



The Challenge Correctional Systems Face

Among people with serious mental illness involved with the criminal legal system, lifetime trauma exposure is nearly universal (Policy Research Associates, 2011). However, criminal legal system professionals are often not trained to recognize trauma's effects—and without that understanding, even routine interactions can escalate, leading to retraumatization, additional charges, or worse outcomes for everyone involved.

Changing that reality requires more than awareness. It requires a trained, prepared workforce, and a system built to sustain that preparation over time.

Pennsylvania's Story: What the Right Partnership Can Build

PRA's partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) began in 2015 with a single *How Being Trauma Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses* Train-the-Trainer session, led by PRA's Chanson Noether and Travis Parker. That first engagement delivered what every PRA partnership delivers from day one: expert facilitation, a curriculum grounded in peer-reviewed research, and a team invested in transforming their local system.

Bring a Training to Your Community

Build Your Trauma-Informed Response Capacity

We partner with agencies and communities seeking to make their systems more trauma informed through three offerings:

- [Train-the-trainer event for experienced trainers](#) (2-day program)
- [Training delivery for criminal legal professionals](#) (4-hour training)
- [Training delivery for court professionals](#) (2-hour training)

What You'll Learn

- Understand trauma and its impact
- Recognize trauma-driven behaviors
- Develop trauma-informed responses
- Apply trauma-informed responses

Our research-backed offerings help you reimagine care and system collaboration. Working with the [Systems Mapping and Training Center at Policy Research](#), communities can build trauma-informed systems that scale and promote safety.

Last Chance to Register for AOT in Practice: Building, Measuring, and Sustaining Programs That Work

June 23, 2026, 2:00–3:30 p.m. ET

Join us to learn what it takes to build, measure, and continuously improve an assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) program operating in the real world. This webinar features a practitioner-researcher panel, including a first-person account from a former AOT participant and perspectives from law enforcement. Presenters will discuss:

- Mapping your system
- Differentiating AOT and assertive community treatment (ACT)
- Hiring and retaining the right people
- Counting the right things, and counting everyone
- Measuring the legal and clinical dose
- Treating lived experience as evidence
- Using your data for continuous improvement

AOT in Practice: Building, Measuring, and Sustaining Programs That Work

June 23, 2026, 2:00–3:30 p.m. ET



- Counting the costs and naming who pays and who benefits

Register Now

New Book Chapter Outlines How PRA Uses Research and Practice to Design Sustainable Behavioral Health Solutions

New Publication

"Policy Research and Education Services: The Policy Research Associates (PRA) Approach" in *The Path Forward*



How does PRA combine research and technical assistance to help communities design practical, sustainable behavioral health solutions? A new chapter in *The Path Forward: Psychological Services in the Community with Justice-Involved Individuals and to Forensic Systems*, edited by Kirk Heilbrun and David DeMatteo, answers that question. The new book highlights exemplary projects and services in forensic and correctional psychology.

"Policy Research and Education Services: The Policy Research Associates (PRA) Approach" shares how PRA designs and delivers policy research and technical assistance services to communities nationwide. The chapter highlights signature PRA services, including Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Workshops, learning collaboratives, multisite evaluations, and national TA centers.

What readers gain: The chapter provides a behind-the-scenes look at how PRA builds its projects, how sustainability is a cornerstone feature of PRA's services, and how PRA embeds its national expertise and community focus into every phase of the work. It gives communities the context and approach that has driven PRA's success for nearly 40 years.

The chapter was authored by President and CEO Sarah Desmarais, PhD; Vice President of Research and Evaluation Elan Hope, PhD; Communications Director Holley Davis; and Senior Research Associate Shannon Bader, PhD. *The Path Forward* was published by Oxford University Press.

Learn More About the Book

Connect With a PRA Expert This Summer

JULY



- **NACO Annual Conference and Exposition** | New Orleans
- **RISE26** | Nashville

AUGUST



- **CIT International Conference** | Orlando
- **NIGP Forum** | Columbus

This summer, PRA experts are sharing practical solutions to strengthen behavioral health systems by presenting and exhibiting at conferences. See which events we'll be attending, and connect with us in person.

At the [NACO Annual Conference and Exposition](#) (July 17-20, New Orleans, LA), Senior Project Associate Lisa Maye, MSW, will highlight our [Systems Mapping and Training Center](#) offerings, and Marc Stern, MD, will highlight PRA's [Correctional Healthcare Toolkit RFP](#), designed to help correctional facilities improve their sourcing and evaluation of healthcare services.

At [RISE26](#) (July 20–23, Nashville, TN), Travis Parker, MS, LIMHP, CPC, will highlight our SMTC offerings in the exhibitor hall. Senior Project Associate Violette Cloud, JD, PhD, Senior Project Associate Melissa Neal Stein, DrPH, and Chanson Noether, MA, will present the following sessions with support from SAMHSA's GAINS Center:

- *Managing Agitation and Symptoms of Mental Illness from the Bench*
- *Treatment Courts and Competence to Stand Trial: Opportunities for Integration*
- *From Surviving to Thriving: Solving the Challenge of Low Graduation Rates*
- *Supporting the Uptake of Medication for Opioid Use Disorders in Treatment Court Settings*
- *Roles, Boundaries, and Ethical Responsibilities of Treatment Court Team Members*
- *Guiding Principles and Recommendations for Trauma-Responsive Treatment Courts*

At the [CIT International Conference](#) (August 10–12, Orlando, FL), Travis Parker, MS, LIMHP, CPC, and Funding Resources Advisor Sara Partyka will highlight our SMTC offerings in the exhibitor hall. Chanson Noether, MA, Travis Parker, MS, LIMHP, CPC, and Kristin Sauerbier, LCSW, will present the following sessions:

- *Wanna be a Millionaire? Tools and Tips for Developing Sustainable Funding Streams*
- *From Policy to Police to Prison to Practicality*
- *CRISIS: Crisis Responder Intervention Skills and Instructional Standards*

At the [NIGP Forum](#) (August 23–26, Columbus, OH), Marc Stern, MD, will highlight PRA's [Correctional Healthcare Toolkit RFP](#).

Bring PRA's Evaluation Expertise to Your Next Application

Applying for a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

notice of funding opportunity and need an evaluator? **Partner with PRA!** Our evaluation team brings the behavioral health program evaluation expertise and systems knowledge that these applications require. Upcoming SAMHSA opportunities include the following:

- [Adult Suicide Prevention](#) (due July 6): Build and strengthen community infrastructure and readiness to support early intervention, community-led suicide prevention, and resiliency efforts for adults who are at risk for suicide.
- [Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Team Partnerships](#) (due July 15): Establish new, or enhance existing mobile crisis teams that serve children, youth, and adults experiencing mental health or substance use crises.
- [Behavioral Health Partnerships for Early Diversion of Adults and Youth](#) (due July 15): Develop and implement a program to divert youth and/or adults with mental health or co-occurring disorders who are at risk of criminal and/or juvenile justice involvement to community-based services before arrest or booking.

Want to learn more about bringing PRA on as an evaluation partner? [Contact our Research and Evaluation team](#) to discuss how partnering with PRA can help you achieve your programmatic goals.

PRA leads the nation in driving sustainable, impactful change for people with behavioral health conditions. Ready to transform your community? [Contact us!](#)

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

433 River St Suite 1005
Troy, NY | 12180 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.