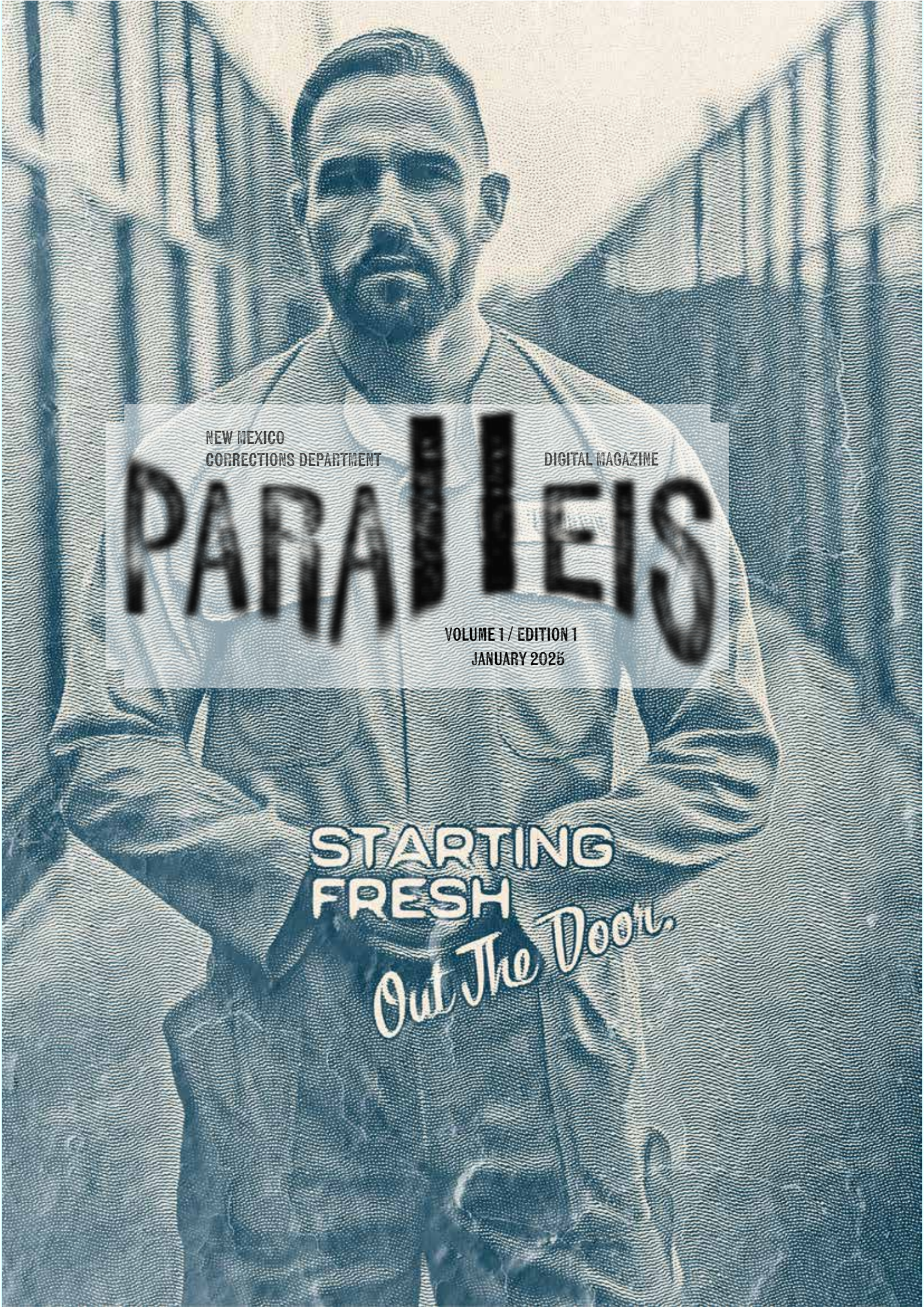


A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white button-down shirt, stands with his arms crossed. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

NEW MEXICO
CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

PARALLELS

VOLUME 1 / EDITION 1
JANUARY 2025

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FRESH
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"CATCHING THE CHAIN" PART 1

We've all seen movies in which an incarcerated character triumphantly walks out the imposing front gate of a film set prison. Sometimes the next scene shows him or her climbing into a friend's car, boarding a bus and settling into a window seat, or shuffling along a remote dusty highway into the sunset.

But, of course, aside from those narrative vehicles, movie scripts rarely dwell on the difficult, lumbering, and bureaucracy-laden buildup to that moment. And they certainly don't portray the mundane real-world challenges that the character faces as they embark on building their post-incarceration life. In fictional representations, those first steps out of prison usually serve as an introduction to a character's back story - their "sordid past" - or as a neat and tidy conclusion to the antagonist's character arc - a "happy ending" as only movies can deliver.

But we can't expect movies to represent the practical realities of being released from prison - that's not their job. In real life, apart from serving as a plot device, being released from prison, or "catching the chain," as it may be described inside prison facilities, is much more than a single scene in a person's story. It's much more likely to be a monotonous process, a long arc, and a difficult journey.

While the click of the Correctional Officer's key unlocking and opening the gate, those first footsteps on outside ground, and those initial deep breaths of fresh air upon stepping through that threshold are all sure to be permanently burned into a person's catalog of core memories, they will also surely remember the months - or even years - of transformation,

anticipation, and preparation that led them to that cumulative moment of release. And unlike in the movies, there are, with hope, many more chapters to be played out after that momentous moment of discharge.



Most returning citizens will always remember the moment that they are released from prison, but the process leading up to that first step out is a long journey.

So, if it's so much more than just one celebratory moment, what does getting out of prison really involve? When does the process start? And what does life after prison look like? What does "the system" do to help facilitate and support that process, and maybe more importantly, what must a person do to help ensure their own post-incarceration success?

**“...When that’s all you know, that’s what you do.
But if you always do what you’ve always done,
you’re always going to get
what you’ve always got.”**

These questions, of course, are best answered by not only the people who work within “the system,” assisting with the process, but also by those individuals who are living the experience; those who are about to be released from prison, or whose incarceration is behind them.



Behavioral health and substance use disorder counseling are integral components of preparing returning citizens for a successful post-incarceration life.

Vital to the process of any inmate being released from a correctional department’s custody is that department’s Reentry Division. According to the New Mexico Corrections Department’s Fiscal Year 2025 Strategic Plan, the purpose of NMCD’s Reentry Division is “to empower individuals to successfully transition out of the NMCD through educational and cognitive programming, workforce development opportunities, [and] pre-release and post-release coordination of care efforts. This holistic approach aims to reduce recidivism among those transitioning from custody to community, offering hope for a brighter future and a more positive outcome.”

So, plainly speaking, it seems that the Reentry Division’s entire purpose can be summed up in one word: success. And setting people up for success as they eventually transition from incarceration back into their communities evidently starts early - as in, from day one.

But how can any organization set an individual up for success? In the case of Reentry, the foundation on which their clients’ success is built is apparently comprised of a few essential cornerstones, including behavioral health, academic education, and career technical training. In this four-part series, we’ll be exploring these cornerstones of Reentry, one block at a time, as well as an important fourth block: post-incarceration community supervision, which, provided by NMCD’s Probation & Parole Division, offers support and encouragement to returning citizens. For starters, we’ll look at the behavioral health component of the reentry process.

