

## Effective Practices: Removing Barriers to a Successful Reentry Transcript

Simon Gonsoulin:

Welcome from the Corrections and Community Engagement, Technical Assistance Center that is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and is housed at the American Institutes for Research. This webinar will be recorded. It'll be entered onto the National Reentry Resource Center's website following this event so that others who were unable to attend could in fact view the video and the recording of the webinar. Any participant who would prefer to participate only by audio should do so. Make sure your video cameras are off because that would be captured as part of the recording.

Simon Gonsoulin:

To give you a little information about the American Institute for Research. It's a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance. The technical assistance is always a relationship-based technical assistance approach. And we partner with peer organizations to strengthen our TA approaches. And as I mentioned a little earlier, we make up the Corrections and Community Engagement Technical Assistance Center.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Joining me today are five grantees, five current second chance act grantees. And these are model grantee programs that will share with you a little information about their program as we introduce 14 practices that we feel are critical to reentry success. Joining me is Crystal Speer, who is the Program Director of the Kansas Department of Corrections. Rhett Covington, who's the Assistant Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Erica Jaramillo, who's the Director of Programs and Family Pathways out of the State of Texas. Kristin Tiedeman, who is the Program Manager for Mountain Comprehensive Care Center there in Kentucky. And Gunner Johnson, who is the Reentry Manager for Insight Garden Program and operates in the State of California.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Today we will share 14 effective practices that help to remove barriers leading to successful reentry. These practices will be introduced by me, and our five agencies and community-based organizations will share examples of how they are implementing that particular practice. So, we know there are many, many partners in their reentry approach. We know it cannot be done just by one agency, one community-based organization. We know that there are many releasing agencies such as the departments of corrections, jails.

Simon Gonsoulin:

And so of course, they are very critical in order for reentry to work properly for individuals returning to the community. But we know they need the help. They need the help from community-based organizations, probation, parole agencies, possibly other state, county, local agencies as well. And for sure, we need the returning individuals to be engaged in the process of really looking at what are their goals around reentering, what are the appropriate steps that need to be taken? What are their roles?

Simon Gonsoulin:

Also, their family members, and the family members should be defined by that returning individual to the community. And of course, there are others. And we really like to go to this next slide and ask you a question. So, in the chat, it can be just that simple. Go ahead in the chat, answer this question. With what other partners might you consider establishing and delivering reentry practices?

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, we identified many of them before you on the previous slide, such as community-based organizations, those releasing agencies, probation or parole, the individual, as well as family members. So just feel free to enter in the chat, others that maybe we overlooked in that previous slide or some that you have in fact been very successful in utilizing. Homelessness response services. Wow this is moving so quickly, it's hard for me to even follow it.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Excellent. This is wonderful. Vocational Rehabilitation, super. Education, schools, employment services, education partners, local religious communities. Absolutely the faith-based community, excellent. District attorneys, mental health services, homeless services, reentry grant programs, colleges, managed care organizations. Absolutely this are wonderful suggestions. Public defenders. Hey, you can see that reentry is all about the community. All about all these individuals, all these agencies, all the organizations that you've identified for us. They are in the chat as well as the ones that we shared with you early on the previous couple of slides.

Simon Gonsoulin:

We want to do is just sort of look at the major topics of the 14 different practices right now. We're just going to just touch on them very, very quickly, get into a little more detail shortly and have our grantees tell us about implementation. So, we know that one of the most critical areas are initiatives that need to take place in order for reentry to be successful is to develop that formal reentry plan. Family reintegration, whatever family might be for that individual is critically important to consider. Also, the supports needed by those family members in order for the returning individual to be received appropriately so they can accept the individual back into the home and in a very helpful way.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Technology training. For some people who have been incarcerated for a period of time, technology changes on a daily basis. It's hard for all of us to keep up with it. So, you can imagine individuals who in fact have not had access to some of the technology that we have for a considerable amount of time. The issuing of governmental identification. Oftentimes it stands in the way of employment, housing, so really important to make sure those governmental identification cards, photographs, those sorts of things are in fact in place before the individual leaves the facility. Medicaid and other insurance, healthcare, is a major issue oftentimes for individuals leaving facilities. So, we want to make sure that Medicaid is reactivated or there's other health insurance that they can depend on.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Housing, another critical piece for individuals to ensure that their needs are being met. I mean, this is just sort of a basic need. Connect with community-based partners. You'll see from the work that our community-based partners are providing during today's webinar. You'll see why, how important those community-based providers are. And looking in the chat, your suggestions of others who could play a major role and reentry success. You can see many, many community-based partners or providers were listed there.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Also, medical behavioral health treatment, education, job readiness, and skill development, as well as employment, job placement, transportation, unbelievably important. Supportive adults and extended family are critical to the success. We know that research says that the more supportive adults in the community surrounding the returning individual, the greater the likelihood of success and they connect with community supervision agents. So oftentimes there are those requirements that the individual actually would be in touch with community supervision agent. You want to make sure that they have good quality information and connections before the individual leaves the facility.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, the 14 effective practices that we are going to cover are really looking at those major 14 areas I just shared with you and go into more detail. We suggest s that you take a little time and do some of informal self- assessment as we go through each of these 14. Decide which ones you're implementing effectively, which ones maybe you're implementing in a partial sort of way, or which ones you really are not implementing. It would be interesting to learn a little bit more about, or potentially implement them. All of our presenters today, their contact information is on the final slide of this webinar and the slide deck. And they are open to you contacting them, sharing information with you.

Simon Gonsoulin:

And today they're not just going to talk with you as I am right now. They're going to actually show you via this webinar some of the forms that they use, some of the processes they have in place. And so hopefully what you can do is take these 14 practices ultimately, and you can design maybe a checklist of sorts that you can in fact utilize to sort of check off determining, what are we addressing now? What do we want to address? What do we need to pull together to really improve reentry efforts in our jurisdiction?

Simon Gonsoulin:

But to help you with that, we have developed a resource, the five Second Chance Act grantees who are on the call with me... We've created a resource that is on the NRRCs website, and it's entitled, Checklist of Practices for Effective Reentry. And we would hope you would go to that resource, take a look at it and you can see a write-up of these 14 practices, a short description of what the grantees will be sharing on today's webinar is also identified there so that you can get a better idea of revisiting this information down the line, especially as you might want to share with other colleagues within your organizations or agencies.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Without further delay, we're going to go ahead and take a look at practice one, develop the reentry plan. We know this is critical in order for us to ensure that reentry goals are set, action steps are set, that we know what individuals are going to be responsible for what sort of action, that we know what agencies are engaged, what community partners are engaged, what are the expectations of the returning individual? This is all going to be based on our awareness of needs. So, you want to make sure that when you sit to write this reentry plan initially, it's heavily based on a validated risk needs assessment and some other factors pertaining to the individual.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So ultimately you want this reentry plan to be a roadmap, a roadmap to successful reentry. And of course, in order for that to occur, you want to make sure the substantial input, from the returning individual. So, we have Kansas, Crystal will be joining us from the Department of Corrections in Kansas and Rhett from the Louisiana Department of Corrections will follow her as they talk a little bit about how they implement practice one, developing the reentry plan. Crystal, I'll turn it over to you.

Crystal Speer:

Good afternoon. Well, our grant project targets individuals who spend time in restrictive housing, or what's been known as segregation during the last six months of their incarceration, because we found that those individuals have more high-risk areas, more barriers to reentry and they actually have about a 10% higher recidivism rate in Kansas than the general population releasing to the community. So, we chose to target that population for those reasons. And also, because while they have those higher risk areas, they also have had limited access or more limited access to reentry programming and services in the past. So, we really, really wanted to take our evidence-based practice and the things we were doing with the general population and start to expand those to individuals who are spending time in restrictive housing. So, our program has two components and one of them is that intensive reentry case management plan.

