

Presentation Date: October 1, 2026

Presenter: Dr. Carmin Irving & Jeanette Puskas

Topic: *PAX Tools for New Beginnings to Inspire a Stronger Tomorrow*

[00:00:00] **Moderator:** Today, we are pleased to welcome two leaders from the Praxis Institute, an organization focused on strengthening children, families, and communities through evidence-based prevention and youth development practices.

[00:00:14] Dr. Carmen Irving, Vice President of Praxis, brings more than twenty years of experience in youth development, prevention, and organizational effectiveness. Joining her is Jeannette Puskas, Director of Customer Experience, who brings more than a decade of experience helping schools and communities implement, expand, and sustain PAX programs.

[00:00:36] Together, Carmen and Jeannette bring deep expertise in translating evidence-based practices into effective programs that support young people, families, and professionals who serve them. We are delighted to have them with us today. Carmen and Jeannette, the floor is yours

[00:01:01] **Carmen Irving:** Hello. Good afternoon, friends. Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Carmen Irving, vice president of PAXIS Institute, and Shana, go ahead and introduce yourself.

[00:01:09] **Jeanette Puskas:** Hi, everyone. Thanks for being with us today. We're so excited to, uh, get to know everyone and just share more information about what we do and, um, how we might be able to support some of the work that you're doing in your community.

[00:01:23] So, we welcome questions that you might have. I know I see some things going in the chat box, and we have, uh, Amy monitoring that for us as well. So we are gonna have our presentation, um, using our PowerPoint slides, but, uh, uh, we are welcoming questions at the end. But if there's some time, Amy's gonna let us know if there's something as well that we can, uh, address throughout the session as well.

[00:01:45] So, it's a pleasure to be here. Take it away, Carmen.

[00:01:48] **Carmen Irving:** Thanks so much, Shana. So let's start at the top. As Michelle introduced us, we both mentioned that we're from PAXIS Institute. And so PAXIS Institute is an international prevention science company. Our job is to do one thing and do it really well, and that's to take evidence-based, trauma-informed, universal prevention strategies and equip the workforce for integrating those strategies into daily routines.

[00:02:16] And so today we're gonna really start with understanding the foundation of PAX and the, the theoretical foundation and principles we use in PAX, and then we'll work into exactly what that looks like within the recovery and, um, unification process So when we talk about PACS, I think that often what happens is we start thinking about this as programming.

[00:02:45] And so I'm gonna ask all of you to kind of expand that. We're really thinking about how we leverage those evidence-based or the science in weaving into our daily practice. And so as we know, prevention is not something that we can do in isolation. And so that's why we take this system of care or systematic approach of equipping evidence-based and trauma-informed strategies throughout the community within our workforce for supporting young people and most recently women in the recovery setting.

[00:03:19] So our picture here really looks at what is the role of educators or human service professionals or out of school time professionals, parents, caregivers, recovery support specialists, peer specialists. When we think about what that looks like in any given community, each of those roles play a critical function in the lives of each of our community members.

[00:03:43] And so we wanna make sure that we're taking a systematic approach to match those evidence-based trauma-informed strategies to each of those contexts. When we talk about PAX, the first question that comes to mind is, what is this PAX thing? What does it stand for? So PAX is not an acronym. PAX is the Latin word for peace.

[00:04:05] In the context of PAX, it's what we want more of within our youth serving settings, what we want more of in our workplaces, what we want more of in our homes, what we want more of in our communities. When we talk about PAX programming, we're taking those evidence-based strategies for any adults who work with or care for young people.

[00:04:25] And again, we're gonna get to what that looks like in recovery. But foundationally, the start of PAX was really in our schools, and so how do we begin to equip our educators with some of those foundational skills to integrate into their day? Eventually, that rolled out into what does that look like in a community, and now we're working in those recovery settings.

[00:04:48] When we talk about PAX programming, which you see on the top of the slide, we're not talking about a program. We're not talking about a workbook. We're not talking about a curriculum that you're gonna run, um, for the next eight weeks on Tuesdays at two o'clock. We're talking about a set of evidence-based strategies that integrate into the workplace, that integrate into the natural routine of the things we're already doing in our setting.

[00:05:17] Regardless of our setting, we're always going to take a trauma-informed approach. We're always going to approach behavior as a skill set, meaning we know that the things we want more of can be taught. We're going to be intentional in leveraging the science to create a nurturing environment to build that trusting relationship.

[00:05:37] And last, and certainly not least, we're going to be certain to establish reliable and consistent adults in the lives of our young people and the people that we serve within our work context. So coming back to the evidence base, there's it's always interesting. People want to know what does this PAX thing do?

[00:05:59] So we talk a lot about being trauma-informed. We talk a lot about being evidence-based, but what does that mean? So through the data, there are some pretty immediate benefits, and by immediate I mean following training. So you're trained, and now you're going to go use this thing you were just trained in.

[00:06:17] What we notice straight away is a decrease in problematic and disruptive behavior. The opposite of that, of course, is an increased focused attention and time on task. We see an increase in pro-social and cooperative behavior, and in our school settings we see increased teaching and learning time. These mid-range benefits are somewhere between eight weeks and one semester's worth.

[00:06:43] So we've started integrating PAX into our daily routines. Now we're using all of these strategies. And about a semester in, we see a significant increase in reading level for elementary students. This is not opinion. This is the data. I'm just summarizing data here. Increased standardized test scores in both math and reading.

[00:07:03] So this was a very interesting study. Regardless of which math or reading curriculum was being used, when we had students in PAX classrooms, we saw an increase in standardized test scores. Going the other way, this wasn't just for students. This became protective factors for our educators. We saw a decrease in teacher depression and workplace stress, an overall reduction in school violence and suspension. Well, we love these immediate and midterm benefits.

