



GEORGIA
MENTAL
HEALTH
CONSUMER
NETWORK

gmhcn.org

Effectively Integrating Peers in Accountability Courts

Forensic Peer Mentoring Training Project

©2022 GMHCN

Success Stories / What's Working

- ▶ **Cam Parks**, CPS', CADC-II, FPM - Clinical Case Manager, Adult Felony Drug Court Floyd County Courthouse
- ▶ **Shane Sims**, CPS-AD, FPM - Executive Director of People Living in Recovery RCO in Athens, GA
- ▶ **Lindsey Sizemore**, CPS-AD, FPM - Forensic Peer Mentor Training Project Director with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network



Forensic Peer Mentor Training Project

In 2015 the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) partnered with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to establish the Forensic Peer Mentor (FPM) Project.



FPMs serve **returning citizens** who have behavioral health and/or substance use diagnoses by using the mentor's most valuable tool, her/his personal lived experience.



Forensic Peer Mentor Training Development

2004

GMHCN developed the Peer Mentoring Project Pilot Program from the Olmstead decision and contracted with the DBHDD to better serve individuals with behavioral health diagnoses

2018

GMHCN received a Statewide Consumer Network Grant from SAMSA to develop a Georgia-specific forensic peer mentoring training:

**Ready4Reentry
Forensic Peer Mentor Training**



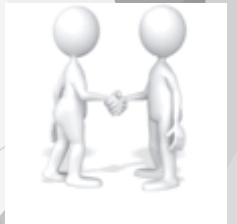
Collaboration

Memorandum of Understanding outlined individual and mutual responsibilities among the:

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)

Department of Community Supervision (DCS),

Department of Corrections (GDC) and GMHCN



FPM Overview



Forensic Peer Mentors (FPMs) are people living in recovery from behavioral health and/or substance use diagnoses who also have lived experience in the carceral systems.

We operate from the perspective that everyone has the capacity to recover and successfully live meaningful and purposeful lives in the communities of their choosing.

Forensic Peer Mentor Role

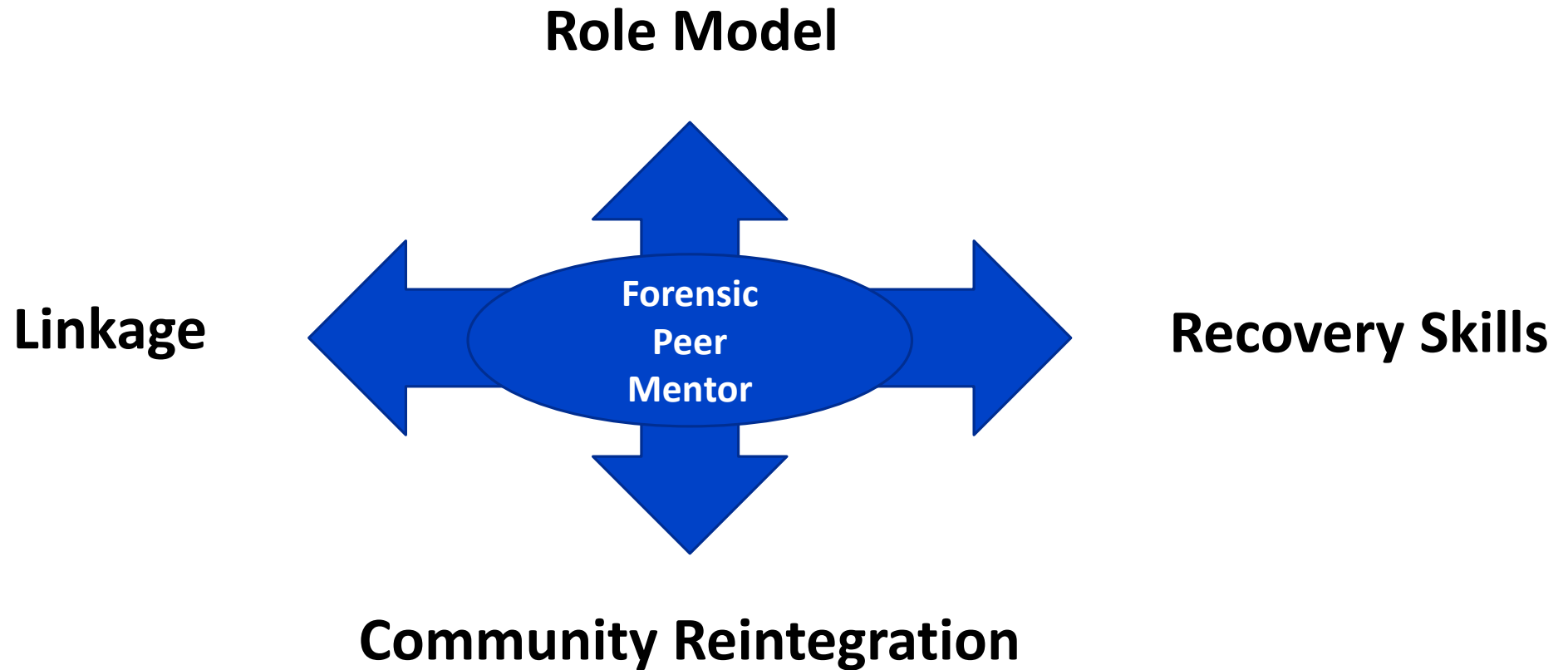
Creating mutually beneficial relationships while establishing personal and community-valued lives

