

On Jan 24, 2024, at 11:12 AM, Kimberly Fortier <kimberlyfortier@txassociates.onmicrosoft.com> wrote:

In my personal experience the communication between case management at the DOC and the service providers when releasing incarcerated individuals is almost nonexistent. As a provider that has worked with II after release, I find they have no clue what or where to go for services. There are many resources available for helping people get back on their feet. Unfortunately, if you don't know they are there then they can't help you. If the DOC needs help identifying how to access these there should be a combined meeting between the prisons to share information. We can't expect that all humans will know all resources. That is why information sharing is so important. We want to cut down the recidivism, yet we are setting these humans to fail. They are being released unprepared and with no tools.

The MAT program is a very important tool in the fight against drug addiction. Unfortunately it is medication without the supports needed to conquer the reasons why people are using drugs in the first place. I appreciate that covid played a part in the breakdown of services. These services should have always been provided with incentives for participation. There are ways around 1:1 and in person meetings that seem to be successful in other institutions. They do all have tablets. It seems there was much more loss than just the connection in a group setting. Putting a female transgender person in a male prison that is SFI with no support and in seclusion that led to "successful suicide" is another break in the mental health system.

Mental health was not the only care aspect that lacked. There have been injuries and infections that were not tended to either at all or in the appropriate time. Again, covid being the excuse for the lack of healthcare and the hospitals being overloaded. Having a human with a bad infection needing daily bandage changing for a year+ in an environment not suitable for that level of sanitation needed will not have a good ending. Or changing medication and not having the right one so they go without. This wouldn't be okay for a family member therefore it shouldn't be okay for anyone.

No system is perfect. There just doesn't seem to be any movement or motivation for improvement.

Kimberly Fortier