

# Mental Health Court Roll Call

## What is Mental Health Court Roll Call?

The mental health court conducts a “roll call” of defendants when the formal court status hearing is not operational for two consecutive weeks due to some personal or administrative conflict in the Judge’s calendar. The roll call is conducted by a member of the mental health court steering committee (usually the MHC probation officer) in lieu of the District Judge. The roll call is conducted at the district court either in the courtroom itself or in an adjacent conference room or other court location. Conducting the roll call in the court setting maintains the procedural formality of the reporting process and provides the opportunity for defendants to receive additional program orientation and information about the program’s objectives and intent that may not be otherwise available in the normal course of program participation. Questions regarding the logic or rationale of past sanctions or requirements imposed by the court and/or related judicial decisions are not entertained in the roll call procedure.

## Why is Mental Health Court Roll Call conducted?

The roll call system is established as a stop-gap measure so as to maintain the frequency, pace and routine of program participant’s personal appearances in the judicial system. Maintaining consistency in the reporting process reinforces the principle of accountability, which functions as a critical factor relative to program advancement. Particularly with respect to level I participants, the increased frequency of court appearances provides a motivational incentive for positive performance, whereas the greater the distance between court appearances in the same population tends to result in a reduction in compliance with program expectations. Generally, defendants in the anticipatory and encounter stages of the process of assimilation (level I and II of the mental health court program) are more likely invested or engaged in continuing counter-motivational behaviors rooted in the dynamics of ambivalence, than those further advanced in the program and more committed to the concept of therapeutic jurisprudence.

## How is Mental Health Court Roll Call conducted?

Defendants scheduled on the court docket for appearance on the day of roll call are assembled together in either the court or adjacent conference room. The committee member conducting the roll call, at their discretion, may proceed in the manner outlined below or in whatever way felt best given the circumstances and list of defendants on the day in question.

1. The roll call proceeding is brought to order.
2. Introductory comments are given at the discretion of the conductor.
3. Defendants are called by first name in any order preferred by the conductor.
4. Each defendant is greeted and asked if they have any questions, comments or concerns.
5. Questions, comments and concerns are addressed as appropriate by the conductor.
6. The defendant is thanked for their appearance and provided a notice of next appearance.
7. The defendant is then excused.

## Program Advancement – Measures of Success

The issue of advancement or ascension through a succession of program levels is a critical component that ideally should be constructed so as to influence the participant's progressive development toward mental health recovery. The gradient nature of the program is intended to help participants build upon strengths acquired in each phase until they reach program graduation or disengagement and are better equipped to sustain the success gained through the stages of program participation. This progression can only be accomplished if program advancement is directly and concretely tied to objective measures of success. To the degree that advancement is either arbitrary or capricious, it will be devoid of both meaning and influence relative to sustained levels of personal change and subsequently of little effect as a viable tool against criminal and therapeutic recidivism.

The following outline is designed to address 4 measures of success applicable to mental health court program advancement. The program participant as well mental health court personnel need some defined parameters from which to measure individual motivation beyond simply the duration of time, which alone does not provide any qualitative indication of success. The measures described below, in addition to the chronological component, help provide a more concrete and logical link to program advancement thereby minimizing the degree to which the program is either perceived abstractly and/or applied arbitrarily.

### Measure 1: Program Chronology

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate meets the duration of time relative to the applicable level of advancement (i.e., 90 – 120 days level 2; 180 – 240 days level 3; 300 days level 4)

### Measure 2: Adherence to clinical requirements

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate demonstrates an active (attends to clinical activities and readily participates without prompting) level of participation in mental health treatment (i.e., therapy, medication management).

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate demonstrates a high (90 – 100% compliance with scheduled appointments/prescribed services) to moderate (75 – 89% compliance with scheduled appointments/prescribed services) rate of participation in mental health treatment.

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate demonstrates a generally cooperative attitude toward mental health treatment and is appropriately engaged in the treatment relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate has demonstrated or currently demonstrates an overall adequate level of compliance with specifically prescribed clinical curriculums (i.e., DBT group; case management, skills development services, etc.).

### Measure 3: Adherence to adjunct treatment requirements

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate demonstrates an overall adequate level of compliance with adjunct treatment/services (i.e., drug and alcohol treatment, AA and/or NA programs, clubhouse program, etc.).

#### Measure 4: Adherence to judicial requirements

\_\_\_\_\_ The candidate demonstrates an overall adequate level of compliance with fundamental program requirements (i.e., stable drug free housing, no weapons possession, no substance use/abuse, etc.), conditions of probation and cooperation with AP&P, as well as additional court imposed expectations (i.e., employment, community service, curfew restrictions, etc.).

#### Summary:

With each level of advancement, the participant should be informed as to the specific measures of success which have resulted in the level change so as to reinforce a mental association between compliance and progress.