NMCD Reentry Division Deputy Director Haven Scogin explains the importance of offering behavioral health and substance abuse counseling to incarcerated people this way: “Our goal is for people to never come back to us, and so [we are always asking ourselves,] ‘How do we provide them services and resources and engage them in a way that lifts them up so that they’re not committing crimes, so that they’re not staying addicted to substances?’” “A lot of the clients that we serve have committed crimes because of, and in support of, addiction and so when we can get people engaged in residential drug abuse treatment, when we can have them attending out-patient treatment, when we can provide services for

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substance addiction inside of our prison facilities while they're serving their sentences, that has the biggest bang for the buck because helping someone get sober is not just helping that person get sober; it's helping



a generational track of sobriety in their family. ...And I think it can really change lives in a way that a lot of other things can't."

It certainly stands to reason that if addiction issues are what caused – or at least, contributed to – a person's incarceration, then addressing those issues is a powerful way to prevent the same pattern from repeating itself. In corrections terminology, preventing the same pattern from repeating itself is referred to as recidivism reduction.

It's widely recognized that substance abuse in a child's home environment normalizes that behavior and makes him or her more likely to rely on substance use to cope with stresses and emotional challenges. In fact, many children who grow up to eventually become incarcerated were initially introduced to illicit drug use or alcohol abuse by their parents.

Tommy, who first became involved in the criminal justice system at the age of sixteen, and whose numerous charges include drug possession, explains that "[Drug use] was in my house a lot, so it seemed natural for me to grab it and be around it." During one period of Tommy's time outside of prison, his drug use almost ended his life. Upon returning to prison shortly after

his drug-induced medical emergency, he had time to reflect on having received "a second chance at life," which finally prompted him to take advantage of a variety of programming opportunities during that next – and hopefully his last – stint in prison.

Now out on parole, employed full-time, supporting his family, and living a clean and sober lifestyle, Tommy has realized that his drug abuse not only contributed to the incarceration that defined his adolescence and young adulthood, but also nearly cost him his life.

Allen has been in and out of prison for many years. Currently in for drug and escape charges, it took him years to realize that continually avoiding substance abuse treatment and returning to the same addictive behaviors would continually result in the same disappointing outcome.

"I've been to prison before and I got out and I did the same thing. And the reason I did the same thing [when I got out] is because when I was in prison, I was doing the same thing. I was just ...chasing drugs. The last time I was in prison I was doing that same thing. ...But this time, whenever I came back, I was like, 'Man, I'm back where I started.' And I had hit all-time lows on the outside. You don't get lower than what I hit. I was eating out of dumpsters and doing bad. And it went from doing good to doing bad, because I got out of prison and I got a job, and I thought to myself, 'Oh, I'm not going to get caught. I'm off parole.' No. You get caught eventually. And you wind up back in the same situation."

Having realized that it's time for him to approach things differently, Allen's current sentence is being spent focusing on sobriety and education, working toward earning his GED.



It's better to take advantage of the opportunities while you're in here and do them and succeed. That way, whenever you get out you can be successful. ...[Drug use] is all I knew. It's all I really knew since I was a kid. I just followed in my dad's footsteps. ...When that's all you know, that's what you do. But if you always do what you've always done, you're always going to get what you've always got. And so I got what I deserved, which was to come to prison."

Tina spent most of her three-year incarceration participating in a Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP). "It's an intense program...You got a lot into your lifestyle and what you have to do to better yourself and what made you always go back."

Tina's involvement in RDAP, as well as relapse prevention programming, clearly helped her reflect and reform, as she's now enjoying a post-incarceration life that includes working, living in her own place, and continuing her counseling.

So what, exactly, is RDAP? Wendy Price, Psy.D., NMCD Behavioral Health Outreach Administrator, explains the basics of RDAP, which is offered throughout the NMCD, as well as the Federal Bureau of Prisons.



RDAP and other behavioral health counseling programs focus on sharing one's thoughts and feelings with a group of peers and learning healthy coping skills from each other.

"RDAP... is a residential drug abuse program, it's an evidence-based program... ..It's based upon ...motivational interviewing, interactive journaling, [and there are] cognitive behavioral

aspects... And it is primarily for substance use. So when you think about substance use, you have to dig into reasons people use substances and you have to talk about coping skills and you have to talk about family environments ...early trauma."



Learning how to replace unhealthy coping skills like anger, control, and substance abuse with healthy ones is key to the successful recovery of those with substance use disorders.

"..You have this coping skill – for them, it's using drugs, right? It's escapism, right? It's worked for them; it's been successful ...except for ...a result of incarceration. ...But in general, it's a successful [coping] skill. If it wasn't a successful coping skill, you wouldn't keep using it, right? So they keep using it because it's successful, but then it becomes their default coping skill. And then, all of a sudden, you're taking away the coping skill that they know. And so their ability to feel pain and trauma, and situations, and depression, and anxiety, they don't know how to handle it because you've taken away their coping skill. ...And you have to teach them new ways of dealing with those."

"You have to practice the skills you learn. And [behavioral health programming] allows you that chance, in a safe environment to talk about these things. Because everyone in the room is in there for the same exact reason: to talk about these things and to practice these skills."

Independently Licensed Clinician Pamela K. Smith, MA LPCC and NMCD Behavioral Health Authority, helps explain further how RDAP works.

"RDAP is in three phases. So, the first phase is that precontemplation phase and that's the one where they're still kind of fighting it,

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right? The second phase, they've got to live with everything that they've done. They start thinking about ...some of the things that they have done. And you probably see more people wanting to drop out of the program in phase two, because they're very uncomfortable with those kinds of emotions. They may ruminate a lot at night before they go to bed because they know that they were high and they were someplace and they remember that they left their kids and they didn't know where they left their kids because they were so high.So having to live with that sometimes is really kind of hard. ...It's learning to make those apologies... It's having to deal with sincerity and honesty at the same time, and understanding that they don't mean the same thing, and living through and learning to forgive yourself for some of the things that you have done and making amends and building those relationships again."

"And then phase three is all about the recovery stage and staying safe and, 'What are you going to do?,' and 'How are you going to stay sober?,' and 'What are your plans?,' 'What is your safety net?' ...And you find that, by the time they get to phase three, then they're afraid to graduate. They come to the conclusion that they kind of like being sober and they like being the person that they are when they're sober and now they're going to be done and they're not going to be in their community that supports them, and helps them stay sober, and tells them all the time, 'You can do this, you got this,' because they're going to get out of the program and go back to GP (general population), and they start getting very afraid. ...it's hard on them."

Having served just under three years for trafficking methamphetamine, not only did behavioral health programming, including RDAP, help Ambrosia transform personally, but it introduced her to her new professional calling as the Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement (OPRE) Special Projects Admin Agent.



The opportunity to safely share one's thoughts and feelings and to become comfortable with emotional vulnerability are important aspects of recovery.

During her incarceration, Ambrosia was introduced to Project ECHO (Extended Community Healthcare Outreach), which enabled her to become a Peer Educator and eventually become certified for her current position with OPRE. "Who could ever think that a qualification for such a good, professional career would come from me making mistakes and going to prison, but then making the right choices from prison?," she wonders.

Having recently celebrated five years since her release, Ambrosia reflects on the lifestyle and environment that set the stage for her incarceration in the first place. "...Growing up, my family was all ...in their addiction or drinking, partying. ...I guess I was around it so much that I guess I was comfortable. ...When I went into RDAP, I went in not expecting to get much out of it because I didn't see myself as an addict."

Not only did Ambrosia's involvement in substance abuse programming allow her to develop a new career and come back to her children as an example of the power of sobriety, but her recovery has had even greater ripple effects than she could have imagined. "I kind of feel like what I had learned, plus my foundation with my faith, I was able to even be a role model to my parents, my family, the elders," she explains.

