

Alternative-to-Incarceration Services

Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, a program of the Center for Justice Innovation, offers people an opportunity to change the direction of their lives. The program transforms how people navigate the legal process of criminal court in Brooklyn, New York, and helps them avoid the harmful effects of incarceration.

Overview

In order to ensure that court mandates address the unique needs that contribute to each individual's contact with the criminal legal system, the program offers a diverse array of services. These include individual counseling and case management sessions, group sessions with curricula developed by ATI clinicians to address common needs, and services provided through partnerships with other community-based agencies. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives (BJI) ensures that each of its community-based partners provides services at a high standard and is able to accurately report participants' compliance to the court.

Clinical Services and Group Offerings

Case Management/ Individual Counseling Sessions

Participants meet with a Brooklyn Justice Initiatives clinician or case manager to address their social service needs, ranging from mental health and substance use treatment to support with education, employment, and more. Participants also receive individual counseling sessions focused on their therapeutic needs and goals.

Full Clinical Assessment

Conducted by a licensed social worker, the Full Clinical Assessment gauges participants' needs in key areas including education, employment, mental health, substance use, trauma, and others. Clinical assessments are used to develop individualized treatment recommendations presented

to the court parties, which may include the services listed below or referrals to outside service providers.

The Driver Accountability Program

Group also available in Spanish.

The Driver Accountability Program (DAP) encourages participants to reflect on how their driving habits impact themselves and others. Using surveys, video, interactive maps, and dialogue, the group helps participants address the root causes of their risky driving behaviors and replace them with safer habits.

Drug Education Workshop*

The Drug Education Workshop helps participants gain a better understanding of the complex nature of addiction. A safe, non-judgmental space, the workshop dispels common myths about addiction while covering different kinds of substances and the various ways they might affect the body and mind. At the end of the group, participants receive a resource guide and the option to take part in personalized counseling.

Goal-Setting Workshop*

In this workshop, participants learn to identify and work towards realistic personal goals. After learning effective techniques to guide them in developing both short- and long-term goals, participants work to identify barriers that they have encountered in the past and develop strategies for overcoming them.

Tools for New Thinking*

Tools for New Thinking (TNT) uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to help participants better manage their feelings and behaviors. Participants identify “activating events” that have led to harmful behaviors in the past, and learn how their values and thoughts lead

to specific consequences. By participating in collaborative discussions and activities, participants gain concrete skills for examining harmful thought patterns and behaviors.

Treatment Readiness

This group uses Motivational Interviewing to guide participants in gaining a better understanding of their own relationship with illicit substances and exploring their thoughts and feelings surrounding substance use treatment. Facilitators review what various treatment options look like while helping participants navigate where they may fall in the cycle of change.

Anger Management

Two sessions, held one week apart.

This two-session group aims to help participants identify and manage the signs and symptoms of anger. Through lessons, discussions, and collaborative activities, participants will explore different types of stress and come to better understand the difference between stress and anger. Participants will also have the opportunity to reflect on the range of feelings that accompany anger as they expand their vocabulary, develop coping skills, and learn to manage frustrations more appropriately.

Employment Readiness Group

Over two sessions, participants in the Employment Readiness Group learn to develop the skills they need and overcome obstacles to finding meaningful employment opportunities. Session 1 focuses on building self-confidence, setting goals, and mapping resources, while session 2 walks participants through crafting a resume and interviewing for positions, navigating barriers to achieving their goals, and identifying specific job opportunities.

Workforce 1's Employment Essentials Workshop

Workforce 1's Employment Essentials Workshop offers career support for individuals with prior or current criminal justice involvement. Participants explore potential careers and develop job interview skills while openly discussing the challenges system-involved people face in obtaining employment. Participants are also connected with a job coach to explore potential job opportunities.

Beyond Boxing

In partnership with Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, Beyond Boxing offers a three-month boxing program for young people ages 24 and under focused on social-emotional development as a way of fulfilling their court mandates and reducing the risk of recidivism. Led by a qualified educator and grounded in positive mentorship, the curriculum aims to instill the core values of Respect, Responsibility, Discipline, and Humility while supporting participants in making sustainable choices across all aspects of life.

