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Shared Life Experiences: Augmenting Treatment and Recovery in Criminal Justice Settings Through Peer Support

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Learning Objectives

- Define peer support and apply core competencies involved
- Determine the social framework of peer support and evaluate the importance to criminal justice involved individuals
- Explore effective means for integrating peer recovery services into correctional settings

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Traditional
Function of
Corrections

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Today's Corrections

- Medical care
- Detox
- Screening and assessment
- Social services
- Treatment
- MAT

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Some Data

65% of prison/jail population experience active SUD

Another 20% do not meet criteria for SUD but under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the offense

Between 2000 and 2019, the number of local jail inmates who died from all causes increased 33%; the number who died from drug/alcohol intoxication increased 397%

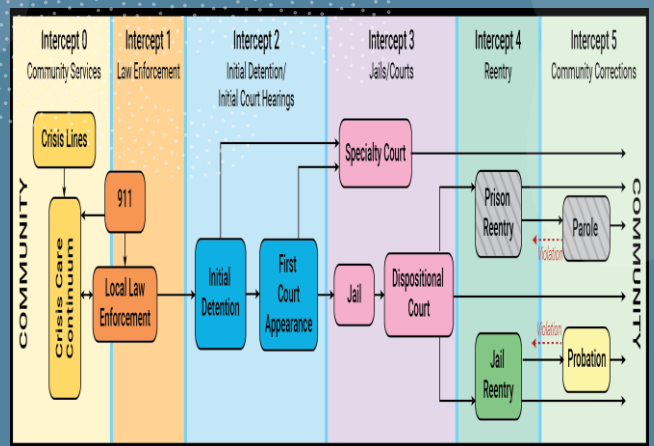
Women die in jail at a rate almost double that of men

Those who die of drug or alcohol intoxication were incarcerated a median of **1** day

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Sequential Intercept Model

- ✓ Explore local strategies to implement core services
- ✓ Promotes stakeholder collaboration
- ✓ Identifies opportunities to fill critical gaps in services
- ✓ Apply evidence-based practices through the continuum of criminal justice services



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What is Peer Support?

“Offering help, based on the shared experience, understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment between people”

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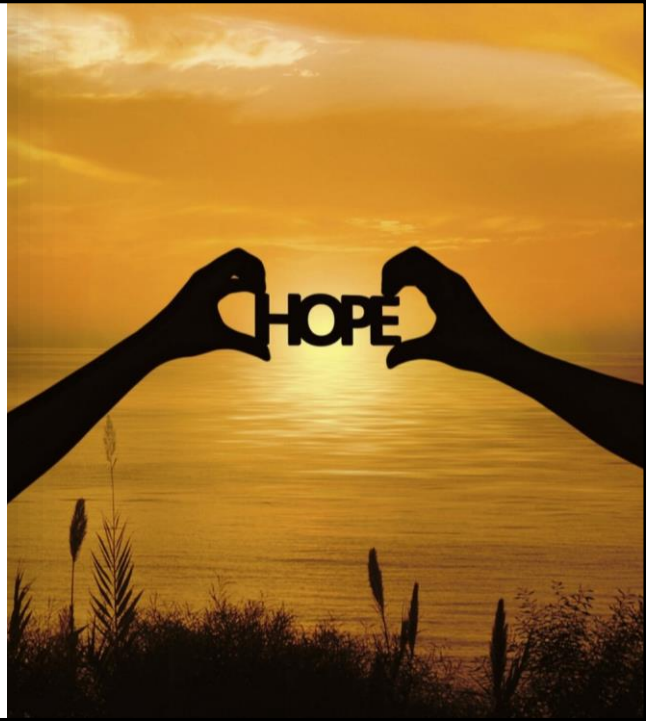
Research Findings

- An evidence-based practice
- SAMHSA supports peer support:
 - Improves the quality of life
 - Supports engagement and satisfaction with services/treatment
 - Enhances overall health
 - Decreases hospitalization and inpatient stays
 - Reduces comprehensive cost of services

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Peer Support Assists With:

- Setting recovery goals
- Inspiring hope and change
- Developing an action plan
- Accessing critical resources
- Solving problems related to recovery
- Housing/sober living assistance
- Addressing transportation concerns
- Supporting social relationships
- Improving job and time management skills



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“Being a certified peer allows me to see what others saw when I was in active addiction. I was struggling but worthy and deserving of a better life. This daily reminder is a motivating tool in maintaining my own sobriety every day.”