Crystal Speer:

So as soon as individuals are assigned to the program, they start working on that case plan. We have a dedicated position, a reentry case manager whose office is in that restrictive housing unit. And that case manager meets with that individual immediately and they start working on that plan together. And it has very specific goals and action steps that looks at their high-risk areas that have been shown in their risk assessment. We use the LS/CMI in Kansas and also from interviewing, from talking and working with that individual, figuring out what their barriers to reentry are, what their high-risk areas are. And then that reentry case management plan addresses those and comes up with a plan to overcome those barriers and to address those high-risk areas.

Crystal Speer:

And it involves collaboration and cooperation from many different people within the facility. It involves training all staff because we want everyone from security staff to the counselors, to reentry staff. We want everybody on board and train and working with that individual on those goals and action steps. And then when they release to the community, we have community partners that we refer to and they become part of that plan. And so, we just really want a good, solid, comprehensive step-by-step at reentry plan as that individual prepares to release into the community. And while they're working on that, they continue to meet with the case manager at least once a week to work on that plan until they release. And while they're doing that, they're also attending intensive reentry intervention sessions.

Crystal Speer:

And there's a group session where they work in a group on skilled building activities, on skills such as emotional regulation and problem solving and areas such as that we have found to be helpful as people prepare for their release. And in between they have practice work, they do role plays in those group sessions and in those case management sessions, and we just really wanted to create a wraparound approach with lots of different partners and the individual actively involved in that case management process so that we can prepare people for reentry as much as possible. And these are just some pictures of our programming areas in our restrictive housing units. Restrictive housing is an interesting place to hold programs and sessions. And so, we've done some work with that. With that I will turn it over to Rhett from Louisiana.

Rhett Covington:

Hello everyone. So, can you hear me okay because I'm still not showing the next screen?

Simon Gonsoulin:

Yes. Yes, we can hear you, Rhett.

Rhett Covington:

In Louisiana we have about half our population housed in local jails. So, we have eight state prisons, and then we have over 100 local jails across the state that house about half of our population. And that constitutes about 80% of our releases are coming from those local jails, because those tend to be those who have shorter sentences, less serious offenses. They don't have the medical or mental health issues that would need them to be brought into a safe facility. So, we developed a regional approach to put regional reentry centers across the state. And this is just a map on your slide that shows kind of where we have those located.

Rhett Covington:

They're located in major Metropolitan areas for the region where we tend to see most of those folks going back to that region releasing to so that we can get as many of those folks close to home, get them through our regional reentry

program, which consists of 100 hours of pre-release program, which is actually the curriculum that we do, where we look at all the different potential barriers from housing, to transportation, to substance use issues, to their educational plans, et cetera. We develop or we update depending upon what we already have in place, our reentry plan.

Rhett Covington:

And we follow the transition from prison to community model and we have our Reentry Accountability Plan or REAP, as it's called Louisiana. So that plan looks at what they've gotten while they were incarcerated. And of course, we'd all like to be able to say that people come into incarceration and we're able to do everything that we possibly can to repair them. We're able to get them a high school equivalency or diploma were able to get them a college degree. We're going to get them all kinds of resources so forth. But when you're looking at an average length of stay of less than a year in these local jails, there's just not enough times to do that.

Rhett Covington:

So, the plan is what can we do while we have them? How do we get them out with identification, Medicaid cards, a place to stay, a plan of action and connect them to community helpers, the community resources that they so desperately need whenever they get out? And then have a plan that we can then share with our community partners, as well as our probation and parole division, because the vast majority of our folks who release are supervised on parole by the division of probation and parole.

Rhett Covington:

So, our plan includes getting them state identification. I'm going to talk about that a little bit later in the presentation. It includes working with community partners who do in-reach into these regional reentry facilities, meet them before they get out. We have probation and parole come in and provide question and answer sessions and walk through what it's going to be like and what to expect. We try and make sure that there's a plan in place for these folks. In our state facilities, we have a very good process in place to follow someone from the time that they begin their incarceration all the way through release, where we develop that transitional plan, that REAP. And that's where we kind of got the template that we use. We're just moving this out in local jails now. So, there's already a solid plan in place in our state facilities. Our grant, our initiatives, all focus on how we now move this out into those 100 local jails.

Rhett Covington:

So, we've been able to put 23 transition specialists and 38 of those jails. So, they go, and they help folks make that initial plan of what can we do while you're incarcerated? How do we get you to one of these regional reentry centers? When do we do that? Are we going to put you into work release or some other option? And we work with that person to develop a plan of action whenever they get out. So, I know I'm kind of, I'm not going into as much detail, or length of time as Kansas, but she said a lot of the things that I was already going to say. We're definitely wanting to touch base with them on a regular basis. We definitely want to connect as many people to them as we can before they're released so that whenever they get out, they have that plan.

Rhett Covington:

We've recently partnered with our Louisiana 211, which is, I guess, a statewide resource network that any citizen can use, where we are using a program application called Unite Us that actually will let us do electronic referrals. And that's going to be rolled out this year as part of an expansion of our referral process because that lets us get feedback on, did the person show up? Was there a breakthrough or a fall through in them being referred and then following up and picking up the ball when they get out?

Rhett Covington:

We can also share documents back and forth. They can repeat the providers in the community can request information from us. We can then provide that through this platform. So that's going to be a game changer for us. We're moving into the electronic world more and more through our tablet systems that we have throughout the department and through all of our regional reentry partners. So, we partner with local jails, sheriffs, jail wardens from across the state and they're providing the staff the resources and we're reimbursing them. And that includes these computer labs and these tablets. So that helps us get all these things in place.

Simon Gonsoulin:

All right, thanks a lot, Crystal and Rhett. I really appreciate that. So, our second practice we wanted to share with you was to provide legal discharge information. Are there conditions for release? Those are the things that we want to make sure are made very, very clear to the returning individual, to family members, to community organizations, individuals say he's enrolled in a mentoring sort of program, that sort of thing. We want to make sure that individuals are aware of what sort of conditions for release are necessary so we can assist the individual to make sure that they do in fact meet those conditions.

Simon Gonsoulin:

We want to make sure there's an official document that states that the individual has in fact been released on official stationery. And of course, if there are other legal issues or implications that need to be addressed, that all individuals who are working on all organizations that are working with the returning individual, they're aware of those. They can assist them in meeting those demands. So, we're going to turn things back over to Rhett and then to Gunner from Inside Garden, who'll let you know how they're implementing practice number two.

Rhett Covington:

Great, thanks. So, you're able to see, I guess the first page of our reentry accountability plan. And this plan starts with basic information and goes all the way through to goals for week one, week two, week three, week four. So going back to our previous discussion on that comprehensive plan, we want to make sure that all that information is there. And we track whether they got a social security card, whether they got a birth certificate, state ID, et cetera. Our process for releasing someone is that our records in pre-class division actually creates the paperwork to release someone 30 to 45 days before they get out. That is then sent to the facility who then goes over the documentation. They have to sign multiple copies of it. One copy is placed with the person who is releasing.

Rhett Covington:

We call it our transition document envelope. So, it's a big yellow envelope, you'll see a picture of it later on, that we place legal papers inside of so that when we hand the person everything is together in one spot. This is the outside of the document and kind of a checklist for the staff to initial what else is inside it. Want to make sure that all their documents are in one spot so that they don't end up losing them and we are signed off that everything is in here. So that document has to be signed. We also bring in probation and parole beforehand to go over just general conditions of supervision. And we allow them to ask questions to make sure that they fully understand what happens. They're required to report if they have post release supervision, they're required to report within the first 72 hours of release into the probation, parole division, where another copy of those release papers is also sent, and they're required to sign it again and we go over all the conditions from the probation and parole angle.

