyer or call the Project's Director John F. Volpe at (212) 577-3340.

Did You Know?

- You have a right to privacy for all your psychological, psychiatric and medical information.
- You have a right to mental health, medical and medication services in NYC jails.
- If you receive mental health counseling and/or medication in NYC jails, you have a right to work with a discharge planner who should arrange for your return to community treatment.

For more information or guidance please contact: John F. Volpe, LCSW @ 212-577-3340.



MAKING THE CASE FOR HUMANITY

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