

NEWSLETTER




Tia Hartsock is a mental health and wellness advocate and expert who has spent more than 20 years working to improve criminal justice and mental health systems in Hawai'i. Ms. Hartsock is a SAMSHA-certified Trauma-Informed Care trainer and a lecturer at the University of Hawai'i Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health. In early 2023, she was appointed Hawai'i's first Director of the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR).

Before being named the Executive Director of OWR, your background was in social work, mental health, criminal justice, and trauma. In your experience, how do trauma, substance use, and poor mental health impact the life trajectories of people in Hawai'i who are involved with the criminal justice system?

In my experience, early adverse childhood experiences and social determinants of health in communities can impact the disproportionate representation of native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in our state systems. Past traumatic events in Hawai'i's history unfortunately continue to impact these issues. The creation of policy continues to impact how Hawaiians utilize cultural practices to thrive and heal, specifically access to

land and water. Systemic barriers need to be addressed to create balance and reintegrate systems of support for overall health and well-being. Our resilience is rooted in our well-being...this is critical to building healthy and resilient communities, and keeping the focus on well-being and how Hawaiians define it provides a good guide for all those who have the privilege to live in Hawai'i.

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The Power of Lived Experience:
A Peer-Run Mental Health Court's Approach to Justice

In 2013, Lexington, Kentucky, city leadership [analyzed](#) the growing challenge of homelessness in their community; they learned that many of the people experiencing homelessness in their city also had serious mental illness (SMI) and also had ongoing interactions with the justice system. Knowing that the "black robe effect"[1] was a powerful motivator, the city partnered with its local [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Lexington](#) and Fayette County Court to establish a mental health court to divert individuals entering the court system from incarceration and into treatment. The [Fayette County Mental Health Court](#), overseen by Fayette County Judge John Tackett in partnership with a multidisciplinary team from NAMI, is dedicated to reducing recidivism among individuals with a diagnosed mental illness or a co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder by increasing their wellness, which is facilitated through court-ordered services and treatment.

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IN REVIEW:

a year of insight and innovation in criminal justice and mental health



SAMHSA's GAINS Center's monthly newsletter aims to bring diverse and impactful stories to community members, justice system partners, and treatment providers. Based on reader engagement, here are the top five articles of 2023 covering topics at the intersection of criminal justice, mental health, and community reintegration.

1. [The Petey Greene Program: Supporting the Reentry of Incarcerated Individuals through Educational Advancement](#)



This article highlighted the inspiring work of the Petey Greene Program (PGP) in facilitating educational opportunities for individuals who are incarcerated. Our exploration of the program's commitment to aiding reentry through education garnered the highest unique pageviews among readers.

[Read More](#)

New Year's Partner Feature

Start the new year strong with these new resources from our partners, designed to enhance your treatment court, reentry program, or emergency response preparedness.

- [Department of Justice and Department of Health & Human Services Guidance for Emergency Responses to People with Behavioral Health or Other Disabilities \[PDF\]](#)
- [Best Practices for Successful Reentry From Criminal Justice Settings for People Living With Mental Health Conditions and/or Substance Use Disorders](#)
- [Incorporating Peer Recovery Support into Treatment Courts](#)

Resource Spotlight

[Foundation Work for Exploring Incompetence to Stand Trial Evaluations and Competence Restoration for People with Serious Mental Illness/Serious Emotional Disturbance](#)

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



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