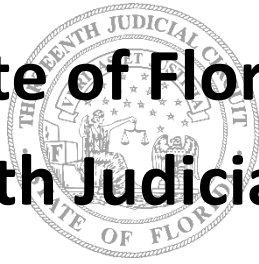


State of Florida
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit



Juvenile Mental Health Court
JMHC Handbook



Welcome to JMHC!

where youth

YES

experience success

As a participant, you have a unique opportunity to take part in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC), supported by grant services from the Success for Kids and Families (S4KF) Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Program. This handbook will give you an overview of the court program, policies, and procedures. JMHC represents a non-traditional, evidence-based approach to treatment for juveniles charged with crimes who struggle with impairing behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. JMHC encompasses a team approach to problem solving which addresses a juvenile's treatment needs and tackles underlying issues that led to the arrest, all with the goal of achieving wellness while promoting public safety through the reduction of recidivism. Admission to JMHC provides the Youth the opportunity to Experience Success!

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I. Mission Statement.

JMHC identifies and redirects juvenile offenders with impairing behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders from the juvenile justice system through the use of therapeutic dockets, multidisciplinary treatment teams, and a non-adversarial approach. The defining feature of JMHC is the highly individualized nature of the treatment and supervision for each juvenile, which are guided by evidenced-based assessments and supported by effective community resources. JMHC features team member engagement, active judicial supervision, and a focus on juvenile and parent or legal guardian accountability. JMHC best practices aim to provide meaningful opportunity for juveniles to achieve wellness and alter their trajectory away from the juvenile justice system while promoting public safety through the reduction of recidivism.

II. Background.

It is well documented that there is a high prevalence of juvenile offenders with impairing behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders in the juvenile justice system. In an effort to better address the needs of these juveniles, the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit established a Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC) by Administrative Order S-2023-024 in March of 2019. This specialized problem-solving court was modeled after the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's Adult Mental Health Court (AMHC), which was established in December of 2016, as well as multiple other problem-solving courts within the Circuit. JMHC is unique, however, because it includes specialized collaboration, resources, and programming designed to oversee therapeutic treatment for juvenile offenders.

JMHC falls under the supervision of the Problem-Solving Court Oversight Committee, which includes representatives from the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Office of the State Attorney, and the Office of the Public Defender. JMHC is supported by grant services from the Success for Kids and Families (S4KF) Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Program. As the designated community-based provider to JMHC, the YES Program has an advisory board which is chaired by a S4KF representative and whose membership includes, in part, representatives from JMHC and other community-based providers.

III. About JMHC.

JMHC is a specialized court overseeing separate dockets for juvenile offenders found incompetent to proceed by the Court, pursuant to Florida Statutes Chapter 985, and juveniles who are determined eligible by the Office of the State Attorney to participate in a diversion program facilitated through a “Case Resolution Contract”.

Historically, juveniles found incompetent to proceed were not provided access to treatment or other community resources to address the reasons for their incompetency, they simply received competency restoration training provided by the Florida Department of Children and Families. As a result, JMHC was created to address this need which now provides treatment and other beneficial resources under a therapeutic court lens.

The JMHC’s diversion program under a “Case Resolution Contract” follows a problem-solving court model. If the juvenile successfully completes the terms and conditions of the contract, the criminal charges will be dismissed by the Court. If the juvenile does not successfully complete the terms and conditions of the contract, the juvenile’s case will be transferred back to the originally assigned juvenile delinquency division for reinstatement of criminal proceedings.

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit aims to maximize the therapeutic benefits of JMHC by extending eligibility for juvenile offenders with impairing behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. This includes offering “Case Resolution Contracts” to eligible juveniles regardless of their legal competency status. While recognizing that being competent and volunteering to participate in therapeutic treatment is a hallmark for eligibility in adult problem-solving courts, juveniles, by nature of their age, are unable to make many treatment and supervision decisions without a parent or legal guardian so the voluntariness distinction is less significant and should not be a barrier to eligibility. Furthermore, being found incompetent by the Court does not prevent a juvenile from entering into a “Case Resolution Contract” because the contract does not require the entry of a plea, and if the Court determines that a juvenile is unable to complete the contract, JMHC will ensure a juvenile’s due process rights are protected and proceed pursuant to Florida law.