[00:07:34] Where PAX began to really get the attention in the prevention world is based on the Johns Hopkins studies and the other 50 independent studies, including additional randomized control trials that backed up the findings. So what they found in this, now we're in our, I believe, 43rd year of longitudinal data collection, is that when you taught PAX in a classroom in the first grade and compared it to students who were not in PAX classrooms, there were some very statistically significant results.

[00:08:10] So as those elementary students were exposed to a year of PAX and went on to become young adults, we saw an increase in high school graduation and college entrance rates for those students from PAX classrooms. We saw a re- a reduced risk of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, a decrease in opioid and other drug misuse, and decreased suicide.

[00:08:34] I'm gonna pause for just a second 'cause Amy, I'm seeing a scary note that I can't see anything or hear anything, so should we check in and make sure people can see and hear us?

[00:08:45] **Moderator:** Yep. Uh, we'll work on that.

[00:08:47] **Carmen Irving:** Okay. You want me to keep going?

[00:08:49] **Moderator:** Um, yes. I'll check in with Michelle.

[00:08:53] **Carmen Irving:** Absolutely. So I wanna break out for just a second on this Hopkins slide.

[00:08:59] Okay, thanks. So somebody can see and hear me, so I'm gonna keep doing the show here. So when we're talking about these outcomes, I want us to think really big picture, because we often talk about what does the science say. Getting evidence-based we know is rigorous, and to be able to have 40-plus years of longitudinal data is no easy feat.

[00:09:22] So on the left side of that screen you see there are 50 independent, we're, we've now exceeded that, additional studies confirming those results. Lots of those are randomized control trials or adaptations looking at what happens in other age groups or other age groups or grade bands, what it looks like in other contexts, what it looks like in other countries, some of those cultural adaptations, if you will.

[00:09:47] Again and again and again, the findings are the same. And so I wanna kinda get to the shtick here. When we're talking about PAX, what we're doing is we're building those skills of self-regulation. So there isn't anything magical happening in the principles we're using in PAX. It's science. What we're using is these evidence-based strategies that intentionally teach self-regulation to young people.

[00:10:13] When young people are able to build self-regulation early on, they have wildly different outcomes than their counterpart peers So how do we do it? So there are an array of offerings of programming, if you will, under the heading of PAX. So in our school-based world, we have a foundational set of trainings called PAX Good Behavior Game.

[00:10:35] We have that for various age groups. So we start offering it for early childhood. PAX Good Behavior Game, which is the flagship program, serves our elementary students, and then we also have PAX for adolescents. Again, we're not working directly with children. What we're doing here is we're training our workforce.

[00:10:54] So these are classroom teachers, administrators, support staff who are trained and then implementing those principles within their school-based context One of the community-based iterations is PAX Tools for Human Services. So this is acknowledging that there are a lot of other caring adults in the web of young people, so we want to make sure that our counselors, our therapists, our behavioral health professionals, our social workers even some of our juvenile justice staff, uh, children services staff are trained in evidence-based trauma-informed strategies that they can integrate into their practice.

[00:11:32] This does not take place of their training. This is something that they're rolling into their daily routine. PAX Tools for Community Educators is really taking those community-serving professionals, many of them working within public health or extension agencies, working as health educators, to be trained in a set of evidence-based trauma-informed strategies that they can then teach in their work as they're working with parents and caregivers

[00:12:05] And sometimes we don't have health educators or community educators available, so Praxis Institute does offer a training explicitly for caregivers. So this is taking a workshop style to deliver those same strategies to a variety of audiences. So lots of caregivers, lots of grandparents, kinship, and foster families

[00:12:32] So everything I talked about so far is about, hey, we have a whole array of programming intended to work directly with the workforce who works with young people. And we've been doing this work for 30-plus years now, building and building and building that evidence base. So the 43 years of work starting with Hopkins was with one strategy, and we've been able to build those across time.

[00:13:01] Based on the success of that and the evidence base there, we were approached, um, by one of our longtime stakeholders that we've been working with now for, well, since 2012. And their-- Oh, and their question was-- Okay, well, the light fell down, guys. So sometimes that happens. There we go. Um, the question was, how do we do this with our women in recovery?

[00:13:30] And the answer was really quite was quite simple. Everything we've talked about is a human behavioral strategy. Nothing that we do in PACS is exclusively intended for young people or for children. Those strategies are intended for humans. What we had done always and forever up to this point was to really be deliberate about equipping our workforce who supports young people.

[00:13:57] So once we received this request of we see a need for doing similar work with our women in recovery, we went into the lab, and we began to take those evidence-based strategies and really begin to understand what the science looks like as we work in tandem with adults and how we begin to further develop and refine those skills of self-regulation.

[00:14:21] And so PACS Tools for New Beginnings is our newest programming intended exactly for women in recovery, women maybe in rehabilitation, along with the professionals that work with them. So this is a peer model where both our workforce and our participants are doing this together

[00:14:45] So what does it look like? So when these, when participants come to training, they're learning strategies that are really intended to build self-regulation, to build a sense of en- empowerment, really focused on, uh, relationship repair and relationship building, as well as communication and collaboration.

[00:15:06] When they're learning these strategies, they're in a very facilitated training, so we're not there with a PowerPoint talking. They're there working together. And so the goal is that for every evidence-based trauma-informed strategy we're teaching, they're applying it straight away with the staff that they're interacting with, oftentimes peer supporters, and how they're gonna use that strategy as soon as today or tomorrow in their setting.

[00:15:35] Additionally, as every strategy is taught, they're also learning how they're gonna take these strategies home with them and use them with their own children. At the end of the

day, what we're really after is building a more peaceful, productive, healthier and happier environment for our staff, for our residents, and ultimately the children that our moms are...

[00:15:57] have in their lives So starting at the beginning, and I mentioned this a little earlier, we have to have a theoretical framework to put this on. So it's not enough to just say, "Hey, these are evidence-based and trauma-informed strategies." We really need to understand what is it we're trying to do from a theoretical perspective.

