

2021 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

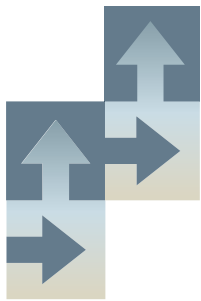


2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



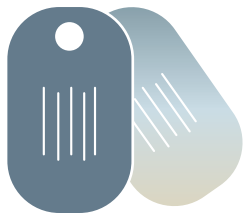
Policy Research, Inc. Hosts Virtual Town Hall to Support Safety and Justice Challenge on Correctional Worker Wellness: “Moving from Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment”

In January 2021, Policy Research, Inc., in its capacity as a technical assistance provider to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge, hosted a town hall discussion in collaboration with Desert Waters Correctional Outreach, Inc., on the topic of correctional worker wellness. This discussion addressed how correctional occupational stressors impact the staff, and indirectly, the staff’s family members, as well as the individuals the staff manage. Panelists representing probation and locked corrections facilities provided approaches for countering negative effects of the job—including “corrections fatigue”—and tools for promoting staff and agency health, wellness, and fulfillment. [Graphic recording notes](#) captured the proceedings and are now available for on-demand access. A [video](#) highlighting the creation of the notes is also available, to convey the evolution of the event’s themes.



SAMHSA’s GAINS Center Launches Early Diversion Virtual Learning Community Series

On March 25, 2021, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) GAINS Center kicked off the first of several 2021 Virtual Learning Communities (VLC). The Early Diversion VLC webinar and discussion group series focuses on enhancing system responses for people with mental and substance use disorders who are justice involved or at risk for justice involvement. Part 1 in the series, “Strategies for Addressing Treatment Engagement Challenges with Certain Individuals,” provided information on specific strategies, services, and practices that communities have developed to address the support needs of such people who have difficulty engaging in services. These strategies include care coordination, targeted case management, data-driven responses, motivational interviewing, peer-based responses, and trauma-informed services. Presenters shared multi-faceted approaches to improve individual outcomes and system response. An [animated event teaser](#) offers an overview of the topics covered throughout the rest of this five-part series.



SMVF Completes First Virtual Implementation Academy of 2021

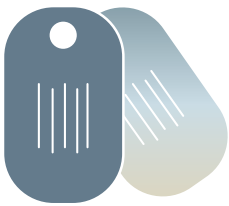
On March 30, 2021, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and SAMHSA hosted the first of three 2021 VA/SAMHSA Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Virtual Implementation Academies. SAMHSA’s SMVF Technical Assistance Center facilitated the meeting of seven state teams: Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington. During this 3-day event, state teams participated in plenary sessions, breakout workshops, state team work sessions, virtual networking sessions, and consultations with subject-matter experts. The goal of the Implementation Academy process is to strengthen statewide behavioral healthcare systems and suicide prevention services for SMVF through collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels. The Virtual Implementation Academies bring states and territories together to receive intensive technical assistance focused on strategic plan priorities.

2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



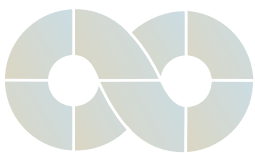
HHRC Hosts Webinar to Explore Benefits of Incorporating Mobile Psychiatry Into Street Outreach

On June 24, 2021, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Homeless and Housing Resource Center hosted the *Street Medicine for Unsheltered Individuals* webinar. Over 1,300 attendees gathered virtually to learn about the life-saving outcomes that can result from integrating mobile psychiatry into street outreach. Panelists shared their knowledge and experience with the street-medicine model. They highlighted the importance of multi-disciplinary teams to strengthen continuity of care and housing stability for people who are unsheltered. Access to the webinar recording can be found on [YouTube](#).



Thirty-Five of Fifty States Are Engaged in VA/SAMHSA's Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF

This quarter, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Technical Assistance (TA) Center facilitated several virtual Implementation and Policy Academies. Twenty-one state teams convened and attended plenary sessions and workshops and designed strategies to implement action plans for preventing suicide among SMVF. To date, 35 of 50 states are engaged in VA/SAMHSA's Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF. SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center maintains monthly contact with all 35 teams to support their suicide prevention strategic planning and implementation efforts.



Policy Research Develops New Tools for Mental Health Awareness Month

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, Policy Research developed two breathing box GIFs to help staff incorporate a mindful minute into their workday. Each animation is 16 seconds long and follows a 4-second count to inhale, hold, or exhale. These GIFs are an easy and accessible meditation tool to use throughout your day, either before launching a meeting, after sending an email, or between tasks. Policy Research also adapted its [Share That You Care](#) image pack into three animated GIFs. They can all be found free for public use on the [Policy Research GIPHY account](#). Since its release, the GIF suite has garnered over 340,000 views. Share them with a friend, colleague, or loved one to celebrate and support their mindfulness and mental health.