IV. Guiding Principles.

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit’s JMHC embodies the seven (7) common characteristics of Juvenile Mental Health Courts, which were derived from a National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) Research and Program Brief, titled “Juvenile Mental

Health Courts: An Emerging Strategy” (2006). The seven (7) common characteristics include:

1. Regularly scheduled specialized dockets.
2. Less formal style of interaction among court official and participants.
3. Age-appropriate screening and assessment for trauma, substance use, and mental health disorder.
4. Team management of JMHC participant’s treatment and supervision.
5. System-wide accountability enforced by the juvenile court.
6. Use of graduated incentives and sanctions.
7. Defined criteria for program success.

Unique to JMHC are the essential stakeholders. JMHC partners with Hillsborough County Public Schools, Child Welfare through the Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Success 4 Kids and Families (S4KF) Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Grant Program, and many other community-based providers. JMHC seeks to maintain age-appropriate programming and utilizes providers that take into consideration variations of treatment depending on a juvenile’s development and individual maturity.

While adult problem-solving courts primarily focus on the voluntary participation and accountability of the participant, in JMHC many of the decisions that affect a juvenile’s life and participation are made by parents or legal guardians, extended family members, school officials, child welfare representatives, juvenile justice representatives, community treatment providers, and social service agency representatives. JMHC takes this into consideration and works to hold all accountable in their respective role in a juvenile’s successful participation and program completion.

Finally, the success of a juvenile participating in JMHC often depends on a parent or legal guardian’s cooperation. In some cases, parents or legal guardians find themselves struggling or in crisis. JMHC team members work to inform the Court about a juvenile and family’s unique circumstances so program requirements can be structured to account for these considerations and judicial flexibility can be exercised if and when conditions need to be modified or simply cannot be met. JMHC also strives to resource a juvenile and family’s needs, as necessary, which significantly contribute to overall positive outcomes.