[00:16:19] And we understand that the nurturing environments framework is what allows an environment to really begin to implement those evidence-based strategies and to really build a trusting relationship that inspires self-regulation. So with that nurturing environment through training, we really talk about how we create safe spaces that are both physically and emotionally safe.

[00:16:43] How we use those practices that are inclusive for voice and choice for all of our members within our own community, whether that community is at home or in a recovery setting. The, um, importance, the priority for predictable routines, guidelines, procedures, how important it is for both our staff and our community members to understand what to expect and to have a mechanism to have shared expectations together.

[00:17:12] We wanna be able to have an environment that fosters the development of those positive relationships, and ultimately, we wanna build self-growth. We wanna build self-awareness. Again, many of, um, many of our established environments are already this. We're doing this work already. Now it's taking those evidence-based strategies and layering them into this existing environment PAX Tools for New Beginnings really hinges on the connection to ACT.

[00:17:44] So ACT is Accep- Acceptance and Commitment Training. And in, in a nutshell, ACT is really about being aware of your thoughts, accepting those thoughts as just thoughts, understanding just because I'm having a thought, particularly a negative one, doesn't make it true, doesn't mean I have to act on it. I'm gonna build an awareness, a mindfulness if you will, to be aware of what I'm thinking, to hold onto it for a second, and I may even have to diffuse it and understand this is an old, an old way of thinking, or I'm having a negative thought, I'm gonna hold onto it for a minute.

[00:18:19] I'm gonna be reminded of my own goals, values, where I'm headed with this, and I'm gonna act on that. And so when we're when we're teaching PAX Tools for New Beginnings, with each of those strategies, we're coming back and connecting it to the nurturing environment, as well as to the principles within ACT, which, as we know, are very common in many of our recovery settings So I wanna slow down for just a second, then I promise I'll give Jeanette a chance to talk.

[00:18:50] And I wanna talk about kind of big picture, what we're looking at with generational change. So when we're in a PAX Tools training, we're working directly with women in recovery and support staff, whether we're talking about staff directors, peer supporters, uh, recovery staff. But we're building this inclusive environment so that

everybody sitting in that room, staff and women in recovery, are learning these skills together.

[00:19:18] And ultimately, these skills are about increasing self-awareness, increasing self-control, increasing self-regulation. With that, we're working on very specific communication and relationship skills. Some of that is about relationship repair, some of that is about our own self-help, our own self-awareness, and really understanding how to practice some patience, understanding how to identify impulses and tap the brake a little bit.

[00:19:46] As these principles are implemented, as we make these practices just part of our routine within that recovery setting, both for staff and women in recovery, those become integrated and again taught to then start using and implementing with the young people in our lives. So another-- Said another way, moms are learning these strategies in this environment and practicing them as they're visiting with their children and ultimately reunifying with their children.

[00:20:17] What we want to have happen there, and what we're seeing in the data, is that this gives young people an opportunity to also increase their positive choices. That as these strategies are being implemented within the home with their young people, we're increasing cooperation between adult and young person, and also young person to young person.

[00:20:39] What we're doing there is practicing those skills of self-regulation in the home environment, building self-regulation in our young people, which is where we drop to the bottom of the slide. So as young people develop self-regulation, what we know from heaps of data is that young people with self-regulation grow up to be healthier adults.

[00:21:00] They perform better academically, and we see time and time again, they avoid legal problems. So what we're doing here is we're really creating this cycle of being very intentional in building skills in our adults that get passed to our young people. Our young people further develop and go on to be adults who have these skills

[00:21:22] So when we went into the lab, if you will, to build PAX Tools for New Beginnings, we wanted to think about how we would deliver this information in a useful way and an approachable way. And so many times when we're conducting our trainings, we have a manual or a workbook, and we fly by PowerPoint, and in many of our professional roles, we're accustomed to that.

[00:21:47] And we wanted to make sure that we did something that was practical and approachable for all of our participants. And again, you all know the power of journaling within the recovery world. We understand that journaling is not just a practice, but a safe place to really think about your emotions, to come back and reflect on how we're f- how we were feeling and how we're feeling now, what we were thinking and what we're thinking now.

[00:22:13] Becomes not just a place to monitor our progress, but often a little bit of a private place to have our own accountability measures. And so we wanted to really embed the

practices that we're asking people to implement within a journal space. So go ahead, Jeanette, I think we have a picture of the journal.

[00:22:36] So in the journal, which I thought I had right here. So within the journal the idea is in the front, all of the content we're gonna cover in training are the first pages of the journal. The idea is from the get-go of training, we want participants interacting with the journal, getting familiar with it, getting comfortable with it.

[00:22:59] So as training is being facilitated, as participants are working in their groups, they're in their journal. They're taking notes in there, they're answering open-ended questions, they're answering application questions, they're working together, and they're comfortable in the journal. After 20-some pages, we're gonna be done working in the journal with them, and we're introducing them how they're going to use the journal after training.

[00:23:23] So the next pages are a 90-day recovery journal. And for every day of that recovery journal, you'll see these areas of setting goals or priorities, some gratitude journaling, as well as some self-care, followed by the mirrored page being a space for journaling. Toward the end of the toward the end of the journal, we wanted to also give a place for some mindfulness practices or, again, just a safe space to go and diffuse.

[00:23:55] And so there are some coloring pages in there as well as a, a dot journal. So the idea was to make this as practical as possible. The last pages of that journal are really for the funders. So all of the evidence base, who are the references? Where did the science come from? How do, how do we know this?

[00:24:14] Is all in the back of the book. So we didn't want to we didn't wanna make it too heavy to manage, but we also wanted to make sure that the references, the resources, and the credibility were there

[00:24:28] So you've heard me say strategies and principles and trauma-informed, so what's this thing really about? So when you come to training, there is some front-end matter, some of which I touched on, and the purpose of that is to really ground the why are we doing this? So we can't just tell you what to do if we don't tell you why it matters.

