

#6 - Introduction of Bruce Barnard by Claudia Lennhoff

Hi again.

I would like to ask Bruce Barnard to join me on stage, along with Captain Karee Voges, Lieutenant Mark Vogelzang, and Officer Brian Tison for this next award.

Captain Karee Voges is the Jail Superintendent for the Champaign County Sheriff's Office.

Lt. Mark Vogelzang is a CIT Officer with the Champaign Police Department.

And Officer Brian Tison is the CIT Coordinator for the University of Illinois Police Department, and he is also on the County's CIT Steering Committee.

Thank y'all so much for being here this evening.

And I have good news for everyone here tonight.

Instead of having to listen to me talk so much tonight, I am very pleased to say that I successfully roped Bruce Barnard, a friend and colleague, into doing this awards presentation tonight!

Before Bruce presents the award, let me just give a little bit of background.

A few years ago, Health Care Consumers was invited to become a stakeholder and partner in some important work dealing with Reentry services in our community, and with a Justice and Mental Health Collaboration. Reentry services refer to the services available to people who are returning to the community following an incarceration.

Both of these efforts brought together law enforcement, mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment providers, social service providers, local government, and advocacy organizations.

The goals of both efforts overlap a lot. Generally speaking, these community collaboration efforts seek to reduce recidivism and to reduce the number and length of incarcerations of individuals with mental and behavioral health needs.

Health Care Consumers role in this work is to help provide enrollment and benefits assistance to people in the jail, as well as to people who are referred to us through these other agencies and law enforcement.

People's lives are messy and this can be really hard work. The people standing up here with me tonight understand that. They bring to their work an ethic of caring and a commitment to help improve people's lives, while serving the public's safety.

Most people in our community do not know about these Crisis Intervention Team services provided by law enforcement.

What I have learned from working in these collaborations, and also through personal experience when I myself have had to call for CIT with clients, is that the officers who do the CIT work are the front-line on-the-streets mental health first responders. They are an essential but almost invisible part of the fabric of our mental health system in this community.

But Bruce will tell y'all more about their work, so let me go ahead and introduce Bruce.

Bruce Barnard is currently on the faculty of the School of Technology at Eastern Illinois University and the Program Coordinator for the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Development program. He served as Project Director of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Project and currently chairs the Reentry Council for Champaign County. His professional experience includes more than 30 years of leadership experience in community-based addiction and mental health services including detoxification, residential, outpatient, and transitional housing. Bruce's teaching is focused on organizational development, teamwork, and strength-based approaches to development preparing the next generation of community leaders.

I have known of Bruce for a very long time, but I have been fortunate to work with Bruce for a few years now in his capacity as Chair of the Reentry Council, and Project Director of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Project.

Bruce is an amazing resource – his knowledge of these issues and so much more is encyclopedic, and our community is fortunate to have his expertise and guidance. And I find him to be delightful.

Bruce, I happily relinquish the podium to you.