Rhett Covington:

So, they actually will repeat all the conditions, get them to fully understand what's expected of them, sign them up, start their full case and there's another copy that's then provided to them. So, we have a redundancy built in, so they cannot be released until they get the signed paperwork. That's what actually affects their release. If they don't sign it, then we put down, refuse to sign, and then that's actually put in their folder. So, they still get a copy of it even if they refuse, then whenever they get out, they got to go over it again.

Rhett Covington:

So, we have redundancy built into the system and this transition document, envelope was our attempt to try and capture all these important documents in one location because we were having them just all over the place. Sometimes they would have their release papers and not their ID. Sometimes they'd have their ID, not their release papers. So, if they lose them, they're probably going to lose them all. So hopefully that has helped us have a better track record of having them continue to use them whenever they get out. That's concludes my report. I think we'll turn it over to our Inside Garden.

Gunner Johnson:

Thank you, Rhett. My name's Gunner with Inside Garden program, a brief overview of our program. We conduct a 48-week curriculum inside 10 adult correctional institute.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:25:04]

Gunner Johnson:

The 48-week curriculum inside 10 adult correctional institutions within California. We're in seven male institutions and all three female institutions. As far as reentry support, the last 12 weeks is really focused on reentry preparation. We go through resume building, support for securing housing, connecting with needed services, Medicare, Medi-Cal and a lot of systems navigation work.

Gunner Johnson:

And so, I want to turn it over to one of our alumni, former participants. We also have a reentry model that is all of our reentry coordinators are formerly incarcerated. So, we really lean on our own experience in reentry to help others navigate that space. So, I'd like to turn it over to Jamala Taylor, one of our reentry coordinators for LA.

Jamala Taylor:

Good morning, Jamala Taylor, IGP, understanding special conditions of parole. This is an incredible challenge and barrier to reentry due to the lack of information and communication. Many of our participants have been incarcerated. Sometimes that incarceration actually predates special conditions and laws regarding two specific groups.

Jamala Taylor:

One of these is who is required to sign up on the 290 Registration List which are sex offenders and arsons are also required to register as well. So many of the people getting out who were convicted in the early 90s, 80s, 70s, their crimes actually predated those laws. So, when they do get out, they actually get a piece of paper outlining their special conditions. The whole time preparing for release thinking they're simply on parole and there are no special conditions that are tailored to one, the offense and two, the specifics of the offense.

Jamala Taylor:

For instance, you may have somebody who can't go to the mall or can't go to church without having the pastor at the church contact his parole officer. Somebody who can't go to any private residence without having the owner of that residence contact parole. Somebody who can't go to a park.

Jamala Taylor:

And this impacts every aspect of their life beginning with housing. You have different levels of special conditions. Some can be within distance to parks or malls and that kind of thing, others cannot. If you're ordered to go to transitional housing and that transitional house happens to be within two to three miles of a school or a park, guess what? You can't go. That could be the difference between you having housing or being homeless.

Jamala Taylor:

I think the greatest shock is within 24 hours of release you're going to get a knock on your door wherever you are, and your parole officer is going to ask you to step outside and have a GPS device fixed to your left ankle. I had a good meeting with people who had no idea this was coming.

Jamala Taylor:

From that point on you're told you're going to have a power outlet access to one twice a day. You'll have to be plugged up for one hour to recharge. If you can't, if you're homeless, they encourage those who have that bracelet to spend their time around the parole office. Parole offices are basically in uninhabited parts of the city, and they have parole outlets on the outside where you see people there charging each and every day.

Jamala Taylor:

So, I think one of the remedies for this is communication preparation. This is something we find ourselves doing, explaining the realities of special conditions to people and just how restrictive they can be. And that could be a triggering event because from the outside looking in, they sound, look and feel overwhelming especially when you had absolutely no idea.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thank you very much. All right, so our third practice identified here, welcoming community experience. You want to make sure that, that environment, that experience has been created. I'm sure being released from incarceration is both exhilarating. Yes, a little frightening for the returning individual and it's really through a welcoming atmosphere that the person's really going to get through this.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, we want to make sure that the approach is extremely structured, that is strategic in nature, and this goes back to the reentry plan we've talked about. You've heard from three or four of our grantees already who talked about what are some of the supportive services they put in place in order to assist the returning individual and notice how all of them up to this point have been proactive.

Simon Gonsoulin:

And you'll see that throughout today's presentation that all of the work that the individuals are doing that are on this particular webinar session they really have thought this through, probably through some errors along the way. But they figured out what it is that they needed to do to really remove as many barriers as possible. And so, we want to do is we want to make sure that they... And what their goal is to remove the risk of the person reoffending because in fact there may not be in an atmosphere that is welcoming in nature.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, what I'm going to do is I'm going to turn this over to Kristin from our Northeast Kentucky Reentry Program followed by Gunner from Insight Garden. Kristin, it's all yours.

Kristin Tiedeman:

Hi everybody, I'm Kristin and Simon said I'm the program manager for the Northeast Kentucky Reentry Program. We're a small program, just really quick, in Northeast Kentucky, very rural area. We work out of a regional detention center that houses about 300 individuals. We provide pre-release services for individuals three to six months from the release, which involves substance use treatment groups, mental health counseling, case management, peer support. We do that, both pre-release and post-release. The idea is that we want to be able to walk with them as they prepare and then as they get out helping them to stay out.

Kristin Tiedeman:

So, one of our main objectives is that we do not want the lack of basic needs or human connection to be the reason that a person is not successful that they go back to their old lifestyle. And in order to help make this happen, we focus on building trust and making a strong connection which is done with us spending a lot of time in the jail prior to them getting out, building a strong reentry plan which everybody has talked about before me. The participants have someone they trust to help guide them as they enter into the community.

Kristin Tiedeman:

We're small, we have four people in our program on our staff. So, the individuals who we work with get to know us very well. They feel comfortable, they see us all the time, we're in there. We do groups four days a week, so they get to be very comfortable with us which helps during their pre-release. And then we're at the door when they walk out, we pick them up.

Kristin Tiedeman:

Prior to them getting out though with their reentry plan, we've identified a safe and sober place for them to live. We brought clothes to the jail for them to wear out. We pick them up at the door and from that release time, we bring them to the office, and we begin... Usually, we stop and maybe get them something to eat first. Roll down the windows and let them breathe a little bit.

Kristin Tiedeman:

But we then make it to the office and let them begin some intensive case management which involves providing them with hygiene, clothing, food. We get donations, food baskets, we have bedding. We have basically everything that they need to be okay. They have a safe and sober place where they're going to spend the night close to where they feel connected. Our plan is that we don't want them worrying about how they're going to pay their rent, where they're going to sleep, what they're going to eat.

Kristin Tiedeman:

We want them to worry about making healthy connections in the community. Worry about working on their recovery, transitioning into a life that's free of addictive and criminal behaviors. It's not easy as anybody who works in this field knows.

Kristin Tiedeman:

I'm going to tell really quick a quote from one of our participants which kind of sums up a little bit about our program. And she said, "It really meant a lot that reentry was there to keep me from getting overwhelmed by my new lifestyle. They showed me how to start doing all the adult things I needed to do to build my foundation in my new life, showed me how to live again and provided support for an otherwise scary thing. Best of all, they gave me a plan and guided me through it."

Kristin Tiedeman:

This participant in February she celebrated a year out of jail, and it was her first, that Christmas that she was out, Christmas 2021 was the first one in about six Christmases that she had not been in jail. So now that's just a little bit about how we do it and I'm going to give you Gunner from the Insight Garden Program.