So based on Ambrosia's experience, it seems that Deputy Director Scogin's desire to see Reentry's substance abuse services interrupt generational addiction by "trickling down" and impacting younger generations is not only coming to fruition, but that that positive influence can also work its way up the family tree to influence older generations as well.

Ms. Smith is similarly hopeful for the ways in which behavioral health programming can change lives. "My vision would be to take some of these inmates [who are addicted to substances] ...[and] see them be sober and be the person they were meant to be."

Having participated in RDAP, Raul certainly believes that the program helped him become "the person he was meant to be." During the last year of what will have been over a decade of incarceration that is expected to conclude soon, Raul committed to the six-month RDAP program and collected a variety of tools that he believes will help him not just avoid the pitfalls of addiction, but be a better all-around person as he embarks on life on the outside.

Having gone to prison at the age of nineteen, his upcoming integration into "regular life" will actually serve as his first experience with "normal" adulthood. Having learned a trade while inside (he's become a licensed barber), Raul is looking forward to starting again, focusing on his new career, and reestablishing family relationships.

While substance use did not play a direct role in the crime that landed him in prison, drug use and violence were modeled for Raul as normal behavior when he was a child. And he believes that RDAP helped him "unpack" that unhealthy upbringing and examine the ways in which it had influenced his decision-making.

"RDAP doesn't change who you are; it changes how you think and how you react. It has allowed me to be the best version of myself ...and make the best decisions I can make. ...It's helped me stop and think of consequences before I react."

"And it all stems from your childhood. In the environment I grew up in, drug use was normalized, violence was normalized, you know, so, as a kid, that's how I responded. ...my influencers were the drug dealers, the gang members... but I only saw one side of it. I didn't see the incarceration, or the consequences of those actions. I only saw the benefits."

"I think that RDAP is something that's necessary for anybody who's incarcerated ...I didn't have a drug addiction... so at first, I didn't think that it was necessary for me ...but it goes deeper than the drug use. What I took out of it is ...tools for confronting those childhood issues that I had."



Peer support and camaraderie can help people in recovery feel less alone and frightened.

BECOME THE PERSON YOU WERE MEANT TO BE.

A close-up portrait of a man with a shaved head, a full brown beard, and a wide smile. He has extensive black and grey tattoos on both arms and neck. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, tank top. The background is dark and out of focus.

RDAP
RESIDENTIAL
DRUG ABUSE
PROGRAM

ASK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF
HOW TO GET STARTED.

So while not a person with a substance abuse problem, Raul was not only allowed, but actually encouraged to participate in RDAP during his incarceration. But are incarcerated people required to participate in behavioral health programming? Or are they making the choice to participate in these programs on their own? Ms. Smith offers some clarity on that question.

“All behavioral health services are voluntary. We don’t mandate anybody to any behavioral health treatments other than [inmates charged with] DWI (driving while intoxicated) ...because that’s the law ...and we do have to mandate that. And it’s a forty-hour treatment program where they attend classes for those forty hours with no lump sum attached to it. Other than that, all behavioral health services are voluntary.”

“So, it’s when they go to committee and a judge has made a recommendation in their J&S (judgement and sentence) that the inmate takes some RDAP, or takes intensive outpatient treatment, classification can mandate them to that group. And every time they refuse, it will stop their good time. Because, we do have that responsibility. If a judge has made that type of recommendation... So, if the inmate would get out and never take that type of treatment, they still have to take it on the outside. At least if they take it here, they’re not paying for it [as they would] on the outside.”

Those who are not justice-involved may find some of this explanation somewhat confusing. “Good time,” for example, according to the NMCD Offender Family Guidebook, is “a system of sentence calculation in which an individual is credited a set amount of time toward the completion of his or her sentence for participation in approved programs, performing acts of heroism, or good conduct.”

So, do some incarcerated people seek out behavioral health programming solely in an attempt to shorten their sentence in accordance with this “good time” system? Of course. Ms. Smith readily acknowledges that some inmates are simply “lump sum shopping,” meaning that they are seeking the lump sum award that comes with completing a program like RDAP.

This may make some inmates’ motivation to participate in RDAP seem questionable. However, as Dr. Price points out, “I believe everyone can benefit from trying to figure themselves out and trying to figure out how to be a better person, and that doesn’t just include justice-involved individuals, that includes me, that includes everyone...”

“A lot of the individuals who are in our population don’t grow up working on themselves; like, that’s not the way they ever really functioned. And I think that developing that ability, working on that skill to



Behavioral health programming that encourages self-reflection and self-evaluation can help returning citizens become the family members and friends that they want to be.

kind of self-evaluate, and monitor, and think about how to do better is a very important skill in life in anything you do, and that’s not just important to drug abuse. That’s important to anything. Evaluating your life, evaluating how you got here, evaluating your crimes ...what got you justice-involved ...it’s just really important to think about those things and think about how to do better. And so these programs really allow you a guide on how to do that.”

So it seems that, even if an inmate is simply “lump sum shopping” when they enroll in RDAP, NMCD behavioral health professionals are so confident that they will benefit from participating in the program that the sincerity of the inmate’s motive is actually a non-issue. RDAP is believed to be so impactful that regardless of the initial reasons for inmates’ involvement, their eventual enrichment is practically guaranteed.

Need to Talk?



If you are currently incarcerated within an NMCD facility and are struggling, reach out to your facility's Behavioral Health Staff for behavioral health support.

If you are a community member (whether justice-involved or not) call, text, or chat with 988 for help with emotional, mental, or substance use distress.

- Call 988
- Text "TALK" to 988
- Live chat at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>



Apparently, by unlearning a variety of unhealthy coping mechanisms (i.e., substance abuse, anger, and violence), and relearning more productive ones (or, as Dr. Price describes the process, “unbecoming and rebecoming”), participation in behavioral health programming can contribute to inmates avoiding recidivism after their release.

And there is certainly data to confirm that. According to performance measures presented to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee by NMCD for Fiscal Year 2024, participation in RDAP reduces recidivism by approximately thirteen percent.

And a thirteen percent reduction in recidivism is a thirteen percent better chance of an inmate’s release actually becoming a real-life version of that cinematic “happy ending,” which is what everyone wants to see.

If you are incarcerated within the NMCD and are interested in learning more about participating in RDAP or other substance abuse programming, reach out to your facility’s Behavioral Health staff.

If you are an NMCD probationer or parolee who struggles with substance use, don’t hesitate to discuss these challenges with your Probation / Parole Officer. They have access to a wide variety of resources with which they can connect you.

And everyone in the community, regardless of being justice-involved or not, is always welcome to call or text 988 any time, day or night, to talk to a behavioral health professional, free of charge.



Participating in RDAP can help you become the person you were meant to be.

Be sure to check out Part 2 of this article series, which will appear in the next issue of *Parallels* and will focus on Reentry’s academic educational offerings.

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PEER FACTOR

Project ECHO's Peer Mentorship Program Connects Prison Community

In this first issue of *Parallels*, we're focusing on the role that behavioral health and substance abuse counseling play in preparing incarcerated people for a successful life on the outside.

While NMCD staff is committed to providing these types of programming, as well as other health services, there is a unique effectiveness associated with incarcerated people receiving support and education from their peers as they address not only addiction and mental health issues, but also other health concerns. One program that facilitates incarcerated people assisting each other as peer mentors is called Project ECHO.

According to the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine website, Project ECHO (which stands for Extended Community Healthcare Outreach) "is a telementoring organization dedicated to disseminating best practice knowledge in rural and underserved areas around the world."

Having identified penitentiaries as one of these underserved areas, UNM's Project ECHO has incorporated a prison-based program into their organization: the New Mexico Peer Education Project (NMPEP). The UNM School of Medicine website describes the NMPEP project this way: "We use the ECHO Model to make powerful and lasting interventions in people's lives. We believe redemption is the solution and time served can be an opportunity to gain a healthier and more productive life."

