

NEWSLETTER



Q & A

Cheryl Gagne, Sc.D.
Senior Associate, C4 Innovations

As Director of [Praxis](#), a training and consultation project based in Massachusetts, you help addiction treatment programs meet the needs of people with substance use disorders. How can we better serve individuals involved in the justice system who are experiencing substance use disorders?

There's a lot of area for improvement. In Massachusetts, I have a limited role in providing training to some of the houses of correction that have specific programs for people with substance use disorders. I think when substance use treatment starts in houses of correction and jail, it really needs to be continued when people leave. Overdose rates are still astronomical for people exiting criminal justice settings, even for those involved in substance use programs.

I think the most significant needs are offering comprehensive addiction treatment, both inside and outside of correctional facilities, and providing tailored supports to help people get back to work in the community. People come out of prison, and there isn't much on the menu for them to choose in terms of what parts of society are really open to them. Addressing substance use is broader than just treating addiction. It's about creating opportunities for people coming out of the justice system to work, live, and succeed. There are many policies and organizational barriers in the community that prohibit successful reintegration for people who were formerly incarcerated.

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Changing Lives—and the Justice Process—through Collaborative Tribe-County Treatment Courts

Cass County (Minnesota) District Court Judge John Smith first approached Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Court Judge Corey Wahwassuck to discuss starting a joint jurisdiction court to address the increasing number of DWIs among their constituents. At the collaboration's outset, they thought there would be a model to follow—little did they know they would be creating the model themselves. The Cass County/Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Joint Jurisdiction Wellness Court Program began in 2006, and on July 19, 2007, the Cass County and Leech Lake Tribal courts signed a Joint Powers Agreement, setting out three overarching goals:

1. Improve access to justice.
2. Administer justice for effective results.
3. Foster public trust, accountability, and impartiality.

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From Reentering the Community to Establishing a Reentry Project: Susan Burton's A New Way of Life Reentry Project

Susan Burton knows the pain of the women she serves. Incarcerated multiple times over 15 years, after the accidental death of her young son led her to addiction to cocaine and crack, Burton has since turned heartbreak into hope, and pain into promise. Burton started the [A New Way of Life \(ANWOL\) Reentry Project](#) in 1998 with a 3-bedroom house in the Watts section of Los Angeles, California. Since then, the project has become a nationally and internationally replicated model for helping women leaving incarceration to rebuild their lives, their families, and their communities.

Burton turned her life around with the support she received in a recovery home in Santa Monica, a largely White, affluent community. Her experience there stood in stark contrast to what she knew about the difficulty of accessing services in South L.A., where the population is more racially diverse and less economically advantaged. "It angered me a bit," Burton says, "but that also fueled me to do something about it." She used her savings to buy that three-bedroom house in Watts and started meeting women when they got off the bus from prison in Downtown L.A.'s Skid Row.

"I offered them a safe place to go," Burton says of the founding of ANWOL, of which she is president. "We didn't have much, but we had enough to maintain the house and to support one another to recover from many things—from incarceration, from addiction, from loss, from family separation. We had time to heal and discover the effects of racism in our lives."

[Read On](#)

2021 Virtual Learning Communities

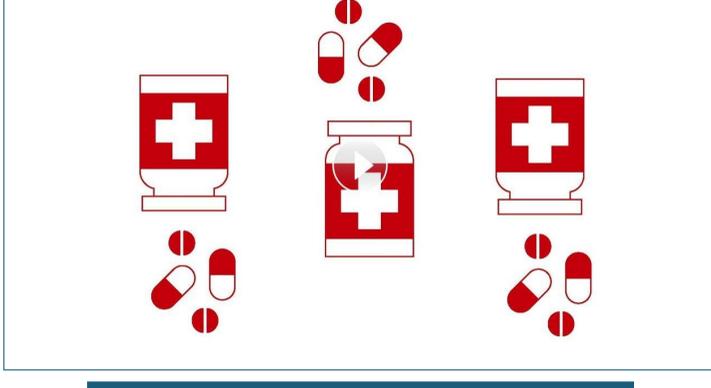
Join SAMHSA's GAINS Center's 2021 Virtual Learning Communities (VLCs) on Early Diversion and Medication-Assisted Treatment in Drug Courts this spring! Each learning community will offer a series of webinars and discussion groups. The GAINS Center will announce additional registration information as events are rolled out in the coming months.

Medication-Assisted Treatment in Drug Courts Virtual Learning Community (Part 1): Addressing the Concerns of Court Staff about Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

April 20, 2021, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET; discussion group 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET

This webinar and discussion group will identify barriers to MAT acceptance by prosecution, defense, judges, case managers, and treatment providers, and other members of the treatment court team, and will outline several approaches for addressing these common concerns about MAT.

Click on the following video to view the webinar teaser or the button below it to register.



[Register for the MAT VLC Webinar and Discussion Group Now](#)

Early Diversion Virtual Learning Community (Part 2): Addressing the Critical Need for Housing and Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Improve Housing Access

April 22, 2021, 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET; discussion group 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET

This webinar and discussion group will address comprehensive strategies to improve housing access for individuals who are in crisis, at risk for justice involvement, and experiencing homelessness.

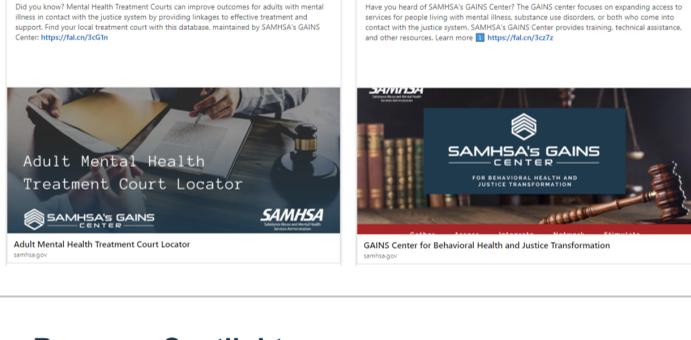
Click on the following video to view the VLC teaser or the button below it to register.



[Register for the Early Diversion VLC Webinar and Discussion Group Now](#)

More from SAMHSA's GAINS Center

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Resource Spotlight

- [Great Barrington PD, Rural Recovery Resources to Provide Substance Use Services](#)
- [Sarpy County Launching Nebraska's First Mental Health Court](#)
- [Maine Corrections Department Expanding Medication-Assisted Treatment to All Residents](#)

