NEW MEXICO
CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

# PARALLELS

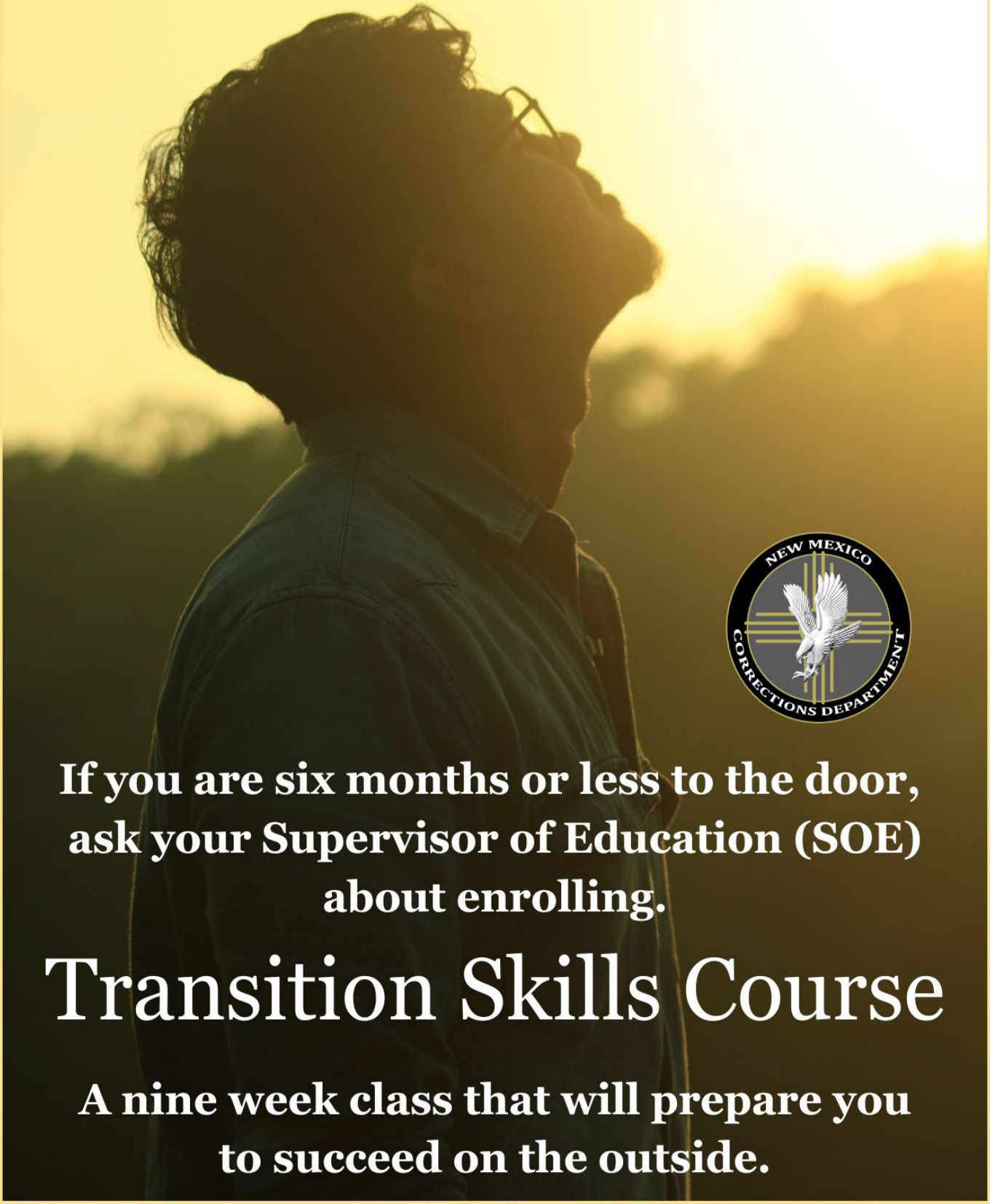
VOLUME 1 / EDITION 4
OCTOBER 2025



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- **If you are on probation or parole and find yourself in need of support, speak with your PPO about your challenges, call or text 988, or go to 988lifeline.org/chat/ for help via a live chat.**
- **And if you have a loved one who is not justice-involved but is in need of mental health support, let them know that they can also call or text 988 or go to 988lifeline.org/chat/ for help via a live chat.**





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**GET QUALIFIED TO WORK IN ANY COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE!**

**WALK OUT THE DOOR WITH A NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE IN HAND!**

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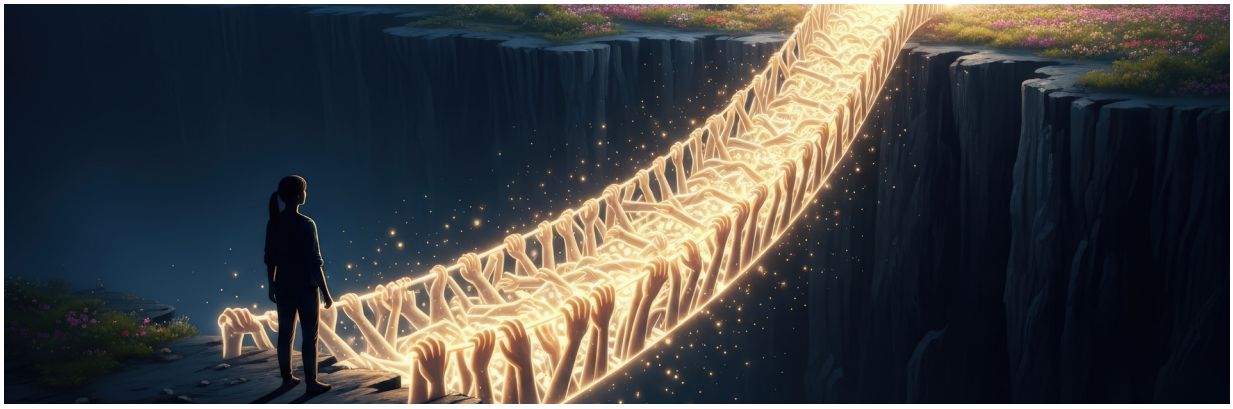




**ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR OF EDUCATION (SOE) HOW TO GET STARTED!**

# "CATCHING THE CHAIN" PART 4

**Probation and Parole Supervision**



NMCD's Probation and Parole staff work to help returning citizens "bridge the gap" on their reentry journey.

**This is the last installment of a four-part article series that has been featured in Parallels over the course of this past year discussing the various components of serving and completing a prison sentence. In other words, we've been attempting to answer the question, "What does the process of getting out of prison look like?"**

The answer, as we have discovered and shared, is that getting out of prison begins on one's first day in, and it involves the contributions of dozens of NMCD staff members as well as, of course, the commitment and determination of incarcerated people themselves.

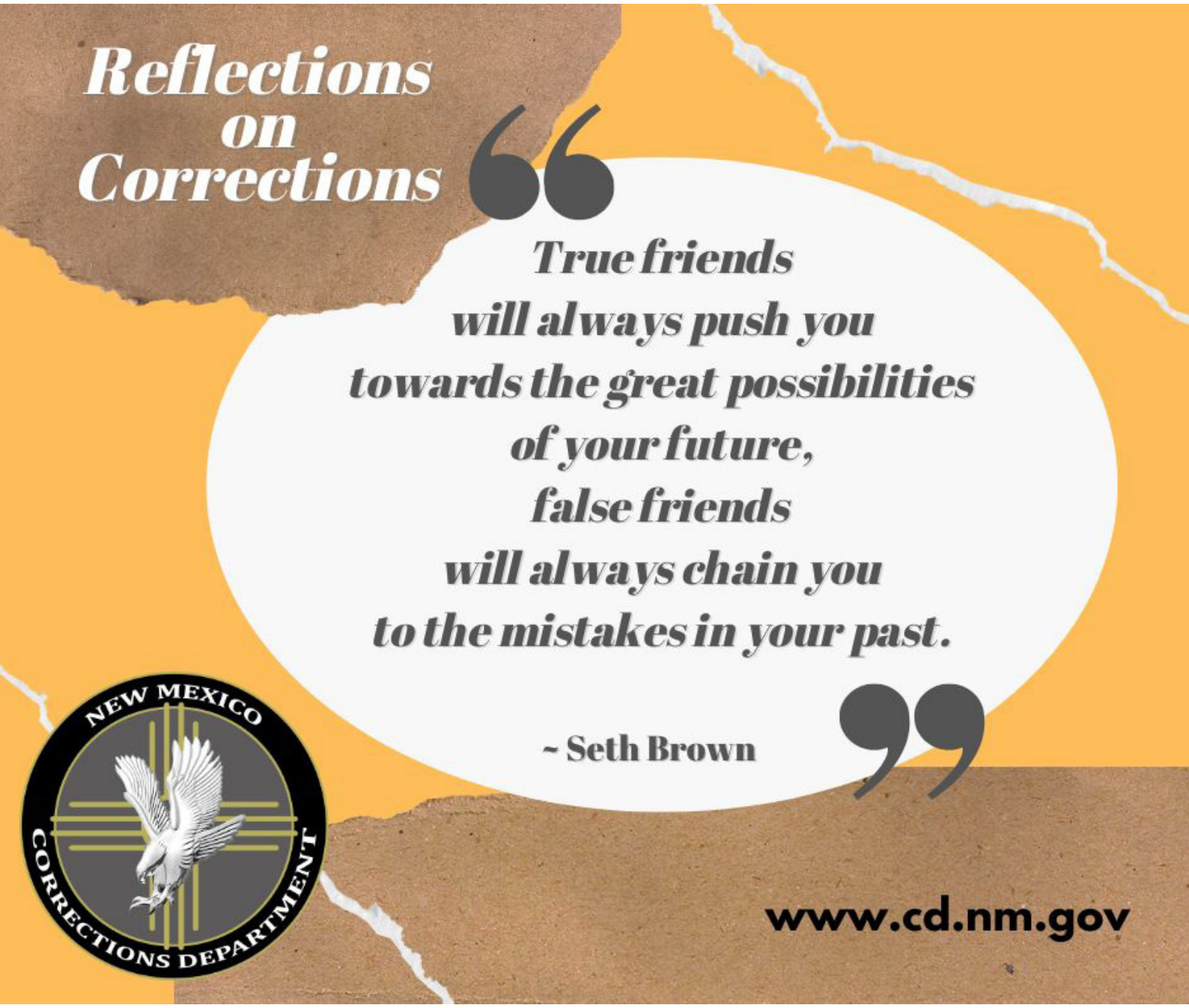
The real-life process, unlike in the movies, cannot be distilled down to one euphoric moment when a person strolls out the front gate, hops into a friend's car, and rambles off into the sunset. Rather, it involves months or years of self-reflection, redirection, programming, and rehabilitation.

It's a lot more like the metamorphosis that a caterpillar goes through on its way to becoming a butterfly than a bolt of lightning or a clap of thunder. Metamorphoses are slow, measured processes that cannot be rushed and that remind us that most often in life, the only way out is through. If caterpillars could simply close their eyes for a moment and open them back up to discover that they had been instantly transformed into butterflies, they might choose that "easy way out" over the grueling transformational process that Mother Nature has assigned them. But then, they might not fully appreciate their beautiful new incarnation. Having earned their new wings by being literally liquified and reformed in a new image ensures that they will never take that transformation for granted. The struggle, the time, and the discomfort are what make the metamorphosis real.

Parts One, Two, and Three of this article series explored Behavioral Health, Adult Education, and Career Technical Programming, respectively.

So once an incarcerated person has participated in Behavioral Health Programming; hopefully gathered the tools they need to master their addictions; completed their mandated educational requirements; perhaps earned a Career Technical certificate; and completed their sentence, then they're finally ready to play out that magical movie moment in which they walk out the gate and leave the criminal justice system in their rear-view mirror forever, right? Well, not exactly.

Rather than a "clean break," as might be depicted in the movies, most people who are released from custody will continue to be involved with corrections for some time in the form of community supervision – probation and / or parole. In fact, every person who leaves prison must serve a term of parole. Instead of bolting out of the prison gate and embarking on the "Tour de France," most people cautiously pedal out with training wheels keeping


Reflections on Corrections
True friends will always push you towards the great possibilities of your future, false friends will always chain you to the mistakes in your past.
~ Seth Brown
NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT
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them upright. And as most of us were told as kids, training wheels are nothing to be embarrassed about. They are there to keep us from getting hurt; to give us some practice under safe circumstances as we build our confidence and gain the skills we need to eventually rely on our own balance and ability.

In Part Four, we are now focusing on probation and parole supervision, which is often the bridge that returning citizens must traverse from the inside to the outside. Since so many incarcerated people do transition from prison to the community via probation and parole supervision, it's important for justice-involved people to understand not only what community supervision is, but also, how to make the most of the resources, opportunities, and assistance that it offers.

It might be helpful here to take a look at the definitions of probation and parole.

Probation is a sentence ordered by the Court allowing the offender to remain in the community under the supervision of the Court through the guidance of a Probation Officer. Conditions are set by the Court that the person must meet.

Parole is a conditional release from prison that allows a person to serve the rest of a sentence in the community after serving a portion of the sentence in prison. Conditions are set by the Parole Board that the person must meet. In New Mexico, someone can be ordered to both types of supervision.

Also important to understand is the definition of a Parole Plan. This is a plan created before a parolee is released from prison that outlines where the parolee will live, his or her connection to the community into which he or she will release, what conditions are recommended to remain on parole, and what treatment or services the parolee may need in the community. The plan is created by Corrections Department staff and the parolee during a Reentry Committee meeting, reviewed, and then approved or disapproved by the Parole Board.

NMCD Reentry Division Deputy Director Haven Scogin explains how probation and parole supervision play a role in the reentry process for returning citizens:

"When someone is getting ready to exit from a facility, there's a lot of nervousness and apprehension about what to expect upon returning to the community. And, in all essence, most of the people who go into our prison system in the State of New Mexico are going to be released at some point, and how we work toward that release, and the success of that release, really does have an impact on their ability to stay in the community and to be successful. So, a lot of the things that we work on with a lot of our population, while they're still in the facility, is working on trying to get them identification cards, trying to find a safe and stable



Imagining life on the other side of one's prison sentence can be difficult, but parole supervision can help ease the "culture shock" of returning to the outside world.



Rebuilding one's post-incarceration life can seem like a lonely and daunting endeavor, but NMCD Probation and Parole Officers (PPO's) are available to offer support, guidance, and supervision to help ensure success.