[00:24:48] So there's a little bit of that foundational work on the front end, and then we get to training, and it's time to work. So in a training day, you're going to learn nine individually evidence-based trauma-informed strategies, starting with shared vision and ending with PACS requests. So in just a second, my colleague Jeanette's gonna demonstrate what that looks like.

[00:25:09] But the idea here is each of those strategies are going to offer a function for staff, a function for the women in recovery, as well as what it looks like for young people in our home communities. So shared vision is really gonna be about talking about how do we get on the same page? How do we have matched expectations?

[00:25:31] How do we empower people to have a voice in describing what they need or don't need? Using beat the timer, understanding how do we use, uh, reduced allocated time theory to really help us lock in or stay focused on some things that can be really difficult for us. Going all the way through, which I don't, I don't wanna take all of Jonna's thunder, but understanding that each of these has a function and has an application for a variety of ages, and the way, the way that works is it's exactly as I said earlier.

[00:26:05] These are human behavioral strategies. So with that, go ahead, Jonna.

[00:26:11] **Jeanette Puskas:** All right. So thanks, Carmen. As, um, as we talked a lot about, you know, we laid the foundation of why we do w- why it's important to do this training and why it's important to learn each one of the strategies. And now I'm gonna jump into demonstrating or talking about one strategy in particular.

[00:26:29] So as Carmen mentioned, we do nine within the training, and we wanted to highlight exactly what one might really look like. Again, taking, understanding, uh, why these are important. But we oftentimes come out of training and go, "Okay, that was cool, and I get it, but what do my hands do? How do I do that?"

[00:26:48] How do I create a reliable, consistent environment? How do I create a more nurturing environment and build the skills?" And that's exactly what we're gonna do here with these PAC strategies. So when someone comes to training with those nine strategies, we follow this exact, you know, this pattern with each one.

[00:27:06] We're gonna talk about the problem and the solution, so something you might notice within your setting or something that comes up in your, uh, daily interactions with others. So we're gonna, we're gonna talk a little bit about that. We're gonna give you the recipe. Again, those are in that journal, so, our participants follow right along.

[00:27:24] But we wanna be able to tell you exactly how to apply this and what it looks like. We want you... We understand that sometimes you hear it, and I'm demonstrating it in front of the room, but you forget, like, "What was that that I was supposed to do?" So we wanna have something that you can refer back to, so we're gonna give you the recipe.

[00:27:42] We're gonna talk what this looks like. How am I gonna apply this into our current setting? So again, we start with the setting that we're in, working directly with staff and our, uh, residents or women in recovery. So we're gonna talk about what that looks like for us. And then we're gonna shift about what this looks like with young people.

[00:28:04] If you're a mom with your young person, a grandma. We've trained and worked with aunties and y- you know, anyone within the life of a young person. So we're gonna talk about how you can help build and apply this within that setting and why it works. So again, going back to if I don't understand why I'm doing it, it might not be something I stick with.

[00:28:24] So we wanna connect that back to the reasons for it. And then what's most important here, we're gonna practice. We wanna make sure that we fully understand how to

walk through those steps and how to do this. So th- we're gonna follow the same practice and procedure for each one of our strategies, and we're gonna highlight one right now.

[00:28:45] This is a really popular one, and I would say probably one that, Participants really spend time with. Uh, we might not get to the whole sheet, so you can see we're gonna walk through this a little bit. You, you actually get that hands-on, uh, resource when you're sitting in training to walk through this.

[00:29:03] But this is called a PAX Goal Map, and what we wanna do here is to buy... really be able to identify not just goals that we want to achieve, but also what are those resources that I might need to take the steps to achieve those things. I wanna be very clear, this is not about treatment goals. This is really just about any goal that someone might have that they're working towards baby stepping to, to accomplish.

[00:29:30] And again, w- with PAX strategies we hang our hat on it being very practical. We want someone to be able to walk away right away with being able to use this in their setting. So with this goal map, we're gonna provide a practical way to understand the steps that I need to go through to make some, some effort to have some accomplishment here.

[00:29:52] But the purpose is to follow a process that really helps a trusted adult to provide some support with the individual. So this might be a resident, uh, or one of our women in recovery working right alongside a staff member with a peer support specialist. They could have-- they might do this alone.

[00:30:11] But you would have that way that that trusted adult could help to support through these steps. So we're gonna find those steps to reach the goal, and it really be-- it's able to provide us that planned approach and not just to accomplish it, but understand what are the obstacles getting in my way, and how do I plan to overcome or address those obstacles?

[00:30:32] So that's what's really important here with this strategy. So we're gonna walk through that. So here we go. This is just an example of one that, uh, that we might talk about in training, and I'm gonna give everyone a moment just to kinda read through this. So, with this we selected our goal is to reenter the workforce and get a job close to home.

[00:30:53] So that's what our PAX, our goal might be for this activity here. So I'll let everyone just kinda read through this, each one of these steps that you'll see. And if you want to, you can drop in the chat box, what are some things that you notice with this mapping activity? What are some of the things, um...

[00:31:10] And I'm gonna look at the chat here and see what your, your feedback is. But what's some of the things that you notice with this, uh, with this hands-on resource that we're doing here? So I'll give you just a moment to look and reflect a little. Don't be shy.

[00:31:27] I see there's seven steps. Can you read through these?

[00:31:35] So we might see here... Oh, I see some coming in. Thanks for, ah Oh, very good, says Paul. It breaks this into manageable steps, right? So we see manageable steps here. Smart goals, says Bethany. So, Oh, excellent, Joe. Strength-based, right? We're gonna really kind of think about what is this thing that I want to achieve, and how is this going to be, lead to a better future.

[00:32:03] And you can see a job will help me get some more income and structure through the day. What might else, other things that we notice with this? So we're gonna identify the goal What's really important here, action items, say Amy. So we wanna have those things break, broken down is specifically what I do.

