

# **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 Sonoma County when a family member who suffers from a brain disorder (mental illness) is arrested.*

## **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.
- Upon arrival at the Sonoma County Jail, he/she will be screened 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 ARRESTING AGENCY**

- Call the agency that has arrested your family member. Inform the agency that your family member suffers from a mental illness and describe the diagnosis and any other concerns you might have. Inquire as to your relative's status and estimated length of stay with the agency. Ask the arresting agency the approximate time of the transfer to the jail.

## **STEP THREE: CONTACT THE SONOMA COUNTY JAIL**

- Contact the jail to inquire about your family member's booking and housing information.
- 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

Sonoma County Mail Adult Detention Facility  
2777 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone: (707) 565-1400

## **STEP FOUR: PROVIDE JAIL MENTAL HEALTH WITH INFORMATION**

- Provide the jail with medical and/or mental health information of your friend or relative to help assist medical and mental health staff in their

evaluation, you may do so by completing the [Inmate Medication Information Form](#) or **Mental/Medical Health Concern Form**. These forms are available on this web page and are also available in the lobby at the Main Adult Detention Facility. Print them out, complete and fax to (707) 565-1444.

If these forms are not available:

- Prepare a fax requesting that your relative be screened by Mental Health staff. Begin this fax with your relative's:
  - Full legal name
  - Date of birth
  - Booking number
  - Housing location
- The body of the fax may include information such as:
  - His/her diagnosis
  - His/her psychiatrist's name, phone number, and address
  - The medications that are prescribed for your family member by name and dosage
  - Whether a particular medication has proven to be ineffective or has dangerous and/or uncomfortable side effects
  - Any history of suicide attempts/threats or other violent intentions in the recent past. Briefly describe the events and when they occurred.
  - Any other urgent medical conditions that might require immediate attention, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, seizures, heart problems, etc., and medications currently prescribed for those conditions. Include his/her medical doctor's name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. The medical information you provide is tremendously valuable in making an assessment and will help the mental health staff select the best treatment for your relative. There is a clear preference for maintaining effective current treatment. However, the Jail Mental Health staff must conduct its own assessment of your relative's condition and may not necessarily prescribe exactly the same medications.
- On the cover page, indicate whether your relative has provided you with a written confidentiality waiver. If your relative has not previously done so, ask that he/she be asked to sign one while in jail. The Jail Mental Health staff is prohibited by law from giving anyone information about a client's status unless they have the client's consent, but the staff can receive information from relatives or friends without the client's consent.
- If you are sending both mental health and medical information, you must fax the information to the Jail Mental Health Service number (707-565-1444) and the Jail Medical Services number (707-565-6083).

## STEP FIVE: CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Upon arrival at the jail, as stated above, your family member will receive a series of evaluations from our 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 unit. Once they are transferred to a housing unit, you will have the opportunity to visit your family member.
  - The visiting schedule is as follows:
    - Inmates with last names beginning with letters A thru L visit Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.
    - Inmates with last names beginning with letters M thru Z visit Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
  - Visiting hours are in the afternoon from 1:00pm to 4:25pm and in the evening from 6:45pm until 9:45pm. Visits are 30 minutes in length.
  - Visiting information is also readily available on the internet at [Visitor Information and Guidelines](#)

TIP: When visiting MADF or NCDF, always bring a few quarters for a locker to store your personal belongings while you visit your family member. Photo ID is also required. Please review the [Visitor Information and Guidelines](#)
- 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. 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:

Law Office of the Public Defender  
600 Administration Drive, First Floor-Room 111  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone (707) 565-2791

## **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-Sonoma County)  
1717 Yulupa Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405  
Phone: (707) 527-6655  
[www.namisonomacounty.org](http://www.namisonomacounty.org)
  - Friends Outside in Sonoma County  
Located in the lobby of the Main Adult Detention Facility  
2777 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, California  
Mailing Address: PO Box 3905 Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
Phone: (707) 526-7318  
Fax: (707) 526-5648  
[www.friendsoutsidesonoma.org](http://www.friendsoutsidesonoma.org)
  - Department of Health Services  
Mental Health Division  
PO Box 1539  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
Phone: (707) 565-4850  
[www.sonoma-county.org/health](http://www.sonoma-county.org/health)
  - Jail Mental Health Services  
Main Adult Detention Facility  
Phone: (707) 565-1400  
Fax: (707) 565-1444