**location for them to live upon release, finding a support system, working on family reunification if that's possible, and once they are released into the community, really doing wrap-around supportive services for those clients while they're on probation and parole supervision in the community to provide the necessary treatment, counseling services, housing stability, and other needed resources like - basic things - food, clothing, and things that they may need for getting a job in a specific field."**

**Deputy Director Scogin, whose past roles within NMCD have included that of a Probation / Parole Officer (PPO), discusses how having a PPO on one's side when reintegrating back into the community can be powerfully supportive and helpful:**

**"You have to want to make the change. You have to choose it. And choosing sobriety is hard. Saying, 'No' to criminal behavior is difficult when every friend you've ever had is still actively involved in that. These are choices that each of these individuals has to make on their own, and they have to decide. But it helps – it makes it easier – to make those decisions when you have that person standing next to you and supporting you. ...How can we ensure that you have that wrap-around care so that when you step out, you feel stronger? You feel emboldened to be making better choices, and doing something different for your life?"**

**Wendy Price, Psy.D., NMCD Behavioral Health Outreach Administrator, reiterates how beneficial the assistance of a PPO can be for returning citizens:**

**"I think the number one thing is the idea of using your PPO as a resource. Individuals think of their PPO as just the person you go in to see, and you do your UA's (urine analyses), and they ask you if you've made your appointments, and you say, 'Yes,' right? But we have a ton of resources available for people who are reentering the community out there. We have substance abuse providers, we have inpatient hospitals, we have family and group and individual therapy, anger management programs, domestic violence programs, halfway houses; we even give out hygiene kits to individuals. ...If someone gets a job but they need steel-toe boots and they can't afford them, we can find a way to get them steel-toe boots."**

**Dr. Price points out some important concepts that are explored further in this issue's article titled, "Hedge Your Bet with a Safety Net." Namely, the importance of viewing one's PPO as an ally and prioritizing clear and open communication with him or her:**

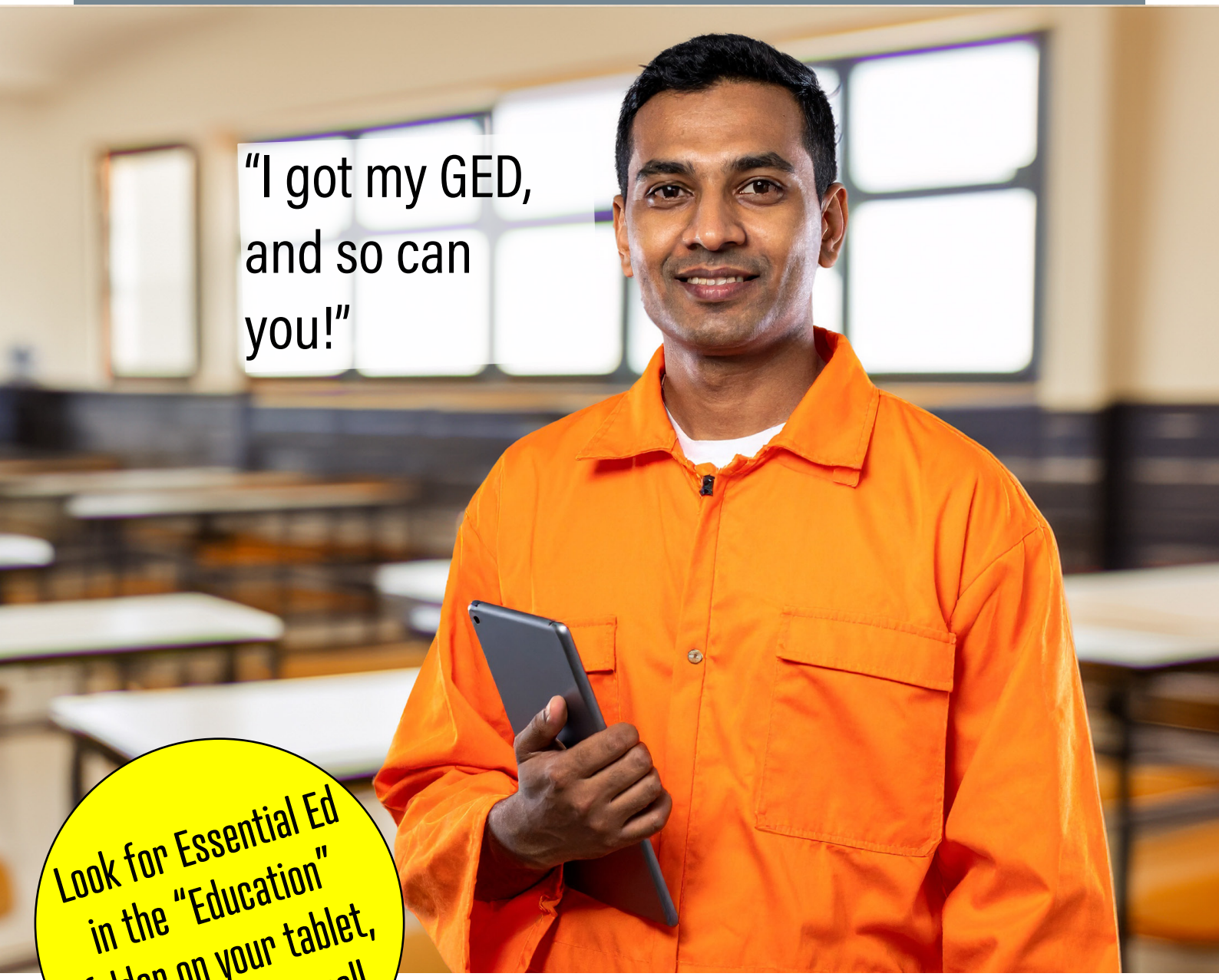
**"It is super important to think of your PPO as a resource and someone who works jointly with you to get things done, rather than a barrier. They can be a conduit for you for amazing things. ...You just need to be able to say what you need help with."**

**"Creating new behaviors and habits is hard. ...It's**

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hard to develop new ways of living. But we are here to try to assist as much as we can. But people have to ask for it. We can't read their minds. ...It's really up to individuals to tell us what they need."

Dr. Price goes on to explain that probation and parole supervision is also an important tool in ensuring continuity of care as people transition from incarceration to living in the outside community:

"In corrections, we are very often the first ones to diagnose major medical and major mental health issues, because our population just has not prioritized that, or been able to access it for whatever reason. We are the first people to really take care of them in that way and so we need to just make sure that we can continue to provide that care during their incarceration as well as during their transition back to normal life."

Supporting the continuation of returning citizens' treatment, whether that be for mental health conditions, substance use disorders, or physical illnesses, is just one of the numerous ways in which probation and parole supervision can help justice-involved people actually lift off from the runway and take flight toward a bright future ahead.

Since all justice-involved people are unique and have specific needs, probation and parole supervision will look different for each person. Some returning citizens will be on what's called standard supervision. But others may require more intense assistance (due to being high risk and high needs), which is provided by a component of the NMCD Probation and Parole Division (PPD) called Community Corrections. Some of the probationers and / or parolees under the care of Community Corrections, for example, have what is known as a "dual diagnosis" (meaning that they have been diagnosed with both a mental illness and a substance abuse issue). Sex offenders also require a customized variety of supervision and so dedicated Sex Offender Units and Officers have also been established within NMCD's PPD.

Community Corrections programs offer close supervision and supportive treatment services for probationers and parolees who are considered as having a high set of needs that, if not met, place them at a higher risk for reoffending.

People who are supervised by Community Corrections tend to have chronic needs such as mental health diagnoses, homelessness, severe medical conditions, and multiple unsuccessful attempts at substance abuse treatment, among others. The average duration of Community Corrections supervision is six to twelve months, but could be longer based on the client's needs.

Yet another aspect of probation and parole supervision includes various Community



NMCD PPO's are equipped with an extensive list of resources and are prepared to connect returning citizens with whatever they need to succeed in their new life.

# HEAVY EQUIPMENT CERTIFICATION

# 2025



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**Ask Education How To Enroll In This In-Demand Class!**




For many returning citizens, being connected with outpatient mental health and / or substance abuse treatment is an essential component of their reentry and recovery journey.

**Corrections residential programs in the form of the recovery academies.**

**NMCD's Men's and Women's Recovery Academies offer intensive substance abuse treatment and mental health services to parolees who need extra support transitioning from incarceration to living in the community, as well as for parolees and probationers who are facing violations, as an alternative to incarceration.**

**The Men's Recovery Academy and the Women's Recovery Academy offer substance abuse and mental health treatment in two tracks: substance abuse / mental health and mothers seeking on-campus reunification with their children.**

**Deputy Director Scogin discusses some of the advantages that inpatient treatment programming offers to participants:**

**"All of the residents of the Men's Academy have a meeting every afternoon where they talk about and process through their day of treatment services. They're discussing things that were frustrating, they're discussing things that they're struggling with, they're discussing ways to cope with things that are coming up in counseling. It's a way for them to have a family community to build each other up and provide support. All of them are here for the same purpose: to get their lives back."**

**"Getting sober is hard. Stopping an addiction that you have is really difficult and having a community that's living together and walking with you and supporting you matters more than anything and that's what inpatient treatment programming is."**

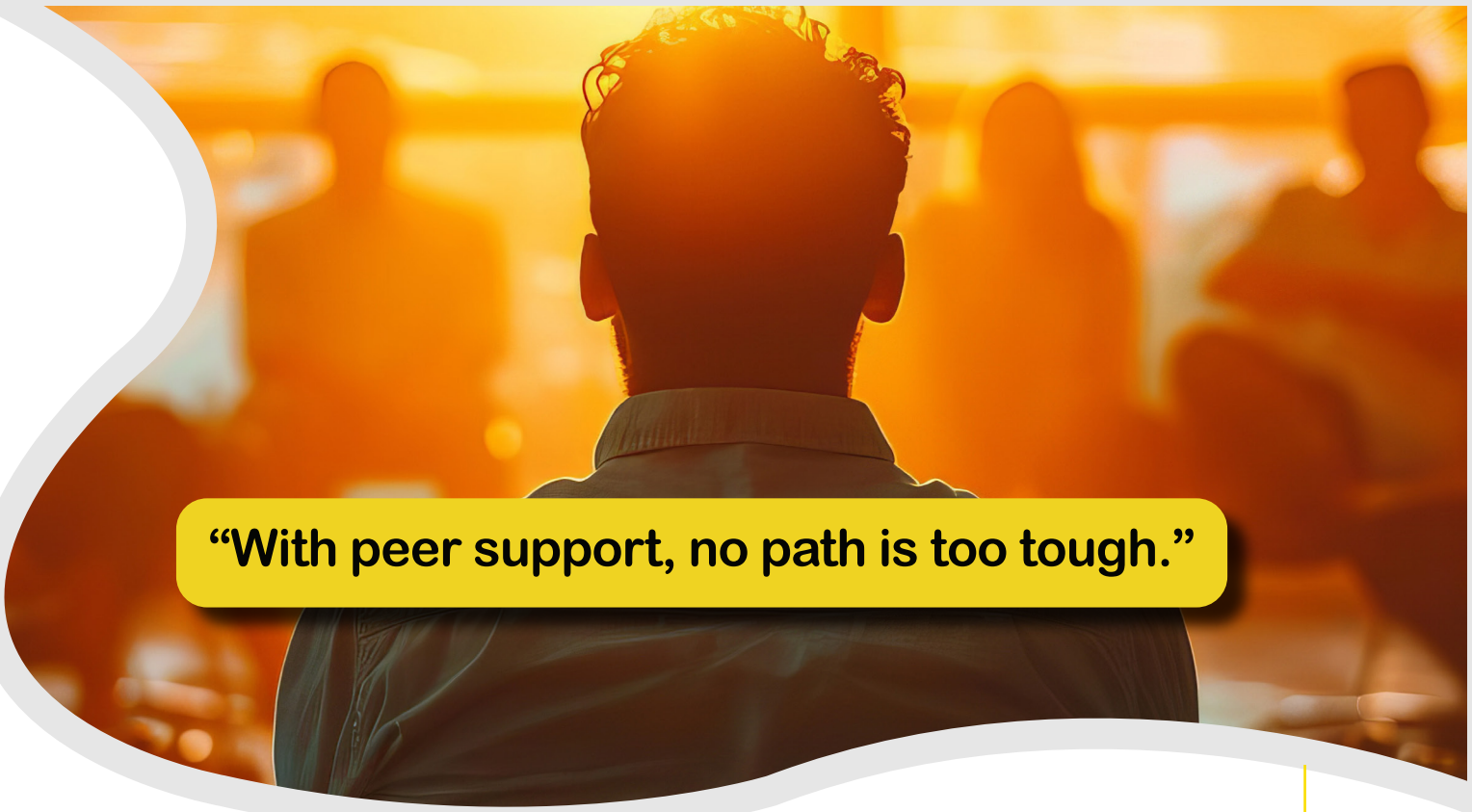
**Inpatient treatment, while not appropriate or required for every justice-involved person, can be transformative for those who need it. While most incarcerated people hope to jump right back into "normal life" (and some certainly do), the reality is that many returning citizens require a bit more support and a residential treatment program can provide the transitional environment that they need. Needing that extra support is nothing to be ashamed of.**

**Taking advantage of such an opportunity is simply another way to empower oneself in reimagining and rebuilding a new, sober, post-incarceration life.**

**Find out more by listening to the free podcast on your tablet, located in the “Information” folder.**




Inside Voices S2E8




# CPSW PROGRAM

**Do you have 3 or more years in recovery?**

**Do you currently serve in a peer role?**

**Do you have a passion for helping support others?**

## Train to Become a Certified Peer Support Worker.

**Contact Behavioral Health to learn more about this program.**

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New Mexico Credentialing Board
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OPRE
New Mexico Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement

NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

# HEDGE YOUR BET WITH A SAFETY NET

## Community Supervision Can Support Returning Citizens on Their Way Back to Regular Life



For returning citizens, there should be no shame in utilizing the "safety net" that probation and parole supervision can help provide.

If you've ever been to an acrobatic show like the ones produced by Cirque du Soleil, you've seen the performers gracefully spin themselves from rigging, athletically leap from one platform to another, elegantly balance on tightropes, and flawlessly catch their performance partners who have faithfully leapt toward them from a swinging bar. Perhaps the most amazing part of a show like this is not that they do all of this many dozens of feet up in the air, but that they make it all look so easy.