[00:32:22] Oh, your own path rather than telling them their path. Exactly. What am I capable b- of? Oh, pros and cons. So we have to be able to identify what are the things that might get in our way. Because oftentimes the things that get us in our way, we don't really have a plan to overcome those, and those really can set us back a little bit.

[00:32:46] So we wanna be able to identify and then say, "How do I work through those things?" And maybe we go back one of those challenges and working through becomes a new goal, right? So we might even go back and say, "Huh, was my goal a little too big? Maybe I need to break this down and make it smaller." But what's really important here, one of my favorite things, yeah, what's right with you?

[00:33:08] Exactly. But we're gonna be able to take the thing of motivational interviewing or guiding someone and say, "What are the steps to do that?" Because sometimes that becomes daunting in itself. So this is a practical and visual reminder, so important. I might not get through this whole thing, but I can fold it up, put it in my journal and come back to it.

[00:33:28] It's a visual reminder of my progress. And what I love about this, these steps too is identifying who can support you in reaching your goal. Who is on, who's in my tribe? Who's on my team? Who can help me walk through this? And who do I turn to when I need help? And so making those things very clear and understanding, and maybe as the peer support specialist or the program manager, this might be a place where I can provide some assistance and, and see where the gaps are.

[00:34:01] So again, it's not just helping those that, um, are in, in our recovery, but it's also giving that tool for our staff and our workforce to say, "What is that tangible way that I can really help to do the work that I need to do in a meaningful way?" And so, yeah, exactly. We all need help, right? This is just a good human behavioral strategy, and it's breaking it down.

[00:34:22] So knowing what's getting in the way and again, what does progress look like? So maybe it's thinking that the job is the ultimate goal, but what would progress towards that? Is it just building the resume? That would be progress, right? So what does that look like? Such an important piece here, and I don't want to spend-- to go too fast.

[00:34:46] I wanna spend some time looking at, um, what this... why this makes this a little bit different along the way. And before I move on, I'll often s- I'll say oftentimes with this

one, I find that when I'm guiding through training or, or working through this, what we find is the initial goal s- was a little bit too big, you know?

[00:35:04] Uh, the first time we did this, it was someone wanted to get a house to build a home when they're reunified with their kids, with their young people. And what we realized is that building a, m- getting a home w-was a really... that's a great goal, but it was, it was daunting. It was overwhelming. But when we broke it down and say, "Okay, what are the steps we need, and how do we just do that one step?"

[00:35:26] That became the new goal. So just kinda thinking about that, why that's such an important piece of your journey. So again, we walk through that. We do that in training. And then we're gonna talk about, okay, here's that recipe to do it. In case you forgot, here's exactly how you're gonna walk through those steps.

[00:35:43] So we give that to you so that you would have that as a reference. And talking about why we're gonna do this in our current setting, so giving you some examples, and then seeking examples from our participants. But transition, reunification, re-entering the workforce. And then flipping that a little bit, again, we wanna give that same kind of example and analog of how am I gonna use this as a strategy as the young- as the adult supporting a young person?

[00:36:12] So now you're gonna then have a, a tangible and practical way to support the young people in your life. So you might do a, a goal map for doing chores or making friends, doing homework or improving your grades. And so again, another way that we can utilize this very effective strategy. And then we're gonna spend some time reflecting.

[00:36:33] So again, we do this with each one of our strategies, but we wanna know what goals are you working towards, and how might some of the young people in your life what do you predict that they might wanna work towards? So we're gonna talk about that in training, again, giving you that practical plan as you move forward in how you're gonna use this We're gonna practice that, and then connecting it back to act.

[00:36:58] So Carmen laid that foundation for us of the framework, and then we're gonna connect it back to why are we doing this? Why is it so important? So it's-- someone brought up motivation- motivational interviewing. Exactly right. Purposeful interviewing that are really gonna give you a, a strategic plan that you can achieve and accomplish.

[00:37:17] So we're gonna help everyone and to accomplish these goals, identify what we need more of, recognize, again, the people and the resources that are gonna be helpful for us to move forward, and then understanding those barriers and what I can do to overcome those. So connecting that all back to the why. So let's talk a little bit about...

[00:37:38] That was just one strategy. We have nine that we walk through in training, and we wanna talk about what does training actually look like. So you show up. We can do trainings virtually or in person. I would, um, say most of our trainings are done in person. It is six

hours of content that we wanna really give that opportunity to lay the foundation, but again, practice each one of those strategies.

[00:38:03] What's very important, and I, I oftentimes bring this up, is PAX is here to be helpful. We want our help to be helpful, and one of the things that we really focus on is taking that six-hour content training and saying, "You might not have six hours to give up in a day to attend training. You really want to, and you see the value, but maybe you need this in two three-hour sessions or three two-hour sessions."

[00:38:28] We're here to make this work because the goal is to get the intervention out and to get these strategies in the hands that need them most. And so we really work with our sites and our organizations to help make this fit what your needs need to be. All of our trainings include not just the, the training, but also the journal Carmen had and these, uh, the hands-on strategies.

[00:38:52] So we-- I highlighted that little, the goal map. You get, uh, some of those. You get, like, a little pad of those and you walk away with, with that as a resource. And I also wanna talk, I'm gonna highlight what's called our facilitator training. So that's, um, once we lay the foundation of this PAX Tools for New Beginnings for all of our clients, residents, and staff, we build in a sustainability model, which includes our facilitator training.

[00:39:19] So I'm gonna highlight that a little bit for you. We did this, uh, project in 2025 through the state of Ohio. Carmen mentioned that we were approached by a state funder, and it was the state of Ohio. Uh, so those of you in Kentucky right next door. And, uh, and we did this project for New Beginnings in 2025, and this is just some of, um, just what the reach looked like, and gonna share those outcomes.

