



MONTGOMERY

C O U N T Y

Office of Ex-Offender Reentry

“Establishing the Road To Recovery for Returning Citizens Through Innovative Employment Practices and Partnerships”

Presentation by: Jamie Gee, MBA, OWDS

Our Mission

Serving the citizens of Montgomery County with programs and services that minimize barriers to effective reentry and promote a reduction in recidivism



Our Philosophy

***Transforming Obstacles Into Opportunities through
“Action, Alliance & Accountability”***

**Blueprint For Reducing Recidivism in Montgomery
County**

“Note To Victims”



Reentry Process

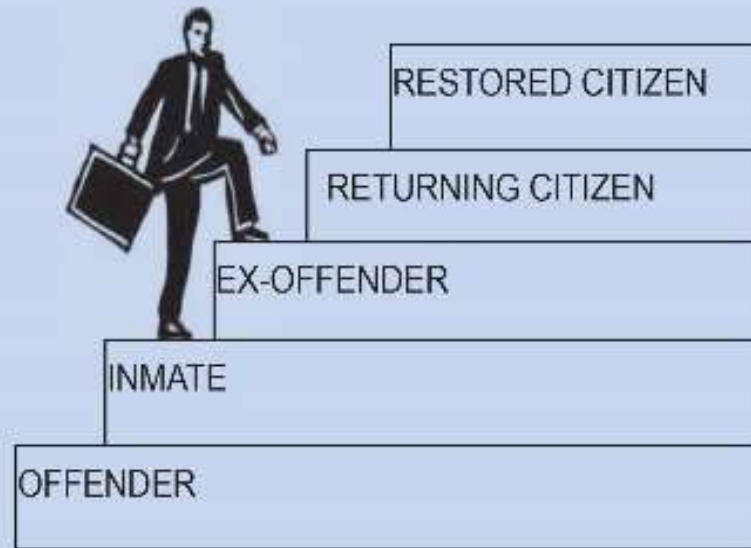
- **Transition from prisons or jails back to the community - 650,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons annually**
- **Number of offenders and the likelihood of reoffending have made reentry a priority**
- **Breaking the cycle of reoffending and re-incarceration has many important implications for public safety and policy**



Reentry Process

STEPS
TO
REENTRY

Action, Alliance, & Accountability



Transformational Steps

- **Preparing for the reentry process**
- **Seeking out positive pro-social support to connect with resources**
- **Planning for the release and community reintegration experience**
- **Developing successful strategies and routines**
- **Identifying immediate barriers upon and beyond release**
- **Reinforcing accomplishments achieved before, during and after incarceration**
- **Developing new personal and networking relationships**
- **Tracking personal progress**



Honesty



Returning Citizens are encouraged to tell the truth
about criminal records
“If you Lie, you lose”



Quality Services In Partnership

Montgomery County Reentry Project

- 2nd Chance Act Grantee
- Goodwill - Transitional Jobs & Employment Program Partner
- Jobsite training assignments with employer partners; leading to part-time & full-time placements
- American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funded stipend up to 30 hours of initial candidate placement
- Office of Reentry wrap-around project model supporting partners in case management, mentoring, substance abuse, mental health & resource support

Best Practices

- Employer workplace mentoring & support
- Supported job coach intervention
- Criminal history check for appropriate placement
- Employment assessment



Quality Services In Partnership

Advanced Cognitive Treatment Services

- Department of Justice Grantee
- Intensive 10-Week cognitive based program / 200-300 hours
- Random selection study – Moderate & High Risk Recidivism Scope
- Cognitive restructuring and social/problem skills development
- NIC Offender Workforce Development integrated curriculum
- Pre-paid debit card living allowance stipend

Best Practices

- Staff certification - Offender Workforce Development curriculum
- Collaborations with multi-disciplinary partners to reduce recidivism
- Actuarial-based assessment instruments used for reentry planning
- Enhance & support conditions of parole/probation
- Data collection & evaluation via WSU Substance Abuse Resources & Disability Issues Program (SARDI)
Boonshoft School of Medicine



Advanced Cognitive Treatment Services (ACTS) Associated with Significant Reduction in Substance Abuse in Ex-Offenders



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The Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry collaborated with the Substance Abuse Resources and Disability Issues (SARDI) Program in the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University and 12 community organizations that serve ex-offenders to deliver an intensive 10-week program called *Advanced Cognitive Treatment Services (ACTS)*. Based on the evidence-based *Thinking for a Change* intervention, ACTS is a 300-hr cognitive-behavioral therapy program focused on cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and development of problem-solving skills. In addition, community organizations offered peer support, case management, SUD treatment, housing, child support, education and employment services.