You can be sure, however, that regardless of how effortless these feats may appear, these acrobats didn't master these stunts overnight. And you can also be sure that early on, when they were first learning how to perform these amazing routines, they used a net.

There's no reason to be embarrassed or ashamed of needing a safety net when you're first learning to do something. Just as kids need training wheels on their bikes until they've figured out how to balance and floaties on their arms when they're first learning to swim, adults too can benefit from a little protective help as they learn to master a new skill.

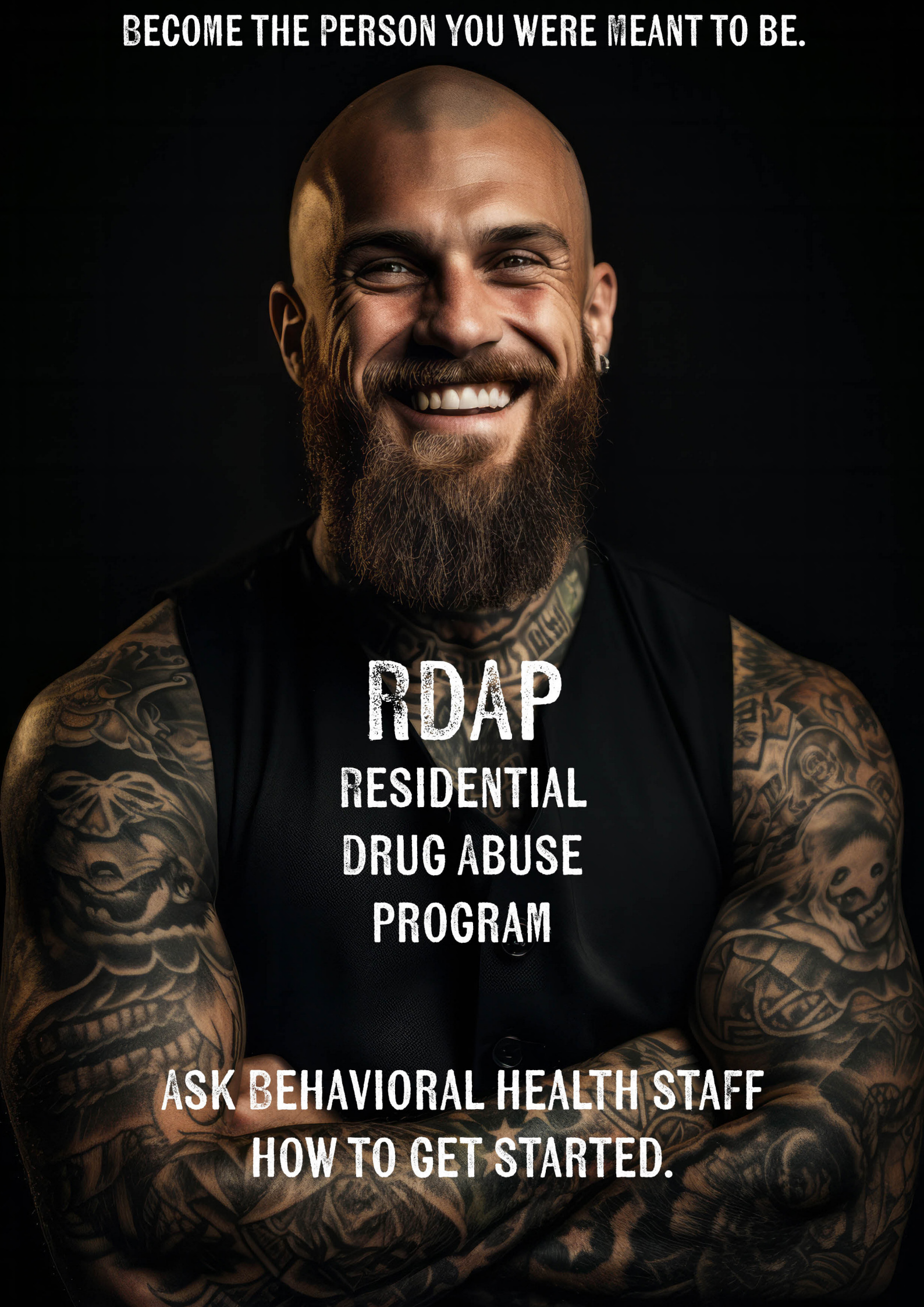
In the world of returning citizens, it can be helpful, then, to think of your probation / parole supervision as a kind of safety net: not something that you'll need forever, but something that will protect and support you as you master the new skill of living your post-incarceration life. Just as an aspiring acrobat who refuses a safety net could easily suffer a career-ending injury before they ever get in front of an audience, a returning citizen who doesn't utilize the support provided by community supervision could potentially stumble and fall.

The key to embracing this mindset – and receiving the maximum benefit from your supervision – is to think of your Probation / Parole Officer (PPO) as a supportive partner rather than a road block or adversary. PPO's, rather than wanting to see people return to prison, are actually committed to supporting the people they supervise and doing everything they can to help ensure that their clients don't wind up back inside.

As Region I Probation / Parole Officer II Lydia Duarte explains:

"It's very important for people to have the right resources so that they can succeed. So, if you have a person who went to prison or who is under supervision for theft because of drug use, and they don't have the right resources – the right counseling, the right treatment providers, the right substance use providers – if they don't have the right people, the right team – then they are at risk of returning to

BECOME THE PERSON YOU WERE MEANT TO BE.



# RDAP

## RESIDENTIAL DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM

ASK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF
HOW TO GET STARTED.

## "We've all done this – created our mix-and-match families, our homemade safety nets." ~David Leviathan

those old ways. So, what we're trying to do is give them the right resources, the right tools to help them stay out of trouble."

Officer Duarte goes on to explain that, despite PPO's making decisions that may seem punitive or unkind, those decisions are always rooted in a desire – and responsibility – to help people succeed. Much like the rules and boundaries that a manager or mentor sets for their employee, the guidance that PPO's provide to their clients is meant to protect them and steward them toward their own maturity, responsibility, success, fulfillment, and eventual independence.

"We're the ones who kind of meet them where they are and then figure out what will fit for them. Even when it comes down to the Parole Plan, when people come out of prison or they're trying to parole out, going to the house that they're asking to go to - if the house is not a good environment - we don't accept that house because ...it will put them in a chaotic situation. So, we always try to find the right environment for them so that they can succeed."

Your Parole Plan, which Officer Duarte mentions, is a plan that's created before you're released from prison, which outlines where you'll live, your connection to the community into which you'll release, recommended supervision conditions, and what treatment or services you may need in the community. The plan is created by Corrections Department staff, along with your own input, during a Reentry Committee meeting. It's then reviewed and approved or disapproved by the Parole Board.

Officer Duarte continues to explain some of the challenges of helping people understand that PPO's have a responsibility to provide practical and honest feedback and encouragement:

"Like I tell everybody who has drug or substance abuse issues, I'm not going to judge them for the past because I do not know what happened in their past or what made them get into substance abuse. So, the most challenging part is to give them the self-confidence that, yes, they can do it. That, yes, there's going to be stress in life, there are going to be situations that are going to push them to want to go use because that's their way of coping, but what's important is having the self-confidence that they can deal with that stressful situation at that moment sober. And once they deal with one stressful situation – the loss of a family member, for example – sober, then they can face a lot of other things sober."

Wendy Price, Psy.D., NMCD Behavioral Health Outreach Administrator, agrees that PPO's are a powerful resource and a valuable asset to the people they supervise.

Dr. Price wants you to understand that your PPO is eager to connect you with the resources that you need, but reminds you to realize that PPO's are not mind-readers:

"Your officer doesn't know you need something unless you tell him or her that you need it. So, it's really important to have a good working relationship with your officer and be willing to tell them, 'I need substance abuse treatment,' 'I need transportation to my job,' 'I need steel toe boots in order to keep my job,' 'I need hygiene products.' And so, it's just really important to make sure you have a cooperative relationship with your officer."




Many returning citizens are surprised to find that the relationship that they develop with their PPO is what finally helps them learn to love themselves and make more empowering choices.

Of course, sometimes justice-involved people don't even know what they need or what to ask for. Post-incarceration life can be quite overwhelming and often returning citizens "don't know what they don't know." For this reason, PPO's are usually quite adept at recognizing needs perhaps even before you do. However, that doesn't mean that PPO's have a crystal ball. You have to take an active role

# Hit the Road with NMCD's CDL Program!

**"Thank God for the Road"**
**by The Flatlanders**

There's the sky, here's the earth
This is the road for all it's worth
It's a ribbon, it's a river, it's a wave
It's an arrow and it's a snake
It's asleep and it's awake
And it stretches from the cradle to the grave

Thank God for the road
And the hubcaps and the headlights
And the mudflaps and the taillights
And the dim lights and the bright lights

Thank God for the road
And the miles that come between us
The little rains that come to clean us
The guardian angels who have seen us

Thank God for the road
No matter what it takes to drive it
Life and death can seem so private
Still you think you will survive it
Thank God for the road

There's the sky, here's the earth
This is the road for all it's worth
It's a ribbon, it's a river, it's a wave
It's an arrow and it's a snake
It's asleep and it's awake
And it stretches from the cradle to the grave

**Ask your SOE how to apply!**

in recognizing what problems you need to solve, and even if you don't know what solutions might be available, you must bring those concerns to your PPO to discuss and explore possible resolutions.

While the support that PPO's provide is not exactly an "ask and ye shall receive" guarantee, it is true that you can rest assured that your PPO will always do everything within their power to try to meet your needs. Even when meeting those needs requires a bit of creativity and a lot of resourcefulness, you can count on your PPO to rise to the challenge at hand.



The pain and confusion of recovering and reentering society can be overwhelming. PPO's are often able to help returning citizens recognize what type of help they need even before they know it themselves.

Special Programs PPO Luis Hernandez explains how, from the moment his relationship with a new client begins, he is assessing their needs and figuring out ways to meet them:

"Once somebody gets out of prison, they come into my office, I tell them what to expect as far as their parole or probation or whatever they may be sentenced to, and typically, I'll ask them, 'Do you have your birth certificate? Do you have your Social Security card?' If they don't, I'll help them get those. I'll ask them, 'What do you need from me? What do you need to keep from going back to prison?' And if it's within my ability, I'll help them. I'll point them in different directions; we have substance use resources; we have alcohol abuse resources for people dealing with those kinds of issues; if they need to find a place to live, we have financial resources that can help them in the short term."

"I like having conversations with people and I like trying to get to the bottom of what the issue is so that I can help them by having a better understanding of them. One of the biggest challenges is getting them employed, getting them in working roles. I think it's important for them to get jobs because it helps them feel normal, and it helps them financially, and people find a self-worth in doing something that they like or something meaningful."

"We have to make sure that we're there teaching them what it is to be a citizen and at least give them those building blocks to get their lives back again. Some people see us as a kind of punisher, like we're there to keep people incarcerated, or to treat them badly because of whatever they did wrong, and that's just not the case."

Quinn Slade, Region II PPO, echoes the idea that PPO's are not "out to get" their clients, but rather hope to help them stay out of custody:

"The biggest misconception about Probation / Parole is that we just want to put everybody in jail. I think that's far from true. I think we want to help people. At some point in time, they will get out of prison. And either they're going to be successful or they're not, and we would much rather see people be successful, productive members of society than back incarcerated."

PPO Sectrina Romero works Intake for Region II and voices her satisfaction with being able to assist probationers and parolees:

"I love helping people. They come in from Intake and sometimes they're very overwhelmed; maybe they've never been on probation before, and so to provide hygiene packets, to give them instructions on where to go, or to just make them feel a little more comfortable is important to me. Our main concern is rehabilitation and keeping the community safe, of course."

The fact is that authentically caring about someone involves a commitment to that person's growth and well-being. Sometimes, the best action is to challenge and guide someone toward better behavior and choices; to hold a mirror up to them and help them see how their own poor choices are preventing their growth.

By holding a person accountable, you're saying to them that you know that they're capable of making better choices and becoming a better person. Understanding this is the first step toward respecting your PPO and appreciating why they expect accountability from you.

As Region II PPO Carla East, who is with the Sex Offender Unit, reiterates, PPO's have a dual responsibility to their clients as well as to the public:

"We're part law enforcement and part case workers as well. That's something that we have to balance in our job. Probation Officers are human; we are trying our best as much as we can to ensure the public safety, number one, and also to rehabilitate our clients. And there have been plenty who have moved on with their lives – they're not on supervision anymore – and they're doing great ...and I do think we play a part in that and we do have an impact on them."

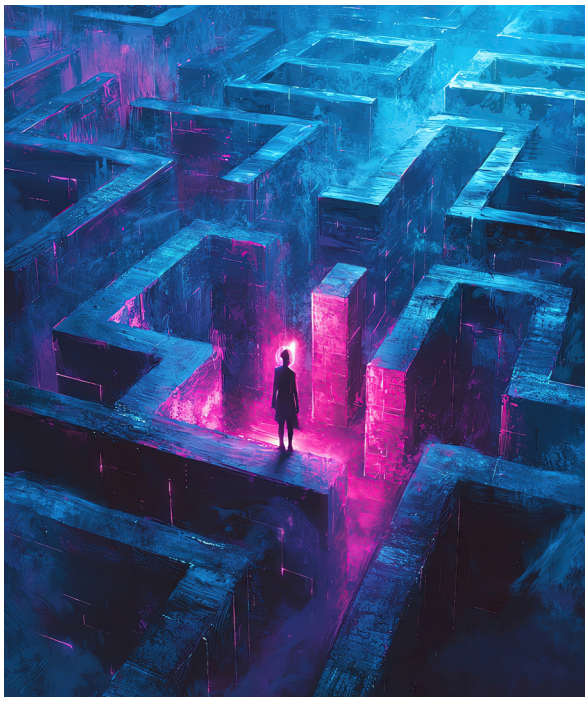
PPO II Joseph Sedillo with the Community Corrections Special Programs Unit is responsible for supervising probationers and parolees who have a dual diagnosis (both a mental health condition and a substance abuse issue). He emphasizes the fact that PPO's are more of a coach than anything:

"Everybody thinks, 'Oh, that's a cool job; you get to tell people what to do. You get to put people in jail.' No. That's the myth, I mean, a lot of it is getting to know these people. You become part of their lives and so you've got to have a lot of intestinal fortitude – you're gonna see them at their best, you're gonna see them at their worst. Being in the Special Programs Unit, my phone is always on. You know, even if I'm off, I'll check and see, 'Did somebody call? Did somebody have an emergency?' Because it's not my emergency, but it's their emergency, and if they're calling me versus doing a new crime or using drugs, you know, I'll try to talk them down the best I can."