Gunner Johnson:

Thank you, Kristin. So, Insight Garden Program, our reentry team and that sense of community is really an extension of the 48-week curriculum and that community building that we do on the inside. I actually facilitate every Tuesday morning at Mule Creek State Prison. I am also formerly incarcerated.

Gunner Johnson:

So, the CDCR, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has really invested in this credible message or model allowing people with incarceration history to go back in and connect with people prior to release. To let them know through our own lived example that success reentry is possible and we've been able to do that really effectively.

Gunner Johnson:

We go on a rotation to all 10 correctional institutions. We talk to people about reentry, what resources are available, what we've been able to do individually and as a collective within our organization.

Gunner Johnson:

Like Kristin, we also provide transportation to those getting out. A lot of people, especially people that have served long sentences, we have a lot of lifers getting out that, don't have a lot of familial support. So, we're there to provide a gate pickup. We provide our participants with the reentry backpacks full of hygiene and essentials.

Gunner Johnson:

We give them a cell phone. Some of our participants get out, we hand them that cell phone they don't even know how to turn it on. It's like a completely foreign object and similar to my experience when I got out after 18 years in the federal

system. My brother gave me an iPhone and it was basically a \$700 paper weight. I did not know how to turn it on. If you called me, I didn't know how to answer it. So, we often help people learn how to navigate just that phone which as we all know now in this new era of our society, we rely on those phones heavily.

Gunner Johnson:

So, we stop for that welcome home meal. Like Kristin said, that's really important just to let people kind of settle into that space. And during that meal is often when we show people how to navigate their phone, we help people get a new set of clothing, so they don't have to wear their institutional clothing or whatever they're released with. Give them that sense of freedom like it's real.

Gunner Johnson:

And then our support is indefinite. We don't put a timeframe on our reentry support. We have people in our reentry groups that have been coming for five years. They discharge parole and they just come out of a sense of community that we build.

Gunner Johnson:

We also do outings within the community. We go on fishing trips and hikes. Nature is a really big part of our reentering model as a gardening program. So, we try to reconnect people with nature and find that healing space that nature affords us. That's it, thank you.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thanks so much. Our fourth practice, connect with community supervision agents. We talked about at this at the very beginning, has been really critical. Ideally, these connections to community supervision agents would occur in the facility prior to release, make sure that the individual has the contact information readily available and also ensuring there is a clear understanding of the necessary first steps and as far as getting in touch with their community supervision agents.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So just as it was mentioned a little earlier that on day three, you're going to receive a knock at the door. Those expectations need to be shared with the returning individual. And we're going to turn to Crystal with Kansas Department of Corrections, who'll share a little bit about other implementing practice four.

Crystal Speer:

Yes, we try to pull in the community supervision officer as soon as we can into that reentry planning process. For our particular grant project, it's a six month pre-release program. We reach out and make sure there's a parole officer assigned and then we start involving that person in that release planning process. They're involved in the discussion about where the individual's going to live. We look at all of the goals and actions step to their case plan and the parole officers involved in looking at how to address those barriers to reentry, how to help the individual work through those obstacles.

Crystal Speer:

And we do that several different ways depending on what makes the most sense logistically and what works for everybody. It could be through a phone call. It could be through a Zoom call, or a Microsoft Teams call or when possible, the parole officer actually comes into the facility and does in person business with that person.

Crystal Speer:

And we involve whoever needs to be involved in those meetings. It could just be the parole officer and someone from reentry and the resident or it could be we need somebody from behavioral health. It could be we need somebody from medical, we need the unit team counselor. Whoever needs to be involved in those meetings, we involve in those meetings.

Crystal Speer:

And it really helps a lot for the resident to be able to start building that rapport with their parole officer and that connection so they can start to see that parole officer as a resource and the support rather than an adversary.

Crystal Speer:

It gives them the chance to go over all their parole requirements and ask questions and get those questions answered. So, everything is really set out step by step for them, so they're released in the community. They know what the expectations are, they know what that first couple days is going to look like, they know what they're going to have to do to comply with their parole conditions. And they build up that good communication with that parole officer pre-release early on and we found that to be very helpful.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thanks so much. So, the next practice works hands-in-hand with practice three. However, practice five really looks at enhancing the relationships with members of their community and specifically family. However, the returning



individual defines family. It also covers establishing that initial ongoing relationship with the community members who are dedicated to improving outcomes and the life outcomes of individuals returning to the community.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, practice number five, we have Gunner from Insight Garden and Erica from Family Pathways, I'm sorry, from Family Pathfinders, who will share a little bit on how they're implementing practice five with you.

Gunner Johnson:

I'll just turn this over to Jamala to introduce his video for restorative justice and the way we try to reconnect families pre-release.

Jamala Taylor:

Yes, we created this video about three months after I'd been released from prison after serving 31 years. I'm actually a twin, I have a twin sister. That's what I think makes it so interesting. At 18 years old, she went one way to college, and I went another way to prison. And some speaking to some of the damages done and the need to restore it. So, I don't want to go too much into the video.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thanks for the moving video, Jamala. Strongly appreciate you and your sister sharing your story. And we'll turn things over to Erica from Pathfinders.

Erica Jaramillo:

Hello, everyone? Can everyone hear me? Okay, great. Well, I am super excited to be here. I do want to thank Insight Garden; I think that was an exceptional video. I think that it really set the stage for the ins and the outs of family reunification. It's a big lofty term that a lot of the times clients or individuals who are in their journey in reentry here, and they think, "Okay, someone's here to tell me how to do it, when to do it and how to go through the process." So, I really think that was an exceptional video that demonstrated Sean and your family's experience, so I thank you for that.

Erica Jaramillo:

But again, I am actually with Pathfinder so I'm very excited to be here. Our mission is we're committing to providing self-sufficiency, mentoring and financial coaching to help, excuse me, eliminate poverty and move families towards economic stability and self-sufficiency. So, in that we are actually... Our Second Chance Mentoring Program involves wraparound services. So everywhere from mentoring, case management, life skills, financial coaching and family reunification.

Erica Jaramillo:

With this, we actually partner with a few different agencies. So, community supervision and corrections here in Texas, a reentry court, parents and partners of prisoners that helps us facilitate the family reunification as well as the University of North Texas which assists us with the evaluation.

Erica Jaramillo:

So, in that we actually started the family reunification services in 2010 and they included family reunification as a core component pre-release. So, we were actually able to enter the jail with parents and partners of prisoners to facilitate this program presentation in-person and actually provided as pre-release programming from the very beginning.

Erica Jaramillo:

So, this component again is set up as a workshop or a small group instruction where we're able to allow participants and opportunity to learn a little bit about the definition of what family reunification is? What it might mean to them? And it also of course provides the opportunity where participants can take ownership and kind of look back and assess their own situations, where they are now in their relationships with family and/or friends. And also, what goals or where they would like to be in terms of reunifying with their family or even building a new support system.

Erica Jaramillo:

So, in doing so we allow participants to have that opportunity, to have the conversation about evaluating what is safe for them or what reunification might look like and creating an actual covenant or a contract with their family to see what the ins and outs of reunifying with their family, if that feels like a safe move for them.

Erica Jaramillo:

And in that during the workshop we have a breakdown of steps. So, in the first step we're reaffirming the relationship. The second step, we recognize that either actions or time has passed and so we need to repair the relationship. In that we're rebuilding the relationship and talking a little bit about managing of expectations for our client or the client as well as the family. And then of course, looking into what we call prosocial activities. So how can we support you? What support do you need in order to be successful in your transit-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:50:04]

Erica Jaramillo:

...port you, what support do you need in order to be successful in your transition? That in all is the comprehensive approach of family reunification, that we offer pre-release and then of course we offer a post-release as well. If an individual wants to meet one on one to kind of discuss what that covenant or contract looks like with their family.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Alright. Thanks so much, appreciate that, Erica. Alright, and the six practice is to gather government or issued IDs, a major obstacle in securing housing and a job is really not having that proper identification on hand, at the time the individual returns to the community and with us today to share a little bit about how they handle this in different ways, right? But successful in both venues is Crystal and Rhett.