Method

Ninety-one ex-offenders (79 men, 12 women; 46 high-risk and 45 moderate-risk for re-offending) were randomly assigned to the ACTS treatment group or a control group within a week of reentry. Before and immediately after the 10-week treatment period, the voluntary participants completed the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Symptom Distress Scale (SDS), and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) before and after ACTS. ANOVAs were conducted to compare test scores for high- and moderate-risk ex-offenders in the treatment and control groups. The 10-week ACTS treatment program included:

- Thinking for a Change cognitive behavioral therapy (36 hrs)
- Victim awareness education
- HIV education and testing
- Housing, financial, and nutrition education
- Vocational training and educational counseling
- Child support and legal counseling
- Life skills education and case management
- Community service experience

Results

DAST and SDS scores were significantly reduced for ex-offenders following the ACTS treatment, compared to controls. Significant interactions indicated that high-risk ex-offenders in the ACTS group were positively affected by the intervention, compared to high-risk ex-offenders in the control group whose scores significantly worsened over time (Figures 1 and 2). Improvements in Satisfaction with Life were associated with reduced drug use (Figures 3 and 4). However, scores on the AUDIT were not different for these groups.

Figure 1. DAST (DRUG SCREEN) SCORES

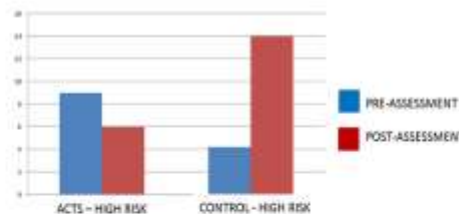


Figure 2. SYMPTOM DISTRESS SCALE SCORES

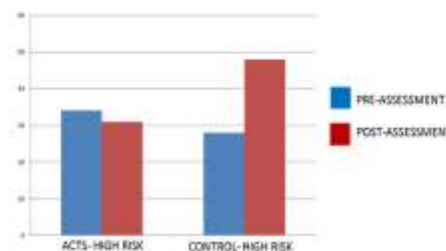


Figure 3. Satisfaction with Life for High Risk ACTS Group

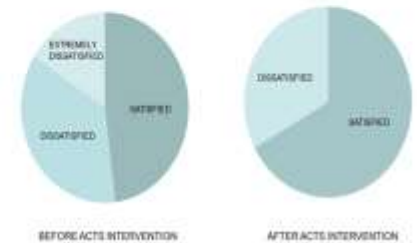
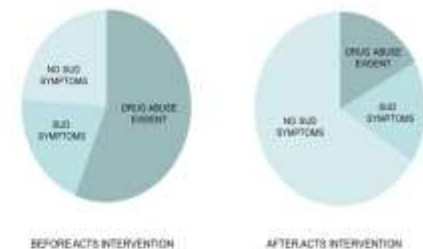


Figure 4. Substance Abuse Screen for High Risk ACTS Group



Conclusion

ACTS appeared to play a positive role in reducing drug abuse problems, especially for high-risk ex-offenders. Reductions in DAST scores were associated with improvements in satisfaction with life (SWLS) and symptom distress (SDS) scores and reduced recidivism rates. However, some ex-offenders appeared to have increased alcohol use as their drug use decreased. This finding will require more research in future studies.

Quality Services In Partnership

Reentry Career Alliance Academy

- Intake orientation, needs/risk screening & service coordination
- Assistance with employment linkage upon successful program completion *with favorable voluntary drug screen*
- Reentry case management planning & community connectivity
- Life/Social skills education, routine support & advocacy
- Offender workforce development & mock interviews

Best Practices

- Employer & Community engagement (direct referral agreement)
- Holistic approach to workforce readiness
- Positive reinforcement – Formal Graduation, Career Passport & Board of County Commissioner’s Proclamation
- Peer-based involvement in cognitive education
- National Institute of Corrections strategies utilized
- Ohio Means Jobs “Reverse Job Fair” Engagement



Quality Services In Partnership

Reentry Collaborative

- Comprised of over 90 community reentry stakeholders
- Promote Education, Support & Creative Funding Strategies
- Routine network meetings & site visits
- Share employment & supportive services best practices

Best Practices

- Site visits to highlight local programs & services
- Promotion of “Fresh Start Employment Fair” with Veteran’s Administration
- Future direction to support and engage reentry client reintegration through social enterprise engagement



Quality Services In Partnership

- **Creating Education-Based Partnerships with...**
 - **Volunteer Organizations as an opportunity for recovering candidates to build work experience**
 - **AmeriCorps VISTA for stipend based service opportunities**
 - **Peer Recovery Coach Certificate Training Programs**
 - **Online CDCA programs to enhance skills needed for recovery based employment**
 - **Local Treatment providers supporting reentry employment efforts**
 - **On-the-Job Training & Workforce Investment Act programs which help to build employment skills**
 - **Academic student work study programs**



Contact Us

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Resources

Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness. Website www.csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/the-reentry-and-employment-project

Kincaid E. & Lawrence. A. (2011) Ex-Offender Employment Opportunities
National Conference of State Legislatures Publication

National Reentry Resource Center (2014) Pathways to Prosperity How Public & Private Sectors Can Put People With Criminal Records To Work. White House Domestic Policy Council.

Peer Academy Workforce Development Program. Life Essentials. Website www.LifeEssentials.org





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Thank You