[00:39:46] But we led 32 PAX Tools for New Beginnings trainings, working with over 370 clients and staff together. So important that we talk about doing this together so that we can practice it in our everyday daily interactions and really integrate this into what we do. We partnered with over 70 agencies across the entire state, and so that's just kind of a snapshot of the, the work. Here's some feedback that we received.

[00:40:16] So that middle part there is feedback directly from not just our staff, but also the participants, um, the clients and women in treatment and recovery that, But someone brought this up with the goal maps, right? And it's exactly here. "Love that it's strength-based." Exactly. So I'm glad that someone pointed that out in that chat box as well.

[00:40:35] But I- I'll say this was a, a highlight and for me. Carmen and I actually got to the rare occasion that we get to train together. Uh, but we did, and we went down to an area in Southern Ohio and did this training in person. And like I said, we wanna make our help helpful, so we split the training into two sessions.

[00:40:55] We did the first session. We taught a few strategies. And one of the strategies that we talk about is called Kudos Notes, and it's writing a, a, a compliment or a positive, uh,

reinforce some things that you notice that, uh, someone else did that was great or an effort. And so you write a note, and you hang it up.

[00:41:14] We taught that strategy in week one, and when we came back in week two to do the second half, those Kudos Notes were hanging all over the facility. And it was just an amazing thing to witness, that you walk away wondering if people are gonna actually you know, use the strategies and the impact it's gonna make and to see that on the walls, and that's exactly where some of these quotes came up, that our residents and clients are coming up with their own personal goals and began to immediately use that goal map and then started to encourage each other.

[00:41:45] So I just didn't wanna gloss over that. It's such a huge piece. And then again, you're looking at some of these outcomes that we saw from our surveys of participation. So 99% agreed that PAX tools will help them to reduce stress, improving that connection for our staff and clients, so that's why it's important that we do this together.

[00:42:05] Um, and then also, what does that impact and those outcomes look like when we are working with the kids in our care? And so you see those outcomes as well. We wanted to make sure that we spent some time looking at those Now I did mention that New Beginnings facilitator training. So this is that way that we're gonna build some sustainability and capacity building.

[00:42:25] We have that New Beginnings, which is our foundational training, that's the one that we just talked about. But then when we walk away, we wanna make sure that we have some of, I call those our PACS champions or our folks that are embedded within those organizations that would make a good fit to be what we call our New Beginnings facilitators.

[00:42:44] And they're trained, it's a, a more extensive training, and what they're trained to do is to work with the women and staff in recovery, that you're gonna- we train you and then as a facilitator, you're within that setting, you're helping to embed these strategies within their daily practices. You're helping to troubleshoot.

[00:43:02] You're teaching and guiding these strategies as new clients and residents are coming into your facility. And so this is really that way that we're building some sustainability within our settings and creating and com- building some capacity to keep the program going and to keep using these strategies every single day And so we have that.

[00:43:23] Now PAX Tools for New Beginnings, oh, Carmen, you're gonna take over and, uh, and just kind of share what... You only see three states here, and that's because we're gonna talk a little bit about where there is some current funding right now, but that doesn't mean that that's the only place that PAX Tools New Beginnings is being utilized.

[00:43:40] So I'll let Carmen talk about that.

[00:43:42] **Carmen Irving:** Thanks, Shauna, and I appreciate it. I did see that question come up in the chat. So, uh, some- uh, one participant asked, "Where is New Beginnings offered

particularly in person?" And so, these three initiatives, New Mexico, Kansas, and Louisiana are statewide initiatives where we have funding available in order to do PAX Tools New Beginnings.

[00:44:05] PAX Tools New Beginnings in person is available anywhere you want it. So if there's, you know, a need to be in a state that's not listed here, we're available to do that with the asterisk that we don't have the funding to do that. So that's, that's the major difference here. So New Mexico is newer to New Beginnings.

[00:44:25] We've had a handful of trainings offered and, and done, and based on the essentially pilot done in New Mexico, they have expanded their initiative to include beginning... Well, I guess that's today. Today marks a new year for many of us. Um, the same story is true in Kansas. Again, this was just unveiled in '25, and so we started doing small test sites in these states, and now we're at the point of extan- expansion.

[00:44:54] Our newest iteration is in the state of Louisiana, so this is a new state bringing this initiative to a region within Louisiana.

[00:45:03] **Jeanette Puskas:** A few parishes. We're gonna say parishes in Louisiana. Okay. So four

[00:45:07] **Carmen Irving:** parishes

[00:45:07] **Jeanette Puskas:** Louisiana. Yep, so funding to do PAX Tools New Beginnings there. Okay.

[00:45:13] **Carmen Irving:** Okay, well this is my sign.

[00:45:15] This is, um, we have made it to the end. So there were some good questions popping up. We promised Michelle and Amy that we would get through the content so-efficiently so that we could address any questions. So I know there were a couple... I saw a couple come up, but Amy, I feel like I'm taking your job, so I'll be, I'll be quick.

[00:45:34] **Moderator:** No, no, you're totally fine.

[00:45:36] **Carmen Irving:** All right. Take it away. Um,

[00:45:38] **Moderator:** you addressed the one, which states are you doing in-person training? So it sounds like right now New Mexico, Kansas, and Louisiana. Is that-

[00:45:45] **Carmen Irving:** I'm gonna, I'm gonna say my answer again.

[00:45:47] **Moderator:** Yeah.

[00:45:47] **Carmen Irving:** If the question is where are they available, they're available anywhere.

[00:45:51] Um, where are they fully funded that a participant could come free of charge? In those three states. Yeah. And so that's the, that's the difference. So if someone's saying like, "I wanna bring that here and, and I have funding to do that," well then the answer is anywhere. If you're saying, "Where is this grant funding available to do it?"

[00:46:10] Then we're currently only working with those three states.

[00:46:14] **Moderator:** Okay. Um, Miranda in the chat asked, uh, "How would the virtual option work?" Someone was interested in the virtual option.

[00:46:21] **Carmen Irving:** Uh, Jeanette, I know that you have been part of the planning for that, at least in, well, Oklahoma, right? We started in Oklahoma.

