

NEWSLETTER



As Executive Director of the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, you are a passionate advocate for recovery. What does it mean to you to be celebrating 30 years in recovery?

To me, it means that I've lived half of my life in recovery. I turned 60 in the middle of July, and at the end of July, I celebrated 30 years of sobriety. So, it's pretty amazing. It made me look back over my life and see how much better my life has gotten and how grateful I am for everything I've been through because it lets me be the person I am today.

I didn't always celebrate my recovery anniversary because I got sober the same year my Dad died. It's always been kind of bittersweet because I don't remember a lot of his last year. So, I picked up my 10th-anniversary chip and tried to explain to a friend why I wasn't celebrating. And she said, "It's not for you. It's for everybody else, so they know it's possible." So ever since then, I've said, "Look, you can do this. It's not just me. You don't have to be a special person. I'm just a regular old person, and I've done this for this many years."

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Asian Prisoner Support Committee Supports Trauma Recovery and Healing in Prison and Reentry through Cultural Restoration

By Erika Ihara, M.A., M.S., Project Associate, SAMHSA's GAINS Center

Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC) is a community-based organization in Alameda County, California, providing culturally specific programming for Asian and Pacific Islander (API) people in the United States who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. Through a network of staff and volunteers, many of whom have experienced incarceration, they offer in-prison education programs and reentry planning, as well as community-based reentry services.

APSC interweaves direct supports for people impacted by the criminal legal system with opportunities for facilitated engagement and learning about the diverse ethnic and cultural histories that comprise API identities in the United States. APSC's in-prison education program, called Restoring Our Original True Selves (ROOTS), grew from the work of Eddy Zheng, Viet Mike Ngo, and Rico Riemedio, three API men who advocated for an Ethnic Studies curriculum for people in California's San Quentin State Prison while incarcerated there. Students attend weekly classes on topics such as migration histories, intergenerational trauma, mass incarceration, racial justice, physical and behavioral health, leadership, and reentry through an API lens. Participation in ROOTS is open to everyone regardless of ethnic background, including those who identify as API, "Other," or API allies.

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Meeting Needs and Reducing Recidivism: Washington's Offender Reentry Community Safety Program

Washington State is cutting its recidivism rates nearly in half among individuals with a disability or diagnosed severe mental illness who are incarcerated or involved in the criminal legal system, specifically those served by the state-funded Offender Reentry Community Safety (ORCS) Program. This legislatively mandated program was begun in 2000, notes Angie Sauer, M.S., LMHC, health services reentry administrator for the State Department of Corrections (DOC), who oversees the program.

The 20-year-old reentry program operates in conjunction with the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA). HCA has a budget of roughly \$1.8 million a year "to contract with community health agencies and providers for reentry care services above and beyond what we could consider the normal standard of care at the Medicaid level," says Alex Stoker, M.A., LMHC, the HCA-side program administrator and Sauer's counterpart. Together, Sauer, Stoker, and a committee of community providers run the effort.

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The Future of Teleservices in Drug Courts Virtual Learning Community

Join SAMHSA's GAINS Center's 2021 Virtual Learning Community on the future of teleservices in drug courts this summer! This 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. Access [event descriptions and register here](#), or click below to view the series teaser.



More from SAMHSA's GAINS Center

Via [@samhsagov](#) on Twitter, [@samhsa](#) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) on LinkedIn!



Resource Spotlight

[Identity and Cultural Dimensions – Asian American and Pacific Islander](#)

This National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) webpage provides an overview of the ways in which culture and identity play a role in mental health for Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals in the United States. The page also includes information on barriers to mental health care, how to seek culturally competent care, and free resources for this population.

[Behavioral Health Equity – Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander \(AANHPI\)](#)

SAMHSA's collection of resources on and for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals includes national survey reports, agency and federal initiatives, related behavioral health resources, and in-language resources.

[Asian American Psychological Association](#)

This is the website of the Asian American Psychological Association, an organization dedicated to advancing "the mental health and well-being of Asian American communities through research, professional practice, education, and policy." Available resources include fact sheets, reports, a newsletter, and annual awards and grants.