Crystal Speer:

Yes, like it was mentioned, lack of ID is a huge obstacle. One of the biggest obstacles to be able to access necessary services and obtain employment in the community. To help overcome that, we partnered with the Kansas department of revenue and the department of motor vehicles to issue a state IDs and driver's licenses as pre-release while people are still in facility. The way we did that is we have a couple of onsite units at two of our state facilities, where there's an actual working department of motor vehicles units that operates, where people can get their state IDs and driver's licenses and have them in hand when they walk out the door and release to the community. We also have mobile units that travel around to the other facilities that don't have those onsite units. We just schedule those as needed when we have enough people.

Crystal Speer:

And again, those mobile units go out to our state facilities and issue IDs and driver's licenses. Again, people can actually walk out the door and have those in hand when they're released to the community. If we can't do it that way, we can also do it through the mail. We have a mail process that's coordinated through our central office to really make sure that everybody has a birth certificate, a social security card and a driver's license or state ID when they are released to the community.

Crystal Speer:

That's one less thing they have to worry about, and it opens up a lot of doors for being able to access services. We started this particular program in August of 2020, and so far, we've been able to issue about 700 IDs and driver's licenses to our residents. We do have some funding for residents who do not have the ability to pay for that. We have a special fund set aside that helps funds that. If people have restrictions on their driver's license, unpaid fine and fees that are preventing them from getting a valid driver's license. We also try to work with the courts and work with that individual to get those resolved so that they can get that valid driver's license.

Rhett Covington:

Right. Thanks. Well, in Louisiana, as I mentioned, we provide IDs before someone gets out. The way we do that is that in Louisiana, we are very fortunate that we're actually the department of public safety and corrections. Part of the public safety side of our department is the opposite motor vehicles. Through a memorandum understanding, we are now operating in four different locations, and have our own OMV site. We have the machines; we use our staff that have been trained by OMV personnel. They oversee, come out and do audits of our location as if they were going to any one of their other sites. We function and handle that internally for them. We also have funds available to help pay for those who can't afford identification, their state identification, as they go out. This has been in place since 2014 for the four sites.

Rhett Covington:

We've had one, since I believe 2010, we had one site here at headquarters. We also do a lot of this by mail, so we can do virtual, we take the pictures on site, send them in and are able to put them into the system that way. Our process, when someone comes into incarceration or for the first time, they're touched by a DOC worker, if they're in a local jail, we try to get this, the birth certificate and a social security replacement card. If we don't already have that, that we would have the primary documentation needed to get those estate IDs, which is so important. In order to get the social security cards, we have a memorandum of understanding with the social security administration to provide replacement cards. This gives us the ability to request them and get them. The only thing that they will not allow us to do, which we've tried on numerous occasions to get is to verify other state agencies can, the numbers.

Rhett Covington:

We have to guess, if the person gives us their best understanding of what that is, and it's amazing how often people don't know their social security number or give us a fake one. Then we have a problem getting the social security card. If we can't do that, then we have the delays getting that state ID. We also have a ability to do replacement driver's licenses. We also have a process in place where we can provide through legislation that was passed a couple of years ago, provisional driver's license. If someone gets out and they have fines, fees, et cetera, they don't allow them to get

their driver's license. They can then renew their driver's licenses by setting up a payment plan, and they're given a provisional license for a year. That way they can get back to work and be able to have transportation to work, and as long as they keep their payment plan straight, they're able to keep that license. It becomes permanent after a year, if they stay stable with their payments.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay. Practice seven, connect with service providers in the community. Obviously, many of the individuals on this call, both presenters and individuals who have joined, are in fact involved in being a service provider to returning individuals so we're glad you've joined this call and you've been exchanging ideas in the chat, which is always a good thing to do. But you know, when you look at practice number seven, we know that many individuals have to engage with and be connected to those community providers. Ideally, the service providers have been actively engaged in delivering prerelease services prior to the individual returning to the community. We want to make sure that those services continue once the individual is in the community. We have Inside Garden who will share a little information about how they implement practice seven, as well as family Pathfinders.

Gunner Johnson:

At IGP we really start the reentry preparation once somebody becomes involved in our class. Sometimes those participants may have an indeterminate life sentence, meaning that they'll eventually have to go to parole board to be found suitable for release. We'll advocate for their release, just as using Jamal's case as an example, he actually had to go before the full panel, the parole board, we gave testimony on his behalf, myself and our deputy director. We advocate, we really start the preparation process prior to someone's release, a year prior, maybe even a couple years prior, and to find out what county they're going to, what their immediate goals are. We send in a, not just a needs base assessment, but a goals-based assessment. We want people to have some sense of agency. If they want educational goals, workforce development goals, and we built out a list of community collaborators throughout different counties of the state, and it's an ever-growing list.

Gunner Johnson:

Sometimes some of those organizations fold or whatever, and we have to, so it's always, it takes work to constantly edit it and make sure that when people go to whatever county they're going to, say, a remote county in the Northern part of the state or Eastern part of the state, we got to make sure there's resources available beyond what we can offer.

Gunner Johnson:

This outlines our reentry trend or process from start to finish. When somebody's incarcerated, we have collected call lines, they can contact us in California. They can also send us emails. We send in the transition forms. We connect with their family members. We connect with, if they want to go to school, we'll connect them with the project rebound. This is an example, the third picture is an example of what's inside one of their reentry kits, including the prepaid cell phone. Then we connect with a lot of workforce development organizations on the outside and try to lean into that and find, not just employment, but something that is career-based employment, something that offers retirement offers, paid vacations. It's something that could give someone a long-term goal-oriented workforce development plan.

Jamala Taylor:

Then the systems' navigation component, where that's probably at the core of the first few days and weeks is really connecting people to services, whether it be medical or getting those documents, we could have the Louisiana and Kansas program out here, how much better off we would be. Right now, we probably spend the first two to three months of transitional housing, which is only six months of free living, really running down documents. As you said, you'd be surprised at how many people don't have a birth certificate, don't know their social security number, so we're really starting from scratch, but we've developed a little skill at it. We're getting better and we are effective in doing it, delivering that service. Simon?

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay, Erica, I turn it over to you with Pathfinders. Erica. Erica Jaramillo:

I was getting excited and just going into it. Okay. Can everyone hear me? Awesome. So, with Pathfinders, we actually partner with various nonprofits in the community. We are located in Tarrant County in Texas, to provide basic needs. That could be anything from clothing, food, hygiene, substance support groups, housing, second chance housing specifically, mental health, and second chance employers. Our goal is to be able to provide a referral pipeline to our clients, to be able to counsel any concerns that they might have and facilitate that connection with any community resources that can provide, whether it's the basic needs, or even if it's something more specific such as counseling needs.

Erica Jaramillo:

In that pipeline referral process, we actually sit and meet with participants prerelease. We do this as part of our reentry planning, I aim to do it about twice or three times a month in allowing the participants to be active in their reentry

planning to create the reentry resource packet. In that packet, we're looking at individualized resources and needs that a participant might have, or that voices concerns for, and to be able to plan accordingly with any additional probationary or reporting requirements, excuse me, that they might have. This might include thrift store referrals, medical and dental referrals, critical documents are huge and very, very important. Definitely the facilitation of contacting DPS to try and schedule that appointment. Our goal is to walk alongside our clients and to encourage them, empower them, to be able to voice any concerns or any goals that they might even have personally, professionally or in their education that they want to pursue as their transitioning in their reentry.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thanks. Many individuals who are incarcerated have furthered their education during the time of incarceration. We want to make sure that as we look at every reentry plan and the work that's occurring at the time of release that there is an education plan, that's a component of the reentry plan. We want to make sure that the momentum gained through their educational accomplishments continued right upon release. We want to make sure we gather both educational attainment prior to incarceration, any sort of training or additional education could be a GED, could be college course credit. We want to make sure we gather that information as we really look at a pathway for educational success upon the individual's return to the community. Inside Garden hunter, Gunner will go ahead and share with you a little information about their education opportunities for returning individuals.