[00:46:29] **Moderator:** Yep.

[00:46:30] **Carmen Irving:** Okay. Yeah.

[00:46:30] **Jeanette Puskas:** So virtual training is, you know, we, we still cover the same content. Um, and when we are working, you know, very practical, usually it's, you know, we, we have a system where you register. In the training you pop on. It's a Zoom link, so we're just like this. We can see one another. Uh, we use the chat box.

[00:46:48] We you know, have breakout rooms, and with training you still get those materials delivered to you and sent. We also have handouts that you can download. So the virtual sessions are very similar, um, that a lot of us do in meetings, and again, it's six hours. Now we have a little more flexibility with the virtual sessions because we can break those up into...

[00:47:09] It... Sometimes that's easier because you can do a session at a Saturday at 9:00 and then on a Monday at 10:00 at night, you know? But virtual sessions you're not, you know, limited to folks coming to a location. But the flexibility is there with, you know, with the timing as well, so we can break those sessions up as much as you need.

[00:47:29] But, so funding doesn't matter. You know, funding is funding, so all of our initiatives, you either have it for virtual or in-person options. So the, the funding covers the training and the materials, and then PACCEIS offers the formats or the, for how that training is delivered, so in person or virtual.

[00:47:48] **Moderator:** Another question that came up is if someone wasn't in one of those states that had the grant funding, uh, how much is the training when it's not in the funded, in a funded state? Well, there's a big fat asterisk. Um, I think the best way to handle that is by reaching out for a quote. So all of the trainings do have fees associated with them.

[00:48:07] **Carmen Irving:** I wanna be forthright about that. There's a lot of variance in how we do it depending on the format we're looking at, the number of people we're trying to reach. And in many, many of those situations, there's an initial or a foundational training, and what we're really doing is then getting to that facilitator so that we have kind of straightaway capacity building.

[00:48:28] So there are a lot of variables to factor in there. In large part, what are we gonna need for materials? How many sessions are we doing? How many facilitators do we need?

[00:48:37] **Moderator:** Okay. And it sounds like too that this might be something like, let's say that you're... I know a lot of folks that follow The Fletcher Group run recovery houses or some type of ecosystem.

[00:48:47] They might have peer supports. Yeah, so, uh, you know, maybe you could get a group of you together in an area and then- Yeah ... try to fund a training together. So,

[00:48:56] **Carmen Irving:** um- That addresses the next question, so I wanna... I clearly did not give a clear answer. So, um, that's our goal. When we say, "What if we wanna have our own facilitator?"

[00:49:08] We're gonna do the initial training And we are very reluctant to send a facilitator who's not been trained to facilitate our training. We really need someone who understands what it is and what it isn't, and have a little bit of experience with those strategies before they come to facilitate our training.

[00:49:28] So there's always a foundational training, and then once we're up and running and implementing an implementer is gonna say, "Pick me, pick me," and they're gonna be the facilitator for sometimes a site, sometimes a community, sometimes a region, and then they come to facilitate our training. So, our goal is to have facilitators in a recovery house or in a recovery space, because we know that those group of people are going to turn over.

[00:49:56] So it-- there's never gonna be capacity for PAXIS to come in and train at a recovery house repeatedly. We are never gonna have the funding or the bandwidth for that. So our goal is to get the ideal facilitator fr- trained and embedded in those environments, because big picture, what we want is that it doesn't feel like training.

[00:50:17] That initial training, when we're training a facilitator, they're coming and we're giving them, you know, a new set of skills and doing a-- basically an information dump. But the goal is, take it back to Jellyfish Recovery House and make this part of your daily routine, so that it doesn't really, like, feel like we're teaching anyone anything, as much as these are the tools we use when we're in this space, and it just becomes part of the practice

[00:50:45] **Moderator:** Can

[00:50:45] **Carmen Irving:** Does that help, Amy? I'm-

[00:50:47] **Moderator:** Yeah, yeah. I think so. I, I think the, uh, one of the things that we hear quite often from recovery, specifically recovery house providers, is that they struggle to find staff, and they struggle to keep staff. And I think the concern I'm reading into this is, like, hey, if we go through this whole process and train a facilitator, and then could that facilitator train another facilitator?

[00:51:07] Because, you know, the chances of us going through the staff are, are quite good, and so ... And what I hear you say is yes, the answer to that question is yes.

[00:51:14] **Carmen Irving:** Abso- so we train the, we train the trainer. We train the facilitator. It is a certification. So a trained facilitator will be trained by PAXIS, and they're gonna go spread it in that.

[00:51:27] So they're gonna go use the strategies, they're gonna teach those strategies within their environment. You're only a certified facilitator through PAXIS Institute, so a certified facilitator is not going to certify another facilitator. They're going to implement and teach those strategies.

[00:51:45] **Moderator:** Okay, okay. And then the next question that came up is, um, does the training allow for CE credits?

[00:51:51] So like- Mm-hmm ... for example, peer supports, uh, recovery coaches, uh- Uh- ... clinical people, those types of folks. So PAXIS doesn't, we're not the entity that gives the CE. What happens is, is we work with the state agency or the county agency. Uh, for example in Ohio, it was the Min- Ohio Mental Health and Recovery Board, or, and so they had, they were the, the governing body of d- of accreditation. And so we got that approved, and then as those trainings happened, our trainers are listed as they're approved on their list, and then that's how that is. So there's some, uh, the peer recovery specialist, uh, mention, um- And there's a list counselors, they all were able to apply and receive CE credits because it was approved by that, that state.

[00:52:41] **Jeanette Puskas:** And so we work directly with either that county or the state agency of who's the approving board to- Yeah ... to get it all, all the paperwork in place. But yes. And I'll also mention as we talk about funding and all those things, in these states and places where we have all these initiatives and there's funding, it comes from different places where PAXIS was written in as part of their plan.

