

# *Individuals with Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System*

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## 3 largest psychiatric facilities in the U.S.

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- L.A. County Jail
  - Cook County Jail (Chicago)
  - Riker's Island (NYC)
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# “Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”

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- Involvement with CJ system is all too common for individuals with MI
    - 25-40% of all individuals with MI will become involved in the CJ system
    - Men w/ MI are 4X more likely to be incarcerated; women w/ MI, 6X
  - Arrest rate for MI has increased since 1965, often for minor crimes (if at all)
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# “Criminalization of the Mentally Ill” (cont.)

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- People w/ MI are overrepresented in the CJ system
    - The rate of MI in jails/prisons is at least 3X (to 10X) the rate in the general pop.
  - Stay longer in jail/prison
    - In Fairfax, psychotic misdemeanants stayed in jail **6.5X** longer than non-MI offenders
    - In 2000 in PA, only 16% of all inmates served their maximum sentence. People w/ serious MI were **3X** as likely to do so.
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# “Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”: Reasons???

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- Changes in MH-civil commitment system
    - Deinstitutionalization
    - Changes in commitment laws
  - Changes in societal attitudes about “criminals” and the mentally ill
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# Deinstitutionalization or Transinstitutionalization???

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**Table 1** Changes in State Mental Hospital Beds Based on the Years 1955 and 2000

Year	1955	2000 (December)
Number of beds	559,000	59,403
U.S. population	165,000,000	273,600,000
Beds/100,000 population	339	22

**Table 2** Changes in Number of Inmates in Jails and State and Federal Prisons Based on the Years 1978 and 2000

Year	1978	2000
Number of inmates	465,760	1,937,482
U.S. population	223,000,000	273,600,000
Inmates/100,000 population	209	708

95% *decrease* in hospital beds vs. over 400+% *increase* in jails/prisons!!

Lamb & Weinberger (2005). The shift of psychiatric inpatient care from hospitals to jails and prisons. *JAAPL*, 33, 529-534.

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# “Criminalization of the Mentally Ill”: Reasons???

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- Complications of MI
    - Crimes more likely to be detected
    - More likely to escalate when police arrive
    - Presentation not recognized as MI
    - In jail longer b/c get in more trouble
  - CJ System’s hands are tied
    - Police and jails *can’t* say no
  - Revolving door
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# Why is it important for law enforcement to understand MI?

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- ❑ 16% of the U.S. jail and prison population is estimated to have a serious mental illness.
  - ❑ Reduces injury to other inmates (and the inmate with mental illness) → LIABILITY
  - ❑ Reduces injury to staff
  - ❑ Reduces suicides
  - ❑ Positive interactions (e.g., respect) improve future interactions with law enforcement
  - ❑ Higher rates of officer satisfaction regarding how to handle situations involving individuals with mental illness
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