Some of tasks include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Serve as a role model
- ✓ Promote recovery/wellness principles
- ✓ Support linkages with community resources
- ✓ Learn and teach effective coping skills
- ✓ Assist with articulating goals, challenges and needs while maintaining a Wellness Recovery Action Plan



FPM Responsibilities



DBHDD Funded Forensic Peer Mentor Program Sites

FPM POSITIONS

12 (soon to be 31) State Prisons (SP) & Transition Centers (TC)

- Lee Arrendale SP
- Lee Arrendale TC
- Rutledge SP
- Metro Atlanta Re-Entry Center
- Central SP
- Atlanta Women's TC
- Baldwin SP
- Valdosta SP
- Johnson SP
- Pulaski SP
- Augusta SP
- Coastal SP

7 Day Reporting Centers (DRC)

- Athens DRC
- Atlanta DRC
- Griffin DRC
- Morrow DRC
- Gainesville DRC
- Lawrenceville DRC
- Columbus DRC

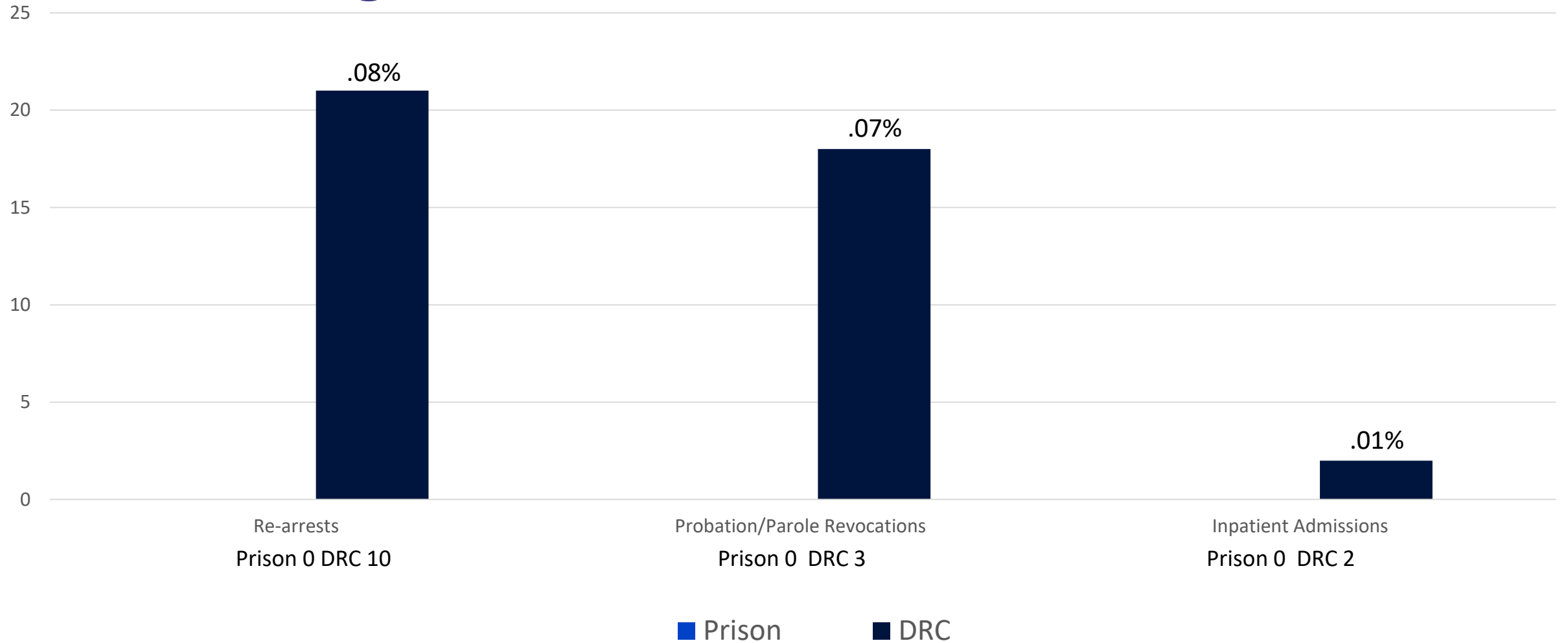


11 Mental Health Accountability Courts

- Fannin, Gilmer & Pickens Counties: Highland Rivers Community Service Board (CSB)
- Cobb County: Cobb CSB
- Hall & Dawson Counties: Avita CSB
- Macon-Bibb County: River Edge CSB
- Spalding & Mitchell Counties: McIntosh Trail CSB
- Cook & Lanier Counties: Legacy CSB
- Thomas County: Georgia Pines CSB



Program Outcomes 2016 - FYTD 2022



Individuals Served 2014-April 2022

	Prisons	DRC	Hospitals	MHC	Appx Totals
FY 2015	26	15	3		44
FY 2016	140	113	13		266
FY 2017	306	215	26		547
FY 2018	205	259	23		487
FY 2019	187	398	39		624
FY 2020	201	242	18	292	753
FY 2021	160	226	17	205	607
FY 2022 TD	124	263	0	229	616
Totals	1349	1731	139	726	3945

FYTD22 Community Integration