Gunner Johnson:

Yeah, we partner directly an Inside Garden program with project rebound, which is a college ed equity program throughout the California state university system. Any participant that has started their educational journey while incarcerated, and to be clear, second chance Pell has opened up a lot of educational opportunities inside, but mostly that caps out at the associate's degree. Somebody wants to go on to a four-year degree or onto graduate school. We'll support them and help them pre-enroll at a California state university, we'll get their transcripts, we'll do a transcript evaluation and academic advising and help them really have that continuity in their education. They're not working on a second or a third associate degree, they go right from the AA on to a four-year degree. And in my case, I'm wrapping up a master's degree on my fifth year out.

Gunner Johnson:

It's been really a remarkable partnership. People, once they hit campus, it's really interesting, there's a lot of support in project rebound, as an example at Sacramento state university, where I also work, we have roughly 70 to 80 students on campus. We really have a great sense of community. There are also additional housing opportunities once somebody is an enrolled student. Continued educational opportunities key, and the stats really play that out. If someone gets an associate's degree, it roughly cuts recidivism up to 15%, a four-year degree, it's like two percent, a graduates degree, it's not existent. We really try to lean into that space. Like I said though, it really depends on someone's goals. We're not trying to make decisions for anyone, but if somebody puts in their transition form that they really have these higher education goals, we'll give them all the support that they need to get their financial aid in order right before release. There really is that continuity with their educational goals.

Jamala Taylor:

Yeah. I'm actually a byproduct of that system as well. The collaboration between Project Rebound and Inside Garden, I'm at Cal State Fullerton majoring in sociology, and without Inside Garden, I don't know that I would be, that's a mentorship. Again, all of the reentry staff are formerly incarcerated and all of us are in college working on a bachelor's, master's doctorate, law, you name it.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay. Just as with educational achievement, many formerly incarcerated individuals have earned work related certifications, licensure prior to release. Either, prior to incarceration or while they were incarcerated. Want to make sure we have all of these documentation for them in one location organized, so that then when they leave the facility, they have this information, they can utilize that information to better obtain a job, continue training that's necessary to really get full certification. Maybe if it's a CTE program that they can in fact, complete that training course upon their return to the community. We'll have Rhett and Gunner who will share a little bit about how they in fact are implementing practice nine, implement work training, and employment plans.

Rhett Covington:

Fantastic. Thank you. We'll start out with the fact that Louisiana currently offers 160 industry-based certification courses for those who were incarcerated, as well as post-secondary degrees through several major institutions. We're very much looking forward to the broadening of the access to Pell and state institutions. But because we have folks in local jails, they're not prohibited from receiving Pell. We're able to get to a lot of our population through that already. Through our return for good campaign, we've done a lot of work trying to reach out to employers. We've revamped our

website to provide a lot of common information about employment of people who've been previously incarcerated, and some of the myths around that and resources that are available such as federal bonding and the workforce opportunity tax credit, so that we can provide that information to them.

Rhett Covington:

We also feature success stories from those who've gotten out, gotten into the workforce, we're creating an archive of those so that we can show five or six of them at a time and have an archive for people to go back and look at even more of those. Because we need to counter that bad rap that people get whenever they come out, that because they have this flag, this Scarlet letter F on their chest for convicted felon, but somehow, they're not as good of an employee or a good candidate than someone else.

Rhett Covington:

We've also through our partnership with ATLO who handles all of our computer tablets and so forth in Louisiana, they created a workforce portal that allows us almost like indeed.com to connect with employers before someone gets out. An incarcerated person can speak with someone who is an employer, and they can share information, even do a virtual interview.

Rhett Covington:

We're also participating on April 27th for second chance month. Our second virtual job fair, where folks who are incarcerated will actually be interviewing with employers in the area they're going back too. The last one we were able to only get two people with actual job offers. Many others got some great opportunities for where they should go to apply for work, but we had a lot of technical issues. The first one was proof of concept, how do we do it? Couple locations, get it done. Now we're expanding it to more locations and so, we're looking forward to this one is going to be much more productive and getting folks into the workforce as they released. Instead of having to get out and start your job search, you're getting out and going straight to work. Again, with those identifications, et cetera, that's another leg up for these folks as they leave. It's very important.

Gunner Johnson:

Yeah, that's great work, Brett. You guys are really ahead of the curve on really getting people prepared with IDs and workforce development. And part of our curriculum is really landscape design and development. A handful of our participants gotten out and actually started their own businesses. And then they themselves have taken on other participants when they got out, its workers. We really try to connect with PTE, which is prison through employment here in California. It is union trades, a lot of jobs that, like I said, will provide retirement, vacation time and a living wage, which is really important. Also, what's important is that internships be paid. A lot of our participants when they get out, they have six months of free housing. And if they don't save some money in that space, that transition to their own place, isn't going to be viable.

Gunner Johnson:

We have to find internships that offer a stipend so people can save money to get their first and last month's rent when they do transition out of that six months, transitional housing program that is offered to their state. We do connect with a lot of different organizations that do this great work we find. Again, it's county by county. We're in 10 different correctional institutions. We have people releasing the Humboldt County down to San Diego and everywhere in between and throughout the state of California. We have to find, placement in the different counties and some are really bear with resources, some are abundant. It's really up to us to connect the dots for our participants before they get out, so they can make that smooth transition like [inaudible 01:10:41]. It's really amazing work. You're muted Simon.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Sorry about that. Practice ten is to provide safe and supportive housing for individuals returning to the community. This is of course a basic need for all of us to have safe housing in order for us to meet the demands of daily living. Housing needs for individuals returning to the community are clearly housing needs that can vary from, they may own their own home, all the way to supportive housing. That's so necessary in order for the individual to be successful as they address reentry goals. Joining us today, who'll talk a little bit about this will be the Kansas department of corrections and Christian from the Northeast Kentucky reentry program.

Crystal Spear:

Yes, of course. If people don't have stable safe housing, it's hard to worry about anything else on your reentry plan. That's such a basic need that everybody has before anything else can be addressed. We have a couple practices in place to try to help with that. We have master lease contracts with landlords around the state. We have those dedicated rental units to use as transitional housing for people as they come out and need them. It is very much designed to be transitional housing, they release to that, so they have somewhere safe to go at release, and then we work on a more permanent housing plan as they move through that. But it is nice to have those master contracts in place so we know we

have those transitional units we can use when we need them. We also have some voucher funds set aside that we can use in some of the less populated areas of the state.

Crystal Speer:

We tend to concentrate the master leases in the more urban areas where more people are released to because it's easier to do that, but we have people released all over the state, of course. For those less populated areas, we use voucher funds that can be used to pay rent, deposits, utilities, furnishings, all of those things you need when you initially move in somewhere. We have both of those and place to help people obtain housing. And again, as we're working through that, we're working on a more permanent housing plan for those people as well.

Kristin Tiedeman:

Thank you, Crystal. As Crystal mentioned, housing is a very important part of a person's reentry program and a factor in knowing whether a person's going to be successful or not, if they walk out the door and they don't have a safe and sober place to live, the chances of the "I'm doing well" decreased greatly. That is a huge part of our reentry plan when working with our participants. Where they go depends upon the participants needs, diagnosis and willingness. Our program is a total voluntary program. Although we can make suggestions of what we think they should do does not necessarily mean that's what they're going to agree to do, but there's, there are several options that a participant can do, which range from resident going into residential treatment, upon their release and then into a sober living or transitional type housing, or just going into sober living or returning to their home or family member's home.

