



Resources to Respond to COVID-19 for Criminal Justice, Behavioral Health, and Homelessness Service Providers

In response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to the criminal justice, behavioral health, and homelessness service systems, Policy Research and its projects have developed the following resources to enhance service delivery during this difficult time:

SOAR Implementation During COVID-19

On April 16, 2020, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center and SOAR providers from Nashville, Tennessee, and Austin, Texas, discussed innovative ways to continue providing SOAR services while maintaining a safe physical/social distance. SOAR providers shared how they are using new (and old!) modes of communication to keep Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications moving forward. Presenters described strategies for communicating with the Social Security Administration and Disability Determination Services while offices are closed or operating remotely. Participants also learned about the impact of unemployment and stimulus payments on Social Security benefits. The slides and supplementary materials from this webinar are available for download.

In addition to the webinar, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has assembled a webpage for SOAR providers that provides answers and resources to common questions on the following topics:

- Unemployment Insurance and its impact on SSI/SSDI
- Economic Impact Payments and SSI/SSDI
- COVID-19's impact on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Federal resources
- National partner resources
- Suggestions from the field

[View the SOAR Resources](#)

Release to What? Behavioral Health-Based Strategies to Address COVID-19

Release to What? Behavioral Health-Based Strategies to Address COVID-19, by Policy Research, Inc.'s Regina Huerter, provides a series of recommendations for jails and prisons releasing individuals with complex mental health needs, substance use disorders, and medical and housing vulnerabilities to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations discussed in this brief are organized across the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), a conceptual model to inform community-based responses to the involvement of people with mental and substance use disorders in the criminal justice system. Recommendations provided in this publication range from providing essential employees with consistent support—including child care—to encouraging virtual supervision, monitoring, and education to individuals on probation and parole.

[Download Release to What?](#)

"Jails' COVID-19 Response Must Support People with Behavioral Health Challenges"

In a new post on the Safety and Justice Challenge blog, Policy Research, Inc.'s Ashley Krider and Regina Huerter recommend that jails consider the needs of individuals with behavioral health challenges when developing COVID-19 protocols and responses. Criminal justice stakeholders are encouraged to think of ways to mitigate social isolation for individuals with substance use disorders and to track relevant data and outcomes to develop a deeper understanding of the impacts of new COVID-19-related release protocols.

New Publications in *Psychiatric Services* Examine Competence Restoration

Policy Research Associates (PRA) is pleased to announce the publication of two papers in *Psychiatric Services*, co-authored by PRA Senior Research Associate Lisa Callahan, Ph.D., and Debra Pinals, M.D. Both papers analyze the competence to stand trial (CST) and competence restoration system (CR).

The first article, "[Evaluation and Restoration of Competence to Stand Trial: Intercepting the Forensic System Using the Sequential Intercept Model](#)," explores the ways in which criminal justice and behavioral health stakeholders can use the SIM to reduce jail stays and increase connections to community-based services for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities. Individuals with these conditions are often found ineligible for traditional diversion services when CST is raised, even though diversion would be a safer alternative in many cases. In this paper, Drs. Pinals and Callahan provide examples of diversion opportunities for individuals involved in the CST/CR process across the intercepts of the SIM.

The second article, "[Challenges to Reforming the Competence to Stand Trial and Competence Restoration System](#)," reviews the problems affecting the current CST/CR system and offers preliminary solutions. Public mental health services are often overburdened with competence-related requests from courts, leading to long delays in evaluation and restoration services for people in jails. In this paper, Drs. Callahan and Pinals recommend collaboration between the legal and behavioral health systems and an examination of the local factors that contribute to CST/CR waitlists. A review of the published works on the legal foundations of CST/CR is also provided to enhance the recommendations.

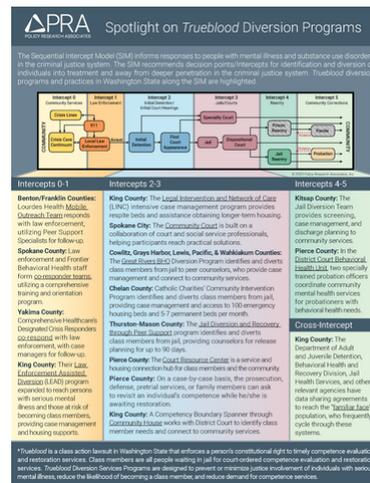
New Resource: Spotlight on *Trueblood* Diversion Programs

Over the past 2 years, PRA has provided technical assistance to 15 diversion services programs funded by the *Trueblood* settlement. *Trueblood* is a class action lawsuit in Washington State that enforces a person's constitutional right to timely competence evaluation and restoration services. The purposes of the diversion services programs are to (1) reduce the justice involvement of individuals with serious mental illness, (2) reduce the likelihood of the need for a competence evaluation, and (3) reduce demand for competence services. PRA has partnered with the *Trueblood* Court

Monitor's Office, Seattle Foundation, Disability Rights Washington, and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to provide this technical assistance.

To highlight the work of the diversion services programs and provide examples of how diversion can be modeled at different intercepts of the SIM, PRA is pleased to release a one-page infographic that arrays the diversion services programs across the SIM.

The infographic distributes the diversion programs by intercept grouping: Intercepts 0–1 (Community Services and Law Enforcement), Intercepts 2–3 (Initial Detention/Court Hearings and Jails/Courts), and Intercepts 4–5 (Reentry and Community Corrections). The highlighted programs include deploying co-responder models, providing emergency housing services, offering warm handoffs to community-based services, training probation officers on community mental health services, and establishing data-sharing agreements. Links to each of the highlighted programs are included for further information.



[Download the Infographic](#)

Upcoming Webinars

Fostering Partnerships and Collaborations across the Sequential Intercept Model

SAMHSA's GAINS Center | National Webinar
April 30, 2020, 2:30–4:00 p.m. ET

Getting Started—Essential Measures for Data & Information Sharing across the Sequential Intercept Model

SAMHSA's GAINS Center | Data and Information Sharing Virtual Learning Community
May 5, 2020, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

Best Practices for Drug Courts: Implementing Effective Programming for People with Methamphetamine Use Disorder

Recent Stories from the PRA Blog



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A Trip Down Memory Lane



What Movies Won't Tell You About PTSD



Heart Health Month: The Role of Workplace Stress



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