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**BLUEPRINT FOR PROMISING PRACTICES IN FORENSIC
MENTAL HEALTH TO BE PRESENTED AT CONFERENCE**

*Programs offer promise in increasing public safety
and reducing recidivism rates among offender population.*

SEATTLE – May 18, 2010 – Specialists from Sound Mental Health are scheduled to present intriguing new findings from their progressive behavioral health program at the International Association of Forensic Mental Health Services (IAFMHS), May 25 through 27 in Vancouver, Canada. IAFMHS is a leading international organization for mental health professionals working in the state corrections system. The practice is called forensic mental health.

Kevin St. Jacques, Psy.D., senior department manager, and Ian Kavanaugh, MS, MHP, coordinator, both of Sound Mental Health's Integrated Services program, will offer new insights into two emerging areas of forensic mental health: using (former offender) peer specialists to support ex-offenders in their recovery and developing collaborative programs with law enforcement systems to reduce recidivism, improve outcomes and increase community safety.

A growing field, forensic mental health addresses the unique behavioral, mental and substance abuse issues that plague populations in state and local corrections systems. These programs were designed to increase community safety, create more productive members of society and reduce the burden on the state corrections systems. Emerging research suggests that specialized re-entry services greatly reduce recidivism rates among the offender population (learn more at the CMHS National GAINS Web site at <http://www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/html/>).

The presentations, "Forensic Peer Specialists: Ex-Offenders Helping Ex-Offenders," and "Collaborative Relationships in Forensic Behavioral Health," will address best practices from Sound Mental Health's nationally recognized programs and provide mental health leadership with the effective protocols and tools necessary to replicate the programs and their successful outcomes.

"With a goal of increased community safety and giving people the opportunity to become productive members of society, we are breaking new ground with these programs," said St. Jacques. "We are eager to share our information with our peers to help them bring the same kind

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of success we've experienced with these programs in reducing crime and ensuring public safety.”

To learn more about the conference and its speakers, visit <http://www.iafmhs.org/iafmhs.asp>.

About Sound Mental Health

Sound Mental Health is a private, non-profit organization that has provided a comprehensive array of mental health and related services to the King County community since 1966. Our goal is to help individuals and families achieve the highest level of independence and (mental) health possible. Services are tailored to meet the unique needs of different age, disability and cultural/ethnic groups. To learn more, visit www.smh.org.

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