Kristin Tiedeman:

We assist with moving fees. We assist with bedding. We connect them with, we live in a community that is very every second chance and recovery friendly. We're so lucky to have a lot of resources that help individuals who are getting out of jail or getting out of treatment centers. We can get the first month's rent paid; we get utilities paid. There's a lot of help out there which is huge for our participants because generally speaking, they're looking at six weeks before. Even if they get a job right away, they're looking at a while before they're going to have a paycheck. What we don't want is them worrying about how am I going to pay my rent? How am I going to pay my utility?

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:15:04]

Kristin Tiedeman:

and start thinking of not unhealthy ways to get that funding? That's all.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Great. Thanks. Thanks, Kristin. Appreciate that. Whether returning to an urban area or rural area, the country transportation is critical to the reentry success for the individual return to the community, and as we have learned in the last two or three months, extremely expensive. So, we have two grantees. So, we'll tell you a little bit about how they handle transportation. And we'll start with Kristin. We'll pick it up with Kristin again, with Northeast Kentucky Reentry Program followed by Insight Garden.

Kristin Tiedeman:

So, as I had mentioned earlier, we live in a very rural community and transportation is a huge barrier for our participants. There aren't subways. We have a bus system in our little town, but it's extremely complicated for being a small town and not the most user friendly. So, one of the things that we do is we provide transportation. As I mentioned earlier, we pick them up at the... we meet them when they get released, but we are also every... The first week that they're with us or the first week that they're out of jail, they're in our office every day, doing whatever needs to be done. And during that... to get here, we pick them up, we take them home, we get them to all of their doctor's appointments. When they start work, we take them to work and pick them up. When they need to go grocery store, we take them to the grocery store. We do this until they can build a support system that will help them with rides so that they can start carpooling. And if they're living in sober living so that they can...

Kristin Tiedeman:

There are other people in the house that are going to the store or that are working at the same place. We provide bus passes and gas cards for active participants who are doing that as they're coming to group and doing the things that are expected of them. We have had, like I mentioned that the bus system can be intimidating. And so, in the past, we've had our peer support will take the bus with the participant a couple of times, just to help them get comfortable. Many of our participants, because it is so rural... the riding a bus is not something they are familiar with ... they've never done it before. And even though they may only have one or two stops that they have to change at, it can be overwhelming and just not worth doing for them. And we stay with them until they get comfortable. And now I'm going to let you... Insight Garden.

Gunner Johnson:

Thank you, Kristin. Like Kristin, we already highlighted that we do provide transportation on the day of release, which

is so critical that people coming home are greeted by a friendly face by someone that's already built that rapport with them. When they get to transitional housing, we can also provide bus passes, vouchers. We are afforded around \$600 annually per participant Reentry Rapid Response Funding. We've also paid DMV fees for someone that may have to reinstate their driver's license and owes money to the DMV. So, we really support people with that and understand that transportation is vital. And like Kristin pointed out, some of our participants that are releasing on parole are not allowed back to the city or the county where they fell out of because there's some restriction on going back to that county. So, they're sent to some place they may be totally unfamiliar with and navigating the bus system in a community that they're not familiar with is very difficult.

Gunner Johnson:

So, we're able to help them navigate that, get comfortable with them. We can pull up maps on online, if they're not comfortable with doing that and really help people find their way around. It is a struggle. I have someone that released from the youth facility where we used to have a program before that institution closed. We got him a mountain bike when he got out. I've offered to let him use my car when he does his driving to pass. I hope he does really well. So anyway, he's really a great kid and he's doing really well. He did his written test, so he's going to make the appointment to do the driving test. I don't suggest everybody loan their car to someone to do their driving test, but he is a youth that's local and he has done exceptionally well since he has been out.

Simon Gonsoulin:

We're going to practice 12. We know that many individuals returning from incarceration have struggled with substance use concerns, mental health issues, physical or medical health concerns as well. We want to make sure that their appointments are made prior to lease from the facilities. They leave with the appropriate amount of medication to get them through for the next appointment or the prescription for medication refills, as they are released to the community and Kansas, Louisiana and Northeast Kentucky Reentry Program will share a little bit of information about how they, in fact, implement practice 12. And we need for you to move through this pretty quickly, guys. Sorry about that.

Crystal Speer:

Of course. So, we have discharge planner positions in our facilities and all of our reentry departments, and their primary responsibility is to coordinate all of that. They help people complete and submit benefits, applications. They schedule post-release behavioral health and medical appointments. If people need assisted living or nursing homes, they help secure those placements. Everybody releases from our facilities with a 30-day supply of medication and an appointment for medication management in the community to make sure that they don't skip any of that. There's no gap. There's that continuum. So those discharge planners are responsible for that and making sure that continuum of care happens between facility and community.

Crystal Speer:

On the substance abuse side, we The University of Cincinnati Substance Use curriculum. We offer that in all of our facilities, as well as aftercare. Everybody receives a pre-release drug and alcohol assessment to determine what they need, what services, interventions, level of treatment they need in the community. And then that treatment is set up in whatever community they're releasing to. We make sure they have an appointment to start that treatment as soon as they release so they don't have that gap in services. We also offer medication assisted treatment and facility. And when we do that, one of the requirements of that is that has to be set up in the community when they release as well, to make sure that if they're getting that in the facility, it's going to continue in the community.

Rhett Covington:

So, in Louisiana, we do similar protocols throughout the DOC system. Those who need follow up medical, mental health, or substance use treatment or community based follow up, we'll make those referrals through our healthcare discharge summary that we get appropriate release the information signed so that we not only can provide this information to the clinics that are in the community, but also to probation and parole to help make sure and follow up that the person makes those appointments and if not reschedules them. We release folks with 30-days of medication with the exception of some very expensive meds, which may be only 14 days, but we also provide them with refill prescriptions. We've also gone throughout the state to all of our local LGEs, our community healthcare providers for substance use and mental health treatment. And we've gotten our formularies unified so that we use the same drugs they use.

Rhett Covington:

We've offered to transition folks from the less expensive drugs that we would normally prescribe to those who are incarcerated to those that are routinely given by our community partners. And we also made sure that our doctors have privileges at those facilities, in those pharmacies, so that the refill prescriptions would be honored. With regard to Medicaid and so forth, we have an agreement so that we can provide that as well, a discharge, which helps them have a

way to pay for services whenever they get out without having to wait on that to happen. And again, we want to make sure that when someone goes out that all these Ts are crossed and is are dotted. This form actually goes into that transition document envelope that we talked about earlier in this presentation, so that they have that as well.

Kristin Tiedeman:

We don't do a whole lot different than what the other two covered. So, I'm just going to focus on some of the things that are a little bit different. One of the things that we do is as I mentioned earlier... It's a seamless transition. Besides program manager, I do the substance use treatment pre-lease and then also post release. So, our participants, when they get released, they spend time with us --they come into the reentry office, we do weekly treatment groups. They get weekly mental health counseling from our mental health counselor. They meet with the peer support constantly, case manager constantly. We're advocates for them. Some of the things... the cool things that we were just starting recently is we've made a connection with a group that will help with dental, with dentures. And one of my participants who is in this outside work program is able to work at a real job in the community then return to the facility after work. She is wearing real clothes and getting real pay.

