

My Family Member Has Been Arrested - What Do I Do?

A step-by-step guide to help families cope with the criminal justice system in Dane County when a loved one living with a mental illness is arrested. Keep in mind that this informational guide was put together to help you navigate the Dane County legal system and not intended to substitute proper legal representation.

STEP ONE: BE SUPPORTIVE

- If your family member/friend calls you and says that he/she has been arrested, help him/her stay calm and offer your help and support.
- The Dane County Jail has a mental health crisis team who will screen him/her for mental illness, as well as other health concerns.
- It is very important that your family member/friend be direct and honest in order to benefit as much as possible from the screening process. Assure your family member that it is OK to discuss his/her physical and mental condition, diagnosis, medications, etc., with the staff conducting the screening.

STEP TWO: CONTACT THE DANE COUNTY JAIL

Contact the jail to inquire about your family member's booking and housing information. You may also provide the jail with medical and/or mental health information of your friend or relative to help assist the medical and mental health staff in their evaluation. The contact information is as follows:

Dane County Jail

Public Safety Building
115 Doty St. Madison, WI 53703

- Phone: (608) 284-6100 (press "2" and then "0" to find out if a person is in jail)
- 1-877-418-8463, Dane County VINE (verify custody status of inmates/sign up for automatic notification of release) toll-free 24-hour phone number
- After-hours jail booking contact: (can be utilized for after-hours immediate medical and mental health concerns): 608-284-6863
- Be sure to request the following information:
 - *The court arraignment date, courtroom and address*
 - *The alleged charges*
 - *Bail amount, if applicable*
 - *His/her booking number*

STEP THREE: CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Upon arrival at the jail, your family member will receive a series of evaluations from the medical and mental health staff. The evaluations will help determine what type of housing will be necessary to accommodate your family member. Once the evaluations are completed, he/she

will be transferred to a housing module. Once they are transferred to a housing module, you will have the opportunity to visit your family member.

- You may also write to your family member. Please remember all mail is scanned in an effort to minimize the introduction of contraband into the facility. Please review the Inmate Mail Guidelines for further details of items not authorized in the facility. In order to assure the accurate and efficient processing of all incoming mail, please include the following information on the envelope.
 - Please legibly address the envelope with the following information:
 - Name
 - Booking number
 - Return address
 - First and last name of sender

STEP SIX: COURT

Once in custody, your family member will be assigned a court date. Court is within 3 business days of their arrival at the jail. For additional court date information please contact the Clerk of Courts at 608-266-4311.

If you would like to assist your family member in obtaining legal assistance, please do so. If your family member is unable to afford an attorney, one will be appointed to him/her. For further information, you may contact the Public Defender's office at: 608) 266-9150. Their office is located at 17 S. Fairchild Street, 2nd Floor, Madison.

STEP SEVEN: FAMILY ADVOCATE / ASSISTANCE

If you need assistance or would like further information regarding assistance for people with mental illnesses, please see the below list of contact information for local agencies.

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-Dane County) at 608) 249-7188
- Journey Alternative Sanctions Treatment: Court referred individuals enrolled in an eligible alternative sanctions program can call 608) 280-2652. Alternative Sanctions is located at 25 Kessel Court, Madison, WI 53711.
- Jail Mental Health Services Main Adult Detention Facility Phone: 608) 266-4033
- Recovery Dane is a resource center for people with mental health needs and their family friends and allies. You can request information about detailed and individualized information by calling: 608)-237-1661

Supporting and coping with a loved one with mental illness can be extremely challenging and stressful. Knowledge, as well as your love and fortitude, will be essential in helping you to become a strong and effective support system for your family member. For information about support groups and educational programs provided free of charge in your area, contact NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, at 608) 249-7188 or on the internet at www.namidanecounty.org.