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Offering Support from Ground Zero

Probation Officer: When you're placed on probation, you aren't asking for this person to "help" you - you're assigned someone that you are often "afraid" of - afraid of the authority they have over your freedom. Often individuals in active addiction are not in a stage of change that promotes recovery and it's extremely difficult to be honest about what their needs are.

Treatment Coordinator: You saw in the video - the treatment coordinator who was working as a liaison between a treatment agency and the courts. I was an advocate for Kristen and other individuals in the court system, someone who could see things from a clinical perspective, and not just through the lens of what her probation officers expected and offered. However, she didn't have that shared experience. She was not a person in recovery.

Family: Kristen knew her family wanted her to be better - but they were afraid of the what ifs and they really didn't know how to help her.



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Credentialing

Certification obtained through Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

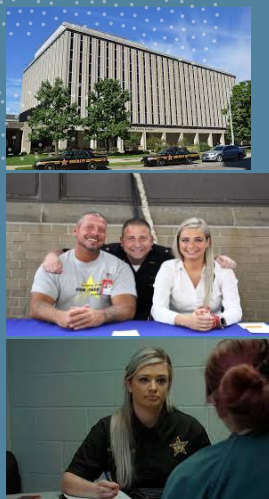
Experience-based - "direct lived experience"

High school diploma or GED

Some prior criminal convictions prohibit certification - either permanent disqualification or disqualification for five years from the end of any supervision/sanction

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Introducing Peer Support Services into Criminal Justice Settings



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Why the Jail?

- The opioid epidemic peaks in 2017
- Led law enforcement to take a different approach to viewing and treating problems in our community, which ultimately led to the idea of increasing supports and services both in and outside of the county jail
- We had to do something!

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The Data

Between January - October of 2017, 67% of fatal OD's had contact with the criminal justice system within one year, 20% within one month, and 10% within one week of death

By 2018 - 94% of individuals who experienced fatal OD in Montgomery County had some interaction with our criminal justice system at some point in their lifetime; 60% of those individuals were specific to a drug charge
PHDMC - 2018 COAT Data Report



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Incorporating Certified Peer Specialists into the corrections setting became an important factor in our county's intent to decrease overdose deaths. What started as a jail service soon spilled over into court and community programming.



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For correctional healthcare, a peer supporter can be key in assisting and identifying inmates interested in MAT services.



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Program Design in the Jail

- Importance of gender specific services
- One on one support services
- Group services
- Collaboration with discharge planners, jail treatment coordinators, defense attorneys and probation officers



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Risks

Negative attitude of staff surrounding the idea of bringing individuals in recovery with criminal backgrounds into a jail setting

Concerns with contraband

Potential for inappropriate relationships



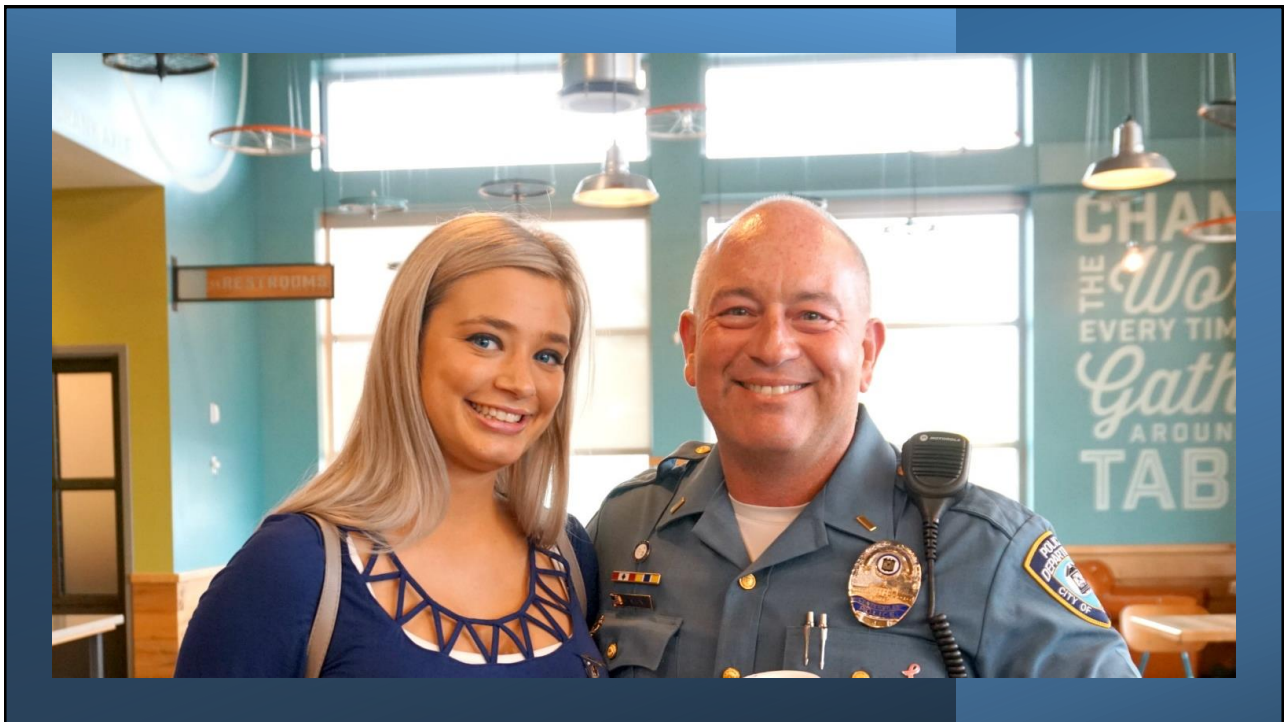
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Rewards Outweigh the Risks

