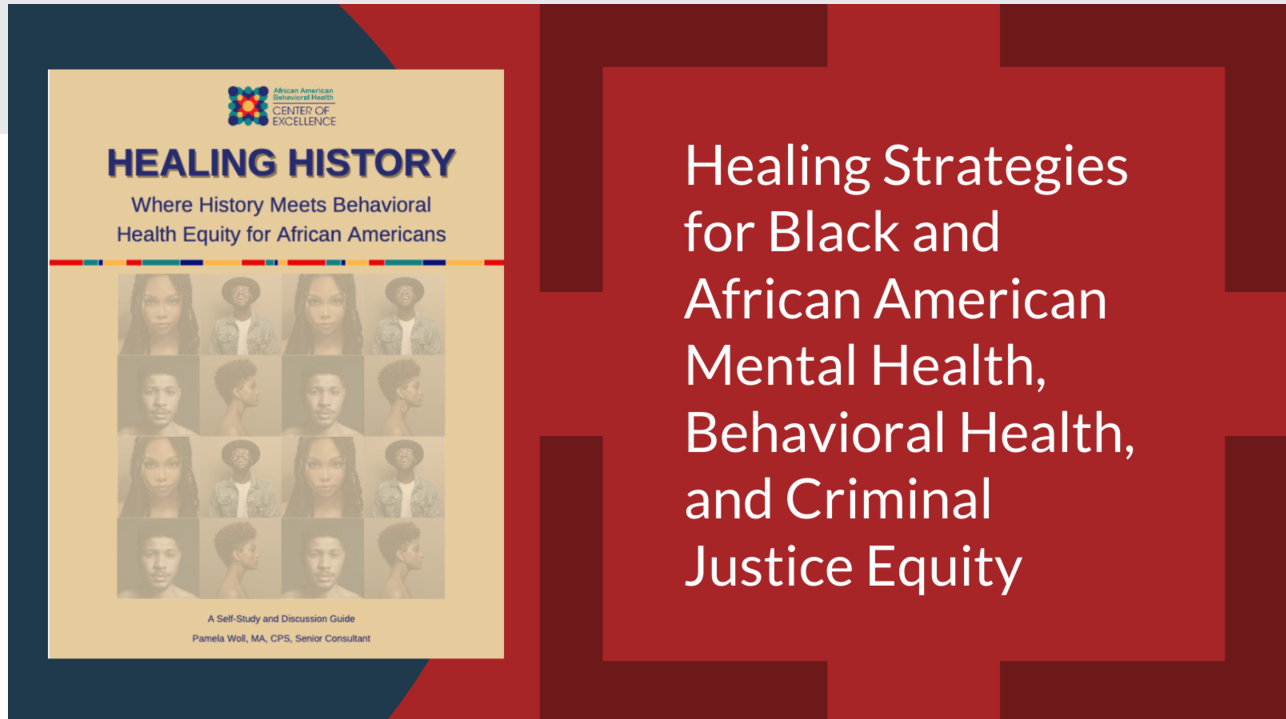


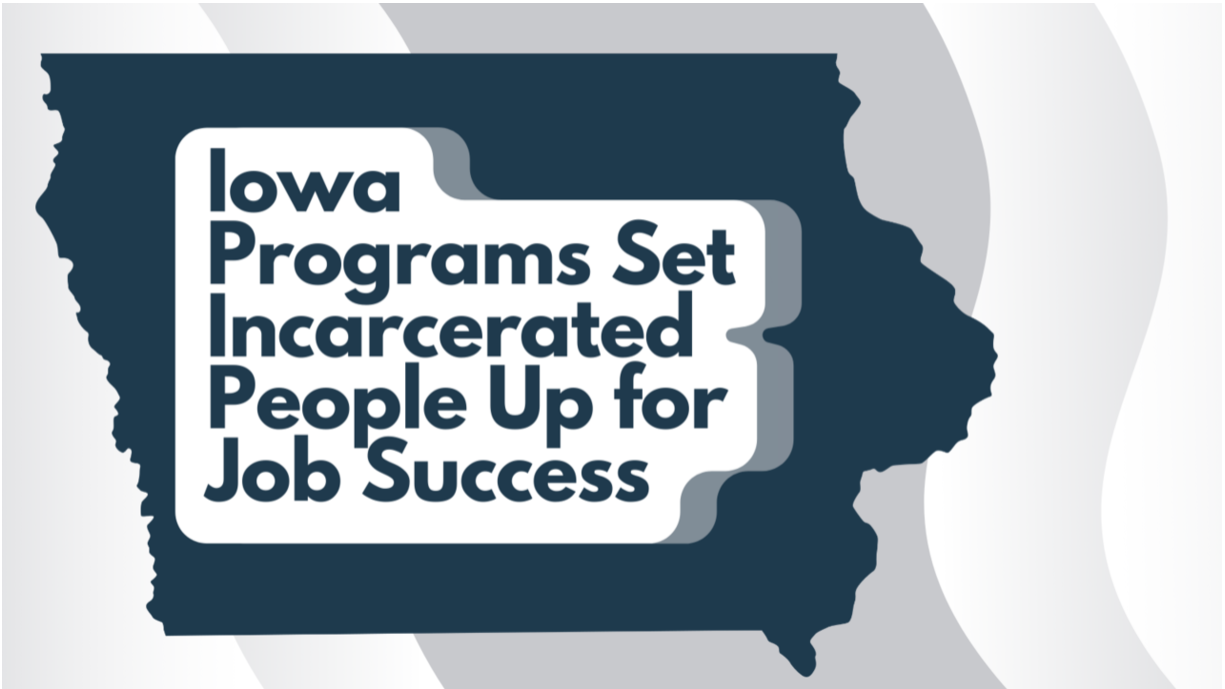
## NEWSLETTER



## Healing Strategies for Black and African American Mental Health, Behavioral Health, and Criminal Justice Equity

### Healing Strategies for Black and African American Mental Health, Behavioral Health, and Criminal Justice Equity

In 2020, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) established the African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (AABH-CoE) to transform behavioral health services for Black and African American people and make those services safer, more effective, more accessible, more inclusive, more welcoming, more engaging, and more culturally appropriate and responsive. The AABH-CoE, hosted by the Morehouse School of Medicine, is tasked with providing training and technical assistance to help communities address inequities that disproportionately affect individuals from the Black and African American community, including disparities in mental health, behavioral health, and justice system involvement; unequal access to treatment or culturally competent trauma-informed providers; and overrepresentation of Black Americans in carceral settings and a higher rate of incarceration and harsher sentencing experienced by Black Americans compared to individuals from other racial groups.



## Iowa Programs Set Incarcerated People Up for Job Success

Gainful, stable employment is a protective factor for individuals reentering the community after incarceration, providing them with a financial means to support themselves and a sense of responsibility and accountability. This may be especially true for individuals in recovery from mental or substance use disorders, as "purpose"—participating in meaningful daily activities—is one of the four major dimensions of recovery. Employment can also support the other three dimensions of recovery: "community," which can be gained through being part of a workplace; and "health" and "home," which can be supported and enabled with the income and benefits one gains from stable employment.

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# Q&A with LEA WETZEL

Certified Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist and Trainer, Advocate, and Expert on Human Trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People



## Q&A with Lea Wetzel, Certified Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist and Trainer, Advocate, and Expert on Human Trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

*Lea Wetzel, Poonoakki (Elk Woman), is from the Blackfoot Confederacy and is a member of the Amskapi Piikani band. She has held many roles across the state of Montana, where she has worked to strengthen support systems and cultural connections for survivors of human trafficking. Ms. Wetzel was a member of the leadership team at Big Sky MMIP and with human trafficking initiatives across the state. She works with the Montana attorney general, the Montana Department of Justice, and many grassroots organizations. Ms. Wetzel is the technical assistant and liaison for Montana's Peer Network. She is a master trainer in cultural humility and a certified trainer for SAMHSA's GAINS Center's How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice Responses.*