Brooklyn Museum*

Group also available in Spanish.

At Brooklyn Museum, participants have an opportunity to explore the power of art as a force for personal transformation and social change, reflecting on their experiences with the justice system and what it means to take accountability. Under the guidance of a teaching artist, participants are introduced to the work of various artists in the Museum's galleries before learning to creatively take ownership of their own stories and experiences through original art projects.

Groundswell Community Mural Project

Groundswell offers young people a creative arts program where they can work together to design a mural at a community location. In a series of bi-weekly workshops, participants identify and research social issues that affect them and their communities while learning how to translate their reflections into a collaborative visual display. Groundswell can be considered for either one Brooklyn Justice Initiatives' session or a half-day community service credit by referral.

Hip-Hop Therapy/Therapeutic Beat-Making Workshops

In this weekend-long workshop focused on mental health education through hip-hop therapy, participants learn to express their emotions and process trauma by making beats, writing rhymes, and recording their own original tracks.

Recess Assembly

Founded in 2016, Assembly offers system-impacted young people, ages 18 to 26, an inroad to the arts and connections to working artists. The curriculum empowers young people to take charge of their own life story and envision a better future through art while offering an alternative to incarceration and intersecting systems of oppression.

Restorative Justice Programming

Healing Connections

Healing Connections explores and addresses the underlying drivers of intimate partner violence, including sexual harm, domestic violence, and abuse or harm in the family. Drawing on a restorative justice and

trauma-healing philosophy, participants explore their own experiences of gender socialization, trauma, and structural violence while reflecting on the harm that they have caused. With a focus on healing and accountability, participants support each other in understanding where their harmful behavior comes from and shifting to healthier and safer ways of being. Individuals must be screened for eligibility before taking a plea in order to participate in Healing Connections.

Circles for Safe Streets

Circles for Safe Streets (CSS), a partnership between the Center for Justice Innovation and Families for Safe Streets, takes a restorative approach to addressing the devastating harms caused by traffic violence each year. By bringing drivers, victims, and members of the broader community together to engage in dialogue, CSS holds participants accountable for the damage they have caused while facilitating healing and helping to prevent future harm. Individuals must be screened for eligibility before taking a plea in order to participate in CSS.

Brownsville Keepers—

Peer-Led Diversion (Youth Impact)

This peer-to-peer, youth-led initiative gives young people up to age 24 a path out of the criminal legal system through restorative circle keeping, community organizing, conflict mediation, and counseling. Young participants learn to acknowledge the harms caused by their actions, take responsibility, and develop a plan to prevent the situation from happening again.

Community Circle

Combining a traditional restorative justice approach with art-making, the Brooklyn

Justice Initiative's Community Circle provides a space for participants to process their arrest experience and connect with the community. The circle leverages the power of art and storytelling to foster accountability and empowerment while introducing participants to restorative justice principles that they can use in their own lives moving forward. By inspiring connection among participants and a shared sense of responsibility for the space, the process aims to cultivate a similar sense of responsibility towards the community.

Community Service

Red Hook Community Justice Center

Participants work outdoors assisting a local Red Hook food pantry, then work inside the Community Justice Center for the afternoon to support general cleaning of the spaces. No State ID required.

Brownsville Community Justice Center

Participants may support a variety of projects, from facilities maintenance to community benefit initiatives including flyering, tending to flower beds, graffiti removal, or cleaning on Belmont Ave. No State ID required.

One Community

Participants support One Community staff and other volunteers with a robust food pantry in the Fort Greene/Clinton Hill area. Projects may include organizing inventory, packing bags of dry goods and produce, loading cars for distribution, or distributing groceries to community members at the Ingersoll or Farragut pantry locations. No State ID required.

Stanley Isaacs Center

Participants assist the Stanley Isaacs Center by packing and preparing food items and meals for homebound senior citizens as part of their Meals on Wheels program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

*To make a referral, please fill out the Brooklyn Justice Initiatives' ATI Referral Form. Please note that many of BJI's services are offered **in cohorts or on a cyclical basis**, and we cannot guarantee that they will be available or accepting new referrals at any given time. Groups are open to all ages, unless otherwise stated; groups with an asterisk (*) have both youth and adult options available.*

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