



RECOVERY

**CORRECTIONS RECOVERY
COACHING PROGRAM**

Peer Support
Through
Incarceration and
Beyond

Learning Objectives

- Explain the value of peer recovery support in correctional settings, including how lived experience can build trust, increase engagement, and strengthen connections to recovery resources.
- Identify key components of implementing a Corrections Recovery Coaching Program, including developing correctional partnerships, defining the role of recovery coaches, establishing workflows, and navigating the unique challenges of providing peer support within correctional environments.
- Describe strategies for managing and sustaining a correctional recovery coaching program, including staff supervision and support, boundaries and ethics, communication with correctional partners, data collection, and program evaluation.

Learning Objectives (cont.)

- Recognize the importance of continuity of recovery support during reentry, including connecting individuals to community-based recovery resources and relationships before and after release.
- Apply lessons learned from Full Circle Recovery's Corrections Recovery Coaching Program to identify opportunities for developing, expanding, or strengthening peer recovery support within their own correctional or community-based systems.

What is Full Circle Recovery?

- **Recovery Community Organization (RCO)**

- A nonprofit organization founded in 2022 and led by people with direct lived experience with substance use challenges and recovery.
- Everything we offer is non-clinical, low-barrier, and free.
- Recovery Community Centers (RCC) - Des Moines & Council Bluffs
- Corrections Recovery Coaching Program
- REACH (Rapid Engagement And Community Health) Post-Overdose Response Program
- Rural Peer Recovery Support Services
- Satellite office locations - Ankeny, Neola, & Harlan
- Training Program to help grow the Iowa peer workforce

Focus of Peer Recovery Support

Peer recovery support focuses on **long-term recovery** and is rooted in a culture of **hope, health, and wellness**. The focus of long-term peer recovery support goes beyond the reduction or elimination of symptoms to encompass self-actualization, community and civic engagement, and overall wellness. – SAMHSA

Peer support is a **proven resource** to address mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) in correctional and community settings to **support recovery from MH and SUD**, prepare for release, and facilitate reentry. – Bureau of Justice Assistance

What is a Recovery Coach?

A recovery coach is a person with lived experience and training who serves as a mentor, ally, and accountability partner.

Four main goals:

1. Promote recovery
2. Remove barriers
3. Connect people with recovery support services
4. Encourage hope, optimism, and healthy living

Peer Support – An Evidence-Based Practice

Recovery coaching is a peer-based, person-centered support model grounded in the evidence-based practice of peer support.

- Stages of Change
- Motivational Interviewing
- Trauma-informed care
- Recovery Capital framework
- Person-centered and strengths-based
- Recognized by SAMHSA, Medicaid, and Health Resources Services Administration

Benefits of Recovery Coaching

- **Improved access to social supports** (O'Connell, ND; Boisvert, et al., 2008; Andreas, et al., 2010)
- **Decreased criminal justice involvement** (Rowe, et al., 2007; Mangrum, 2008)
- **Reduced relapse rates** (Boisvert, et al., 2008)
- **Reduced substance use** (Bernstein, et al., 2005; Kamon & Turner, 2013; Mangrum, 2008; O'Connell, ND; Rowe, et al., 2007; Armitage, et al., 2010)
- **Greater housing stability** (Ja, et al., 2009)

Benefits of Recovery Coaching (cont.)

- Reduces burden on courts, jails, probation offices
- Reduces costly returns to jail or prison
- Supports successful reentry into the community
- Connects people to treatment, housing, employment, and other resources
- Improves engagement through trust and shared lived experience
- Helps prevent relapse, overdose, and emergency room visits
- Provides continuity of support before and after release
- Addresses needs early, before they become a costly crises
- Complements probation, parole, treatment, and corrections staff without duplicating services
- Uses community-based support that costs far less than incarceration
- Strengthens long-term recovery, stability, and public safety

Corrections Recovery Coaching Program (CRCP)

- What does CRCP strive to do?

- Empower justice involved individuals to initiate and sustain their recovery and to build meaningful and healthy lifestyles from incarceration to release and reintegration into their communities.

- How did CRCP get started?

- From CRCP Director's own experience with incarceration
- One contact in North Central Correctional Facility in Sept. 2022

- How do we connect with recoverees through CRCP?

- Mail
- Email (CorrLinks)
- Virtual (Tech2Connect)
- Virtual & in-person visits
- Community-based corrections
- Speciality courts

- How is CRCP funded?

- Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR)
- Polk County Opioid Settlement Funds
- FCR funding

Full Circle Recovery CRCP Locations



Data Collection

TOOLS: SUPRT, BARC-10

SYSTEM: From spreadsheets to a data system (Apricot - Bonterra)

- SUD history
- Recovery activities
- Referrals made
- Recovery notes
- Rearrests
- # of contacts made
- # of unduplicated recoverees
- Recoveree quotes & stories

What is the SUPRT?

