

# Sensitizing Providers to the Effects of Incarceration on Treatment and Risk Management (SPECTRM)

Expanding the Mental Health Workforce Response to Justice-Involved Persons with Mental Illness

---

The CMHS National GAINS Center for Systemic Change for Justice-Involved People with Mental Illness

February, 2007

---

**P**eople with serious psychiatric disorders experience high rates of incarceration. Through their experiences in the uniquely demanding and dangerous environment of jail and prison, many develop a repertoire of adaptations that set them apart from persons who have not been

## Features

The provider training component of SPECTRM reviews potential behaviors that are considered adaptive in jail and prison and uses a cultural competence approach to address them. Through teaching treatment providers about the incarceration experience and showing them how behaviors adapted therein are traditionally misinterpreted in community treatment settings, staff are better able to understand their clients and engage them in treatment more effectively and efficiently.

The Re-Entry After Prison/Jail (RAP) Program is designed to assist providers in working with people with serious mental illness who have histories of correctional incarceration. The purpose of this program is to help participants make a successful transition from correctional settings to therapeutic settings and the community. It provides participants with the skills necessary to better engage in therapeutic services and to help avoid further hospitalization and/or incarceration.

Based on a cultural competence model, the program is based in cognitive behavioral theory and utilizes psycho-educational and reframing techniques. It helps participants to relinquish behaviors learned or reinforced in the cultures of jail and prison that interfere with successful readjustment and to replace them with skills that will help them better achieve their own personal goals.

## Conclusion

Cultural competence requires that agencies be able to identify and understand the help seeking needs of the population they serve and deliver services tailored to their unique needs. Meeting the needs of individuals with mental illness who have histories of incarceration is challenging, and compounded by providers' unwillingness to treat this poorly understood and estranged clinical population. SPECTRM is an approach to increase the mental health workforce capacity to provide quality clinical work in therapeutic settings and add a best

---