"We're real people too. We're not robots. Most of us are very unique individuals, not run by some dogma or preconceived notion that everybody's a criminal and that they need to go back to prison. Everybody deserves a chance. And just like them, we deserve a chance too; the opportunity to work with these folks."

As attributed to Tom Landry, "A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear. Who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be." This quote reiterates Officer Sedillo's comparison of PPO's to coaches, and it says a lot about the role that PPO's play in the lives of the people they supervise.

It can be helpful to realize that PPO's complete a tremendous amount of education and specialized training in order to pursue and advance in their careers. While their role involves supervising their clients and enforcing their clients' sentences, it's important to avoid minimizing one of the most significant components of their job: supporting and encouraging their clients. By and large, PPO's love their job because it involves helping people.



PPO's are charged with the challenging task of helping returning citizens accept accountability and make choices that will support their growth and recovery.

Region I Probation / Parole Officer Jordan Trujillo explains why he finds his profession to be so satisfying:

"This work is meaningful for me because there's a rewarding aspect to this job: helping the people on my caseload meet their goals, get off of drugs, find a new meaning for life."

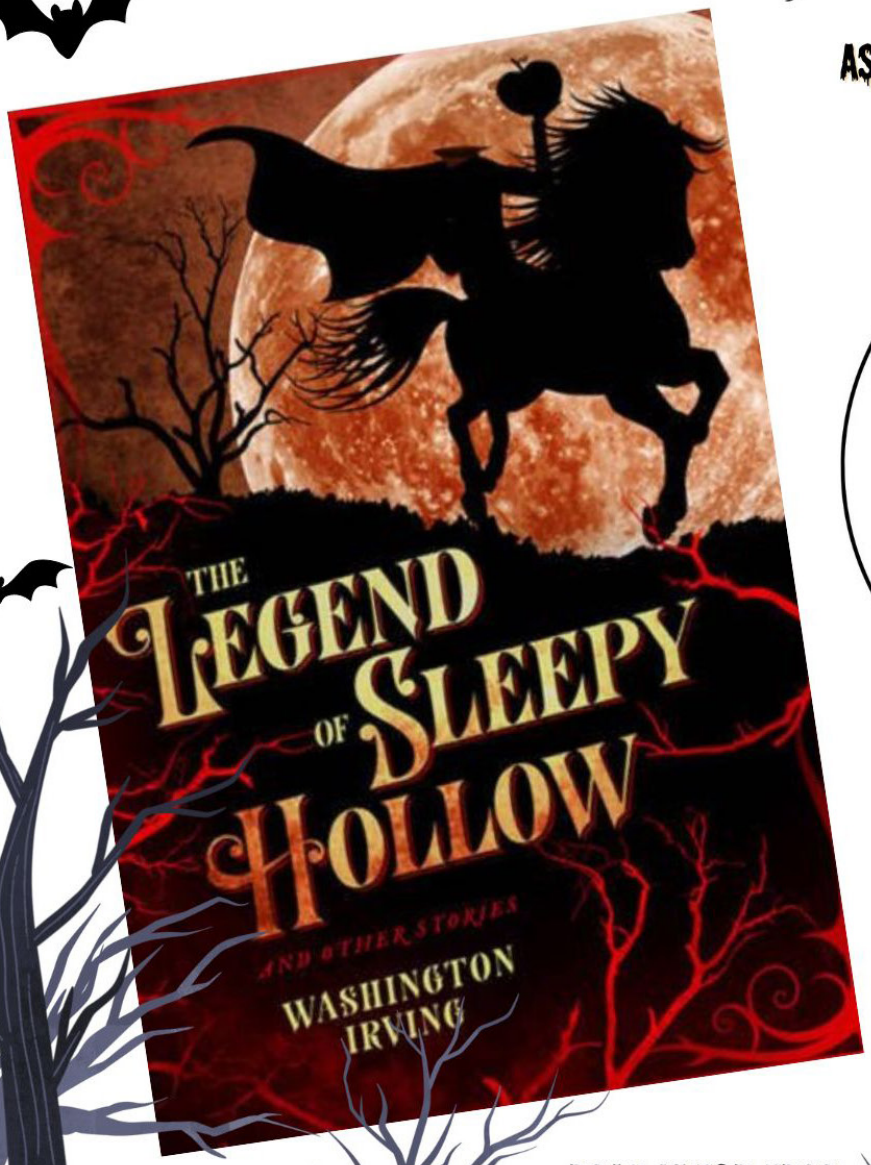
Region II Special Programs Manager Wes Hatley reinforces this:

"We assist people in their rehabilitation. We help them with resources, services, motivation, and encouragement, but there's also a compliance aspect to probation and parole supervision. The vast majority of my staff work with our clients on a daily basis for alternative solutions so that we can help them remain in the community, maintain employment, and eventually lead a crime-free

# New Book Club Selection:

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## by Washington Irving




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lifestyle. My officers and supervisors spend a ton of time locating resources, housing, employment, and other positive opportunities for our clients to be successful."

"We need to keep trying; we need to keep giving them the resources, the encouragement, the guidance, the advice so that they will eventually get to that point to where they're making a change, but it does come from within. And we've seen success story after success story of people changing their lives, no longer committing crimes, no longer using illegal substances, and being that productive member of our community."

As Region Manager Hatley points out, while Probation and Parole staff are determined to assist their clients in every way possible, people's success ultimately depends on their own resolve to change their lives.



The support and guidance that PPO's provide can help probationers and parolees discover their own inner moral compass and encourage them to follow a more fulfilling path.

Stephanie Vincenti, Region III Probation and Parole Manager, also emphasizes the transformative changes that she has seen people make in their lives:

"Our goal is rehabilitation. Our goal is for people to be successful while keeping our communities safe. We want to see people make changes in their lives and become better people and better community members and be successful and actually see in themselves that they can do good things in their lives."

While PPO's are dedicated to providing resources to the people they supervise, Region IV PPO I Christopher Roper points out that sometimes, one of the most transformative services PPO's can provide is simply a listening ear:

"As a PPO, you talk to probationers and parolees, you hear their concerns, you hear their issues, and you try to help them. I explain to them that things will be ok. When they're in their darkest moment, they don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, so we have to show them that. But then you have the really great days when someone comes back from rehab and they're feeling great, they're thanking you and saying, 'I couldn't have done it without you,' or they're completing supervision for the first time, even though they've been on it a few times, and you were that change for them and you gave them an open ear. Sometimes, that's all it is because in certain situations, there may not be anything we can do but listen and be compassionate and empathetic."

Isabel Lucero, Probation and Parole Region IV Manager, reiterates this idea that by PPO's simply being there for the people they supervise, they can have a powerful impact on their lives:

"I like to do this job because sometimes people don't have anyone else. At least they know that there are people in the Probation and Parole Division who are there for them, who are trying to help them, and who genuinely care for them."

If you are currently on probation and / or parole, or if you will be on community supervision upon leaving prison, there are a variety of ways you can help ensure your own success.

Tips for Making the Most of Your Probation and / or Parole Supervision:

•ASK FOR HELP - Never hesitate to ask your PPO for what you need. Remember that your PPO wants to help but they can't read your mind. Your PPO can't help you get what you need unless they know what it is. Chances are that once they know what would make your success more likely, they will

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**Talk to your SOE to find out how to take the leap and continue your education!**



**YOU'RE NOT DONE YET!**

**BRIDGE THE GAP TO THAT GRADUATION CAP.**

work hard to try to help you get it. As Officer Roper points out, "Ninety percent of Probation and Parole is communication. We cannot help people if they do not inform us of what they need. And they need to be honest with us."

•BE HONEST - Be truthful with your PPO. "If you mess up, 'fess up." If you make a misstep, it's better for your PPO to hear about it directly from you rather than finding out from someone else. Don't assume that making a mistake will automatically cause you to go back to prison; mistakes will be made, but how you handle them is key.

•SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY - Think of your PPO as a coach or mentor. Your PPO is professionally trained to help you design a healthy, fulfilling, and successful life for yourself. Take advantage of that assistance and don't waste the opportunity to have a professional guide you through this transitional period of your life. As Daniel T. Dougherty, Jr., Probation / Parole Officer Supervisor, Community Corrections Unit, explains, "We are there to provide as much stability and as much assistance as we possibly can, but it's only as good as the effort that our clients are also willing to put in. It's a partnership. So, we want to facilitate potential success for every single client."

•ASK QUESTIONS - "When in doubt, talk it out." If you have questions about the conditions of your probation or parole, always ask your PPO and clarify your understanding of what is expected of you. It's always better to ask what may seem like a dumb question rather than making a mistake that could potentially derail you.

•EMBRACE HELP - Always remember that your PPO wants to see you succeed. Treat him or her as a valuable asset, not an adversary. This means being honest with them and being open to their input. They have a long history of helping people redirect their lives, so trust their judgement and benefit from their valuable experience.

•COMMUNICATE - "It doesn't take much to stay in touch." Always make sure you're maintaining communication with your PPO; taking the time to do so is essential to successfully completing your supervision. Avoiding or neglecting communication with your PPO - not calling them, not answering their calls, missing appointments, etc. - may seem easier in the short term, but in the long term, this type of behavior is likely to ruin your shot at being successful.

•"CLEAN HOUSE" - Actively evict from your life those people who are a bad influence. Guard your peace and maintain your boundaries. Stay away from people who bring out the "old you" that you're trying to not be anymore. Remember that the price we pay for associating with the wrong people is far too steep for us not to be stricter about who we let into our lives. Far too often, individuals who are reincarcerated relay that their downfall was rooted in associating with the wrong people upon their release – often the very people who led them to incarceration in the first place. Branch out and surround yourself with people who will uplift you rather than drag you down; support healthy




Don't assume that those who want to help you can read your mind - if you recognize a need, voice it.

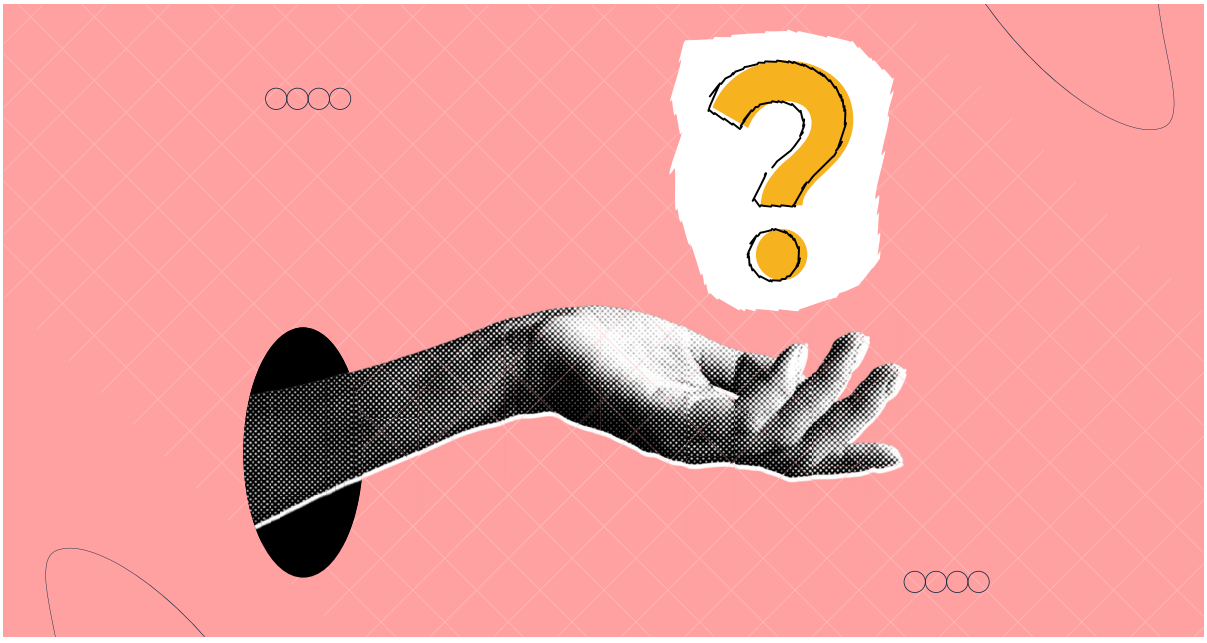
decisions rather than lead you down dangerous roads; and encourage positive growth instead of encouraging old (bad) habits. And remember that not only is your PPO one of these positive people, but they can also introduce you to other positive people (therapists, counselors, mental healthcare providers, employers, peer supports, and others).

•ENLIST YOUR FAMILY - Help your family understand that your supervision is an important step in your rehabilitation and encourage them to be supportive participants in the process. As Officer Roper says, "Offenders' families need to be honest with us. If we're looking for someone, it doesn't necessarily mean they're in trouble; it could be as simple as us needing to talk to them, it could be as simple as their having missed an appointment and family members need to be honest with us so that we can help them."

•DON'T COMPARE – Don't fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others. Remember that you are on your own path and have experienced a unique set of circumstances that have led you to where you are now. Everyone else is doing the same. Embrace your own story, "warts and all," and focus on what you can do from this point forward to make the rest of your life the best of your life. This includes recognizing your own mistakes, setting your own goals, and utilizing the right programming (which your PPO will help you find) that will help you address your own unique challenges and needs. As attributed to Albert Einstein, "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." The point is that expecting your own life, challenges, talents, lessons, and accomplishments to look like anyone else's simply sets you up for failure. Live YOUR life and make healthy choices that are right for YOU.

Whether you are currently on probation and / or parole or will be eventually, remember that Probation and Parole Officers are "on your side" and that their support provides a valuable safety net that can keep you from falling. You can be sure that your PPO will help you, but you can also be sure that he or she will hold you accountable for your decisions and your actions and will expect and assist you to rise to the challenge of being the best possible version of yourself.

Having someone like that in your life is a gift and utilizing that guidance is one of the best favors that you, as a returning citizen, can do for your future self.



As is often said, there is no such thing as a stupid question. If you are unsure about what is expected of you while on supervision, always ask questions to clarify your responsibilities.