SUPRT is a federal data collection and performance reporting tool with a questionnaire filled out by program staff using information found in client records, tracking, behavioral health history, services, screenings, and diagnoses.

What is the BARC-10?

The Brief Assessment of Recovery Capital (BARC-10) is a self-report questionnaire to evaluate a person's resources and strengths, also known as recovery capital, that can support their recovery from substance use disorders.

Why Lived Experience Matters

“I know what it feels like to be incarcerated and wonder what comes next.”

IN RECOVERY

I struggled with alcohol for nearly 20 years before finding recovery.

I'VE BEEN THERE

My addiction led to jail, prison, and walking away from the people and things that mattered most.

WHY IT MATTERS

I understand the environment and the uncertainty before release.
Relatable support can make room for hope.

People matter. They all deserve recovery.

Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR)

BCOR expands access to peer recovery support during incarceration and helps that support continue through reentry.

9

IOWA PRISONS

Statewide access

2

WORK RELEASE
SETTINGS

Fort Des Moines +
Fresh Start

7,308

CORRLINKS CONTACTS

632 unique individuals

194

TECH2CONNECT

12 unique individuals

The numbers show reach. The work happens in the individual conversations and relationships behind them.

Recovery support across incarceration, reentry and community.

How Individuals Connect With Our Services

There is no single doorway into recovery coaching.

DIRECT OUTREACH → Individuals write to Full Circle.

COUNSELOR REFERRAL → Correctional counselors connect people with our team.

FAMILY → Family members may reach out on someone's behalf.

WORD OF MOUTH → Participants hear about the program from others.

FORT DES MOINES Orientation + weekly coaching + approved Recovery Community Center visits

FRESH START Monthly Big Group + weekly coaching

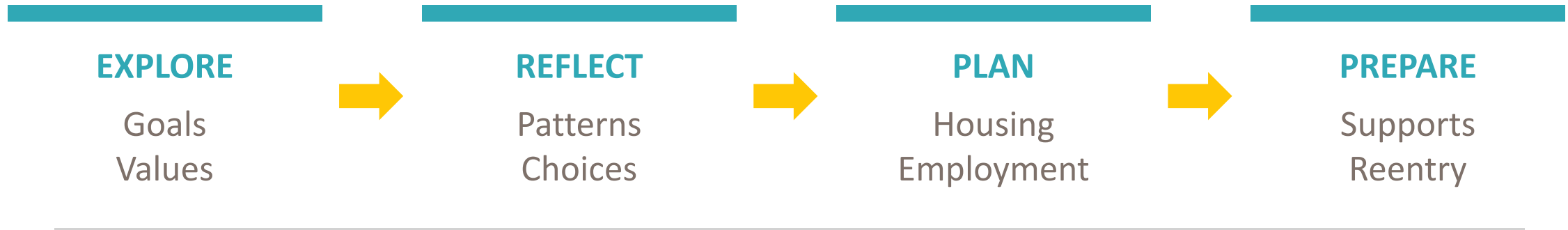
**Multiple entry points. One goal:
make recovery support easier to reach.**

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Recovery Coaching During Incarceration

CorrLinks & Tech2Connect

The platform is the method. The work is still peer recovery coaching.



CORRLINKS Used throughout Iowa prisons. Participants pay \$0.25 for each message they send.

TECH2CONNECT Free to participants through the Seventh Judicial District. I currently carry a five-person caseload.

We treat the recoveree as capable of defining their own recovery.

Why This Timing Matters

Incarceration can be a pivotal period of reflection.

THE RECOVEREE MAY BE...

- Reconsidering previous patterns
- Identifying values
- Thinking about the future
- Preparing for release

PEER SUPPORT CAN...

- Build trust through lived experience
- Use reflection instead of directing
- Support stages of change
- Connect hope to realistic next steps

Meaningful reflection at a pivotal point can help someone see a different path forward.

Recovery Support in Community Corrections

Fort Des Moines & Fresh Start

FORT DES MOINES

- 01 Weekly recovery coaching
- 02 Services introduced during orientation
- 03 Approved Recovery Community Center visits

FRESH START

- 01 Weekly coaching when schedules allow
- 02 Monthly Big Group outreach
- 03 Connection to Full Circle services

COACHING CONVERSATIONS

Troubleshooting frustrations • Resources • Goal setting •
Maintaining recovery goals

Transition can be difficult even when someone
is doing well.