Kristin Tiedeman:

And even if it can't happen before they walk out the door, we made the connection that will be able to get that process started as soon as they do walk out the door. They'll have appointments with that group as soon as they walk out. They have appointments with a primary care physician, as soon as they walk out so that we can begin whether it's mental health medication, whether it's Hep C treatment, whatever their medical, mental health needs are, we're able to help them. We want to help them develop trust, build connections, build sober networks. We want to help them be successful. I'm going to just stop because I can talk forever.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Thanks so much, Kristin, appreciate it. The 13th practice that we want to suggest to you today is to ensure that Medicaid is restored, and the individual does have appropriate health insurance. Because as we said a little earlier, and many of our partners have said this today on the call, that individuals leave the facility with mental health concerns, health concerns as well, that certainly need to be addressed. Kansas and Louisiana are sharing with you a little bit about how they implement practice 13.

Crystal Speer:

Yeah. It's very closely related to the last point. We have partnerships with the Kansas department of health and environment and the social security administration so that when people come into the facility with benefits, we contact and have those shut off while they're incarcerated. And then we have that partnership so that when they're released, they can be reactivated as soon as they're released, and they don't have to have that gap in coverage. They don't have to wait to have things paid for. It's just automatically reinstated on the day that they're released. For people who are getting new benefits and have not had them previously, we also have that agreement with those agencies, so that can get started as soon as possible and they don't have that long wait period. And [inaudible 01:27:05] just opens up those opportunities to get services immediately upon release, those much-needed things that they need that those things cover.

Rhett Covington:

Same. In Louisiana, we have an agreement, a memorandum of understanding with Louisiana Department of Health and the offices of Medicaid, where we actually share data between our computer systems and that narrows the amount of information that we have to get to the person selecting the managed care organization that they want to serve them through Medicaid upon release and get their signature and release of information, they get their card at release. So, we have this at all of our regional reentry centers, all of our state prisons and we're expanding into our larger jails beyond that at this point, so that people release with that healthcare plan card at release. We also have, as I mentioned before, that social security MOU to help us make sure that we cross the Ts and dot the Is with office state Medicaid, because they want to make sure that all the numbers match behind the scenes. And of course, we put all that documentation and that transition document envelope for them.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay. The final practice, number 14, is to provide prerelease technology training. We know that technology is a major factor in all of our lives. It's tough for us to all keep up with this, with all the changing technology that comes across our desk. But can you imagine the individual hasn't had a smartphone in their hand before much like Gunner and Jamala were talking about it a little earlier or navigating their way to work using the GPS technology. So, what we want to do is allow Insight Garden to share little information about how they address practice 14, provide free release technology training.

Jamala Taylor:

As Gunner mentioned earlier, we provide cell phones at the gate when we pick up our participants. That first hour, as



we're taking them to eat lunch, their first meal and freedom, we're working on that phone. We've learned to download Zoom apps and some of the more common apps they're going to need to access our Thursday night Healing Circle, which is also a healing circle for all of our participants who've been released from prison. A safe space that they come together and pull the resources, whether it be technology jobs or speak to their challenges, and we use that to connect them to technology courses, maybe offered through Cal State, maybe for free. We had a person in our ranks who offered a class, just a fundamental thing on out a set up email and things like that. When I first got out of prison, like Gunner, I couldn't operate a cell phone, I couldn't operate a laptop.

Jamala Taylor:

We speak a lot about connection to resources about access and documents. It's hard to get human beings on the phone. If you don't have an email and you don't understand how... just a fundamental, a really fundamental understanding of how laptops work or cell phones work, you absolutely can't do that. As we're assisting people doing that, a lot of times through Zoom, we're teaching, we're teaching, we're teaching. Repetitions. So, this needs lessons over time, people pick things up, our participants begin to get more independent and able to maneuver these resources. But for me, I've been out a little more than a year and I still haven't mastered it. I'm not where I need to be, but I'm certainly much further along than I was. Somebody can't successfully reenter into society without a fundamental understanding of technology. Can't be done. Yeah, that's a big part of our strategy.

Simon Gonsoulin:

All right. Well, I want to thank our five second chance at grantees for taking a look at those 14 practices, identifying how they implemented those practices. While we did go over time, and I want to apologize to participants for going over, I appreciate you hanging with us for the presentation, because there was just so much good information that our grantees shared with you. You can certainly see their passion and the work that they're doing and meeting the needs of people who are returning to the community. But we do have a couple of polling questions just to get a little feedback from the grantees for the participants, if you don't mind, some of which are grantees, some of which are non-second chance at grantees.

Simon Gonsoulin:

So, the first polling question is, what practice or practices stood out to you from the grantees presentations? And the form that you'll be able to click on will come up right here if you look over to the right hand side of your screen, please identify what practice stood out to you from the grantees' presentation. So, if you wouldn't mind just clicking on one or more, that would be great. We'll give it maybe another 15 seconds.

Okori:

So far, we have about 70 answers. Folks who have provided answers and whenever you're ready, Simon, I can end the poll and then you can see the results.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Why don't we go ahead and end the poll and see where we see where we land?

Okori:

Sure. So, it'll take another about 15 seconds to tabulate.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay.

Okori:

So, thank you everyone for sticking with us...

Simon Gonsoulin:

As Okori's tabulating your results, I'll give you a little insight into the next question. The next question is what practice or innovation would you be interested in exploring for your program? So, the same list of options will come up. Okay so let's see. Formal reentry planning was a major one, as you can see. Received 22 hits and family reintegration, technology training, issuance of governmental IDs was another one that there was interest in. Okay. So that gives us a good feel for some of the areas in which you felt those particular practices really stood out, given the grantees presentations. So, presenters, you certainly hit the nail on the head for many of those practices.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay, let's go to the next question. What practices or innovation are you interested in exploring for your program? Is it going to be the formal reentry planning, again, Medicaid or other insurances, re activating Medicaid, education, employment, transportation related issues? There was a lot of buzz in the chat from participants pertaining to medical and behavioral health related treatment at the time of release.

Okori:

Formal reentry planning seems to be the front runner right now, somewhat with 11 percent of the votes.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Okay. All right. You want to close it in maybe just a handful of seconds, Okori?

Okori:

Sure. We can give folks five seconds to vote and then we are going to close the poll.

Simon Gonsoulin:

I also want to thank individuals who entered into the chat, their contact information or something that they would want to share. Certainly, do appreciate that very much because we know that this is how five programs, organizations, agencies implement those 14 practices, but we know there's a world of additional approaches to implementing those 14 practices. Okay, so the formal reentry planning process, issuance of governmental IDs, housing, another one, connected community partners. Okay, very good. So that was the list there. And I wanted to identify contact information of individuals who did present today. Their names identified for you there, their email addresses identified. If you have additional information that you need, it would be good for you just to email them. If you email me, I'm happy to get it to the right person at [sgonsoulin@air.org](mailto:sgonsoulin@air.org).

Simon Gonsoulin:

And I certainly want to thank everybody for joining the webinar and especially staying with us for this extended time. I want to thank our five grantees, both organizations and agencies that have joined us and shared details about their particular programs. And don't forget, you'll be able to access this webinar in its entirety at the National Reentry Resource Center's website, sometime in May. And also, you can go to this website currently and pull down the written document that covers these 14 practices and gives you a summary of basically what our presenters shared with you around their programming. So, thanks for being with us and good luck for the rest of the Second Chance Month. I think you'll enjoy many of the activities coming up. The National Reentry Resource Center and the technical assistance providers have pulled together, I think a pretty nice portfolio of webinars and content to share with you. Wish everybody the best in their reentry and their reentry work in the future. Have a good one. Take care.

Kristin Tiedeman:

Thank you, Simon, for all of your help in letting us do this.

Simon Gonsoulin:

Of course. And I thank you all. You all were great. Tremendous. You all really shared some wonderful ideas with everybody. Appreciate it.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:38:43]

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Page 1 of 2