

Bringing Recovery before prison as a diversion, recovery within prison and also post-release

The Family Resource Center of North Mississippi has implemented a three pronged approach to address the needs of individuals along a continuum of circumstances surrounding criminal convictions:

Diversion before prison. The First Circuit District Drug Court refers all cases to Families First for Mississippi and one of our qualified staff will work with the referrals. These are usually minor misdemeanor drug convictions where the person will not be going to jail or prison. Our diversion program uses our certified counselors to help the referrals understand the root causes of their problems and the need for change in their lives. The Family Resource Center's life skills classes such as Parenting, Anger Management, Healthy Relationships, Fatherhood Education, Co-Parenting Education, and Domestic Violence Prevention provide targeted information and training for the individuals.

We are particularly proud of our (MRT) Moral Reconnection Therapy certification—our state was one of the first certified in the state that incorporates these life skills along with substance abuse prevention. Additionally, our partnership with the local community colleges which make up the Mississippi Corridor Consortium provides a direct pathway to skills

training and job readiness through the use of jobs navigators.

Recovery within prison. A pilot program began in early 2019, where the Family Resource Center staff partnered with the Alcorn Regional Correctional Facility and the Chickasaw Regional Correction Facility to provide education and training to selected individuals who are 18-24 months from release. Northeast Community College was already providing academic and job skills training at the Alcorn facility and we joined with them to provide our life skills classes and MRT education to those participants. For the Chickasaw facility, we enlisted Itawamba Community College for the academic and job skills classes and we provide life skills and MRT.

Post-release. To further assist individuals once they leave prison, we continue our programs in various locations for those now out in society to keep them on track and have commitments with probation officers to help us maintain our relation with those released from prison.

We are now fully deployed with our pilot and expect positive results to be reported at the end of the first year. To be sure our programs are making a difference in the lives of the participants, our data collection division, headed by Dr. Colin Billingsley, will be tracking these populations and insuring data proves those