

## NEWSLETTER



**Q & A**

**Michael Askew,**  
Executive Director of  
the Center for African  
American Recovery  
Development

### **Q&A with Michael Askew, Executive Director of the Center for African American Recovery Development**

*Given your experience of incarceration and addiction, what are two critical life experiences you feel comfortable sharing that have helped in your recovery?*

I'm celebrating my thirty-third year of sustained recovery from a substance use disorder after a cycle of incarceration with 11 arrests and 6 convictions. I first learned about 12-step fellowship in prison, and it turned me around.

When I was 34 years old, I was diagnosed with HIV, and I was ready to give up. I remember waking up in a dark, isolated jail. I said to myself, "I can't keep doing this. I have to make a change." I knew that if I could stop doing drugs in prison, I'd have a chance. I began to go to twelve-step meetings. I started engaging myself in meaningful activities and opportunities. One night, I was studying the Bible and began praying. I said, "God, if you just take this away from me, I will proclaim your name to the world." God keeps his promise, and I've been doing this work ever since.



**Q&A**  
MICHAEL ASKEW

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**WRAP:**  
A Tool for Personal  
Wellness in Criminal  
Justice Settings

### **WRAP: A Tool for Personal Wellness in Criminal Justice Settings**

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is an evidence-based, self-directed peer group intervention for mental and substance use disorders. Although WRAP is popular among individuals with these conditions, use of this tool does not require a diagnosis. "WRAP is for everyone and focuses on life experiences, strengths, and goals, not diagnoses, illnesses, or deficits," says Lynn Patrone-Miller, advanced-level WRAP facilitator and senior justice associate at Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP). She was previously the director of the Office of Mental Health Advocacy in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.



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**Considerations for Transition-Age Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System**

### **Considerations for Transition-Age Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System**

The years between ages 16 and 24 are a time of great social and developmental transition. Young people in this age range are often called transition-age youth (TAY), emerging adults, or youth in transition. While young people are legally adults at age 18, research shows that their brains are not fully developed until at least the mid-20s. The pre-frontal cortex, which governs impulse control and abstract reasoning, is the last region of the brain to mature, usually not until around age 25.



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