Additional Outcomes	Post-Prison Release in Community		Day Reporting Center	
Peers Served in the Community	5		263	
Employed or Receiving Benefits	4	80%	169	64%
Enrolled in Community Mental Health Services	5	100%	197	75%
Housed	5	100%	260	99%
Incidents of Homelessness	4		6	



Photo by August de Richelieu:
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/coworkers-taking-a-coffee-break-and-walking-4427816/>

Continuation of



CARE

*Upon the returning citizen's release from custody,
the FPM assists in the community with...*

- ➔ Employment, Interview Skills, Resume Building
- ➔ Mutual Aid Group Connections
- ➔ Recovery Maintenance Support
- ➔ Meeting Family and Parental Responsibilities



We Heard From...

Justice-involved Citizens
in



Atlanta
Gainesville
Augusta
Savannah
Columbus
Albany

13 FPMs,
36 Criminal Justice
System Staff,
250 Community
Members

Over 300
Participants!



Frequently Mentioned Criminal Justice System Improvements...

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Medication access
- ▶ Mental health education for families, officers and returning citizens
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Communication and transparency across systems





6.5 hours Monday-Friday =
32.5 hours including
working lunches!

Friday afternoon highlight =
Commencement: FPMs
deliver their elevator
speeches!

Facilitators from State Board
of Pardons & Paroles,
Department of Corrections,
Georgia Justice Project and
Department of Behavioral
Health and Developmental
Disabilities



Forensic Peer Mentor Workforce Expansion



Q&A

