

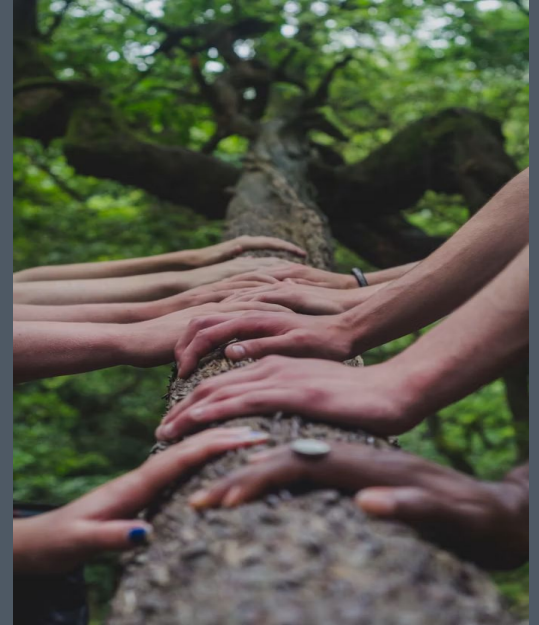
# From Cells to Community: How Peers & Justice Professionals Transform Reentry

Building Pathways of Recovery, Stability, and Successful Reintegration

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# Learning Objectives

- Describe the major barriers individuals face during reentry
- Explain how peers and justice professionals contribute to successful reintegration
- Identify practical collaboration strategies that reduce recidivism
- Apply a multidisciplinary approach to a real-world reentry scenario



*The focus becomes "How do we work together to improve outcomes?"*

# Why Reentry Matters

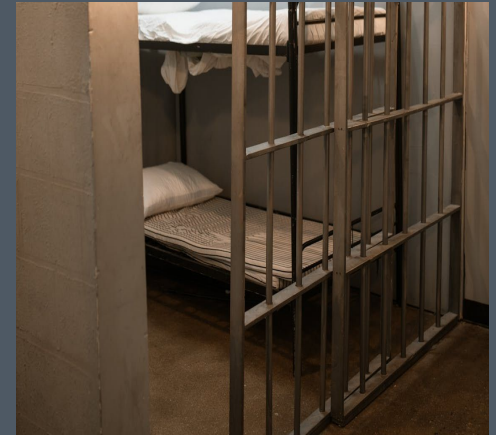
- Approximately 95% of incarcerated individuals eventually return to their communities.
- More than 10 million jail admissions occur annually in the United States, creating a continual cycle of individuals returning to communities and requiring support services.
- Nearly 68% of individuals released from state prisons are rearrested within 3 years, and approximately 82% are rearrested within 10 years.

## □ *Successful reentry supports community safety and recovery by providing:*

- The first year following release is often the highest-risk period.
- Housing, employment, and social support significantly influence outcomes.
- Successful reentry improves both public safety and community well-being.
- Stable housing, which is associated with lower rates of recidivism and improved recovery outcomes.
- Employment opportunities that increase financial stability, purpose, self-worth, and community engagement.
- Access to behavioral health, substance use treatment, and recovery support services.
- Positive family, peer, and community connections that strengthen social support and accountability.
- Recovery-oriented systems of care that address both criminogenic and behavioral health needs.

# The Reentry Challenge in West Virginia

- An average of 3,415 individuals were released from West Virginia prisons annually between 2019 and 2021, returning to communities across the state.
  - Approximately 58% of individuals in West Virginia state prisons and 63% of individuals in local jails have substance use disorders or significant drug dependency concerns.
- *Returning citizens often face barriers that affect successful reintegration:*
- Limited housing opportunities and affordable transportation in rural communities.
  - Difficulty obtaining employment due to criminal records and workforce shortages.
  - Limited access to behavioral health, substance use treatment, and recovery support services.
  - Challenges reconnecting with children, family members, and natural support systems.