V. Team Members.

A. JMHC Judge:

Honorable Michael J. Scionti (813) 301-3825

B. JMHC Judicial Assistant:

Ms. Erin Potter (813) 301-3825

C. Administrative Office of the Court:

Ms. Christine Mukherjee, Court Specialist (813) 272-6514

Ms. Julia Schilling, Problem-Solving Courts, Director (813) 272-6275

E. Office of the Public Defender:

Ms. Sonya Beverly, Assistant Public Defender (813) 272-5980

Ms. Katherine Carter, Assistant Public Defender (813) 272-5980

Ms. Khalila Frett, Assistant Public Defender (813) 272-5980

Mr. Felix Vega, Assistant Public Defender (813) 272-5980

Ms. Lauren Nayrouz, Assistant Public Defender (813) 272-5980

Ms. Marie Marino, Assistant Public Defender, Supervisor (813) 272-5980

F. Office of the State Attorney:

Ms. Skyler Jackle, Assistant State Attorney (813) 272-5400

Ms. April Pent, Assistant State Attorney (813) 272-5400

Ms. Jeria Wilds, Assistant State Attorney, Supervisor (813) 272-5400

G. Department of Juvenile Justice:

Ms. Sharon Seales, DJJ Probation Officer (813) 975-6524

H. Hillsborough County Public Schools:

Ms. Melissa Russo, HCPS Liaison (813) 975-6524

I. JMHC Treatment Providers:

Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp (AFYC) (850) 379-3973

BAYS (813) 372-0235

Chrysalis Health (813) 443-4827

COVE Behavioral Health (813) 384-4000

Gracepoint (813) 272-2244

Northside Mental Health Care (813) 977-8700

Success 4 Kids and Families (S4KF) (813) 490-5490

S4KF Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Program (813) 272-6452

Twin Oaks (850) 643-1734

VI. Team Member Roles.

- A. **JMHC Judge:** The focus and direction of JMHC is provided through the effective leadership of the presiding judge. The JMHC Judge is the leader of a multidisciplinary treatment team, who possesses the authority and responsibility to effectively direct, coordinate, and employ available resources for the treatment of participants. The JMHC Judge is also responsible for building trust within the treatment team and applying a non-adversarial, evidenced-based problem-solving approach to each case. By doing this, JMHC team members are better prepared to handle changing conditions and adapt to unique situations in the management of JMHC cases.
- B. **Defense Attorney:** The Defense Attorney assigned to JMHC is responsible for: (1) advocating for treatment while protecting juvenile's constitutional and statutory rights; (2) ensuring due process rights are protected; (3) advocating for incentives and ensuring sanctions are applied appropriately; (4) monitoring compliance with JMHC rules and requirements; (5) requesting and advocating for graduation from JMHC; (6) sharing information with JMHC team members as appropriate while protecting attorney-client privileged information; and (7) protecting confidential treatment information from individuals outside of the treatment team and defense team.
- C. **Assistant State Attorney:** The Assistant State Attorney assigned to JMHC is responsible for: (1) enforcing state laws and protecting public safety; (2) advocating for treatment while holding juveniles accountable to JMHC obligations; (3) advocating for incentives and sanctions when appropriate; (4) monitoring compliance with JMHC rules and requirements; and (5) protecting confidential treatment information from individuals outside of the treatment team.
- D. **Department of Juvenile Justice Probation Officer:** The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Probation Officer assigned to JMHC is responsible for providing community supervision and enforcement of the rules and requirements of JMHC, as well as providing periodic updates and progress reports to JMHC team members regarding the status of a juvenile's court-ordered supervision.
- E. **Hillsborough County Public Schools Liaison:** The Hillsborough County Public Schools Liaison to JMHC is responsible for providing periodic updates and progress reports to JMHC team members regarding the status of a juvenile's attendance, grades, and disciplinary information, as well as assisting the juvenile and the parent or legal

guardian with navigating school issues to include enrollment, disciplinary matters, or other school guidance and/or mental health resources.

- F. **Treatment Providers:** Treatment Providers supporting JMHC are community-based professionals, who possess the requisite education and experience in developing individualized treatment plans which take into consideration a juvenile's capabilities to comply with treatment and supervision requirements, while affording them the best opportunity to achieve wellness. When appropriate, JMHC team members will consult with treatment providers for clinical guidance and recommendations in addressing the effectiveness of a treatment plan. Treatment providers are responsible for providing periodic updates and progress reports to JMHC team members regarding the status of a juvenile's compliance on a Treatment Status Review Form.

- G. **Success for Kids and Families, Youth Experiencing Success Program Liaison:** The Success for Kids and Families (S4KF), Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Program is the primary treatment liaison for JMHC. The YES Program determines a juvenile's eligibility for family navigator services, therapy, or referral to other treatment and pro-social services. The screening process takes into consideration the juvenile's risk-need-responsivity Comprehensive Assessment for Treatment (CAT) assessment, psychosocial assessment, clinical evaluation, and other available collateral information to guide the development of an individualized treatment plan. To maximize resources, if the juvenile is already being served by another provider, requires more intensive or specialized services, or requires a higher level of care, the YES Program will refer the juvenile to alternative resources. The YES Program Liaison to JMHC is responsible for providing timely and accurate updates to JMHC team members by documenting the status of a juvenile's treatment and compliance on a Treatment Status Review Form.