ASK FOR HELP
DON'T COMPARE
BE HONEST
TIPS
for Making the Most of Your Probation or Parole Supervision
ENLIST YOUR FAMILY
SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY
"CLEAN HOUSE"
ASK QUESTIONS
COMMUNICATE
EMBRACE HELP
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GED
Ask your SOE How to continue the adventure!
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# WHEN WE MESS UP, WE GOTTA' 'FESS UP

**Honesty as a Response to Shortcomings is the Best Policy for Developing Productive Relationships with Others, Including your PPO**



Missteps are inevitable, especially when one is in mental health and / or substance use recovery. But the best way to handle a mistake is to confront it with honesty and openness.

As we worked on this issue's article titled, "Hedge your Bet with a Safety Net," we conducted a lot of interviews with Probation and Parole Officers (PPO's) and other NMCD staff members. In those interviews, one key piece of advice for those who will eventually be on supervision kept coming up, and that was to always be honest and truthful with your PPO.

Of course, it's no surprise that this is recommended. In all areas of life - personal relationships, professional associations, diplomatic relations - good relationships are built on honesty, openness, and trust. And, as attributed to Lincoln Chafee, "Trust is built with consistency." So, it seems that it's not just honesty that's the best policy, but consistent, reliable, and unwavering honesty; not just sometimes or when we feel like it, but all the time, even when it's difficult or inconvenient.

Even – or rather, especially – when you, as a justice-involved person, "mess up" (in other words, relapse or violate the terms of your supervision in some other way), it is imperative for you to share that mistake with your PPO rather than try to hide it. The reality is that, if you make a misstep, chances are good that your PPO will find out (whether through the results of a drug screen or in some other way). Telling your PPO that something went wrong before the officer has to find out on their own is the best possible way to handle the situation and prevent it from turning into a much worse scenario.

As discussed in the article mentioned before, PPO's are dedicated to helping the people they supervise improve their mental health, overcome their substance use disorders, mature, grow, become better people, and succeed in their post-incarceration lives. But none of these things can happen unless you are open and honest with the PPO's who are trying to help you.

While it might seem intimidating, the fact is that discussing a mistake with your PPO actually presents a valuable opportunity to learn about yourself, enable your PPO to help you more effectively, and build a plan together that can help you succeed moving forward.



Your journey will surely include missteps and stumbles. Your PPO realizes this and is prepared to help you get up and correct your path, but they require your honesty.

**For example, if you make a poor choice by using drugs during your supervision, and you bring that to your PPO, the conversation that ensues could help you identify the situation or recognize the trigger that allowed that mistake to happen.**

**Perhaps you had been spending time with people who encouraged you to use, or maybe you had gone to a place that made you want to use.**

**Identifying those triggers by discussing the misstep with your PPO can lead to important insight, informing your plan of action for the future and providing opportunities for treatment support. In other words, talking through the problematic scenario might cause you to realize that hanging out with certain people or frequenting certain places simply presents too much risk for relapse. Your PPO can help you make a commitment to avoid those triggering people and places, creating a plan that is more likely to support future compliance and sobriety.**

**But the mistakes that probationers and parolees sometimes make don't always have to do with substance use or relapses in sobriety. And they don't always involve an actual mistake, but rather something that could simply be misconstrued as a mistake.**

**For example, maybe as a condition of your supervision, you are prohibited from interacting with certain people. If one of these prohibited people shows up at your home, and you make it clear to the person that you don't want them there, then you have obviously made a positive choice. But it's still important to tell your PPO about the encounter and to make sure that the PPO knows how the incident came about and how it was handled.**

**"Every lie is two lies: the lie we tell others and the lie we tell ourselves to justify it."**

**~Robert Brault**




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Bad influences are everywhere, but recognizing the triggering people, places, and things that tempt you to make poor choices is the key to avoiding them

**If you were to fail to mention the encounter to your PPO, and they were to hear from someone else that the prohibited person was seen on your porch, then the PPO would likely have questions. If you are up-front about the incident and explain to your PPO what happened and how you handled the situation, then your PPO will feel more confident in your decision-making – and will appreciate your honesty.**

**Even sharing "close calls" that don't result in actual mistakes, but that may have come dangerously close to a misstep, can be an important way to communicate with your PPO.**

**Maybe you find yourself in need of food and consider shoplifting some grocery items. Obviously, doing so would be a mistake and could potentially lead to new charges. So, hopefully, instead of stealing, you decide to discuss your food insecurity with your PPO.**

**This simple decision to be honest with your PPO will likely lead to the PPO assisting you with gaining access to the food resources that you need (through a food bank or other food assistance program) and will avoid a situation wherein you are putting your freedom in jeopardy. Simply knowing that food insecurity is a challenge for you will prompt your PPO to monitor this issue moving forward and help ensure that you are supported in that area.**

**Reviewing and talking through the thought process that almost led to a mistake can not only help you be more mindful of future decisions, but can also help your PPO learn more about any areas in which you need specific support and assistance.**

## "Honesty is the fastest way to prevent a mistake from turning into a failure."

## ~James Altucher

**It's helpful, too, to realize just how many different kinds of resources your PPO can offer you. Officers have access to an extensive network of providers and options that can help you stay on track and avoid making poor decisions. When you are on supervision, if you believe that any of the resources on the following list can help you be more successful, it's important to tell your PPO that you need help filling those needs.**

**PPO's can help you obtain:**

**•Basic Needs such as housing; rental and utility assistance; food; hygiene products; clothing (both personal and work attire); and transportation.**

**•Resources including referrals to treatment and counseling; education; childcare services; vital records; guidance for health services; referrals to peer support; and help with obtaining employment.**

**•Treatment and Counseling in the areas of substance abuse; mental health; anger management; trauma; domestic violence; parenting and family issues; sex offender treatment; and life skills.**

**"Help me help you."**

**It's also important to realize that in addition to big mistakes and "near misses," even small, seemingly unimportant issues should be discussed with your PPO. As attributed to Marilyn French, "Men stumble over pebbles, never over mountains." This means that even the smallest "bump in the road" can potentially redirect you toward the wrong destination.**

**What seems like a "little thing," if not handled appropriately, can derail your rehabilitation and reentry success. So, even if something seems like it's "not a big deal," mention it to your PPO anyway and let them decide whether it's a big deal or not. If it is, then they can help you manage the situation, and if it's not, then they will simply appreciate your transparency.**

**Stephanie Cordova, NMCD Probation and Parole Supervisor, Region II, High Risk Unit, explains the need for people to be transparent with their PPO's and how doing so is ultimately the best way for them to complete their supervision successfully and receive the most benefit from their probation and / or parole experience:**

**"We can't help someone who doesn't present themself honestly so, another big issue that relates especially to the substance abuse aspect is, if an offender has relapsed, and instead of coming in and having that conversation and giving us the opportunity to try to help them, they abscond from supervision. And that's the worst thing that they can possibly decide to do, because we can't help them and it just makes the situation ten times worse, and it presents an image to the Parole Board that the person is not willing to accept change and doesn't want to change, or participate in any services. So, the alternatives that the person could have received, by just coming in and communicating with us, are no longer available."**



"When in doubt, talk it out." If you are wondering whether you should tell your PPO about a mistake, close call, or relapse, the answer is always, "Yes." You can't overcome what you can't admit.

Ms. Cordova reiterates how important it is for people who are on supervision to avoid the drastic "all or nothing" thinking that sometimes leads them to panic and abscond as a response to a relapse or misstep:

"We are not in the business of putting people right back into the prison system. Our goal is to get people back out into the community and to get them out of this revolving door of committing crimes and returning to prison and continued relapses and problems."

Daniel T. Dougherty, Jr., Region II Probation / Parole Officer Supervisor, Community Corrections Unit, reiterates how a little humility and a lot of honesty with your PPO can go a long way after making a mistake:

"If a person does a drug test and they're positive, and we say, 'Look, we know you did drugs,' and instead of denying it, they say, 'Yup, I screwed up; I was with this person and I just fell into temptation,' then I will actually go above and beyond to help them. We, as PPO's, appreciate that kind of honesty, and so, in this situation, we can say, 'Alright, here's what we're going to do to move forward; here's the treatment that we're going to require.' We want people to take accountability for their own addictions, and that can't happen if they're not going to be honest with us."

Of course, in the scenario that Mr. Dougherty describes, an even better response to relapsing would be to inform your PPO that you used even before it's revealed by a positive drug test. In the event of a relapse, the sooner you make your PPO aware of the misstep, the better. The sooner the mistake is disclosed, the sooner you and your PPO can start working together to address the underlying issues that led to the slip-up and then formulate a plan for avoiding similar downfalls in the future.

So, ultimately, as with all healthy relationships, honesty with your PPO will lay the foundation for a productive and successful partnership and will help ensure that, together, you are able to achieve your shared goal, which is your successful completion of supervision and your reentry into a rewarding post-incarceration life.



PPO's know that recovery is a difficult journey. They are prepared to help those under their supervision make the best choices possible and learn from their mistakes.

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Starting at 90 days or less until release.
Ask your Unit Manager how to get one.

# THE HOME STRETCH

## NMCD Strives to Secure Safe and Appropriate Housing for Returning Citizens




Reestablishing a home after prison can be challenging, but is proven to be an essential foundation for a successful post-incarceration life.

**After any period of time in prison, one of the things that incarcerated people look forward to most is going home. But after you've been in prison for months or years, what does "home" really mean?**

**While the concept of home is often interpreted as a house or an apartment that offers privacy and a safe place to rest your head, keep your belongings, and shelter yourself and your family, home is often represented not by a place, but a nostalgic memory of where you started your journey or enjoyed happy times in the past. In this sense, home is an experience; a sensation of safety, security, and happiness. So, while you may be able to go back to the building in which you spent your childhood or made lasting memories with your own children, you'll never be able to return to a home - a snapshot of the past - that no longer exists. We might say that a home is not just a place, but a place and a time, and a feeling. A home is both the container and the life that plays out within it. A home is created in the space that a person, couple, or family inhabits; where our soul dwells. "Home is where the heart is," as they say.**

**For many incarcerated folks, home might mean "anywhere but here." As Dorothy famously recited in "The Wizard of Oz," clicking her ruby slippers together, "There's no place like home," and of course, most incarcerated people wish that going home was that easy. But there's more to building a life - and creating a home - on the outside than simply being on the other side of prison walls. A home is a place - a headquarters, a command center - from which to stage your recovery, build a career, and create new patterns, habits, and routines. It's a place to build happiness. A home is stability and shelter from the storm. A home is built by the boundaries that you set for yourself, that keep out the dangers of poor choices, bad decisions, and reckless behaviors. A home is that sacred place where you refuse to let harm cross the threshold; the space that you're willing to defend against addiction, violence, and trouble, for both yourself and your family.**

A December 2024 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS) report concluded that:

"Housing is a vital element of successful reentry. Without housing, it is difficult for individuals to obtain employment, re-establish ties to family, access health and behavioral health treatment services, or comply with supervision requirements."

In other words, establishing a home is the foundational act that allows returning citizens to build the rest of a successful, happy, healthy, and productive life. Without a home, we all lack the stability required to put the rest of the puzzle pieces of life together for ourselves.

It's possible for some returning citizens to move into a parent's or other family member's home upon releasing from prison. But that's not always possible or appropriate. In many cases, relationships with family members were never close in the first place or have been strained by broken trust, feelings of abandonment, and the distance that can be a result of incarceration.

For returning citizens who will be on probation and / or parole upon your release, you will need to reside in an assigned area where you might not have any close contacts who can help house you. Furthermore, if the home to which you want to release already houses other people who are on supervision, or children, that housing arrangement may not be approved as compliant with your Parole Plan (sex offenders, for example, are prohibited from being near children, and most returning citizens must avoid contact with other felons as a condition of supervision).

Other circumstances that might constitute barriers to moving in with a family member can include financial strain (the family member may not be able to afford the financial burden of hosting you as a housemate); substance abuse and / or criminal activity in the home (making the home an unsuitable environment for you, as a person on supervision); or mental health issues and / or emotional volatility on the part of either you or your family member. Sometimes, the family member with whom you plan to live is the very person who introduced you to the lifestyle that resulted in your prison

**"Never make your home in a place. Make a home for yourself inside your own head. You'll find what you need to furnish it – memory, friends you can trust, love of learning, and other such things. That way it will go with you wherever you journey."**

**~Tad Williams**



The key to one's own home is also the key to safety, security, protecting one's boundaries, and making better choices.



Home is where we can relax, feel comfortable, let our guard down, and recharge ourselves before going back out into the world.

**sentence. Obviously, this doesn't provide the best environment in which to cultivate reentry success.**

**Even if you had your own house or apartment when you were sentenced to prison, months or years of incarceration can lead to losing your home – whether that be due to defaulting on a lease agreement or falling behind on a mortgage – and needing to start "at square one" upon your release.**

**So, if you can't move in with a family member, and don't have your own house or apartment to which to return, "going home" will likely mean establishing an entirely new home, rather than returning to the housing situation that you left when you went inside.**

**This is concerning because, according to the Holmes and Rahe Stress Inventory, which ranks life events based on their perceived stressfulness, some of the most stressful life events include marital separation, imprisonment, job loss, major changes in one's financial state, major changes in a person's living conditions, starting a new job, and moving. Chances are that anyone who has been incarcerated for any period of time has experienced many or even all of these life events before, during, and / or after their incarceration.**

**While leaving prison and setting up a new home seems like a dream scenario (and is generally an overwhelmingly positive development in one's life), it's important to remember that both major changes in a person's living conditions and moving are on that list of stressful life events. For this reason, not only should you, as a returning citizen, give yourself some grace as you settle into your new home, but you should be receptive to the help and support that your Probation and Parole Officer (PPO) can offer you during this transitional time.**

**PPO's are experts at helping returning citizens find suitable housing, whether that may be a rental house or apartment; placement in a transitional living house; a bed in a residential treatment center or short-term shelter; a room in a sober living home; or some other appropriate arrangement.**

**As mentioned earlier, every person's housing needs will be individual. Fortunately, NMCD Probation and Parole Division (PPD) staff are constantly working to forge partnerships with organizations and entities that can help provide such arrangements.**

**Forrest Beard, NMCD Community Corrections Administrator, is one of those staff members who work to find safe, appropriate, and compliant housing options for returning citizens.**

**Mr. Beard explains that all NMCD PPD staff have access to what is called the NMCD Transitional Living Guide, which lists vetted and approved resources for returning citizens from housing**

# You Have Something to Say!

# So Say it!

Ask your Supervisor of Education (SOE) how to submit an essay or artwork that might be featured in NMCD's Parallels digital magazine!