**You were the drop-in center coordinator for Montana's Peer Network and served as the director of Big Sky MMIP, which plays a crucial role in addressing human trafficking and missing or murdered Indigenous people. What pivotal personal or professional moments led you to this work?**

What led me here is my passion and my own lived experience. I came to this work with intergenerational and historical trauma. I am a survivor of human trafficking, and I am part of the sixth generation healing from the effects of residential school. I claim the movement of "intergenerational healing." When we heal ourselves, we heal seven generations: three generations back, three forward, and ourselves.

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## Upcoming Partner Events

### **National Sobering Collaborative**

#### Sobering Care Providers Network: Peer Support in Sobering Care

*March 1, 2024, 1:00–2:00 p.m. ET*

The event from the National Sobering Collaborative targets professionals in sobering care and peer support, along with those interested in recovery and mental health services, highlighting strategies for using lived experience to enhance services for individuals and communities. This session focuses on the role of peer support in improving the effectiveness of sobering centers, specifically examining Exodus Recovery's approach in Los Angeles, California. It will address how integrating individuals with personal experience in substance misuse benefits people receiving care.

### **The National Association of Reentry Professionals, Inc.**

#### Reentry 2024: “Wholistic” Approach to Reentry Conference

*April 14–17, 2024; Franklin, Tennessee*

The Reentry 2024 Conference, hosted by The National Association of Reentry Professionals, Inc., focuses on innovative approaches to reentry, featuring discussions on entrepreneurship, juvenile justice, Veterans' programs, and recovery journeys. The event includes interactive reentry simulations, panel discussions with Veterans justice coordinators, and breakout sessions covering a wide range of topics aimed at improving outcomes for individuals transitioning from incarceration.

### **Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network**

#### Social Determinants of Health and Interconnected Landscape of Holistic Health

*April 25, 2024, 9:00–10:30 a.m. ET*

This 90-minute webinar focuses on the various determinants of health, including biological, social, environmental, and political factors. It is designed for professionals in health care, public policy, and social services, aiming to enhance understanding of how these determinants influence health outcomes. The session will cover innovative interventions like social prescribing and CARE Court and discuss the importance of advocacy and a trauma-informed approach in addressing health disparities. Attendees will receive actionable insights into improving health strategies and a certificate of attendance, underscoring their participation and commitment to health improvement efforts.

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## Resource Spotlight

- [Bureau of Justice Assistance's FY24 Adult Treatment Court Grant Program](#)
- [SAMHSA's Grants to Expand Substance Use Disorder Treatment Capacity in Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts](#)



SAMHSA's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

**SAMHSA**  
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