"Focusing on solutions, we train people who are incarcerated to become peer educators with the goal of educating the prison community on key health issues, increasing general health literacy, reducing risky behaviors, and increasing job readiness upon release."

"We work toward this by developing individual self-efficacy, utilizing an innovative and cost-effective peer-led model, and by strengthening individual community connections inside and out of prison. As a result, we create strong leaders who

create change in their own lives and communities."

Ambrosia, who is a formerly incarcerated person, a former NMPEP Peer Educator, and currently employed with the Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement (OPRE) as their Special Projects Admin Agent, explains the process of becoming a Peer Educator:

"Project ECHO is comprised of four components. The first one is the forty-hour training, where the employees of ECHO UNM will come into the prisons [and] they'll [choose] a selected few [inmates] ...to be able to train as [Peer Educators]."

"...After the forty-hour training is over, then it's up to [the Peer Educator candidates] to ...work with the staff and schedule ten [one] hour workshops so that [they] can do those presentations ...on a variety of health topics. The main one is hepatitis C, because it's so high-risk, high-need in the prisons. But there's also common infectious diseases, STD's, addiction, relapse prevention, [and] overdose prevention."



Those who are formerly incarcerated have a treasure trove of knowledge, insight, and support to offer others.



As a collaborative telementoring organization, Project ECHO enlists the use of video chat technology such as Zoom to bring currently and formerly incarcerated peer mentors and community mentors together with UNM staff and medical professionals.

“The other two components [include] ...biweekly ECHO sessions, which is where [the Peer Educators] get on a Zoom session and professionals will come into those trainings and all the facilities are in one meeting [for] continuing education.”

“And then the fourth component is where [the ECHO UNM staff] come in and do site visits just to see how things are going. If there are any questions or concerns that are going on in each facility, [the Peer Educators are] able to have that outreach and connection with the staff to help resolve issues within the facilities.”

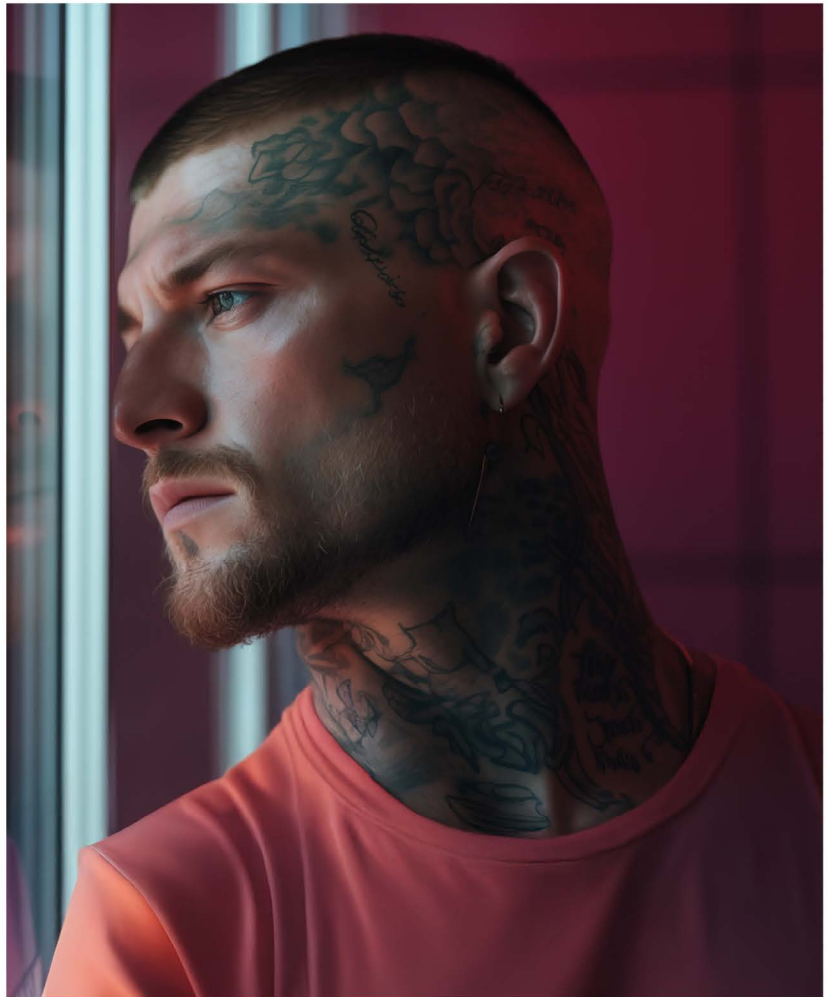
Having become a Peer Educator as part of ECHO’s Peer Education Program during her three-year incarceration, Ambrosia found the opportunity to assist her fellow inmates extremely fulfilling. Upon her release, she was thrilled, then, to have the opportunity to continue her service to others as part of Project ECHO’s New Mexico Community Peer Education Program (NMCPEP), working with justice-involved people in the community, many of whom are formerly incarcerated and may be on probation and / or parole.

“I’m honored to be able to talk to people and help them ...with my experience and the education that I’ve been able to receive. Through my experience of being on [the justice-involved] side, going through the system, and then working with the system, [I’m] able to relate to them, and [say], ‘Hey, I’m not a cop, I’m not the law, but I can tell you, I’ve experienced [the justice-involved] side of things, so tell me what’s going on with you, and maybe I can get you some resources. Maybe I can help you understand that it doesn’t have to be this way.”

“Testimony and experience...equipus....I personally feel like [anyone who has not been justice-involved] will [not] have a knowledge and wisdom and understanding about the struggle of being on the streets to survive, going to prison, feeling helpless and worthless and being able to survive past that. It gives you a certain knowledge, wisdom, and skill, and [an] understanding of life unlike any other.”

Kyle, who is currently incarcerated, discusses his involvement with Project ECHO, first as a recipient of the service, and now as a Peer Educator: “So, I was on the receiving end of the education and the knowledge and it really opened my eyes to the need for this program. And as soon as the possibility of becoming a part of it was presented, I jumped all

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Behavioral Health Services

Life After Release Group

provides cognitive and behavioral skills training modules that assist in planning for life after release for incarcerated individuals approaching a release date.

The Depression Group

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Intensive Outpatient Addictions Treatment Programs offer a concentrated period of addictions treatment.

If you're struggling with mental health or substance addiction issues reach out to behavioral health staff in your facility.



As formerly incarcerated people, Project ECHO staff members can provide those who are currently incarcerated with tools, education, and resources that will allow them to “return back home as the [people] that they want to be.”

“Those who have walked through the fire of their own hell
and survived it tend to leave sparks of light wherever they go.”

~Omar Charif

over it.”

“I can use this time to become part of the solution and to rehabilitate and to position myself to get out of prison and integrate back into society. ...There’s so much that Project ECHO offers and I’m very grateful to be a part of it.”

Daniel Rowan, Project ECHO Senior Program Manager, and formerly incarcerated person, explains the power of the project for those inside NMCD’s facilities:

“I think for people who are incarcerated, there’s a misconception that you have to wait to have hope for your life and you have to wait to be of service to your community, when the reality is that prison is a community and that you can have hope today, right now. And this program is an opportunity to be of service now to your community, but not only to your community, to your family, so you can be ready when you get out of here.”

“The opportunities that I was given during my incarceration helped me discover and find my voice. That transformed my life and I was able to return to my family as the father and the brother and the son that I was meant to be. And that’s something

that I’m passionate about; I want people to have the same opportunities that I’ve had so that they can return back home as the person that they want to be.”