Partnership Makes the Work Possible

2026 COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Fifth District, Iowa Department of Corrections

RESPECT

Correctional partners are the experts in their environment.

ROLE CLARITY

Peer recovery support enhances rather than replaces existing services.

SAFETY + SECURITY

Our practices must work within correctional expectations.



PARTNERSHIP IS OPENING NEW DOORS

Correctional Officer training • Polk County training • Peer Recovery
Specialist training at ICIW

Strong programs respect both correctional expertise
and peer recovery expertise.

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Barriers We Continue to Navigate

ACCESS

Supervision and background restrictions can limit who is eligible to do the work.

CAPACITY

Our waitlist continues to grow and staffing must grow responsibly.

FACILITY ACCESS

One-on-one coaching inside every prison remains a challenge.

COMMUNICATION

Costs, monitoring and platform restrictions affect access.

CONTINUITY

Transfers and release can interrupt established relationships.

The goal is to build a program that works responsibly within correctional environments.

Reentry Starts Before Release

We begin preparing for what comes next while the person is still incarcerated.



COMMON CONNECTIONS AFTER RELEASE

Treatment • Therapy • Employment • Clothing • Financial literacy • Behavioral health and substance use evaluations

When the release date is known, we can provide contact information and set the first meeting before release.

Release should not be the first time we ask what comes next.

Continuity of Care in Practice

1 CONNECTED IN PRISON

A trusted recovery relationship began before release.

2 SETBACK

➡ After release, the recoveree returned to jail.

3 CONNECTION CONTINUED

➡ Coaching continued rather than starting over.

4 TODAY

➡ Independent housing • steady employment • rebuilding family relationships

The recoveree created the outcome.

Our role is to keep a setback from ending the recovery relationship.

**This work matters. People matter.
They all deserve recovery.**

Participant Feedback

In Their Words

CONNECTION

“You have no idea how much it means to me to read the words ‘I am proud of you.’ Those words haven’t been said or written to me in quite a long time.”

REFLECTION

“I do like your challenging questions and inquiries. Things I’ve never been asked before, I appreciate it.”

PERSPECTIVE

“You’ve helped me understand things and given me feedback that has helped me look at situations differently and given me a different perspective.”

Data tells us how far the work reaches.
Their words tell us what the connection can mean.

Corrections Recovery Coaching at Polk County Jail

Meeting people where they're at: inside and beyond incarceration

CONNECTION

LIVED EXPERIENCE

*Sometimes the person sitting across from us needs to see that
changing our lives is possible.*

What Peer Recovery Support Means to Me

Peer recovery support in these environments matters because it shows the person struggling that changing our lives is possible.



2 YEARS IN RECOVERY

My recovery journey began while I was incarcerated.



I'VE BEEN THERE

I know what it feels like to be stuck in the same cycle and not know how to follow through with healthier choices.



LIVED EXPERIENCE HOPE

I can help recoverees identify patterns, create solutions, set goals, advocate for themselves, and challenge old ways of living.

I show up for my people as proof that life
can look different.

What Recovery Coaching Looks Like Inside PCJ



Every other month: brief presentations on the housing units + questions + program flyers

Opioid-related needs prioritized

MAT-specific peer support available

Security comes first. We provide peer support within the jail's rules and expectations.

What Does a Recovery Coach Actually Do?

LISTEN

IDENTIFY

PLAN

CONNECT

SUPPORT

First visit: recovery profile • BARC-10 • needs • wants • recovery goals

Recovery housing & treatment / bed dates

**Relapse-prevention planning &
recovery worksheets**

**Multiple pathways of recovery &
self-advocacy**

**Insurance applications &
resource navigation**

**Goal setting, challenging thoughts &
problem solving**

**Letters to judges &
correctional programming options**

**The coach does not design recovery for the recoveree;
the recoveree leads the plan.**

Support Doesn't End When Their Location Changes

POLK COUNTY JAIL

RELEASED

- In-person reentry meetings
- Phone connection
- Community resources
- Recovery-related transportation

TRANSFERRED

- VINE notifications
- CorrLinks / phone calls
- Letters (including federal re-contact)
- Reentry planning & day-to-day support

126 continued coaching after transfer to state prison in FY26

The method of communication changes.
The relationship doesn't have to.

Recovery Support & Polk County Drug Court

We show up through the whole process.

Fridays in
Court

Resources &
Support

Jail
Referrals

Return to Jail /
Program
Violations

40

Drug Court participants served in FY26

Support continues when a participant returns to jail,
and through whatever comes next.

Five Challenges. Five Lessons.

1

TRUST

Consistency builds credibility.

2

CAPACITY

Access requires adequate staffing.

3

READINESS

Meet people where they're at.