- H. **Twin Oaks Liaison:** Twin Oaks provides competency training for juveniles found incompetent to proceed by the Court and reside in the community or who meet the criteria for secure commitment at the Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp (AFYC). The Twin Oaks Liaison to JMHC is responsible for providing periodic updates and progress reports to JMHC team members regarding the status of a juvenile's training and compliance on a Treatment Status Review Form.

VII. Requirements.

A. General Requirements.

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's JMHC is a problem-solving court that oversees treatment for juvenile offenders in the juvenile justice system with impairing behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

Juveniles will be required to participate in a screening process in accordance with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model¹, which includes a Comprehensive Assessment for Treatment (CAT) assessment, psychosocial assessment, clinical evaluation, and/or other available collateral information to guide in the development of an individualized treatment plan.

Based upon these assessments and other considerations, the YES Program will identify specific treatment and pro-social needs and available resources recommended to address them. The YES Program will assist the juvenile and, as necessary, the parent or legal guardian, unless the juvenile is already connected to services or if there is a more appropriate specialized service available to which the juvenile will be referred. The YES Program will develop the initial treatment plan for the JMHC Judge's approval and provide timely and accurate updates to JMHC team members by documenting the status of a juvenile's treatment and compliance on a Treatment Status Review Form.

Juveniles will have regularly scheduled court dates. Prior to the court date, JMHC team members will conduct a "staffing" for each juvenile case and make recommendations to the JMHC Judge. In JMHC, compliance is achieved by employing evidence-based best practices through the utilization of graduated incentives and, as necessary, sanctions as vetted during the case staffing process. The focus of JMHC is on the team's ability to establish a positive connection with the juvenile and, as necessary, the parent or legal guardian, and build trust, confidence, and cooperation to achieve an overall positive outcome.

¹ The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model is perhaps the most influential model for the assessment and treatment of offenders, which develops recommendations for how individuals should be assessed based on the risk they present, what programs or services they require, and what kinds of environments they should be placed in to reduce recidivism. See Blanchette & Brown, 2006; Ward, Mesler & Yates, 2007; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk-need-responsivity_model.

B. Eligibility Requirements.

In order to participate in JMHC, a juvenile must:

1. be found incompetent to proceed by the Court, pursuant to Florida Statutes Chapter 985; or
2. be determined eligible by the Office of the State Attorney to participate in a diversion program and offered a “Case Resolution Contract”.

Juveniles, who were found incompetent to proceed by the Court, pursuant to Florida Statutes Chapter 985, and who have been restored to competency but are not offered a “Case Resolution Contract”, will have their case transferred back to the originally assigned juvenile delinquency division for reinstatement of criminal proceedings.

However, if offered a “Case Resolution Contract”, the juvenile and the parent or legal guardian must review and agree to abide by all terms and conditions by signing the contract. Once the contract is signed, the juvenile will remain in JMHC enabling the Court to monitor the status of the juvenile’s compliance with all terms and conditions of the “Case Resolution Contract” until such time when the juvenile’s case is dismissed or otherwise resolved or, if non-compliant, the case will be transferred back to the originally assigned juvenile delinquency division for reinstatement of criminal proceedings. It should be noted that successful completion of a “Case Resolution Contract” is ultimately determined by the Office of the State Attorney.

VIII. Rules.

A. General Rules. In order to participate in JMHC, the juvenile and, as applicable, the parent or legal guardian, must comply with the following:

1. The juvenile and, as applicable, the parent or legal guardian, shall comply with all orders of the JMHC Judge, which are subject to applicable Florida laws and statutory authority, rules, and procedures.
2. The juvenile’s parent or legal guardian must sign all required contracts, agreements, and releases of information as ordered by the JMHC Judge.
3. If participating in JMHC pursuant to a “Case Resolution Contract”, the juvenile must abide by all terms and conditions of the contract.