2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



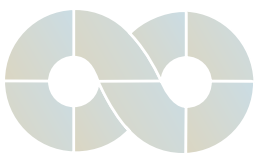
The Academic Training to Inform Police Responses Hosts Panel Discussion on Crisis Response for Rural Communities

On September 16, 2021, 614 people attended a Bureau of Justice Assistance's Academic Training to Inform Police Responses Initiative webinar on crisis response. This webinar featured two programs that have adapted crisis response models in rural communities. Panelists presented innovative approaches in crisis response and discussed the challenges of ensuring the needs of individuals in crisis who live in rural communities are met. The Academic Training project team highlighted key resources to support rural communities developing and implementing crisis response in their jurisdiction. The [slides](#) and [recording](#) from the presentation are available for on-demand viewing.



SOAR TA Center Hosts Virtual Leadership Academy, Graduates New SOAR Practitioners

In August 2021, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) TA Center facilitated a virtual [SOAR Leadership Academy](#). Fifteen participants representing 12 states (CA, CT, FL, IL, KS, MA, MD, NH, NJ, NM, OR, and TX) attended the Leadership Academy. The new Local Leads will assist with implementing their state's SOAR Action Plan and guide the SOAR initiatives in their communities. In addition to welcoming new SOAR Local Leads, the SOAR TA Center celebrated 430 completions of the SOAR Online Courses in Quarter 3. The [SOAR Online Courses](#) train case workers to assist individuals in applying for SSI/SSDI.



New Article on Improving Black Mental Health Published in Psychiatric Services

In September, PRA Senior Project Associate Crystal Brandow, PhD, and Margaret Swarbrick, PhD, published "[Improving Black Mental Health: A Collective Call to Action](#)" in *Psychiatric Services*. The article examines how a Wellness First approach could be structurally used to promote healing and prevent trauma in Black communities. Racism, trauma, and limited culturally relevant services detrimentally affect Black mental health and prevent access to timely, high-quality treatment. These negative experiences, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, contribute to the increased prevalence of mental health conditions in Black communities. Dr. Brandow and co-author Dr. Swarbrick call for a Wellness First approach to dismantle the status quo and mobilize collective action to create equitable opportunities that promote healing and prevent further trauma.

2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



SOARWorks Releases 2021 National Outcomes

On October 14, SOAR released its [2021 National Outcomes infographic](#). This document reflects the impact of SOAR providers and practitioners around the country who continued their work through the pandemic and stretched their comfort zones in using new virtual technologies to make it happen. Nearly 4,000 individuals were approved for benefits in the 2021 reporting period. The national cumulative approval rate on SOAR-assisted Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications remains at 65 percent. There are now 59,153 people receiving benefits because of SOAR. SOAR's top 10 states this year had an average cumulative approval rate of 79 percent. The top states, in order, were Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Maryland, Arkansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington DC, Oregon, and Kansas.

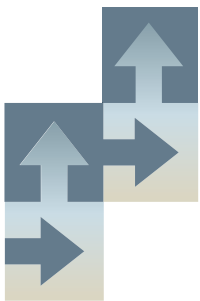


Research Area Delivers Presentation on Examining Fairness of Pretrial Risk Assessment Algorithms

In November, PRA Research Associate Samantha Zottola, PhD, co-presented with Stanford University student Michelle Bao, on the complexities of “Examining Fairness of Pretrial Risk Assessment Algorithms” at the 2021 Neural Information Processing Systems Conference. This presentation featured the extensive research and collaborative efforts of several experts and institutions who assert the value of context when critiquing the fairness of algorithmic risk assessment instruments and outlined several important considerations for researchers interested in examining pretrial risk assessment algorithms. Considerations include awareness of the real-world application of pretrial risk assessment algorithms, the values embedded in their use, and the decades of research and guidelines for the use of these algorithms that exist in psychology and related fields.

In a companion [blog](#), Dr. Zottola reflects on this experience and states, “As algorithms become part of the decision-making process in situations ranging from medical diagnoses to setting credit limits, important questions are being asked about whether these algorithms operate in fair ways. Criminal legal decision-making is one situation in which the use of algorithms has come under particular scrutiny.”

Access to the presentation recording can be found on [YouTube](#).



SAMHSA's GAINS Center Virtual Summit Reviews States' Efforts to Improve Competence to Stand Trial and Competence Restoration Processes

On December 13, SAMHSA's GAINS Center featured national experts and state and local constituents in a virtual seminar on common barriers in the competence to stand trial and competence restoration process. Typically, there are limited resources for providing competence services, resulting in significant delays not only in court proceedings but also in accessing critical behavioral health care services. The Summit's presentations highlighted both system-wide restructuring efforts and targeted, small-scale process changes. This summit shared the work done through SAMHSA's GAINS Center's Competence to Stand Trial Community of Practice over the past 3 years and underscored recommendations, barriers, lessons learned, and outcomes to date.