

Best Practices in Community Reintegration

Background

Community reintegration is a critical process for formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly those with mental health, addiction, and cognitive impairments. Successful reintegration reduces recidivism (the likelihood of reoffending), improves public safety, and enhances social stability. However, many individuals face significant barriers, including limited mental health support, housing instability, employment discrimination, and social stigma.

Purpose

This study explores best practices in community reintegration for individuals with complex needs, assessing current efforts, identifying barriers, and proposing evidence-based improvements for the Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge (HKPR) region.

Research Questions

1. What are the desired vs. achieved outcomes in reintegration programs?
2. What barriers do service providers encounter?
3. What service models/practices could improve reintegration efforts?

Methods

- **Survey:** Collected data from 36 Human Services & Justice Coordinating committee (HSJCC) service providers on reintegration practices, barriers, and policy gaps, analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- **Interviews:** Conducted with a Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) HKPR Justice Services representative and a System Navigator at Central East Correctional Centre to explore service gaps and best practices.
- **Literature Review:** Examined literature to provide contextual analysis and global comparisons of reintegration models.

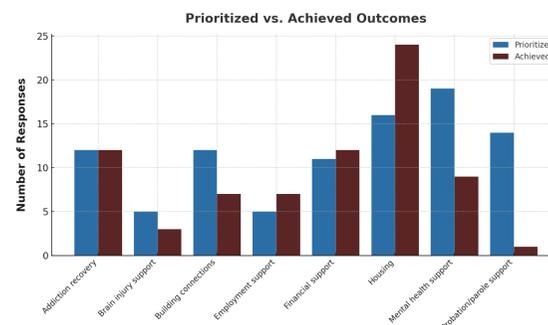


Figure 1 highlights the most frequently reported barriers faced by individuals post-release.

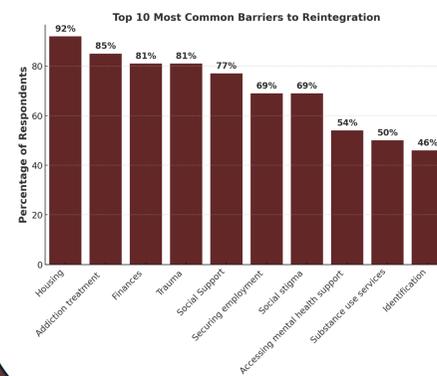


Figure 2 is a comparison of reintegration goals set by service providers versus the actual outcomes achieved, showing gaps in housing, employment, and mental health support.

Key Findings

1. **Unmet Priorities:** Housing is the hardest to secure despite being a top priority alongside employment and mental health support.
2. **Major Barriers:** Housing instability, financial struggles, lack of ID, and delays in accessing medication create major obstacles.
3. **Individualized & Collaborative Support:** Meeting clients where they are, setting personalized goals, and coordinating with probation, addiction, and mental health services improve outcomes but are hindered by high caseloads and limited resources.

Discussion

Reintegration efforts must address both systemic barriers and individualized needs. While housing-first models and employment programs reduce recidivism, service gaps and long wait times hinder success. Survey and interview responses highlight inconsistent access to medication, stable housing, and coordinated support. Service providers stress the need for inter-agency collaboration and personalized case management but face high caseloads and limited resources. International best practices show that continuous support from incarceration to community reintegration leads to better outcomes. Expanding reintegration programs to streamline service access and strengthen collaboration is key to breaking cycles of incarceration.