So, like Ambrosia, Mr. Rowan first encountered Project ECHO while incarcerated, and not only benefitted from the educational content presented to him there, but also went on to evolve from student to teacher, turning the whole experience into a new career.

If you are incarcerated in an NMCD facility and would like to learn more about the educational opportunities that Project ECHO offers, reach out to the Project ECHO Peer Mentors at your facility. And if you are formerly incarcerated, on probation, or on parole and would like to connect with a Community Peer Educator, speak with your Probation / Parole Officer, who will submit a referral on your behalf.

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FOR THE (VITAL) RECORD

NMCD Strives to Assist Returning Citizens in Obtaining Documents and Identification Necessary for Life on the Outside



Enjoying many of the benefits of post-incarceration life requires obtaining various forms of government-issued identification. NMCD is working to ensure that returning citizens have it in-hand the day they leave.

Trying to establish one's post-incarceration life without identification is like showing up at a concert without a ticket. Without that essential piece of paper, you're going to have to settle for overhearing a distant, muffled baseline from outside the arena rather than enjoying the full experience from a comfortable seat inside the venue.

Various aspects of the "full experience" of post-incarceration life include applying for and obtaining employment; cashing paychecks; finding safe and stable housing; opening utility accounts; establishing a bank account; applying for credit; establishing a credit score; qualifying for government assistance; paying taxes; driving (for those who are eligible), obtaining auto

insurance, and registering a vehicle; obtaining medical care; enrolling in educational programs; applying for a passport; traveling (for those who are not restricted from doing so due to their probation & parole terms) on both domestic and international flights and obtaining visas to visit other countries; voting; and much more.

And since the mission of NMCD's Reentry Division is to empower individuals to successfully transition out of the NMCD through pre-release and post-release coordination of care efforts, part of the division's duty is to help people walk out the door with identification and other necessary documents in-hand.



NM H.B. 4, enacted on March 30, 2023, makes returning citizens eligible to vote immediately upon their release from prison, restoring voting rights to citizens who are on parole and probation.

For this reason, each NMCD facility is equipped with a New Mexico Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) kiosk, from which REAL ID can be issued. This includes driver's licenses for those who qualify, and government-issued identification cards for others.

“...These [kiosks] ...are a way for inmates to be able to garner their driver's license [or state-issued identification card] before they leave the facility.”

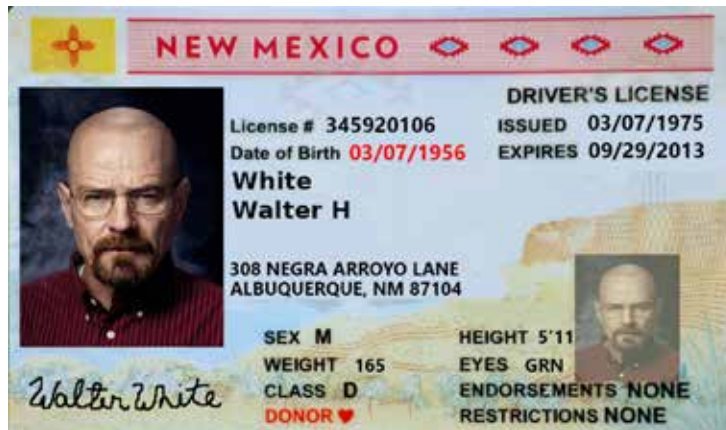
A REAL ID is a state-issued driver's license or identification card that meets minimum security standards set by the REAL ID Act of 2005. Beginning on May 7, 2025, REAL IDs will be required for a variety of day-to-day activities, including boarding domestic flights and accessing federal facilities, including TSA airport security checkpoints.

The kiosks have been installed as part of a joint project undertaken by the New Mexico Department of Motor Vehicles, the New Mexico Corrections Department, the New Mexico Governor's Office, and the New Mexico Secretary of State.

Patrick Lovato, former NMCD Programs Coordinator (retired), explains, “...these [kiosks] ...are a way for inmates to be able to garner their driver's license [or state-issued identification card] before they leave the facility.”

“The reason why it's so important is because the driver's license is often the most difficult piece of information for a [returning citizen to get] when

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they are releasing ...and often, the most vital in terms of being able to capture community services, or being able to apply for different jobs in the community.”

“The reason that this is so relevant is because, what we’re trying to do as a department is we’re trying to change the mindset of the returning citizens ...help them to understand [that] ...they have a lot of worth in society. ...We’re trying to instill that they’re still part of the community, and they still have worth in the community, and they still have something to contribute to the community.”

“Often, changing the mindset of the individual paroling or discharging is key. If we can help them to see more of their ...worth in society, then we can, in turn, have them make more positive choices, and have them make better choices for them and their family.”

“The integration of the [kiosks and] the programming that we [offer] ...intertwine and help to lead to the success of these inmates who are leaving the facilities and hopefully lead to a lower recidivism rate.”

“When they ...are getting ready to release, often there is a lot of anxiety that’s associated with it, a lot of unknowns. But by ...being able to produce ID’s ...we can have an inmate actually leave the [facility] with [their] REAL ID or driver’s license when ...they are released, and even get into a car - once they’re insured - and be able to drive to a job.”

These MVD kiosks, then, seem to serve as mini remote MVD offices that exclusively serve people incarcerated within NMCD facilities. And according to Mr. Lovato, that’s exactly the case.

“When the inmate first comes in, we sit them down, we take the picture, we ask them questions about what’s going to go on their ID ...and where it’s going to be mailed to if they are leaving within a short amount of time. If not, then we receive the ID’s [and] licenses in the mail [at the facility and] we save it for them ...and we give it to them upon release. ...It all occurs in real time, so the minute we take that picture and load the system with the information, the order is immediately placed for that plastic card.”

For many incarcerated people, the family environment in which they grew up did not encourage or support the acquisition of government-issued identification. A rare few of them were guided by their elders in how to obtain the identification that they would need to embark on their adult life. Many returning citizens, then, are not faced with renewing or reinstating expired identification that they had pre-incarceration, but rather obtaining it for the first time in their lives.

Mr. Lovato expands on this:

“A lot of these inmates never had an ID, so [if that is the case], what we’re doing is we’re entering first-



A returning citizen's success largely depends on “the cards they’re holding” on their way out the door.

time information into the system to be able to generate an ID.”

“It’s a game changer. ...We have the inmates coming down, taking the pictures [and] they’re genuinely excited to do it. This is something that they’ve never done before ...they’re relaying to us, ‘This is the one piece of information, this is the one document, this is the one thing I couldn’t get when I was out...’ And guess what; we’re doing it for them and they’re very excited to be able to be part of it and to be able to leave with an actual ID. And they usually ask us, once, twice, even three times, ‘So, I’m able to leave and you’re gonna actually give me an ID that I can have, I can put in my pocket?’ And [we tell them], ‘Yes! You can actually leave with a genuine state ID, you can put it in your pocket and use it as you need it.’”

“So, I’m able to leave and you’re gonna actually give me an ID that I can have, I can put in my pocket?”

So a piece of REAL ID – a driver’s license or state-issued identification card - is a good start, but there are a few other vital records that returning citizens will need if they truly want the “all access pass” to that concert mentioned previously. And NMCD Reentry Coordinators and Classification Officers are the ones who can help with that.

Cristal Quinonez, Reentry Coordinator at SNMCF, explains, “[Reentry Coordinators] work with helping inmates reintegrate back into society, provide them with resources, work on getting them their identification, social security card, birth certificate, and any type of resources that are going to help them out for when they leave here and reenter society.”