# Risk Factors That Influence Reentry Success

## ☐ *Housing Instability:*

- Lack of safe and stable housing increases stress and uncertainty.
- Many returning citizens face restrictions in public housing and private rentals.

## ☐ *Unemployment and Financial Barriers:*

- Criminal records can create barriers to employment opportunities.
- Limited income impacts transportation, housing, healthcare, & family support.
- Workforce development and vocational supports improve long-term outcomes.

## ☐ *Untreated Behavioral Health Needs:*

- SUDs and mental health conditions frequently co-occur with justice involvement.
- Trauma, depression, anxiety, and PTSD can affect decision-making & recovery.
- Early intervention and recovery support improve engagement & retention in care.

## ☐ *Social Isolation and Lack of Support:*

- Positive social support is one of the strongest predictors of successful reentry.
- Individuals may return to communities where relationships have been damaged.
- Isolation can increase feelings of hopelessness and relapse risk.



# Recovery Capital and Reentry Success

## □ *Social Capital:*

- The relationships and connections that provide support, encouragement, & accountability.
- Positive relationships with family, friends, mentors, and peers.

## □ *Human Capital:*

- The personal strengths, knowledge, skills, & abilities that support growth & independence.
- Educational attainment, vocational training, employment skills, and work experience.

## □ *Physical Capital:*

- The tangible resources necessary for stability and successful reintegration.
- Safe and stable housing & reliable transportation.
- Employment, income, access to healthcare, treatment services, and necessities.

□ Individuals with greater recovery capital often demonstrate improved recovery outcomes and community stability.

□ Recovery capital helps reduce barriers that contribute to relapse, recidivism, & social isolation.



RECOVERY

# The Multidisciplinary Reentry Team

## ▣ *Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS):*

- Provide mentorship, engagement, and hope through lived experience.
- Build trust and rapport with individuals who may be hesitant to engage in services.

## ▣ *Attorneys and Public Defenders:*

- Advocate for legal rights, opportunities, and equitable outcomes.
- Ensure individuals receive quality legal representation and due process.

## ▣ *Parent Navigators:*

- Strengthen family engagement and support family reunification efforts.
- Help parents navigate child welfare, court, and service systems.

## ▣ *SWIFT and Support Staff:*

- Coordinate services, accountability, and system navigation.
- Connect individuals to treatment, housing, employment, and community supports.



# Group Activity Scenario

## □ *Scenario:*

- Marcus is 34 years old and has been released after serving four years for a substance-related offense and is on parole for two years.

## □ *Current challenges:*

- No stable housing
- No driver's license
- Limited employment history
- Anxiety and depression
- Wants to reconnect with his children

## □ *Report Out Questions:*

- What barriers are most urgent?
- Which team members should respond first?
- What recovery capital needs strengthening?
- What resources would you recommend?
- What would your team do in the first 30 days?



# Role of Peer Recovery Support Specialists

## ▮ *Build Trust Through Lived Experience:*

- Peer Recovery Support Specialists utilize their personal lived experience with recovery, justice involvement, mental health challenges, or other life experiences to establish authentic connections.

## ▮ *Increase Engagement in Services:*

- Peers help individuals successfully connect to and remain involved in supportive services.

## ▮ *Strengthen Hope, Motivation, and Self-Efficacy:*

- Peers model recovery and resilience while helping individuals recognize their own strengths and potential.

## ▮ *Connect Individuals to Recovery Resources:*

- Peers serve as connectors between individuals, communities, and systems of support.

# Family Reunification and Parent Navigation

## □ *Family Support Improves Reentry Outcomes:*

- Family support can increase motivation for recovery and positive change.
- Positive family relationships are associated with lower rates of recidivism.
- Families often provide emotional encouragement, accountability, and practical support.