- Correction and probation staff appreciate the work of certified peers
- They help shape the attitude of the housing unit officers work in
- Law Enforcement, when they are tapped out of resources, have another means they can access



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Funding Peer Support Services

Grants (DART and QRT)

First 3 years of programming were funded by a DART Grant available through the Attorney General's Office

- DART = Drug Abuse Response Team
- QRT = Quick Response Team



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Additional Funding

County General Fund and local ADAMHS

Ultimately moved from the DART grant to requesting full time employment status for one peer with MCSO, paid through the General Fund

Requests for funding through OMHAS and local ADAMHS boards

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Additional Funding Continued...

Community Partnerships

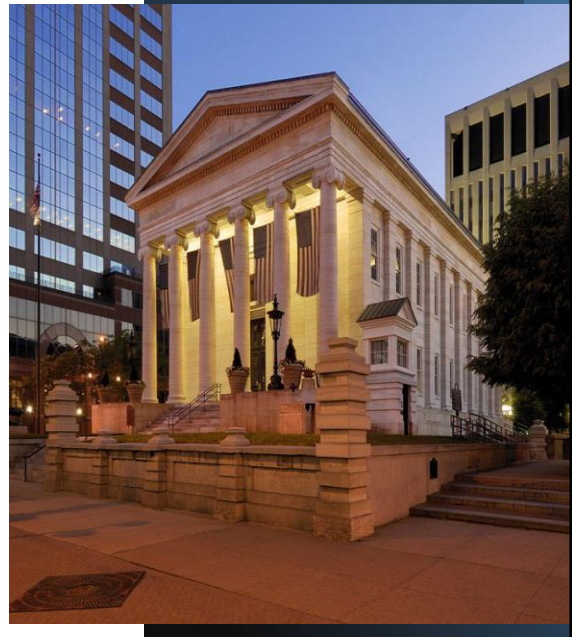
- Find an agency that you can partner with that may be eligible for funding for which the court or LE agency do not qualify
- Often the barrier for jail services is the fact that agencies cannot bill insurance

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Criminal Justice Collaborations

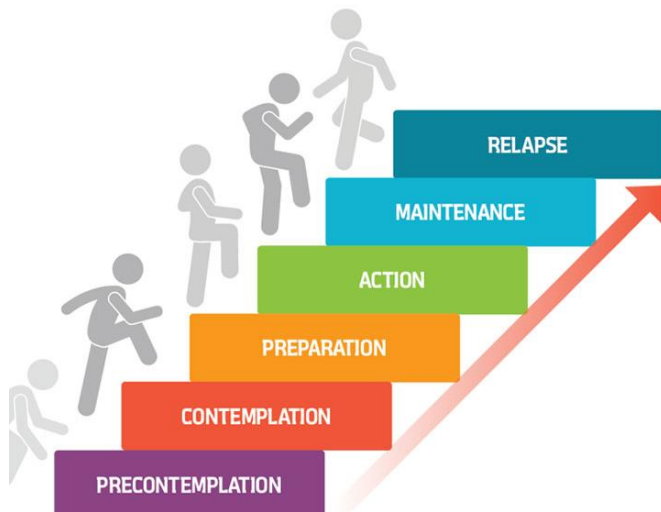
Supporting:

Pretrial intervention
Specialized dockets
Probation services



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The Stages of Change



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Five Specialized Dockets in Montgomery County Common Pleas Court

- RISE
- MARC
- Veteran's Treatment Court
- Mental Health Court
- Kushinda Court



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References

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Amber Widgery, *Deflection and Diversion*, Report, National Conference of State Legislatures (August, 2023)

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QUESTIONS?

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