

# Reducing Recidivism through Cross-Systems Collaboration and Connection



## Community Connections Supporting Reentry (CCSR)

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### Project Background & Overview

To increase success and permanence in the community after incarceration, high quality, coordinated services and supports are needed before, during, and after release to address mental health and substance use disorder treatment needs, employment skills, healthcare, housing, and more.

University of Iowa's Center for Disabilities and Development collaborated with the Iowa Department of Corrections and the Iowa Department of Human Services to create and facilitate a series of trainings with the overall goal to improve cross-systems collaboration by strengthening connections between prison and community corrections staff, state agencies, and community service providers. A replicable curriculum was developed for the Department of Corrections after a total of 24 pilot trainings were conducted across the state of Iowa between February 2016 and April 2017.

### Connection to our Work

There are over 1.6 million people incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the United States, the vast majority of whom will be released back into the community. The incidence of serious mental illness, substance use disorders, and disability are significantly higher among incarcerated individuals than the general population. Many experience multi-diagnosis and behavioral challenges, some of which may have contributed to their incarceration in the first place. Establishing a life in the community upon reentering can be particularly difficult for these individuals.

### Training Overview and Outcomes

This training is unique because it prioritizes the interaction between the participants and the development of relationships over simply transmitting information or skills. The best sessions, from both the perspective of the facilitators and participant feedback, were interactive, personalized by the local panelists, and remained focused on the training objectives.

#### Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the challenges faced by individuals and their families as they reenter the community after incarceration
- Learn how the corrections and community service systems operate, including information about services and supports available
- Establish connections between the corrections and community service systems.

#### Components

- **Lived Experience Panel:** Formerly incarcerated individuals share their experiences with incarceration and reentry
- **Corrections Staff Panel:** Speakers from prison and community-based corrections provide high level overviews of correctional system. Panelists encouraged to utilizes case studies, examples, and audience engagement to keep interactive.
- **Community Provider Panel:** Speakers from 3-4 distinct community service systems, followed same structure as Corrections Panel.
- **Networking and Facilitated Discussion:** This was accomplished through careful facilitation to keep the training interactive, an extended networking break during the training, and a facilitated large group discussion.
- **Resource Guide:** A guide was created to complement the content of the training so the focus can remain on connections, rather than specific details shared by the panelists and others. It provides simple overviews of services systems, programs, and supports and key information necessary for making referrals or getting additional information. Attendees received a hard-copy and a link to where they could access it online.

#### Outcomes

A total of 1,324 individuals representing 274 agencies attended one or more sessions, which were conducted 24 times in geographically distributed locations around the state in both urban and rural settings.

Total Attendance – All Trainings Total	
Community Provider	865
Mental Health and Disability Services	249
Integrated Health Home	124
Mental Health/Disability Services Region	111
Substance Use Disorder Services	81
Employment Services	102
Healthcare Organization	43
Advocacy Organization	40
Aging Services	29
Housing Services	22
Local Government & Law Enforcement	22
State Agency	13
Other	29
Department of Corrections	404
Community Corrections	233
Prisons Corrections	131
Central Office	41
Person with Lived Experience	42
Community Member	12
Grand Total	1324

A total of 1,212 evaluation surveys were distributed electronically and 735 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 61%.

Overall Satisfaction – All Trainings			
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Training	87%	8%	5%
Resource Guide	94%	3%	3%
Overall	88%	7%	4%

### Curriculum Overview

Revisions to the training content and outline were made throughout the training period based on evaluations from participants, input from a stakeholder advisory group, and facilitator observations and experiences. That information was used to create a curriculum that reflects the best of all sessions in a format designed to be replicable by the Department of Corrections and others. The curriculum was created utilizing principles of adult learning, participatory training techniques, and multiple modalities to engage different types of learning styles.

#### The final curriculum included:

- Training Purpose and Summary
- Target Audience
- Panelist Selection, Preparation, and Structure
- Recommendations and Modifications
- Detailed Training Outline/Timed Agenda
- Training Logistics
- Venue and Set Up
- Marketing and Communication
- Registration
- Post-Training Evaluation
- Training Readiness Timeline and Checklist
- Facilitation Tip Sheet
- Conversation Generators
- Resource Guide Overview and Talking Points
- Panelist Guides