

**UNDERSTANDING MEDICATIONS FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS FOR TREATMENT COURT PARTICIPANTS**

**Faculty Biographies**

**Friday, April 12, 2024
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**

**Online Webinar**

**Mary Beth Anderson, JD, LMSW**

**Queens Defenders**

Mary Beth Anderson has served people with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system as both a lawyer and social worker. She is currently working for Queens Defenders, a public defense firm in Queens County, New York, as the office’s mental health specialist attorney. Prior to that, she worked in various capacities within the criminal legal system and civil court forums, including working as Director of Court Operations for CASES, an alternative-to-incarceration agency; as a Managing Director of the Urban Justice Center and Project Director of the Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project; and as director of Social Work and Investigation Services at Brooklyn Defender Services, a public defender organization in Brooklyn, New York. Before that, she had a long career at the Legal Aid Society criminal trial practice where she was initially a trial attorney and later the founding director of a city-wide project that teamed social workers and attorneys to provide comprehensive legal and social work services for clients with mental illness and substance abuse issues. Ms. Anderson was also an attorney in the Society’s special litigation unit and the mental health attorney in the Queens County trial office. Ms. Anderson has devised and participated in many training programs on mental health/criminal justice issues for criminal defense organizations, law and social work schools, bar associations, the New York State Office of Court Administration, the Council of State Governments, providers of mental health services, and many others. She is a graduate of St. John’s University School of Law and Hunter College School of Social Work. She is admitted to legal practice in New York State and the Eastern District of New York federal courts.

**Mckenzie Cassidy, DO**

Mckenzie Cassidy completed a general psychiatry residency at Mt. Sinai North and West Hospital in New York and a Law and Psychiatry fellowship at Yale University. Prior to that, she completed her medical degree at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and undergraduate science prerequisites at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Cassidy has conducted competency to stand trial evaluations in the State of Connecticut since 2019. In 2021, she began working at Manhattan Drug Court, completing assessments for diversion programs and performing risk assessments. Her clinical roles include appointment as a faculty member at New York University Langone Hospital, seeing patients in the faculty practice. She also works in the psychiatry emergency room, where she mentors residents.

**Eva Marie Dowdell, Esq.**

**Office of the New York County District Attorney**

Eva Marie Dowdell currently serves as the Supervising Attorney of Mental Health Courts in the Pathways to Public Safety Division at the New York County District Attorney’s Office. In this role, she oversees the screening, referral and monitoring of participants in both Manhattan Mental Health Court (MMHC) and Manhattan Veterans Treatment Court (MVTC).  She joined the District Attorney’s Office in 2006, first serving in the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor before transferring to the Special Litigation Bureau in 2009, where she primarily litigated cases involving defendants found not responsible for psychiatric reasons.  In 2011, she began handling cases in the then newly created mental health part.  She also served as the Attorney-in-Charge of the Youth Part before being promoted to her current position in 2022.  Prior to attending law school, she held various government-relations positions in both the public and private sector.  She is a graduate of the Rutgers University School of Law – Newark, and New York University’s Graduate School of Public Service.

**Carol Fisler, JD**

Carol Fisler is a consultant specializing in criminal justice and mental health collaborations and nonprofit management. Ms. Fisler was previously the director of Mental Health Court Programs at the Center for Court Innovation (now the Center for Justice Innovation), a New York City-based nonprofit that seeks to help create a more effective and humane justice system by designing and implementing operating programs, performing original research, and providing reformers around the world with the tools they need to launch new strategies. In that capacity, Ms. Fisler oversaw initiatives that addressed mental illness and the courts, which included the planning and implementation of the Brooklyn Mental Health Court (the first specialized court for offenders with mental illness in New York) and training and technical assistance to more than a hundred mental health court planning teams around the country. She also directed the planning and implementation of a juvenile justice/mental health initiative for young people in delinquency proceedings and managed youth development and alternative-to-detention programs. Ms. Fisler speaks frequently at national and regional conferences and has extensive public and private sector legal and managerial experience, serving as the president of a start-up welfare-to-work staffing company, deputy general counsel of the New York City Housing Authority, assistant commissioner for legal affairs of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and an associate at a major New York City law firm. Ms. Fisler graduated from Harvard University and Stanford Law School.