4. The juvenile shall attend all scheduled court hearings on the specified date, time, and location as ordered by the JMHC Judge.
5. The juvenile and, as applicable, the parent or legal guardian, shall behave respectfully, dress appropriately, and remain in the courtroom until their case has been called by the JMHC Judge.
6. The juvenile shall attend, fully cooperate, and actively participate in all scheduled assessments and/or evaluations on the specified date, time, and location.
7. The juvenile shall attend, fully cooperate, and actively participate in all scheduled treatment, training, and/or counseling appointments or sessions on the specified date, time, and location and comply with any other court-ordered elements of the treatment plan.
8. The juvenile shall comply with all Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and/or Twin Oaks supervision and/or training requirements.
9. The juvenile shall maintain regular and consistent communication with their defense attorney, treatment providers, and other JMHC team members as ordered by the JMHC Judge.
10. The juvenile shall comply with treatment requirements as recommended by the attending physician and take medication as prescribed. The juvenile shall, to the extent possible, attend, fully cooperate, and actively participate in programs coordinated by authorized treatment personnel to maintain and improve the juvenile's mental wellness.
11. If the juvenile's condition deteriorates to the point that an evaluation for a higher level of treatment or possible in-patient care is required, the juvenile shall comply with the treatment recommendations as ordered by the JMHC Judge.

IX. Attendance Policy.

Juveniles must make every effort to attend all scheduled court hearings, treatment, training, and/or counseling appointments or sessions on the specified date, time, and location, avoid unexcused absences, and maintain good communication with their defense attorneys, treatment providers, and DJJ supervising officers.

If an emergency or urgent (or unexpected) matter arises that conflicts with either a scheduled court hearing, treatment, training, and/or counseling appointment or session, the juvenile should immediately notify, by all reasonable means available, their defense attorney and applicable treatment provider.

X. Court Sessions.

All JMHC sessions are conducted in Courtroom 52A located on the Fifth Floor of the Criminal Annex of the Hillsborough County Courthouse, also referred to as the “Edgecomb Courthouse”. The presiding JMHC Judge is the Honorable Michael J. Scionti, Circuit Court Judge in and for the Florida’s Thirteenth Judicial Circuit.

Each juvenile and parent or legal guardian are required to attend all scheduled court hearings unless their attendance is excused or presence is waived by the JMHC Judge. A juvenile’s failure to appear in JMHC on the specified date, time, and location as order by the JMHC Judge may result in the issuance of a juvenile pick up order.

During all scheduled court hearings, each juvenile and parent or legal guardian must arrive on time, behave respectfully, dress appropriately, and remain in the courtroom until their case has been called by the JMHC Judge. JMHC sessions begin at 9:00 AM and may last for several hours, resulting in some cases being called after lunch and possibly late into the afternoon. The JMHC Judge will take the time necessary to address the needs and issues of each juvenile.

XI. Incentives and Sanctions.

The use of incentives and sanctions to modify behavior is an evidence-based best practice component of the problem-solving court model. Incentives and sanctions need to be tied to the overall therapeutic approach for each juvenile and sensitive to the fact that juveniles are often dependent on the parent or legal guardian in their lives. Incentives and sanctions are external motivations designed to encourage positive behavior while developing internal decision-making patterns. Key components to effective incentives and sanction are timeliness, perceived fairness or proportionality, and individuality. An ideal ratio of incentives to sanctions is at least a 4-to-1 ratio (4 incentives to every 1 sanction). Individual incentives and sanctions may vary based upon the needs and circumstances of individual juvenile, but a general system of incentives and sanctions exists for all juveniles within JMHC. This general system is connected to measurable behavior outcomes which are the goal of JMHC. It should be noted that the JMHC Judge engages in meaningful interaction, encourages pro-social activities, and provides much needed mentoring for each juvenile, which typically leads to more consistent compliant behavior leading to fewer court appearances.