So, two other documents that NMCD Reentry Coordinators and Classification Officers often help returning citizens acquire are social security cards and birth certificates.

Eric Erickson, Interim MVD Coordinator for NMCD, explains, “The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides a pathway for inmates to request a replacement SSA card prior to release. Furthermore, if you are released and do not have your SSA card, you can go to myssa.gov, create an account, and request a replacement card on their website as well.”

A person’s birth certificate must be obtained from the vital records office of the state or territory in which he or she was born. Knowing the city and county in which an incarcerated person was born, a Reentry Coordinator or Classification Officer can assist with requesting a copy of a returning citizen’s birth certificate.

But what about voting? What does a returning citizen need in order to vote? And what role does the ability to vote play in the success of someone who is embarking on their post-incarceration life?



Obtaining state-issued identification is crucial for post-incarceration tasks such as cashing paychecks.

The New Mexico House Bill 4 Voting Act, enacted on March 30, 2023, ensures that all New Mexico inmates are not only issued REAL ID, but are also registered to vote upon their release from prison.

Prior to the passage of NM H.B. 4, people with felony convictions could not vote until they had completed their entire sentence, including parole and probation. While the bill text reads, “A voter is ineligible to vote while imprisoned in a correctional facility as part of a sentence for a felony conviction,” H.B. 4 makes returning citizens eligible to vote immediately upon their release from prison, restoring voting rights to citizens who are on parole and probation.

It is widely recognized that the ability to vote enables formerly incarcerated people to be more civically engaged in their communities.

Justin Allen, the Inclusive Democracy Organizer at Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ) New Mexico, explains the impact that the ability to vote has on returning citizens:

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“When people have a sense of belonging and connection to their communities, they’re less likely to repeat mistakes that put them in prison in the first place. We feel that civic engagement is critical to reducing recidivism.”

Mr. Lovato details the process of registering returning citizens to vote:

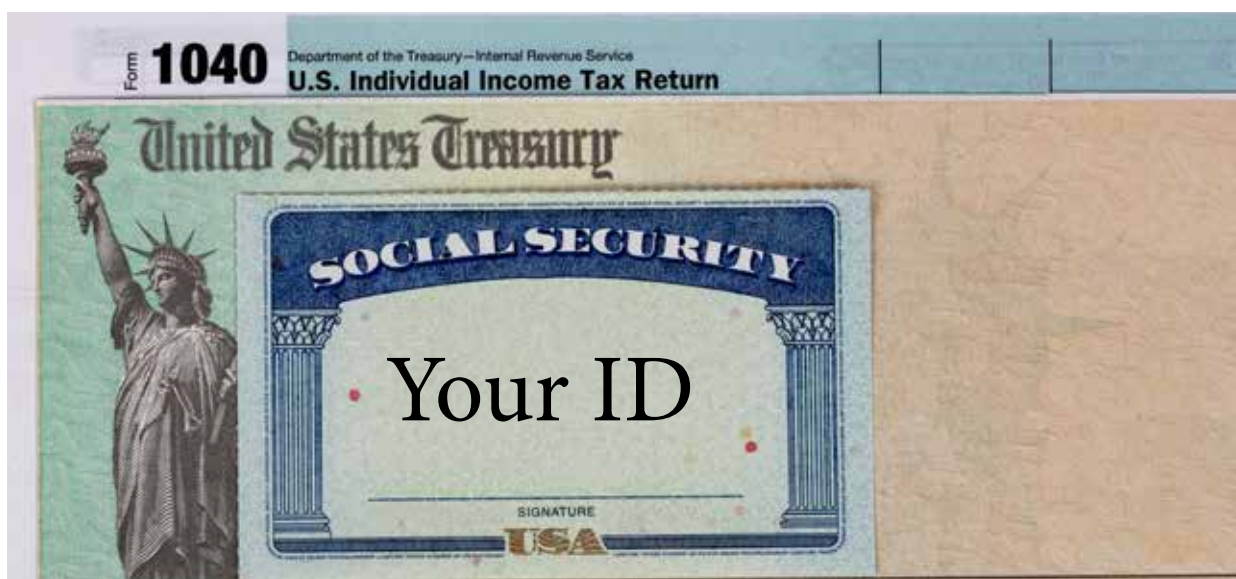
“We register them, they’re registered with the [New Mexico] Secretary of State’s office. If it’s within a window of 14 – 21 days, they will receive the voting card at the facility [before they leave] and ...we’ll give that to the parolee or inmate [who is] discharging upon release so that they can take it with them. ...We are giving them all the tools that they need to be able to go out there and ...garner a job, garner community services, and have that right to vote instilled again.”

Having identification in-hand as one reintegrates into their community makes all aspects of life on the outside more manageable and improves the likelihood of a formerly incarcerated person’s success. So, if you’re preparing to be released from an NMCD facility within the next six months and are not sure that you’ll have the identification and documents that you’ll need, be sure to reach out to your facility’s Reentry Coordinator or Classification Officer for help with obtaining that “all access pass” to the concert of life. Then prepare to sit back and enjoy the music.

PARALLELS



Patrick Lovato, former NMCD Programs Coordinator (retired), shows off the first driver's license issued to an NMCD inmate as part of NMCD's collaboration with New Mexico MVD, the New Mexico Governor's Office, and the New Mexico Secretary of State.



Becoming a law-abiding citizen post-incarceration involves earning a living and paying taxes, both of which require identification.

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NALOXONE “GRAB AND GO”

NMCD’s “Grab and Go” Naloxone Program Helps Prevent Opioid Overdose Deaths

The NMCD is committed, in a variety of ways, to reducing overdose deaths among justice-involved people. These efforts include educational offerings presented by Project Echo’s Peer Mentors inside NMCD facilities and Community Peer Educators in the probationer and parolee community. (See this issue’s article, “Peer Factor” for more on these programs.)

Another of NMCD’s approaches to reducing overdose deaths is the provision of an emergency opioid overdose reversal medication called naloxone: training all NMCD Correctional Officers and other facility staff in its use; stocking all facility “crash carts” with it; ensuring that all returning citizens are issued packages of it upon their release; and creating a naloxone “grab and go” program for those who are on probation and / or parole.

Wendy Price, Psy.D., NMCD Behavioral Health Outreach Administrator, explains, “Everyone that leaves [an NMCD facility]... - when they drop by pharmacy and they get their thirty days of meds - they’re supposed to also get a pamphlet talking about how to use the naloxone... as well as one box [of it, which includes two doses]. ...[And] at the Recovery Academies, they are given [naloxone] when they graduate.”

The anonymous “grab or go” program currently allows probationers and parolees to stop into one of seven NMCD Probation / Parole Offices (PPO’s) to help themselves to a box of naloxone, along with literature that details instructions for its effective use. Dr Price says, “It’s very low barrier; they don’t have to ask an officer...” The Department’s goal is for this “grab and go” program to eventually be expanded to all NMCD PPO’s across the state.



Having access to naloxone nasal spray at the scene of an opioid overdose emergency can mean the difference between life and death.

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Dr. Price reports that since the program was launched in May of 2024, over five hundred packets of naloxone (each of which contains two nasal spray doses) have been claimed.

Naloxone is the generic name for a medication that has also been marketed under the brand name Narcan. When used correctly, it can almost immediately reverse an opioid overdose. Opioids are a class of drugs that include prescription painkillers such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, as well as illicit drugs such as heroin and fentanyl.

While prescription opioids can be helpful in managing pain, they also carry a high risk of addiction and overdose. Opioid overdoses can cause respiratory depression, which can be fatal if left untreated. Naloxone works by blocking the effects of opiates on the brain and by restoring breathing.

