



Holistic Defense Training



Holistic Defense employs an interdisciplinary team of social workers and lawyers who consider both individual and community needs when working with a person charged with a criminal offense.

IMPACT

According to a 2018 study by Rand Corp. and UPENN Law, 10 years of the Bronx Defenders Holistic Defense resulted in:

- 16% reduction in incarceration
- 24% shorter sentences
- 9% reduction in pre-trial incarceration

EXPANDING JOB MARKET

Michigan's Indigent Defense Commission is working to increase the number of defense offices from 9 to 25. As they increase these offices across the state, they are implementing this holistic defense model. This means social work jobs in these non-traditional legal settings (i.e. law offices) will require additional social work skills.

Questions?

Contact Advisor Lawrence Robinson at dz2996@wayne.edu or Faculty Supervisor Susan Lebold at ft2230@wayne.edu

For more information visit us at socialwork.wayne.edu/msw/holisticdefense



Holistic Defense – also referred to as community orientated or comprehensive defense - is a term used to illustrate a new method of legal representation. Established in New York in 1997 by the Bronx Defender's Office, it employs an interdisciplinary team that considers both the individual and community needs when working with a person charged with a criminal offense. This is important because unintended or collateral consequences of arrest and conviction (i.e. loss of housing, removal of children, deportation) – as well as basic and behavioral health needs (e.g., food, housing, services for mental health and substance use disorders), require a team knowledgeable in law as well as problem-solving, human behavior, and community resources. Social workers have been a great asset in efforts to increase the availability of holistic defense. The attorney and social worker team engage with clients who are often indigent, creating a model of legal representation that may reduce incarceration as well as the unintended consequences of legal involvement.

To address these needs, The Wayne State University School of Social Work is piloting a holistic defense training. It will begin with a pilot in Fall of 2020 and be fully running by Fall of 2021. The School is also exploring expanding the training and course offerings by partnering with the WSU Law School.

Holistic Defense Training is appropriate for both MSW interpersonal practice and ICPL students. Ideally, MSW students will enter this training in their advanced year, but in some instances and perhaps with some background and/or experience in the criminal/legal system, students could enroll in their core year.

We are working on implementing micro-credentialing for the holistic defense training.

Participation Requirements

Participants must be admitted MSW students in the Wayne State University School of Social Work and complete the following during the pilot year:

- SW 6550 Behavioral Health and The Criminal/Legal System (Cr. 3) that provides an overview of the criminal legal system, as well as information and resources on the behavioral health needs of those in the criminal legal system
- Field Placement at an approved participating field agency
- 2 seminar courses (1 Cr. each) Fall and Winter terms

Pilot Placement Sites & Seminar

For the pilot year three organizations (listed below) will participate as placement sites for selected students. Each organization employs an attorney(s) who engages in defense work and will be working in an interprofessional group with social workers and other allied health professionals.

- Neighborhood Defender Service of Detroit
- Federal Community Defender Office in Detroit
- Detroit Justice Center

Students will also be required to participate in a 1-credit hour seminar for two semesters. This seminar course is taken simultaneously while the student is in field placement and meets for 2 hours every other week.

To participate in the Holistic Defense Training, contact Advisor Lawrence Robinson at dz2996@wayne.edu or 313-577-4409.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to attend an **informational session**. We will cover program specifics, careers, curriculum and much more. Visit socialwork.wayne.edu for upcoming session dates and times.