**options to Behavioral Health service providers and even tattoo removal services:**

**"We have a team of Transitional Coordinators and a Transitional Coordinator Supervisor who are responsible for the vetting of potential providers as well as auditing all of the contracted providers. For the vetting process, we talk to the potential provider about the services that they provide and we do a site visit and a walk-through to meet with them to make sure that the curriculum they are using satisfies best practices and is evidence-based. And to ensure that, we loop in Dr. Wendy Price, who is the Behavioral Health Outreach Administrator for Reentry."**

**"The reason the vetting process is so important is that we want to make sure that anyone that we're doing business with or contracting as an approved provider, we want to make sure that those individuals are able to provide the best possible services for the people under our supervision. We don't want to be sending people anywhere that could be potentially harmful or negative. We want the best outcomes for everyone. So that's why we have quite a big statewide list of providers that are available for our population to utilize."**

**Having access to this extensive collection of approved providers, including housing resources, through their officer, is exceptionally helpful for returning citizens because finding affordable housing is a growing struggle for nearly everyone these days, even if they're not justice-involved.**

**Minimum-wage workers are especially challenged to make ends meet. To afford the median-priced U.S. apartment, an average minimum-wage worker must work approximately 106 hours a week (that's an average of over fifteen hours per day, seven days a week). In light of this, it's no wonder why so many lower earners must resort to living with family or sharing a place with roommates.**

**This statistic, of course, is one of the many reasons why enrolling in Adult Education, Post-Secondary Education, and Career Technical Programming is so important. As we've discussed in previous "Parallels" articles, earning a GED, a Post-Secondary Degree, and / or a Professional Certification can enable you to earn much more than you could with less education. And of course, earning more per hour means having to work fewer hours in order to meet your financial obligations.**

**If you have an interest in improving your earning potential upon your release, be sure to reach out to your facility's Supervisor of Education (SOE) to learn about what educational options are available to you. The sooner you get started, the more time you'll have to complete your programming.**



Who we share our home with is part of what makes it feel like a welcoming oasis from the hectic outside world.

# Got kids? Be sure to take advantage of CYFD's

# Family Resource Centers

**Connect with low or no-cost services and supports, including applying for benefits, accessing state services, employment opportunities and much more!**

- **Parenting Classes**
- **Budgeting Guidance / Assistance**
- **Nutrition & Cooking Classes**
- **Assistance with Securing Stable Housing**
- **Assistance Establishing and Maintaining Utility Services**
- **Guidance for Parents and / or Caregivers in Identifying and Securing Services**
- **And so much more!**

**Tell your parenting partner that they can find out more by:**

- **Visiting www.cyfd.nm.gov/family-services/family-resource-centers/**
- **Calling (505) 827-7613**
- **Sending an e-mail to familyservices@cyfd.nm.gov**

*"Having somewhere to go is home.*
*Having someone to love is family.*
*Having both is a blessing."*



Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

While transitional living programs, residential treatment centers, and sober living homes can all provide a "soft place to land" upon being released from prison and / or working through addiction issues, none of them is intended to provide a long-term housing solution. So, eventually, returning citizens will have to secure a more permanent housing arrangement. Probation and Parole Officers are prepared to help with that by not only guiding their clients in finding appropriate housing options, but also introducing them to support agencies that can help them secure financial assistance if necessary.

But, of course, this type of financial assistance can't last forever, and so again, positioning yourself to earn more is key to ensuring long-term housing stability. Rent payments are one thing, but paying security deposits, setting up and maintaining utilities, furnishing a place, and acquiring housewares are also expenses involved in setting up a "home sweet home."



Moving into a new home is a special milestone that represents new beginnings, a new sense of security, and new hope for the future.

Despite there being so much involved in establishing stable housing upon being released from prison, it is exceptionally important for you, as a returning citizen, to do so to help ensure your reentry success. That same US DHHS report mentioned previously outlines some of the vulnerabilities that a lack of stable housing can create for returning citizens, including the risk of relapse and recidivism.

So, it's clear that establishing a stable home for yourself upon release is important. But, as mentioned before, returning citizens need not go it alone. PPO's understand the vital importance of having a place to call home and they have access to a wide range of resources to help those under their care connect with the right fit, both initially and longer-term. So, with your PPO's help and support, you'll be ready for the home stretch.

# AMAZING FACTS!

"EVERY MOMENT, THE HUMAN BODY IS ACTIVELY IN A PROCESS OF REGENERATION, BASED ON THE ETERNAL CYCLE OF CELL LIFE AND DEATH."

"WE LOSE APPROXIMATELY 30,000 CELLS EVERY HOUR THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, AND OUR ENTIRE SURFACE LAYER OF SKIN IS REPLACED ABOUT ONCE A YEAR."

WOW! What?!

THEREFORE...



THE "YOU" OF TEN YEARS AGO MAY HAVE BEEN MADE UP OF ALMOST ENTIRELY DIFFERENT CELLS COMPARED TO THE "YOU" OF TODAY!

FROM "THIS PHENOMENAL LIFE - THE AMAZING WAYS WE ARE CONNECTED WITH OUR UNIVERSE" BY MISHA MAYNERICK BLAISE

# MEET THE BOARD

**Members of the New Mexico Parole Board Decide Who Will Be Granted Parole – But Who Are They? And How Do They Decide?**



The New Mexico Parole Board plays an integral role in determining who will be granted parole.

Once a person becomes justice-involved, they find themselves not only having to navigate the experience of being incarcerated, but also having to learn about what it means to be on community supervision, whether that be probation or parole.

It can be a steep learning curve, as there are many areas of community supervision to understand. But learning about how the process works can help incarcerated people prepare for seeking parole and help them successfully complete their supervision.

For starters, it's helpful to familiarize oneself with the definitions of probation and parole and to look at some of the key differences between the two.

A justice-involved person may be on probation or parole, or both. Some inmates serve both a parole term and a probation term simultaneously. From an inmate's perspective, they run concurrently. For those who are on both probation and parole, one Probation and Parole Officer (PPO) supervises the probationer / parolee even though the conditions of each supervision may be different.

What is Probation?

Probation is a sentence ordered by the Court allowing the offender to remain in the community under the supervision of the Court through the guidance of a Probation Officer. Conditions are set by the Judge that the person must meet. If he or she does not follow the conditions, he or she may be sent to prison or jail to finish the sentence.

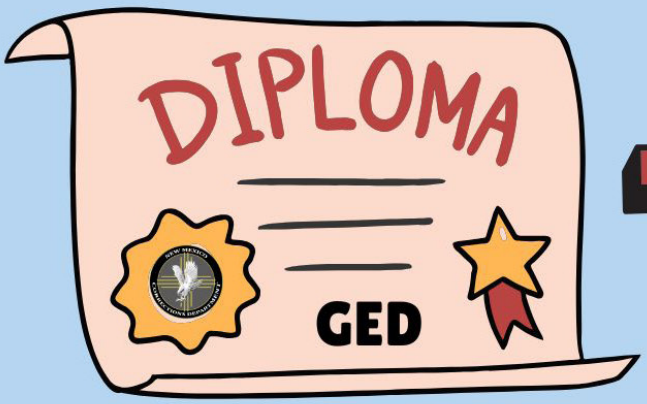
Probation

- Is part of a sentence imposed by a Judge.
- Probation violations are reviewed by the Judge.

What is Parole?

Parole is a conditional release from prison that allows a person to serve the rest of a sentence in the community after serving a portion of the sentence in prison. If the conditions of parole are not met, the person may be returned to prison to complete his or her sentence.

It's important to remember that parole release is discretionary and considered an act of clemency or grace.






# What could YOU do with $150?

- Buy your kids holiday or birthday gifts!
- Spend it on commissary!
- Put it in your savings!
- Pay for your first college course!
- Share it with your family!
- The sky's the limit!

- Are you 24 years old or younger?
- Within one year of release?
- Working toward your GED or HiSET?

Ask your SOE how to enroll!

If so, you can enroll in the
Unearthing Future Opportunities (UFO) Program!
Enroll **BEFORE** obtaining your GED/HiSET,
and you may be eligible to receive a **$150 stipend**
upon completion of your certification!

The UFO Program can also provide help with:

- Financial literacy
- Résumé writing
- Interview skills
- Career readiness workshops
- Employment and / or paid training program placement upon release

Eastern Area Workforce Development Board
A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network

UNEARTHING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

America's Job Center NEW MEXICO

**Parole**

**•Is part of a sentence imposed by the legislature. Every person who leaves prison must serve a term of parole.**

**•Parole violations are reviewed by the Parole Board.**

**What's a Parole Plan?**

**Also important to understand is the definition of a Parole Plan. This is a plan created before a parolee is released from prison that outlines where the parolee will live; his or her connection to the community into which he or she will release; what conditions must be met to remain on parole; and what treatment or services the parolee may need in the community. The plan is created by Corrections Department staff and the parolee during a Reentry Committee meeting, reviewed, and then approved or disapproved by the Parole Board.**

**Inmates who are not serving a life sentence have a determinate sentence; they know how long they must serve when they enter, minus any good time earned. They go before the Parole Board to get their Parole Plan approved and set conditions of parole supervision.**

**How Do I Know When I'm Eligible for a Parole Hearing?**

**Typically, an NMCD Classification Officer will contact you if you are eligible for parole and will inform you of your hearing date.**

**Before your hearing is held, an NMCD Parole Examiner will prepare a recommendation to the Parole Board. This is called your Parole Package. It will include a case summary and their evaluation of your suitability for release. Several factors will be considered as this Parole Package is prepared, including your health and age (if being reviewed for medical and /or geriatric parole); the opinions of your victims; how you have spent your time in prison; whether you have committed to preparing yourself for life on the outside; and whether you are likely to reoffend.**

**Going Before the Parole Board for a Parole Hearing**

**The Parole Board holds regular hearings for parole applications, revocations, and pardon recommendations. On average, 300 hearings are held each month. These hearings are conducted at several correctional facilities throughout the state.**

**These hearings involve the Director of the Adult Probation and Parole Division (PPD); representatives from the Attorney General's office; The Parole Board (made up of the Parole Board Director and fifteen Board Members); crime victims and / or their surviving family members; and others who provide pertinent information.**

**In order for an inmate to go before the Parole Board, that inmate's parole eligibility must first be established. Inmates become eligible for parole after serving a certain portion of their sentence, as determined by law.**



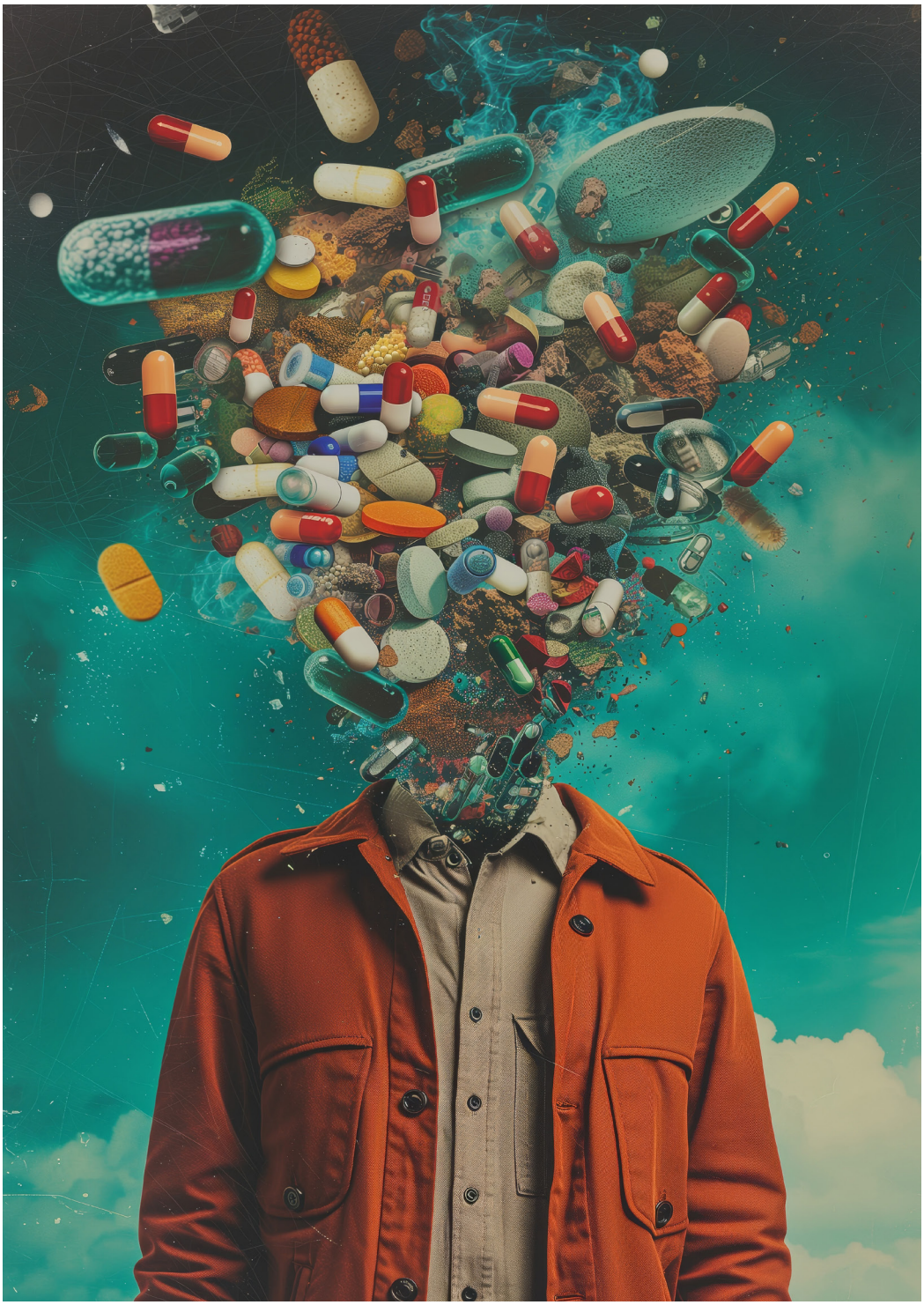

Demonstrating to the Parole Board that you are committed to redirecting your life in a positive way is an important component of being granted parole.