Naloxone will only work if a person has opiates in their system. It has no known adverse effects and has no potential for abuse. Naloxone can be injected into a muscle, or, more commonly, administered via a nasal spray. Therefore, it can be quickly and easily administered by anyone who may be present at the scene of an opioid overdose emergency.

As early as fifteen years ago, research began demonstrating that distribution of naloxone to people without medical training was associated with a significant reduction in opioid overdose fatalities. One early study of opioid overdose prevention programs conducted by Doe-Simkins et al. in 2009, for example, found this to be the case.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from 1999 to 2019, nearly 500,000 people died from an opioid overdose in the United States. In 2019 alone, more than 50,000 people died from opioid-involved overdoses. The CDC reports that prescription opioid overdose deaths declined in 2019 (pre-pandemic), but deaths involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl continue to rise. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that there were more than 100,000 drug-involved overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2023.

When 100,000 American people die in one year due to a preventable phenomenon, that most certainly constitutes a national public health crisis. And the provision of naloxone seems to constitute at least one prevention measure for addressing this widespread tragedy.

Incarcerated community members not only suffer disproportionately from substance use disorder, but, within the two weeks following their release, they are also far more likely to die from an opioid overdose than the general public. Even a year after being released from prison, returning citizens are still more likely to die from an opioid overdose than the rest of the community.

Dr. Price points out that the use of naloxone has the potential to save lives and that people with substance use disorders, and specifically opioid use disorder, “...can’t get better if they’re dead.”

“Someone can’t get clean and become a productive member of society if they die [from an overdose].”

If you are formerly incarcerated, on probation, or on parole and believe that it would be helpful for you to have access to naloxone, speak with your Probation / Parole Officer or stop in at one of the following Probation / Parole Offices to pick up a pack as part of NMCD’s “grab and go” program:

- Albuquerque
- Santa Fe
- Española
- Las Cruces
- Anthony
- Roswell
- Carlsbad

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SERENITY NOW

Learning to Live in the Moment – Even While Incarcerated

In the article called “Peer Factor” in this issue of *Parallels*, Daniel Rowan, Project ECHO Senior Program Manager, and formerly incarcerated person, was quoted as saying, “I think for people who are incarcerated, there’s a misconception that you have to wait to have hope for your life and you have to wait to be of service to your community, when the reality is that prison is a community and that you can have hope today, right now.”

This got us thinking. Thinking about the fact that, when a person is incarcerated, it must be difficult to embrace living in the moment and focusing on enjoying the life that you’re living now. So much of one’s life during incarceration revolves around looking forward; forward to being released, forward to reuniting with family, forward to getting back to “real life.”

But the lyrics of a song by Colin Hay come to mind regarding this. It’s called “Waiting for my Real Life



Becoming immersed in artistic endeavors is just one way to achieve a “state of flow.”



Mindfulness can be experienced in every mundane moment, as we are reminded by the Zen Buddhist saying, “Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.”

to Begin.” “Any minute now, my ship is coming in./ I’ll keep checking the horizon. / And I’ll stand on the bow, and feel the waves come crashing. / Come crashing down, down, down on me. / And you say, ‘Be still my love.’ / ‘Open up your heart, let the light shine in.’ / But don’t you understand? / I already have a plan. / I’m waiting for my real life to begin.”

Of course, there’s nothing wrong with having a plan. Plans are essential to mapping out one’s future and eventually reaching one’s goal. After all, a goal without a plan is just a dream. But these lyrics remind us that if we keep putting off living



Meditating requires nothing but your mind and a willingness to allow it to be quiet, no matter where you may be.

until that one perfect instant when everything falls into place, we'll miss out on all of the moments, days, weeks, and years that transpire between now and that magic moment that may never arrive.

And as John Lennon famously said, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."

Chasing happiness and contentment, or "putting it off" until some elusive time in the future, can be like chasing that pot of gold at the end of a rainbow; if your vision is fixed on that spot where the rainbow seems to end, not only are you unlikely to actually find it, but you're likely to stumble along the way because you're not being mindful of each step of the chase.



Focusing on prayer can not only enrich one's spirituality but can also be a meditative and calming way to be present in the current moment.

The term “destination addiction” was coined by British psychologist Dr. Robert Holden in his 2011 book, “Authentic Success: Essential Lessons and Practices from the World’s Leading Coaching Program on Success Intelligence” (an updated version of his 2009 book, “Success Intelligence”).

In a blog post extracted from his book, Dr. Holden wrote:

“Do you live your life only to get to the end of it? Most people answer this question with a ‘no,’ but not everyone lives like they mean it. In the manic society that most of us experience, people exhibit a frantic, neurotic behavior I call ‘Destination Addiction.’ This addiction is a major block to success. People who suffer from Destination Addiction believe that success is a destination. They are addicted to the idea that the future is where success is, happiness is, and heaven is. Each passing moment is merely a ticket to get to the future. They live in the ‘not now,’ they are psychologically absent, and they disregard everything they have.”

“Destination Addiction is a preoccupation with the idea that happiness is somewhere else. We suffer, literally, from the pursuit of happiness. ...Our goal is not to enjoy the day, it is to get through the day. We have always to get to somewhere else first before we can relax and before we can savor the moment. But we never get there. There is no point of arrival. We are permanently dissatisfied. The feeling of success is continually deferred. We live in hot pursuit of some extraordinary bliss we have no idea how to find.”

In the previous passage, Dr. Holden warns of living in the “not now.” This is important for incarcerated people because they often find themselves not only dwelling on their future - when their “real life will begin” - or ruminating about their past - constantly inhabiting a place of regret and rehashing “should’a, could’a, would’a” scenarios. While self-reflection is a healthy endeavor that can help us evaluate past mistakes and avoid future ones, we must also learn to avoid living our lives in the past or the future – the “not now.”

So, the trick, it seems, is to keep one eye on the rear-view mirror and one on the road ahead while, all the while, enjoying the trip.

As the Buddha professed, “The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, nor to worry about the future, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly.”

The title of this article is a reference to a storyline from the 1990’s TV sitcom, *Seinfeld*, in which several of the characters start following the advice that one of them receives from a relaxation cassette, repeating a calming mantra whenever they encounter a stressful situation, and some of them, exasperated by certain particularly angering encounters, find themselves frantically shouting the phrase repeatedly.

“Serenity now!,” they would urgently exclaim whenever they would get worked up and needed to calm down, as if demanding that these “magic words” instantly erase their frustration. The scenes were humorously ironic, but the mantra itself is actually a great reminder that serenity only exists in this moment – not in the past and not in the future.

For those who are incarcerated, that means that it must be found within the confines of one’s incarceration.

While a prison sentence certainly hits the “pause” button on the life that one had been living pre-incarceration, it does not stop time. The moments, days, weeks, months, and even years that a person spends in prison will not be “credited back” to them once that prison sentence, or their life, ends. So, if one is to truly make the most of every moment of their time here on earth, they must be present in, and even learn to appreciate, savor, and enjoy, each bittersweet moment.

This concept is echoed in comments from Enrique, who, despite serving a life sentence, is using his time to dive into education and has earned a Master’s Degree in Business Administration and a Doctorate of Education. Enrique realizes that he may never be released from prison. But he also realizes that this is his life, for better or worse. He is where he is and so he might as well make the most of it, enrich his own mind, make a contribution to the lives of those around him, and be present in each moment of his existence.

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“That’s one thing that I try to emphasize to people that I come around ...my life experience showed me that education is valuable so I try to let people know here, whether I’m tutoring them in the classroom, or just walking in the yard with them, through conversation, I try to let them know that there’s value in education. ...There’s value in knowledge. When you learn things, you see things that you may not otherwise have experienced without it. And so, that’s a point of emphasis that I try to push to the people that I’m around.”