[00:53:04] So for example, in Louisiana, it was, it's a HRSA grant, and so L- this was written in as the prevention arm of that HRSA grant. So it was treatment, recovery, and prevention, and it was awarded. And so it's part of written into many, many grants that, And we help with that. So we don't expect anyone to be able to explain what this is, so oftentimes people will reach out and say, "Hey, we wanna try to go get this grant.

[00:53:30] Can you provide some of your outcomes, your data, your language? What, how do I explain this?" And that's some of the things that we help to bring.

[00:53:39] **Moderator:** Yeah. And- And let me throw out there on, yeah, on that vein while you're talking about that, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to talk over you there, but is that, you know, SAMHSA is kind of like trickle releasing these grants.

[00:53:48] Typically in the grant world we're used to them all being released at once. And, uh, if you notice, a lot of these SAMHSA grants that are coming out are asking for prevention. Um- I know ... and that is, um, that's one of the administrative focuses right now.

[00:54:01] **Jeanette Puskas:** Well, and that's exactly how the HRSA that's how Louisiana got it.

[00:54:04] They're, they were used to the just treatment and recovery and needed a prevention lens here and a, a piece, and that's exactly how this came in, and it was just awarded, what, like a couple of weeks. Anyway. Yeah. But more are coming, and so that's exactly why it's not that someone has to go try to figure this out.

[00:54:22] There is a place for prevention, and we're seeing that more often. In fact, some were just released today or last week with some, uh, you know, call for proposals and this is how the PAXIS ends up in these initiatives is because it's that prevention part of your plan.

[00:54:40] **Moderator:** Yeah. And you're exactly right.

[00:54:41] SAMHSA just released some new grants last week, and- Right ... they're kind of also tri-stool, and one of the sections is prevention, so.

[00:54:47] **Jeanette Puskas:** Right. Exactly.

[00:54:48] **Moderator:** We do have one question. She's, uh, from Miranda. She says, "I'm a program director for a residential facility and a program director for an RCO, that's a recovery community uh, organization in Georgia.

[00:54:59] I'm also a certified peer specialist in addictive disease with a master's degree in social work." Hey, I'm a social worker too. Congratulations. "I would love to be a facilitator to move PAXIS into Georgia. What would I need to do to start that process," basically?

[00:55:12] **Carmen Irving:** Well, um, thank you, Miranda. We have PACS in Georgia, but not New Beginnings yet, so that would be a great expansion in Georgia.

[00:55:20] Uh, the easiest way to do that is to email Jeanette or I. I, um, I put that in the chat, but yeah that's quite a resume, so come on over, Rover. The fastest way to do that is to, um, to email. What, what we'll need to do is integrate you into a training of some sort to get the, the show on the road, but we're looking forward to working with you.

[00:55:43] Do you want- Amy, my email and Jeanette's email are in the presentation, they're in the chat, and I'm sure you'll have a way to share those out.

[00:55:51] **Moderator:** Yes. Perfect. Yeah, people can update... It takes us about a couple weeks, but we will actually post this and then post the slides and everything to the Fletcher Group website, so.

[00:56:01] **Carmen Irving:** Well, I'm so glad that we're gonna have a documentation of me saying, "Come on over, Rover," on a webinar, not once, but twice, so excellent.

[00:56:11] **Moderator:** One question that I had while we were going through the presentation i- are, do you guys use any technological tools? So I heard you talking about a, a, a journal and different things like that.

[00:56:22] Have you converted those over to, like, an app, or are you still using... I am old school, and I personally prefer, I print everything out still. Don't tell anyone. Well, I guess a lot of people know now, but... And I like to write things out because it helps me remember a lot better, but I know we have a lot of folks now that are, um, you know, they're much more adept to, if it's on an app I'm much more willing to do it versus sit down and write something out Do you offer those as well?

[00:56:48] **Carmen Irving:** So both are sort of true. Um, when Jeanette was demonstrating the, "Hey, this is what's entailed," she said journal and kit. So there are some manipulatives. The PAX goals ma- goal map is a good example. In some of the some implementation we use popsicle sticks, we use a timer. So many of the strategies that we use and actually use tangible manipulatives for are available in the app, and the app is free.

[00:57:16] Some of those are not. They're n- and, and I don't anticipate that they will be any time soon for good reason. So goal maps is not meant to be done in isolation. That's often a facilitated process, so doing it on a phone together is not useful. The journal is wildly different in the physical form than it is in a digital form.

[00:57:38] And we had to really be familiar with our audience. So a lot of the audiences we've served so far don't have access to a phone or can't use the phone in their space. So we've done a lot of work in rehabilitation centers. Um, there are, there are no phones. And so, it's again, it comes with a bit of an asterisk.

[00:58:00] That there's, there are some great advantages to the technology, and there are some barriers to the technology. So for our use, we wanted to make sure that we made this as approachable and as accessible to as many people as we could. So we're rocking it old school with paper.

[00:58:16] **Moderator:** Cool. Cool. Mm-hmm. Well, for old schoolers like me, we love that, so.

[00:58:19] Me

[00:58:19] **Carmen Irving:** too.

[00:58:20] **Moderator:** Well, we've come to the end of our hour, and I just want to tell you how much I've appreciated sitting through this, and we've gotten a lot of comments about how much people have appreciated the presentation and found it to be very valuable. We appreciate what you're doing, and, um, really look forward to check back in, checking back in with you guys and see how things are going.

[00:58:35] And again, if you're looking at some of those new SAMHSA grants, almost every single one of them has a prevention piece in it. So look at those, and these guys might be a great contact for you if you're thinking about applying for one of those. Thank you everyone for attending. We really appreciate you being here and, um, enjoying the webinar.

[00:58:52] And again, we'll have this posted in a couple weeks. So thanks everyone, and have a great rest of your day.

[00:58:57] **Carmen Irving:** Thank you so much. We appreciate the invitation to be here today.