

# Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance & Treatment Advocacy Center Co-Design National Mental Illness Justice Center

*S&PAA and TAC convene cross sector leaders April 23 in DC to shape founding principles for a National Mental Illness Justice Center.*

ALEXANDRIA, VA, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance](#) (S&PAA), in partnership with [Treatment Advocacy Center](#) (TAC), is issuing a national call to action: join us at the table to be among the first to define a structure and national framework for the National Mental Illness Justice Center—an all-access national hub to reform the legal response to people living with serious mental illness when they become involved in the justice system by delivering the tools, standards, and resources communities need, all within one national infrastructure.



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The justice system lacks coordination and informed response when serious mental illness intersects with the legal system. Both families and communities shoulder extraordinary strain.”

*Gordon Lavigne, CEO,  
Schizophrenia & Psychosis  
Action Alliance*

On April 23, S&PAA and TAC welcome policymakers, legal experts, clinicians, advocates, attorneys, judges, and individuals living with serious mental illness and their families to join our working session, [Navigating the Justice System for Our Community](#), in Washington, D.C which marks the formal launch of this coordinated national effort.

Participants in the April 23 working session will:

- Identify where breakdowns in legal response most often occur
- Examine how limited clinical understanding and system fragmentation worsen outcomes
- Define upstream strategies that reduce preventable justice involvement

- Develop strategies that cultivate trust across marginalized identities
- Contribute directly to the Center’s design and implementation priorities

The one-day session will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern at the Top of the Hill Banquet & Conference Center in Washington, DC. Registration is \$199, which includes a catered lunch in a unique venue--the conference center is the only privately owned property on Capitol Hill and offers unobstructed views of the Capitol complex itself set against the backdrop of the National Mall and the Potomac River.



Register now to secure your spot: [https://donorbox.org/events/903272/steps/choose\\_tickets](https://donorbox.org/events/903272/steps/choose_tickets)  
Can't attend the DC session? Sign up to be notified of upcoming Justice Center events: <https://go.sczaction.org/l/1096773/2026-02-19/bws4fy>

Across the United States, justice systems have become the default responders to poorly treated mental illness, and families confront fragmented processes burdened by misinformation and reactive crisis response. For the individual, this often means criminalization of symptoms, ineffective treatment, trauma within correctional settings, and deeper entrenchment in cycles of instability that fracture families.

Disparities in legal outcomes disproportionately impact individuals from historically marginalized communities—including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; and those facing economic and social inequities—reinforcing the urgency of inclusive, equitable reform. All these breakdowns escalate public costs across housing, disability, emergency, and correctional systems.

“When serious mental illness intersects with the legal system, the impact extends far beyond a single family,” said Gordon Lavigne, S&PAA CEO. “Families absorb extraordinary strain, but communities also shoulder avoidable costs when systems lack coordination and informed response.”

The Justice Center’s mission is not only to reduce such harm but to prevent it by creating clear pathways to effective treatment and durable stability—bridging and reducing persistent gaps across legal and public systems, aligning legal expertise with policy guidance, and providing practical tools to families and professionals to strengthen informed response.

As Lisa Dailey, Executive Director at TAC, explained, "This convening is about reform—building practical infrastructure that strengthens stability, safety, and recovery nationwide."

The April 23 session will set guiding principles for the Justice Center and produce a blueprint of potential elements, including legal toolkits, model policy standards, court and law enforcement education resources, connections to legal aid and pro bono counsel, referral pathways to treatment clinics and diversion programs, and clear guidance for families seeking informed support before situations escalate.

By bringing cross-sector leaders together at inception, S&PAA and TAC are shaping this initiative with urgency and discipline. Those who engage now will influence the foundation and long-term direction of a national resource intended to serve communities across the country.

Additional 2026 solution sessions hosted by S&PAA include Insight, Awareness, and Anosognosia: Creating a Shared Framework on October 16 and Digital Tools to Reduce Isolation in Schizophrenia in Fall 2026. Find out more at <https://sczaction.org/solutions-series-2026/>

#### Event Details

April 23, 2026

8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern

Top of the Hill Banquet & Conference Center

1 Constitution Ave NE

Washington, DC 20002

Cost: \$199

#### Sponsorship Opportunities

Corporate sponsorship packages are available. Contact Anne DeGeorge at [anne.pappas@sczaction.org](mailto:anne.pappas@sczaction.org).

If you or a loved one is experiencing thoughts of self-harm, go to a hospital emergency room or call or text 988.

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