

NEWSLETTER

Q & A

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Your peer program EVOLVE works with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office Behavioral Health Unit and in the Washington County Jail. How did you develop partnerships with your local criminal justice agencies so that peers are able to work with justice-involved community members?

Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon (MHA AO) peers have built and maintained relationships with jail staff, court teams, transition and release counselors, local law enforcement, parole and probation officers, and child welfare. We are people who may have even been involved in those systems, and these system partners have witnessed our journey from client to team member now serving people right alongside them. All this is accomplished while staying true to the core values and principles of peer work.

Many of our peer programs began by our responding to requests for proposals and being awarded the contracts. That was the easy part. Preparing to integrate MHA AO peers into the various criminal justice settings took time and effort. Having champions inside the places we were working was key.

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PRISON YOGA PROJECT: CREATING ACCESS TO HEALING AND RECOVERY

Prison Yoga Project: Creating Access to Healing and Recovery

Despite two very different life paths, two individuals with a shared passion found a unique way to give back to their community. James Fox, M.A., spent 20 years in the wine business and then manufactured liquid supplements for nutritional supplement companies. Chanda Williams, M.A., wanted to be an astronaut and worked in the aerospace industry. Both of them practiced yoga. Today, Fox is founding director of Prison Yoga Project (PYP), and Williams is a yoga teacher and trainer and program director for PYP programs in Northern California. PYP has grown from Fox's classes at San Quentin Prison to a national and international program. "What started out with me walking into San Quentin 18 years ago with a yoga mat under my arm has really spread," says Fox, author of *Yoga: A Path For Healing and Recovery*. People who are incarcerated receive the book for free if they request a copy from Fox.

PYP focuses on teaching what Fox calls trauma-informed yoga. "From my own experience growing up as a young man in Chicago and dealing with the kinds of issues that urban young men experience, I thought that yoga would be a really great complement to other restorative justice practices for young men who were in trouble with the law," Fox notes. In San Quentin Prison, the original site for the project, most participants were men, ages 35 to 55, from a variety of ethnicities, including African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Latino.

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COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE RECAP:

COMPETENCE TO STAND TRIAL/COMPETENCE RESTORATION

Community of Practice 2020 Recap: Competence to Stand Trial/Competence Restoration

Overview

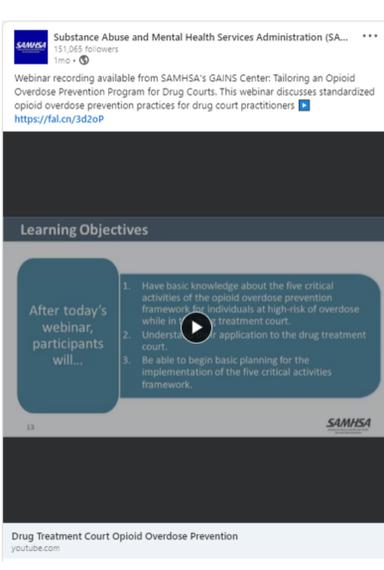
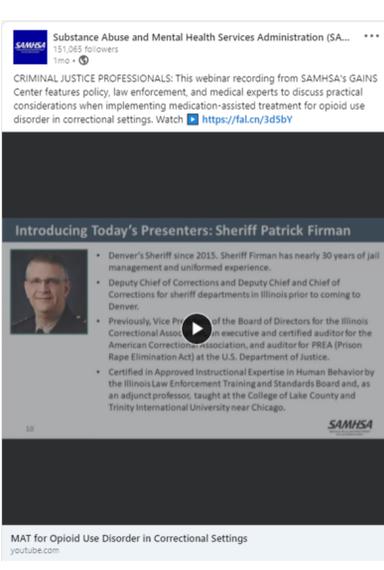
SAMHSA's GAINS Center's Competence to Stand Trial/Competence Restoration Community of Practice (CST/CR CoP), now in its third year, was designed for state applicants, with a focus on legal, clinical, and systemic issues, including the demand for competence evaluations, evidence-based screening and assessment measures, waitlists for CR program beds, best practices for CR programs, partnership and collaboration development between state and local agencies, and other relevant issues.

The states that previously participated in 2019 were invited to continue working on their goals and sharing what they learned with the new states that joined this year as part of the 2020 CoP. California, Florida, Nebraska, Texas, and the District of Columbia decided to continue their work in the CST/CR CoP. Four new states also joined the CoP in 2020: New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Utah. All participating states were offered the opportunity to develop strategic plans to address problems specific to their jurisdiction and identify methods for measuring outcomes. Each state participating in the CoP also identified and gained cooperation from one to three local communities to pilot the recommended changes.

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Resource Spotlight

- [National Academy of Medicine's Vital Directions for Health and Health Care: Priorities for 2021—Transforming Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)
- [How to Help Someone Coming Out of the Criminal Justice System](#)