# 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
is an introductory psychoeducational group that provides participants with education about depression and its treatment.

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



If you're struggling with mental health or substance use disorder issues, reach out to Behavioral Health staff in your facility.




As your Parole Hearing approaches, it's important to think about how you want to change your life; plan how you will do that; and then actually make those changes through programming.

**Once it has been determined that an inmate is eligible for parole and the Parole Examiner has assembled his or her Parole Package, the Parole Board (along with the other panel members mentioned previously) conducts a Parole Hearing during which they review the inmate's case, including their social history, mental state, criminal history, and commitment offense (the crime for which the inmate was sentenced to prison).**

**The Parole Package, which includes the inmate's records, is presented to the panel. The victim or the victim's family can appear at the hearing (or submit a letter) and ask the board to keep the inmate in custody. The inmate may be allowed or denied an opportunity to make a statement. The inmate must answer any questions posed by the panel.**

**The panel meets after the hearing to make a decision and then provides the inmate with written notice of its decision, generally within five working days of the hearing.**

**How Does the Board Decide?**

**In deciding whether to grant an inmate parole, the Parole Board considers factors like public safety, the inmate's potential for rehabilitation, and victim impact statements.**

**Public Safety:**

**The board's primary concern is public safety.**

**Rehabilitation:**

**The board also considers whether the inmate has shown genuine rehabilitation and is ready for release. This is indicated, in part, by the inmate's participation in programming including Behavioral Health, Cognitive, Substance Abuse, Educational, and Career Technical Programming.**

**Victim Input:**

**The board considers victim impact statements and allows victims to express their concerns at hearings. Victims can provide input through written or oral impact statements describing how an inmate's crime has affected them.**

**The Parole Board assesses the inmate's past and present attitude toward their crime, their criminal history, their disciplinary record during their incarceration, and any other documented misconduct.**

**Other factors that the Parole Board takes into account when considering whether or not to grant an inmate parole include:**

- **The circumstances of the offense.**



Your crimes did not occur in a vacuum and they have had ripple effects beyond what you may ever realize. Acknowledging the impact of your past actions is an important piece of accepting accountability.

- Mitigating and aggravating circumstances.
- Whether a deadly weapon was used in the commission of the offense.
- Whether the inmate is a habitual offender.
- Employment history and skills.
- Release plans (residence, employment, social support).
- Substance abuse history.
- Pre-sentence and pre-release reports.
- Criminal history.
- Social history.
- Physical and mental exam reports.
- Institutional record.
- Available community resources.
- Court-ordered victim restitution.
- Programming completed during the inmate's incarceration.
- The inmate's age and health.
- Other relevant factors.

After the Parole Board has conducted the required interviews, heard from the inmate's victims, and considered all relevant documentation, the Parole Board Members discuss the inmate's parole request and vote to grant parole; deny parole; or deny parole with a future review.

Parole can be granted by a majority vote from the board (the vote does not need to be unanimous). In order for the board to grant an inmate parole, the board must find that his or her parole is in the best interest of society and the inmate.

Inmates are informed of the board's decision within an average of five working days, though more time may be needed to finalize the conditions of the inmate's release.

### What are an Inmate's Rights at a Parole Hearing?

Inmates in New Mexico have certain rights at a Parole Hearing, including the right to a hearing, the right to be informed of the decision, and the right to have minutes kept of the hearing.

Additionally, inmates have the right to have a translator if needed. Victims also have the right to attend the hearing and speak to the Parole Board.

### Parole Revocation

If a parolee violates the terms of their release, the Parole Board can revoke their parole after a Revocation Hearing. During such a hearing, the Parole Board may decide to revoke the offender's parole, resulting in incarceration.

### What Rights Does a Parolee Have at a Revocation Hearing?

# Looking for a Career?
# If You're 6-8 Months to Release, Sign Up for the

New Mexico Corrections Department

**Residential & Commercial Maintenance Tech Course**

**Furnace Maintenance**

**Fuse Box**

**Basic Plumbing**

**A\C Maintenance**

**Drywall**

**Wiring System**



# Submit an IRF to learn more.

## 6 Week Course

**Bonus** Participants releasing to the following counties - Union, Harding, Quay, Guadalupe, De Baca, Curry, Roosevelt, Chaves, Lincoln, Otero, Eddy, and Lea - may be eligible to receive tools purchased by Eastern Board WIOA offices.

At a hearing on a parole violation, the parolee will be given written notice of the claimed violations. The parolee will receive disclosure of the evidence against him or her and will have the opportunity to be heard in person and to present witnesses and documentary evidence. The parolee will have the right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses. The parolee will receive a written statement by the factfinder as to the evidence on and reasons for revocation.

Who is on the Parole Board?

The New Mexico Parole Board is an independent agency that reports to the Governor.

The Parole Board has the statutory authority to grant, deny, or revoke parole and set conditions for release. Their primary mission is to provide for public safety, assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens, and help reduce recidivism. The agency also investigates and reports cases of executive clemency at the request of the Governor.

The agency notifies victims through the District Attorney's Victims Advocate of scheduled Parole Hearings for inmates and meets with them at their request.

Pardoning authority is vested solely and exclusively in the Governor as stated in Article V, Section 6, of the Constitution of New Mexico and if requested by the Governor, the board may investigate such cases. All pardon applicants must obtain an application from and apply directly to the Governor of New Mexico.

The New Mexico Parole Board consists of 15 Board Members, all of whom are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the State Senate. An Executive Director, appointed by the Governor, heads the agency.

New Mexico Parole Board Members are not salaried employees. They are compensated with a per diem and mileage stipend, as outlined in the State's Per Diem and Milage Act for Non-Salaried Public Officers, and receive no other compensation.

The people who comprise the Parole Board represent a diverse sampling of New Mexico's population. Board Members are chosen for their qualifications, which may include academic training or professional experience related to the responsibilities of the board. The Governor seeks to appoint three public members to the board, in addition to those with relevant professional



Taking part in self-assessment and reflection can help you understand what led you to becoming incarcerated and help you avoid those behaviors in the future. The Parole Board will want to know what you have learned about yourself during your incarceration.

experience. No member of the board can be an official or employee of any other government entity at the federal, state, or local level.

**How Can I Prepare for my Parole Hearing?**

Given the factors that the Parole Board considers when deciding whether or not to grant an inmate parole, the best way for a justice-involved person to prepare for their hearing is to focus on demonstrating their rehabilitation and accountability and presenting a realistic release plan.

Preparing for your Parole Hearing actually begins as soon as you are incarcerated. You can "do your future self a favor" by making the most of your time in prison to better yourself (not only in regard to seeking parole, but as a general approach to improving your present and your future).

While a person is incarcerated, it is imperative for him or her to prioritize good behavior and clear conduct. The Parole Board will consider whether an inmate has engaged in positive interactions with staff and fellow inmates during their incarceration.

Long before a person is even eligible to seek parole, it can also be helpful for him or her to enroll in and complete as many programs as possible. This includes Behavioral Health, Cognitive, Substance Abuse, Educational, and Career Technical Programming.

Participation in Behavioral Health, Cognitive, and Substance Abuse Programming can help demonstrate to the Parole Board that an inmate is serious about their recovery and about changing their criminal mindset. Completing Career Technical Programming, and potentially earning a professional certification, can help show the Parole Board that an inmate has considered how they will build their post incarceration life and earn an honest living.

During your Parole Hearing, be prepared to acknowledge your crime, express remorse, and demonstrate that you understand how your actions negatively affected the lives of others. But realize that your appearance before the Parole Board will not simply be a performance.

Board Members will be able to recognize whether you have fully grasped the impact of your crime and whether you have come to appreciate the magnitude of your mistakes. As mentioned previously, participating in programming will not only demonstrate to the Parole Board that you have made it a priority to consider your past behavior, reflect, and self-evaluate, but the programming itself will enable you to actually do so. Board Members don't simply want you to "talk the talk;" they want to see you actually "walk the walk."

Parole Board Members will also expect you to show them that you understand the reasons (not excuses) behind your actions and that you



The more reflection, inner work, and Behavioral Health Programming you pursue, the more likely you will be able to articulate your rehabilitation to the Parole Board.

# Not all heroes wear capes!

# Some just carry Naloxone!




## NMCD's NALOXONE "GRAB AND GO" PROGRAM IS NOW AVAILABLE AT ALL

## NMCD PROBATION & PAROLE OFFICES!

**If you are a probationer or parolee and believe that it would be helpful for you to have access to the opioid overdose reversal medication Naloxone, you can now stop in at ANY NMCD Probation & Parole Office statewide and help yourself to a box, which includes two doses, along with literature that details instructions for its effective use.**

***Do humanity a favor - be a lifesaver!***



Your Parole Plan will be an important factor in your Parole Hearing. It is important to work diligently with NMCD staff to create a plan that will be approved by the Parole Board and help ensure your reentry success.

have taken steps to address any underlying issues or traumas that may have contributed to your behavior. Again, Behavioral Health, Cognitive, and Substance Abuse Programs are instrumental in recognizing what led you to incarceration and how you can overcome those old patterns of thinking and behaving.

In addition to being able to show the Parole Board that you have considered how you will secure and maintain employment and support yourself – and potentially your family – you will also need to show them that you have a realistic plan for living a crime-free lifestyle upon your release. This includes:

•Securing and maintaining stable, suitable, and affordable housing.

•Managing finances (including paying monthly bills and any required fees or victim restitution).

•Identifying a network of support, including family, friends, or community organizations that can assist you through your reentry transition.

•Maintaining your sobriety and avoiding substance abuse.

•Identifying potential risk factors for re-offending and demonstrating the steps that you will take to mitigate those risks, such as participating in Anger Management or Substance Abuse Programs.

You should prepare to answer common Parole Hearing questions, including those about your offense, your time in prison, and your release plan. It can be helpful to write down your answers in a journal or notebook in order to organize your thoughts. You will likely be nervous when you are in front of the Parole Board, so you don't want to forget any important points. Writing down your thoughts and creating a presentation outline can help you stay focused and avoid forgetting anything.

## What Documents Should I Gather Prior to my Parole Hearing?

As you prepare for your Parole Hearing, it can be helpful to gather some documents to present to the Parole Board. Some of these items include:

•Letters of support from family, friends, spiritual leaders, instructors, program coordinators, or other individuals who can attest to your rehabilitation and positive character.

•Supporting documents such as program certificates, mental health reports, employment offers, etc.

•Evidence of good behavior such as documents that prove your participation in programs, classes, charitable clubs, etc.

**If My Parole Hearing is Successful, What Happens After I'm Granted Parole?**

If the Parole Board decides that it is appropriate to grant you parole, then you will be allowed to serve the remainder of your sentence in the community rather than inside a prison facility (provided that you are able to adhere to your Parole Plan and meet the conditions of your parole).

As mentioned previously, you will receive written notice of your parole approval or denial within about five working days of your hearing. However, more time may be needed to finalize the conditions of your release.

You will be required to follow several rules in order to maintain your parole and avoid being reincarcerated. It's important to remember that even though being paroled will allow you to go back to the outside community, you will still be a justice-involved person, subject to the rules and laws of the criminal justice system.

The restrictions of your parole may include:

- Submitting to drug screenings.
- Wearing an ankle monitor.
- Adhering to a curfew.
- Obtaining employment.
- Participating in Behavioral Health, Cognitive, and / or Substance Abuse Counseling.
- Having regular check-ins with a PPO either in their office, in your home, and / or at your place of employment.
- Avoiding contact with certain people or certain groups of people based on your crime, for example, your victim(s), certain people from your past, children, etc.

It is extremely important that you adhere to all of the conditions of your parole.

In order to understand the importance of communicating effectively with your PPO, be sure to read the article titled, "Hedge Your Bet with a Safety Net" in this issue of Parallels.

While it may seem confusing and foreign to people who are not justice-involved, understanding community supervision and the Parole Board's role in granting and denying parole are important tasks for anyone who is currently incarcerated.

If you have questions about when you will be eligible for parole; need help preparing for your Parole Board Hearing; or want to learn about what types of programming can help you prepare for seeking parole, submit an IRF to your facility's staff.



As you approach your Parole Hearing, it can be helpful to collect letters of support from people who can attest to your rehabilitation and positive character.





# Skilled Tradespeople Wanted

## Have a trade, skill, license, or certification?

We are looking for you!
Teach others the skills you have.
Make a difference in someone's life.

Ask Education how you can get started today!

# MANAGING THE "HOLIDAZE" INSIDE PRISON

## The Holidays Can be a Difficult Time for the Incarcerated Community, But There are Healthy Ways to Cope – and Even Find Joy



Being incarcerated during the holiday season can be difficult, but there are many ways to savor the season despite being inside.

It's no coincidence that World Mental Health Day is on October 10. As the leaves on the trees start turning and the air becomes brisker, it means that fall and winter holidays are right around the corner. While many folks look forward to these festivities, the holidays can also be a source of anxiety and depression, especially for those who are incarcerated.

Spending the holidays in prison can bring up a lot of difficult emotions, including remorse, regret, shame, sadness, and loneliness. For those who are inside, it can be painful to be unable to participate in festive family gatherings. The holidays often cause incarcerated people to suffer an acute case of "FOMO" (or "Fear Of Missing Out").

Of course, it's not just those who are in prison who find it difficult to cope during the holiday season; the families of incarcerated people also suffer due to the absence of their loved one. That empty chair at the dinner table can be a painful sight as the rest of the family gathers to give thanks and celebrate.

But despite the holidays being difficult due to the separation that incarceration causes, there are some healthy ways for both you and your family to enjoy the season a bit more.

Here are some suggestions for making the holidays more enjoyable for yourself during your incarceration:

•Focus on the Little Things

In order to combat stress during the holidays – or anytime – commit to a routine and set small, achievable goals like working out, memorizing a bible verse, sketching in a sketchbook, or writing in a journal. These types of activities can create purpose in your everyday life.

Creating a personal holiday ritual for yourself can also be helpful. For example, you might choose to observe each Thanksgiving by writing notes of gratitude to the important people in your life or mark each Christmas by volunteering in your facility in some capacity.

Making New Year's Resolutions, of course, is also a healthy ritual that can help you keep your goals for the future in focus.



Holiday decorations can help remind us that the season is upon us and bring cheer into our hearts.

