# An Open Table in Region 7

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The boot heel of Missouri has some of the worst health outcomes and poverty in the nation. To address these problems, which are so often connected, SAMHSA and our community partners are taking steps to bring Open Table to this underserved rural area.

Open Table—From Poverty to Community—is a model that trains congregations and their members to form communities called Tables. The Tables transform their vocational and life experiences into tools their "Brothers and Sisters" in poverty can use to develop and implement plans to change their lives.

Central to the Open Table model is moving away from a *transactional* relationship into a *transformative* relationship, helping people out of poverty. Developing and maintaining relationships is at the heart of the model.

The Southeast Missouri Coalition was originally formed as part of SAMHSA's Access to Recovery grant and the statewide Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers. The Coalition now brings together many community members who want to help people who are coming out of prison and re-entering the community.

On October 24 and 25, the maximum security Southeast Correctional Center in Charleston, Missouri hosted an Open Table Re-entry Exploration Workshop. There were over 40 people present for this two-day event. The warden and many prison staff attended, along with other wardens, parole staff, and leadership from the Regional Department of Corrections Headquarters. There were community coalition members organized by Mission Missouri and Access to Recovery providers, and a variety of states working with Open Table were present. The Missouri Credentialing Board and Missouri Department of Mental Health was also part of the workshop as was the SAMHSA Region 7 Administrator.

The attendees set about creating a plan to bring Open Table to the Re-entry population in Southeastern Missouri. Open Table will provide training for pre and post release reentry services. Under the plan, mission Missouri will connect with faith communities and work with the prison to facilitate Tables for reentering men from Southeast Correctional Center. There is no doubt that the collaborative spirit is alive and well in Southeastern Missouri.

Great things are on the horizon here, as evidenced by the energy in the room when CEO Jon Katov, and Open Table Consultant Dr. John VanDenBerg pioneer and expert in the wraparound model led workshop activities. After just two days, the group is well on its way to local congregations and offenders working together to make the transition back to the community successful. Our region is demonstrating how we can work together to create an amazing support system in this corner of the world.

We anticipate the first five Tables at four churches will be up and helping re-entering Brothers by June 2017. And, if it can work here, perhaps other recovery and reentry coalitions will want to bring this faith-government-community partnership model into their corner of the world. Learn more about the Open Table model.