

November 3, 2016

I, Anderson Curtis will be offering testimony on how to BROADEN THE LENS AND SCOPE of Connecticut's current pretrial diversion programs. My testimony will seek to maximize public safety by demonstrating the value of THERAPUETIC JURISPRUDENCE and FORENSIC PEERS. THERAPUETIC JURISPRUDENCE is the study of how the law has to the potential power to heal ANY WILLING DEFENDANT WITH ACCURATE APPLICATION. FORENSIC PEERS possess the empirical knowledge to accurately apply THERAPUETIC JURISPRUDENCE. My testimony is about my current understanding and application of values, principles, and THERAPUETIC JURISPRUDENCE. I am a FORENSIC PEER.

Therapeutic Jurisprudence can potentially help guide sentencing "not only in terms of what sentence to impose but also in terms of the manner and process of sentence imposition." Therapeutic jurisprudence can legally encourage compliance through release conditions, which grants defendants access to resources to assess and treat underlying issues. FORENSIC PEERS can be effective, empathetic, and empowering facilitators of CHANGE. Forensic Peers engage and support defendants with hope through shared life experience, the therapeutic value of helping another and the support and accountability of living recovery principles. Forensic Peers utilize engagement and support to establish a therapeutic alliance to work with defendants to complete all supervision appointments, court appearances, to analyze their offending behavior patterns, identifying behavioral changes, and the need for implementation of supports that may reduce any pre-trial arrests. Forensic peers monitor compliance. Forensic peers deliver services in a manner that is strength-based, trauma-informed and solution focused.

Since 10/19/2015, I have the privilege to serve men on parole as a forensic peer in the REACH-UP program. I am contracted from Continuum of Care to the Connection Inc. I work with men on parole or back-end conditional release. I mentor men in their re-entry process. The mentoring relationship is based upon a host of dimensions. The primary dimension is engagement. Two vital keys to engagement are listening and boundaries. Peer mentoring is about credibility, acceptance and belief. Credibility is all about HIS GRACE to transform ALL my arrests, my active addiction, and my incarceration into tools to REACH others. Yes I earned an A.S. in Addiction Counseling from Gateway C.C. Yes I went to M-TREM(Men's Trauma Recovery Empowerment Model), Motivational Interviewing, Forensic CBT, Grant Writing and Capacity Building, Whole Health Action Management(WHAM), JustLeadership USA Leading with Conviction, and numerous Re-ENTRY Roundtable and Conferences. I am truly grateful for all that. Nevertheless, I truly believe my credibility in peer mentoring is being able to admit mistakes, accept my process is lifelong and being willing to put my clients first regardless of my preference, comfort, or bias.

So the REACH program has won National criminal justice award. Dr. David Sells has the hard data how REACH-UP has reduced recidivism even when with working with a high risk assessed parolees. So if REACH-UP is a back-end conditional release program how does it translate to pre-trial diversion? FORENSIC PEERS. Forensic Peers trained to engage, equip, and empower participants to navigate THE PROCESS. The lens and scope of THERAPUETIC JURISPRUDENCE tailors the framework and guidelines of release conditions for the participant to capture the motivation to change, increase readiness to identify