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Agency of Human Services

What is CoSA (Circles of Support & Accountability)

CoSA is a restorative justice program for men and women who are reentering their community, are under Department of Corrections (DOC) supervision, and are at a moderate to high level of risk of re-offending.

CoSA's objectives are: No More Victims and No One is Disposable – with the firm belief that people who want help CAN change and deserve support to lead a meaningful, crime-free life. CoSA allows the community to play a direct role in the restoration, reintegration, and risk management of people who are often seen with only fear and anger, and are marginalized in their communities. Evidence indicates that training volunteers to help ex-offenders succeed while holding them accountable for their behaviors in a weekly circle process with a Community Justice Center (CJC) Reentry Coordinator reduces recidivism. The CJC Reentry Coordinator stays in regular contact with assigned the Probation Officer and works closely with DOC and mental health professionals to raise the alarm if necessary.

How CoSA Works

The Core Member, three to five trained community volunteers, and the CJC Reentry Coordinator comprise the Circle. They meet weekly as a group to:

- Support the Core Member's community reintegration by facilitating his or her practical needs (i.e. access to medical services, social assistance/financial means, seeking employment/affordable housing, etc.) and by providing a consistent network of social and emotional support.
- Role model pro-social relationships by demonstrating and reinforcing positive social behaviors such as cooperating, sharing and helping others.
- Help the Core Member develop constructive and pro-social strategies and solutions to everyday problems and concerns as well as celebrate successes.
- Challenge the Core Member's behaviors and attitudes that may be associated with his/her offending cycle.
- Connect the Core Member to natural supports and pro-social and leisure skills and activities in their community.