4

BOUNDARIES

Support isn't always agreement.

5

OUTCOMES

We support the journey—we don't control it.

Connection, support, resources, encouragement and hope, without controlling another person's outcome.

What the Numbers Tell Us

1,836

Recovery support contacts

1,188

Virtual visits

414

In-person PCJ visits

603

Requests for services

493

Post-release engagements

126

Continued coaching after
state-prison transfer

Every number represents a conversation, a relationship,
and an opportunity for connection.

In Their Words

“Just because I am here I am not just thrown away, discarded and forgotten.”

— Recoveree

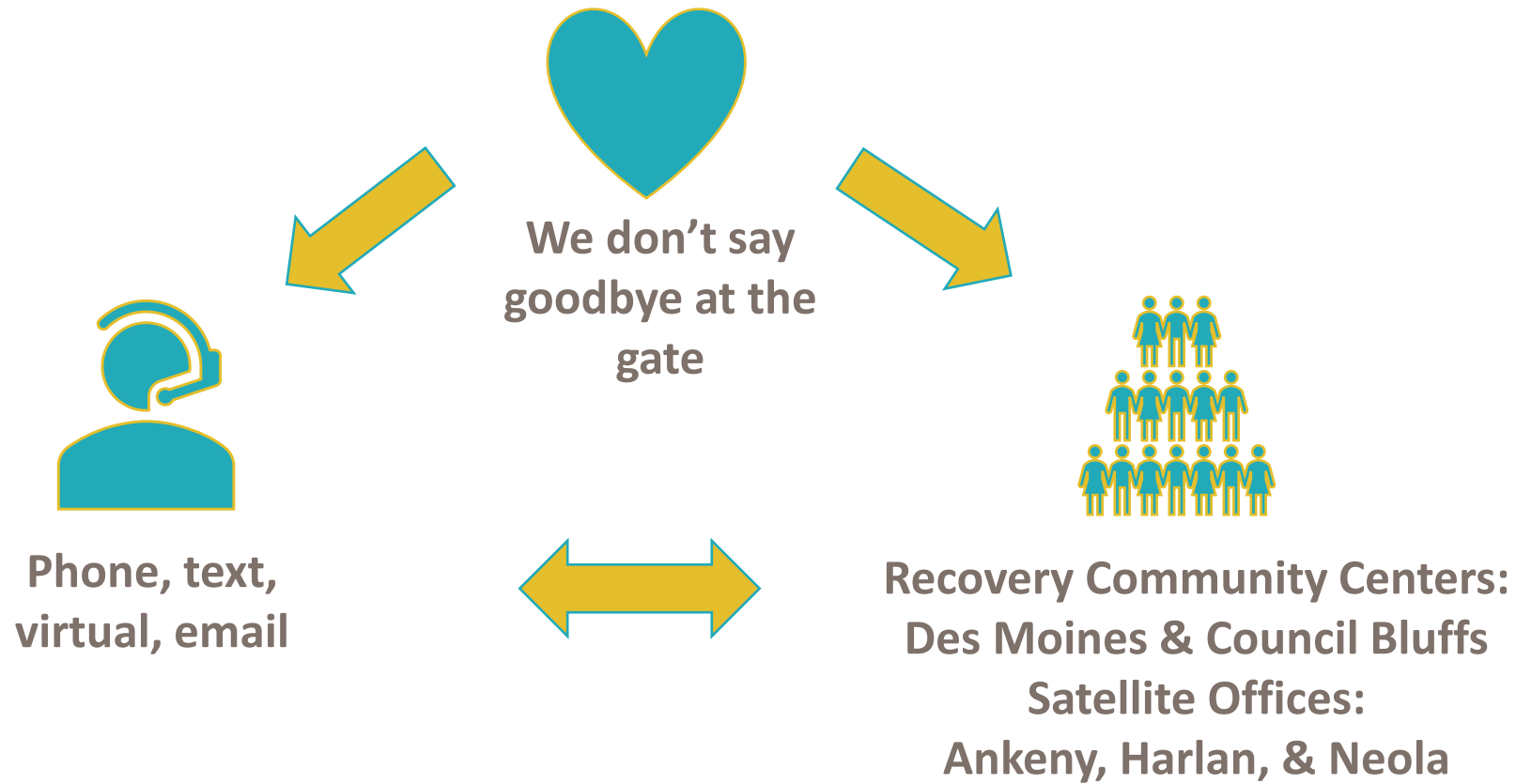
“You are the living proof that things change... having you keep it real and 100 with me the whole way.”

— Recoveree

**Recovery is self-directed.
Self-directed doesn't have to mean alone.**



From Custody to Community: Continuing the Support



Questions? Thank you!

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