

*Enhancing the lives of people  
living and working in our correctional system  
through research, education, and community engagement.*

# Treating the Seriously Mentally Ill in Prison: Evaluation of a Contingency Management Program

## Summary

- Purpose was to evaluate an in-prison program that incorporated a contingency management approach to the treatment of adult males who had significant mental health needs
- Impact was evaluated over a 1-year period using an assessment of individual change in mental and behavioral health outcomes

## Data and Methods

- 58 incarcerated men in a maximum security prison
- Focus on misconduct and the mental health status of participants before and after program start using administrative data gathered by the Arizona Department of Corrections

## Findings

- Program participation associated with positive individual-level outcomes
- Mental health watches, protective custody requests, and drug violations were reduced in the first year of programming
- Refusal to participate while in the program was associated with minor violations after the program

## Implications

- Program presents a promising first step in understanding effective approaches to the treatment of mental illness
- Individual differences reinforced the importance of classification
- Programs need to consider the role of co-occurring risks and needs

## Select Publications

Meyers, T.J., Infante, A.A., & Wright, K.A. (2018). Treating the seriously mentally ill in prison: An evaluation of a contingency management program. *Corrections: Policy, Practice, and Research*, 1-18.