A. Measurable Behavior Outcomes.

The following are a list of measurable behavior outcomes:

1. Compliance with Mental Health Treatment
2. Compliance with Competency Restoration Training (when applicable)
3. Compliance with Substance Use Treatment (when applicable)
4. Compliance with Case Resolution Contract (when applicable)
5. Maintain law abiding lifestyle (i.e., no new criminal arrests)
6. Maintain drug free lifestyle (i.e., testing negative for drugs and/or alcohol)
7. Exhibit good behavior in school and at home
8. Maintain good attendance in school
9. Maintain good grades in school
10. Participate in pro-social activity to include, but not limited to, a mentoring program, school club, sports, band, dance, etc. It should be noted that such activities vary amongst juveniles and should be guided by the juvenile's interests as well as available activities.

B. Incentives. Incentives will be awarded to encourage compliant behavior and enable juveniles to achieve measurable behavior outcomes. The below list of incentives include, but are not limited to:

1. Communicate judicial praise.
2. Reduce court appearances.
3. Call case early in the docket.
4. Grant travel privileges (out of county or out of state).
5. Decrease Community Service Hours
6. Decrease drug testing.
7. Decrease term of supervision.
8. Conduct formal graduation (as applicable for Case Resolution Contracts).
9. Waive of costs and/or fees.
10. Other incentives, as appropriate.

C. Sanctions. Sanctions will be imposed to discourage non-compliant behavior and redirect juveniles to achieve measurable behavior outcomes. Sanctions should be imposed timely, proportionally, and with individuality. The below list of sanctions include, but are not limited to:

1. Communicate judicial admonishment.

2. Increase court appearances.
3. Call case later in the docket.
4. Deny travel privileges (out of county or out of state).
5. Increase Community Service Hours
6. Increase drug testing.
7. Increase term of supervision.
8. Assign essay or recorded reflective assignment.
9. Impose curfew.
10. Require reporting to the Juvenile Reporting Center
11. Unsuccessful discharge from JMHC and case transferred back to the originally assigned juvenile delinquency division for reinstatement of criminal proceedings.
12. Other sanctions, as appropriate

D. Reporting Non-Compliance.

If at any time a JMHC team member or treatment provider believes a juvenile is non-compliant with JMHC orders or rules, they shall immediately document, in writing, the facts and circumstances giving rise to the assertion of the juvenile's non-compliance. The matter shall be timely brought to the attention of the JMHC Judge and, if necessary, addressed at or before the next scheduled JMHC case staffing.

Moreover, if a JMHC team member or treatment provider believes a juvenile's condition has deteriorated to the point that an evaluation for a higher level of treatment or possible in-patient care is required, or that a juvenile's treatment plan should be modified, they shall immediately document, in writing, the facts and circumstances giving rise to the assertion of the juvenile's deteriorated condition. The matter shall be timely brought to the attention of the JMHC Judge and, if necessary, addressed at or before the next scheduled JMHC case staffing or, if necessary, scheduled for a hearing for further assessment and review of the juvenile's treatment plan. Upon the hearing, the conditions of a juvenile's treatment plan may be modified, as necessary, to ensure compliance and successful completion of JMHC. Any therapeutic adjustment or modification to a juvenile's treatment plan will be guided by clinical recommendations from participating treatment providers.

It should be noted that the JMHC Judge takes into careful consideration a juvenile's unique circumstances and mental wellness when considering awarding an incentive or imposing a sanction. The JMHC Judge may award incentives to encourage a

juvenile's compliant behavior, to support progress in treatment, and to celebrate individual accomplishments, or may impose sanctions to discourage a juvenile's non-compliant behavior based upon willful failure to comply with JMHC orders or rules. The JMHC Judge will afford each juvenile, after consultation with their defense attorney, an opportunity to address the court, either to share a thought, ask a question, or offer an explanation.

XII. Supervision Protocol.

In general, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) supervise juvenile offenders. Juveniles participating in JMHC and subject to court-ordered competency restoration training will have an additional layer of supervision conducted by Twin Oaks. All juveniles participating in JMHC may be subject to additional supervision in the form of "wellness checks" conducted by a DJJ Probation Officer.