One of the things that make holidays special is tradition, and you can create and honor your own traditions even while you're in prison; it's just a matter of choosing to do something symbolic – as small or quiet as it may be – to observe the day.

•Give Yourself the Gift of Self-Improvement

One of the best ways you can give yourself a holiday gift is to enroll in a Behavioral Health, Educational, or Career Technical Program. If you enroll now – or at least start researching your options – you will be able to look back on this time as the moment when you made the decision to improve your future. This can be a gift not only to yourself, but also to your loved ones.

Be sure to reach out to Behavioral Health and / or Education staff to learn about the programs that are available to you.

•Give Back Through Volunteering

The holidays are all about showing kindness and love to our fellow humans ("Peace on earth, good will toward men," and all that). So, why not embrace the spirit of the season by doing something nice for others?

There are many existing charitable inmate clubs in NMCD facilities that raise money for a variety of worthwhile causes. By becoming involved in one of these fundraising clubs, you can give to others who need your help (animals, children, the elderly, and others).

Ask your Unit Manager what types of clubs already exist in your facility or, if none of them appeals to you, consider starting your own!

•Connect With Family Through Reading

As we've discussed in previous "Parallels" articles, reading out loud to children is one of the best ways to not only spark their love for books, but also create a strong parent-child bond.

Between your facility's library and the digital library available on your state-issued tablet, you have access to thousands of books, including many works of classic children's literature (you will find titles like "Peter Pan," "The Velveteen Rabbit," and "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," as well as holiday classics like "A Christmas Carol" and "The Night Before Christmas," along with so many more).

By choosing a story and reading it to your child during a video or in-person visit, you will be making special holiday memories that will last a lifetime. After all, the best gifts you can give little ones are your time, interest, and attention.

•Give the Gift of Creativity

When you are incarcerated, one thing that is in ample supply is time. Why not use some of that time to write letters or stories, draw pictures, or create hobby crafts that you can give to your family as holiday gifts? As they say, it's the thought that counts, and usually family members would rather

have an artifact of your time and talents than a store-bought gift anyway.

•Deck the Halls

Getting into the holiday spirit is easier when we are surrounded by seasonal decorations. Talk to your Unit Manager about whether there are any opportunities available for you to contribute to facility decoration projects or competitions.

Brightening your surroundings will not only help you spark your own holiday cheer, but will also help lift the spirits of those around you.

•Reconnect with Your Faith

For some, the holiday season is simply a joyous celebration of family, friends, food, love, kindness, and gratitude. For others, the holidays represent a time to partake in religious ceremonies and prayer. If you observe the holidays for spiritual or religious reasons, then this is the perfect time to focus on your faith and practice the rituals that mean the most to you.

You can always reach out to your facility's Chaplain in order to explore what types of services, events, rituals, or prayer groups are available to you.

•Reach Out for Support

Sometimes, despite our best efforts to "cheer ourselves up" during the holidays, our emotional state requires some professional intervention.

If you are struggling emotionally during the holiday season – or anytime – reach out to Behavioral Health staff in your facility. They can provide you with services to help you manage the anxiety, depression, or other feelings that you're having during the holidays or anytime.

•Combat Isolation Through Community Building

While some incarcerated people are fortunate enough to have a family or other support system rooting for them from the outside, others don't have that asset. Whether through death, estrangement, or some other circumstances, many of us have lost our families, making the holidays a particularly painful time.

For those who don't have an outside network to rely on during the holidays, it can be helpful to create a surrogate family or circle of friends on the inside.



Little things like enjoying holiday meals - even though not "homemade" - can make each day of the holiday season special.




For some, the holiday season is enriched by focusing on their faith and participating in religious services.

**Isolation can be very detrimental to those who are confined to prison, so connecting with other inmates can fill that void of loneliness.**

**Start by finding out what interests you might share with your fellow inmates and think about creating an informal group around that interest. Whether spiritual, religious, academic, creative, athletic, or philosophical, a common interest can be the cement that starts to bond your circle of support on the inside.**

**NMCD's "A New Chapter" Book Club is one example of how a shared hobby can bring people together. Parenting classes, worship groups, hobby craft clubs, recovery programs, and classes like those offered through Project ECHO are also great examples of where you might find your "inside tribe."**

**But aside from just pursuing hobbies or interests together, be sure to also check in on your circle occasionally to see how they're managing the holidays. Talking with peers about the difficulties of spending this special season inside is often very therapeutic.**

**•Discuss Some Suggestions with Family**

**When you're incarcerated, it can seem like you don't have much connection with your family at home. But that doesn't have to be the case. By discussing some of the following suggestions with your family on the outside, you can work together to strengthen your connection and make the holiday season more enjoyable for all of you.**

**Suggestions to Discuss with your Family at Home:**

**•Ask Them to Document Special Moments**

**When we see our partners, children, or other family members on a daily basis, we tend to share with each other about small but significant things that happen throughout the day. This keeps us "in the loop" regarding what is happening in our loved ones' lives and keeps us closer to them.**

**But when you are incarcerated, family members at home don't necessarily have the ability to talk to you every single day. This means that little details that they want to share with you can be forgotten and "slip through the cracks."**

**In order to remember some of the little things that they want to share with you, it can be helpful for them to keep a notebook handy wherein they jot down notes or create a list on their phone. This way, when you do get a chance to chat, they can refer to their reminders so that they don't forget to mention anything.**

Also encourage your family members to take photos of special holiday moments so that they can share the experience with you through pictures.

For those who have the time and interest, another option is to create a scrapbook of milestones that can be shared during visits and also be enjoyed together at home when you are eventually able to rejoin the family.

•Request that Everyone in the Family be Included

Sometimes when one partner is incarcerated and the other one is living life on the outside, it can start to feel as though the two are living two separate lives.

This can be painful and difficult, so it's important for your family to try to ensure that you feel included in family happenings, events, and decisions.



Even the simplest handmade holiday decorations can add a touch of joy and festivity to one's surroundings.

If you are involved with your children, one way this can be achieved during the holiday season is for your parenting partner to discuss with you what gifts will be purchased for the kids. Even though you can't necessarily contribute financially to buying holiday gifts, it will likely mean a lot to you to have some input on what gifts your kids will receive, so be sure to ask your parenting partner if they're comfortable with this.

Also, when holiday gifts are presented to children, it can be helpful to indicate that they are from both parents, rather than just the outside parent. Ask if your parenting partner at home would be willing to communicate to the kids that both their parents collaborated on deciding what to buy and request that they tell the children, "Even though they can't be here today, your dad (or mom) thought that you'd really like this gift."

Knowing that you are still involved in the family's holiday decision-making will help children and parents alike feel more connected.

•Encourage Them to Prioritize Self-Care

Help your family members at home remember that it's important for them to take care of themselves, not only for their own well-being, but in order to be able to care for children and encourage and advocate for you. As is often said, "You can't pour from an empty cup." So, be sure to remind your loved ones to replenish their own soul so that they can care for those around them.

During the holidays, as always, this will look different for everyone. If participating in lots of holiday festivities feels right for them, then they should absolutely do that. If enjoying a quieter, more serene and subdued holiday season is more appealing to them, then that's ok too. But make sure that your loved ones feel comfortable giving themselves permission to enjoy the holidays in their own way, without pressure.

Support your loved ones in doing things that make them happy – and in saying, "No" to things that feel too burdensome to them. This will help enable them to stay in a positive frame of mind, which will allow them to better support themselves, any children in the family, and you.

•Support Them in Acknowledging That They're Grieving

Even though you haven't died, you are still, for the time being, physically absent from your family's life, and they are likely grieving the life – and the special holiday traditions - that you shared together before you were sent to prison.

Make sure that your loved ones know that it's ok to be sad about having lost that pre-incarceration life. But remind them that the "new normal" of this life must go on. For their own sake, as well as yours, don't allow your family to miss out on all that life still has to offer them during your incarceration; just encourage them to share with you about their lives if they are comfortable doing so.

Remind your loved ones that they can still enjoy the magic of the holidays while also acknowledging that your family has suffered a loss. Encourage your family to take time to grieve periodically but suggest that they try to avoid dwelling in that sorrow for too long. Life can still be wonderful without being perfect.

•Encourage Them to Find Ways to Spread Joy

It's easy for all of us to get bogged down in our own struggles and forget that there are others in the world who may be in an even more difficult situation. Often, there's no better way to lighten your own heart than by helping someone in need.

Let your loved ones know that, during the holidays, there are many opportunities for them to volunteer their time, energy, or attention to improve the lives of others. This might mean volunteering at a food bank or soup kitchen; crafting holiday gifts for those in nursing care; donating toys to children in need; or even inviting someone who's lonely (an elderly neighbor, for example) over to spend some time with them during the holidays.

When they share with you about how they're helping their community, it will not only make them proud of themselves, but you will also enjoy the warm feeling of knowing that your family is helping to make the world a better place.

•Remind Them to Give Themselves Some Grace

Holding a household together and providing for a family are difficult for anyone, and especially for someone whose partner is incarcerated and unable to contribute in some of the most important ways. And, of course, the holidays put even more pressure on everyone.

Remind your loved ones to avoid being too hard on themselves. They're doing the best they can under very difficult circumstances. Try to help them focus on all the "wins" and successes – as seemingly small as they may be – instead of their stumbles and shortcomings. And make sure that they never hesitate to reach out for help when they need it.

•Encourage Them to Get Some Help

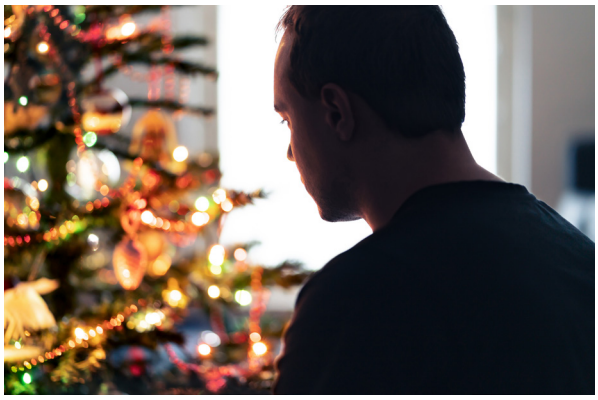
The extra pressures of the holidays can make it especially difficult to manage the duties involved in raising a family – especially if your partner




Decorating for the holidays is not only enjoyable for those who decorate, but also brightens the lives of everyone in the facility.

is incarcerated and unable to help out. But you can help point your family members in the right direction when they need some outside support.

One resource that your family might find useful is The New Mexico CYFD's (Children, Youth & Families Department's) network of Family Resource Centers. These centers can connect your family with low or no-cost services and supports including applying for benefits; accessing State services; employment opportunities; parenting classes; budgeting guidance; nutrition and cooking classes; assistance with securing stable housing and utility services; and more.



Spending the holidays apart from an incarcerated loved one can be difficult, but there are many ways to cope with the challenges of separation.

If keeping up with managing the household has become burdensome for your loved ones, encourage them to visit www.cyfd.nm.gov/family-services/family-resource-centers/, call (505) 827-7613, or send an e-mail to familyservices@cyfd.nm.gov. The CYFD staff with whom your family connects will be able to direct them to the closest Family Resource Center.

Another resource that your loved ones can access is called Prison Families Alliance (PFA). PFA is a nonprofit 501(c) organization that is committed to improving the lives of families and children who have or had loved ones in the criminal justice system.

They can be found at https://prisonfamiliesalliance.org/ and can connect your family with peer support, resources, and even assistance with obtaining holiday gifts for your children.

And, of course, don't forget that NMCD's Family and Constituent Services is always available to assist your family members with navigating the criminal justice system and learning about ways to maintain strong family bonds with you. Your loved ones can reach them by sending an e-mail to CDFamilySrvcs@cd.nm.gov or calling (505) 827-8710 or (505) 231-4762.

•Encourage Them to Make the Call

When dealing with your absence during the holidays – or anytime – it can be helpful for your loved ones to reach out to the Behavioral Health Professionals at the 988 crisis line.

Available to anyone, at anytime (24 hours a day, seven days a week), 988 is a service that can be reached by calling, texting, or chatting online.

Whether your family member needs support with an emotional, mental health, or substance use crisis, connecting with 988 will provide them with a listening ear and guidance on what steps to take next. You can tell your loved ones to call 988; text "TALK" to 988; or go to 988lifeline.org/chat to live chat.

Hopefully some of these suggestions will help you and your family make the most of the holiday season, despite being separated by incarceration.

NMCD's

# CAREER TECH PROGRAMMING



# IS NOT JUST ABOUT



# MAKING A LIVING,



# IT'S ABOUT MAKING A LIFE!

**Ask Education how to get started!**

# Recovery Affirmation



First, let us know these things:
Because we are born with potential, our lives matter;
that we are not the victims of circumstances;
that to be free, we must master our own habits;
that we can become part of something greater than ourselves,
thereby finding the greatest part of ourselves.

Then, let us do these things:
Humble ourselves to learning.
Learn to be learners, out of respect for our own potential,
and out of respect for those who teach us.
Take courage against our fears, be steady in our efforts.
Help each other draw strength from each other,
for the one who falls low can bring us all down,
unless we help him rise.
The one who rises high can take us all higher.
If we strive together,
together we can build a future
that is better than our past.







And in all of this, let us be guided by the highest power
so that we may have love and honor
as all human kind deserves and desires.

# PARALLELS WORD SEARCH

YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWERS TO THE WORD SEARCH ON THE NEXT PAGE.

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## FIND THESE WORDS:

PLAN
HELP
CLEAN
SOBER
REHAB
PAROLEE
PAROLE
OFFICER
SUPPORT
DIRECTION
RECOVERY
PROBATION
ASSISTANCE
CONDITION
RESTITUTION
SUPERVISION
PROBATIONER
GUIDE
VISITS
VISION
STEP
AID



# PARALLELS WORD SEARCH

ASK YOUR EDUCATION STAFF
FOR A PRINTED WORD SEARCH,
THEN CHECK YOUR ANSWERS HERE.

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PLAN
HELP
CLEAN
SOBER
REHAB
PAROLEE
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SUPPORT
DIRECTION
RECOVERY
PROBATION
ASSISTANCE
CONDITION
RESTITUTION
SUPERVISION
PROBATIONER
GUIDE
VISITS
VISION
STEP
AID



NEW MEXICO
CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

# PARALLELS

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**Note that the names of justice-involved people have been changed for privacy, safety, and / or security purposes, as well as out of respect to those directly impacted by their crimes.**

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