## □ *Parent Navigators Assist Families Through Complex Systems:*

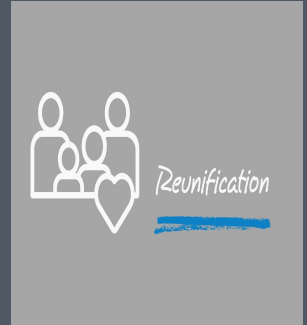
- Provide guidance regarding court requirements and family-related services.
- Assist families in accessing community resources and support programs.
- Help parents understand expectations, timelines, and available opportunities.

## □ *Healthy Family Connections Strengthen Motivation and Hope:*

- Reconnecting with children can increase personal responsibility and goal-directed behavior.
- Positive family engagement supports emotional well-being and recovery.

## □ *Family-Centered Approaches Reduce Isolation:*

- Encourages the development of healthy support networks.
- Reduces feelings of loneliness, shame, and social isolation.
- Creates opportunities for healing and relationship restoration.



# Trauma-Informed Reentry Practices

## ☐ *Assume Trauma May Be Present:*

- Many justice-involved individuals have experienced significant trauma before, during, and after incarceration.
- Histories of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), abuse, neglect, violence, and community trauma are common.
- Trauma can affect emotional regulation, decision-making, trust, and interpersonal relationships.

## ☐ *Prioritize Safety and Trust:*

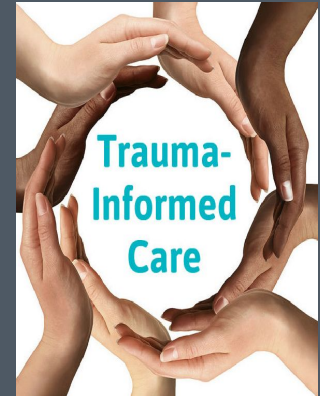
- Creating emotional and psychological safety is essential for engagement and positive outcomes.
- Use respectful, nonjudgmental, and person-centered communication.
- Promote consistency, transparency, and reliability in interactions.

## ☐ *Avoid Re-Traumatization:*

- Avoid shaming, blaming, or stigmatizing language.
- Recognize that trauma responses may present as anger, withdrawal, defensiveness, or avoidance.
- Minimize unnecessary power struggles and confrontational approaches.

## ☐ *Empowerment & Communication Strategies:*

- Use person-centered and recovery-oriented language.
- Ask "What happened to you?" rather than "What is wrong with you?"
- Practice active listening and validation.
- Encourage collaboration rather than control.



# Communication Across Systems

## □ *Communicate Regularly:*

- Hold interdisciplinary meetings when appropriate.
- Establish communication pathways between agencies.
- Encourage ongoing dialogue and relationship building.

## □ *Practice Active Listening:*

- Seek to understand different professional perspectives.
- Ask clarifying questions before making assumptions.
- Demonstrate respect for the expertise of other team members.

## □ *Focus on Shared Goals:*

- Public safety
- Recovery and wellness
- Family stability
- Successful community reintegration
- Reduced recidivism

## □ *Promote a Team-Based Approach:*

- Recognize that no single profession can meet all reentry needs.
- Encourage collaboration rather than competition between systems.



# Conclusion & Key Takeaways

## □ *Reentry Is a Community Responsibility:*

- Successful reentry extends beyond the criminal justice system and requires involvement from communities, families, employers, service providers, and recovery supports.

## □ *Recovery Capital Matters:*

- Recovery capital provides the foundation for long-term recovery, stability, and successful reintegration.
  - Social Capital
  - Human Capital
  - Physical Capital
  - Community Capital

## □ *Collaboration Improves Outcomes:*

- No single agency or profession can address all reentry needs alone.
- Effective communication strengthens service coordination and continuity of care.

## □ *What We Can Do Moving Forward As Justice Professionals and Community Partners:*

- Promote person-centered, recovery-oriented approaches.
- Build partnerships across legal, behavioral health, and community systems.
- Recognize strengths rather than focusing solely on deficits.
- Support opportunities for employment, housing, education, and recovery.
- Encourage family engagement and community connection.



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# Questions??



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