Another NMCD higher education student, tutor, and Project ECHO Peer Mentor, Jamaal, who is serving a life sentence plus some, says, “I wasted the first, you know, twenty-two and half, twenty-three years I was locked up just acting like a dummy, really, if I’m being honest. ...[But] everything I’m doing [now], it’s not like, ‘Oh, I hope this gets me out.’ It makes me feel better, and like, fulfilled, you know what I mean? ‘Cause, I figure, no matter what, if I never get out, like, I found somethin’ positive to do, and if I do get out, then this’ll help me be successful out there, so it’s not ...a waste of time at all. Like, no matter what, it’s a good thing. ...And ...I feel like, if I can help some of these guys ...with my experiences ...that helps them think twice about what they’re doing ...[then] that’s worth it too.”

For some, studying brings them into the present moment and helps them focus on the now. Others are able to achieve that presence of mind through artistic pursuits, whether that be drawing, painting, or creating hobby crafts. Nick, an incarcerated artist, finds that the meditative nature of drawing and painting is helpful in keeping him engaged in the present moment. He explains, “I paint art because of the happiness of those moments of work in which I am building a new thing. The best painting is not only a matter of a pair of eyes and a hand at work, but it is the accomplishment of a pulsing, vibrant being in the finest of time, having a wonderful experience...”

So, a big part of living in the now apparently involves appreciating education for education’s sake, art for art’s sake, learning for learning’s sake, or any enriching activity for its own sake. Not necessarily for future gain, but for the fulfillment that it provides in this moment.

Of course, the activities one focuses on while enjoying each moment will likely result in a positive outcome and pave the way to a better future. For

example, while Nick enjoys the moments during which he is painting, his efforts ultimately produce a beautiful piece of art. And Jamaal and Enrique, while flourishing in each moment of their studies, have diplomas to show for their focus. These endeavors, then, are a way for these men to not only live in each moment, but also to “do their future selves a favor.”

Some describe the state of mind that occurs when a person is totally immersed in an activity as “flow.” The state of flow can occur during a wide variety of tasks such as when a person is learning, being creative, or participating in a sport. When a person is in a flow state, they pay no attention to distractions and time seems to pass without any notice. They are completely immersed in the moment. In that way, the state of flow could be described as the polar opposite of being bored.

It almost seems that poet William Blake was referring to the concept of flow when he wrote his famous poem, *Auguries of Innocence*, in 1803.

“To see a World in a grain of sand,

And a Heaven in a wild flower,

Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,

And Eternity in an hour.”

Some other activities that often generate that state of flow are practicing yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and prayer.

Phoenix Savage, who, in conjunction with nonprofit Santa Fe Community Yoga, has offered a yoga, meditation, and mindfulness class to women incarcerated at Springer Correctional Center, comments on introducing incarcerated people to these concepts:

“I am connecting you to this process within yourself that is going to hopefully allow you to look at your options and figure out which options you should be taking.”

“And that’s where mindfulness comes in. And maybe to the average person [it seems like], ‘Hey, that’s just common thought.’ But here’s the reality: We don’t all get an equal chance at common thought.”



Focused activities such as cooking can help one achieve a "state of flow."

“...It is in these moments that a short phrase or prayer, maybe even a single word, is helpful to come back to that awareness.” ~ Reverend Kevin Everett

NMCD Religious and Volunteer Coordinator Reverend Kevin Everett, Doctor of Ministry, is one of numerous spiritual counselors employed by the NMCD. He, along with Chaplains at NMCD facilities across the state, strive to assist justice-involved people with not only exploring their faith-based beliefs, but also coping with the challenges of their incarceration through spirituality and mindfulness.

Reverend Everett points out, “Everyone experiences times of disorientation. I have observed that there are two extremes for those in prison, that make it hard to get a sense of peace or to practice presence. One is the physical noise of the dorm or pod, which distracts and interrupts. The other is experienced by those in a single cell... There, the noise of their own thoughts and anxieties keeps them from experiencing peace. It is in these moments that a short phrase or prayer, maybe even a single word, is helpful to come back to that awareness. For me, sometimes it is only the name Jesus.”

Reverend Everett also brings our attention to this quote from the writings of Father Richard Rohr:

“The contemplative secret is to learn to live in the now. The now is not as empty as it might appear to be or that we fear it may be. Try to realize that everything is right here, right now. When we’re doing life right, it means nothing more than it is right now, because God is in this moment in a non-blaming way. When we are able to experience that, taste it and enjoy it, we don’t need to hold on to it. The next moment will have its own taste and enjoyment.”

If you are currently incarcerated and would like to explore the ways in which mindfulness and “living in the now” can help you improve your quality of life, reach out to your facility’s Chaplain to discuss programming, activities, and reading materials that may help you do so.

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HELP & HOPE IN NEW MEXICO

988 Offers a 24/7 Lifeline for Emotional, Mental, or Substance Use Distress

For people who are on probation or parole, family members of justice-involved individuals, or anyone in the community who is in need of assistance, calling 988 can be a much-needed lifeline for emotional, mental, or alcohol and drug use support.

Offered as a free and confidential service by the Behavioral Health Services Division of the New Mexico Human Services Department, some of the reasons a person may call 988 include:

- Being worried about one's own safety or the safety of someone else
- Having a hard time managing strong emotions
- Feeling hopeless, confused, or angry
- Having suicidal thoughts
- Being worried about alcohol or drug use
- Needing help finding local community services
- Feeling the need to talk to someone about any behavioral health crisis

When a person calls 988, they will be prompted to press one to connect with the Veterans Crisis Line or press two to connect with the Spanish subnetwork. Callers who wish to be connected to a local crisis center or a national backup center (in the event that the local crisis center is unable to answer) should remain on the line.

More than a suicide hotline, 988 gives callers free and confidential access, in real time, to trained behavioral health professionals. Whether callers simply need someone to talk to, or need to connect with other resources, 988 provides an opportunity to discuss one's behavioral health crisis and find both immediate and long-term assistance. Those who need to connect with a trained behavioral health professional can also text "TALK" to 988 or



You need not be alone in struggling with emotional, mental, or substance use support. Behavioral health professionals are just a phone call, text, or online chat away.

visit 988lifeline.org/chat in order to engage in a live online chat. These options can be of value to people who may not have a private space in which they feel safe or comfortable speaking aloud.



Feeling hopeless, confused, or angry are all reasons why some find it necessary to call 988 for help.

If you are on probation or parole and are struggling with suicidal thoughts or emotional, mental health, or substance use distress, you can call 988 for free, anytime of the day or night. Trained Behavioral Health Professionals are available to help.

Call 988

Text “TALK” to 988

Visit 988lifeline.org/chat to live chat

Anyone. Any struggle. Anytime.

And if you are currently incarcerated and find yourself in need of support with emotional, mental health, or substance use distress, reach out directly to Behavioral Health staff within your facility.

988 es un línea de ayuda 24/7 para el sufrimiento emocional, mental o por consumo de sustancias. Es gratis y está disponible 27 horas al día, 7 días a la semana. Lamada 988, texto “TALK” to 988, o chat: conéctate a tu centro local de crisis por internet.

988lifeline.org/chat

Ayuda y Esperanza en Nuevo México.

Si actualmente está encarcelado y necesita apoyo con angustia emocional, de salud mental o por uso de sustancias, comuníquese directamente con el personal de Salud Conductual dentro de su centro.

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Note that some of the names of justice-involved people may have been changed for privacy, safety and / or security purposes, as well as out of respect to crime victims.

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