

Equal Justice Journal December 2024



"Advocating for equal justice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities"

Spotlight: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month



Seasonal affective disorder affects an estimated **10 million Americans.**



SAD is diagnosed **four times more often in women** than men.

30 minutes of light therapy each day is often prescribed to patients with SAD.



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a very common form of depression that typically occurs during the fall and winter months. It is associated with reduced exposure to sunlight, affecting mood, energy, and behavior. Common symptoms include feelings of hopelessness, trouble concentrating, changes in sleep and appetite, and social withdrawal.

If you're struggling with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), it's important to seek help. Consider talking to a healthcare professional to discuss treatment options, such as light therapy, medication, or counseling. Establishing a consistent daily routine, staying active, and spending time outdoors can also be helpful. If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out to family and friends for support. Don't hesitate to ask for help from a therapist or counselor to manage your symptoms effectively. For more guidance, visit the [NIMH page](#).

Previous Events

Law Enforcement Response to Crises among Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

The Law Enforcement Response to Crises among Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities occurred on December 11th. This training equipped law enforcement professionals with the knowledge and tools to effectively respond to crises involving individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). Participants learned to recognize signs of IDD, employed de-escalation strategies, and applied communication techniques tailored to the unique needs of this population. The session also covered legal considerations, community resources, and best practices for fostering

positive outcomes during crisis interventions. Through interactive discussions and real-world scenarios, the training enhanced officer confidence and improved safety for all parties involved. If you were unable to attend, please reach out to ksalus@arcnj.org for the recording and the slides.



Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a specialized police response program that trains officers to effectively manage encounters with individuals experiencing mental health crises. The goal is to de-escalate situations, connect individuals with mental health services, and reduce unnecessary arrests or use of force.

If you are law enforcement staff or court personnel interested in coordinating a presentation in your county, please contact rholt@arcnj.org.



Juvenile Justice Corner

LEARNING DISABILITIES SHOULDN'T BE A CRIME: THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

85% of the young people in juvenile detention facilities nationwide have learning disabilities.

source: National Council on Disabilities

GOSO
GETTING OUT. STAYING OUT.

This article from the Harvard Undergraduate Law Review addresses important legal issues related to the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly focusing on how disciplinary practices in schools impact students with disabilities. The author emphasizes how special education students, who already face challenges within educational systems, are disproportionately affected by school disciplinary actions. These students are more likely to be referred to law enforcement or pushed into the juvenile justice system due to lack of appropriate support.

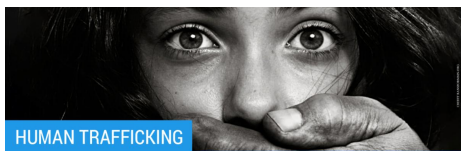
It is crucial for educators, policymakers, and legal professionals to recognize this vulnerability and work to create more inclusive and supportive educational environments. Proper intervention and support can reduce the likelihood of these students becoming involved in the criminal justice system. This topic highlights a critical intersection between education, disability rights, and juvenile justice, underscoring the need for reform in both school systems and legal frameworks to prevent further marginalization of already disadvantaged students. Read more [here](#).

Equal Justice Talks Webinar Series



From Classroom to Cell: Understanding and Addressing the School-to-Prison Pipeline for Individuals with IDD

Upcoming Webinar: "Human Trafficking and Individuals with Disabilities: Understanding, Identifying, and Addressing Vulnerabilities"



This webinar provides an in-depth exploration of human trafficking with a special focus on individuals with disabilities, a population uniquely vulnerable to exploitation. Participants will gain insights into what human trafficking is, why it thrives, and the legal frameworks in place to combat it. Using real-world case examples, the session will highlight the intersections between disability and trafficking, offering practical tools for identifying and addressing these cases.



MAKE IT STOP

END HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Laura Magnone, Senior Assistant Prosecutor in the General Investigations Unit within the Courts & Administration Division, brings extensive experience in prosecuting complex cases, including the first Human Trafficking trial in Morris County. A seasoned legal professional, she has worked in various units handling Appellate, Juvenile, Trial Team, and Sex Crimes cases. She also serves as a legal advisor to the NJ Sex Crimes Officers Association and is a member of the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Task Force. Magnone's expertise and dedication to justice have earned her commendations for her impactful work in combating Human Trafficking.

[Register Here.](#)



Past Webinar: "The School-to-Prison-to-School Pipeline for Youth with Disabilities"

An insightful webinar, "The School-to-Prison-to-School Pipeline for Youth with Disabilities", was held, on the critical topic of the School-to-Prison-to-School Pipeline for Youth with Disabilities. This session, led by Maura McInerney, Esq., explored how students with disabilities were disproportionately impacted by exclusionary discipline practices and policies that increased their risk of incarceration.

Maura discussed practical strategies, legal frameworks, and advocacy efforts that educators, policymakers, and community leaders could use to dismantle this pipeline and support equitable education opportunities for all students.

Attendees left with actionable insights into protecting the rights of youth with disabilities and fostering inclusive educational environments that prioritized rehabilitation and success.

Visit our Webinar Archive

Happy Holidays!

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The Arc of New Jersey Criminal Justice Advocacy Program

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