XIII. Graduation.

Graduation only applies to juveniles participating in JMHC under a "Case Resolution Contract". When the juvenile's defense attorney believes the juvenile has satisfied all terms and conditions of the contract, the defense attorney shall petition the Office of the State Attorney for the juvenile to graduate. If the Office of the State Attorney agrees and the JMHC Judge approves, the juvenile's case will be scheduled for graduation on the next court date, where the juvenile's case will be dismissed by the JMHC Judge.

XIV. Unsuccessful Discharge.

Juveniles participating in JMHC under "Case Resolution Contracts" who fail to follow JMHC orders or rules, fail to follow JMHC treatment provider instructions, fail to consistently participate in treatment and counseling, test positive for alcohol, illegal or prohibited substances, and/or are charged with a new criminal offense may have their case scheduled for a hearing to determine whether the juvenile will remain in JMHC or be unsuccessfully discharged from JMHC and have their case transferred back to the originally assigned juvenile delinquency division for reinstatement of criminal proceedings.

Juveniles participating in JMHC, who have been found incompetent to proceed by the Court, pursuant to Florida Statutes Chapter 985, will have their non-compliance addressed in accordance with Florida law.

XV. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Limitations on Sharing Information.

In order to foster a supportive, therapeutic environment for all juveniles, JMHC will adhere to strict confidentiality and privacy guidelines. State and federal laws require strict confidentiality regarding the release, sharing, and/or exchange of information, either written or verbal, regarding treatment of juvenile's impaired with behavioral health disorders, mental health disorders, or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

A. Confidentiality and Privacy Guidelines:

1. While confidentiality and privacy guidelines will be followed and enforced in JMHC, an exception is made when the juvenile through their parent or legal guardian and defense attorney consent to the release, sharing, and/or exchange of information, either written or verbal, for use during JMHC case staffings or court proceedings and only for the limited purpose of furthering treatment goals for the juvenile.
2. JMHC team members are prohibited from releasing, sharing, and/or exchanging a juvenile's information, either written or verbal, with any individual, government agency or department, or other organization or party not affiliated with JMHC, without both the consent of the juvenile through their parent or legal guardian and defense attorney, and provided such release, sharing, and/or exchange of information, either written or verbal, is consistent with state and federal laws.
3. Juveniles in JMHC shall respect and maintain the confidentiality and privacy of other juveniles in JMHC and will be held accountable for breaching such confidentiality and/or privacy, which may include, but is not limited to the imposition of sanction(s) or unsuccessful discharge from JMHC.
4. All JMHC related documents filed and recorded in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Clerk of Court's database will be accompanied by a "Notice of Confidential Filing" or a "Motion for Confidential Filing" prepared by the juvenile's defense attorney, which will be timely addressed by the JMHC Judge, as necessary. The JMHC record will be limited to general demographic information along with the minimum information necessary to document participant compliance with JMHC contract obligations.

5. JMHC compliance reports are prepared on a regular basis and forwarded directly to JMHC team members. These reports are limited to information relating to a juvenile's compliance with JMHC obligations and will be the only information released, shared, and/or exchanged, either written or verbal, between participating treatment providers and JMHC team members.

B. Inquiries. Juveniles, or parents or legal guardians on their behalf, should direct any inquiries (or questions) regarding confidentiality, privacy, and limitations on sharing information to their defense attorney.

XVI. Complaints and Grievances.

A grievance is an official statement describing an actual or supposed circumstance regarded as just cause for complaint to include, but not limited to, being treated unfairly or subject to any form of harassment, bullying, or disrespect by a JMHC team member. If you believe you have just cause for complaint, you may address your grievance by filing an official statement with the applicable government agency or department, or other organization or party affiliated with JMHC.

If you need an attorney to assist you with this process, you may contact the Hillsborough County Bar Association (www.hillsbar.com) and request to be referred to a Florida licensed attorney.