

***THE FACTS: MENTAL HEALTH CARE, IN AND OUT OF PRISON, AND THE
CHALLENGES OF RE-ENTRY: STUDENT HANDOUT 1***

1. Access FRONTLINE's Web site, *The New Asylums*,
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/asylums/etc/map.html>, and read the complete heading for available mental health care in state prisons and discuss the following:
What do you expect to discover about your state's mental health care in the prison system?
2. Click on your home state. Take notes on the *quantitative* information presented.
3. Discuss the following questions:
 - ∞ How current is the information? What is the source of the information? Is this a reliable source? Why or why not?
 - ∞ Do you think that an appropriate amount of funds is allocated to mental health in the prison system? Why or why not?
 - ∞ What kind of mental health training do correctional officers receive in your state?
Do you think prison staff should receive additional training, and if so, what kind of services?
 - ∞ Is it appropriate for states to take mental illness into consideration when offenders are sentenced and incarcerated?
 - ∞ What percentage of the inmate population is mentally ill?
What factors do you think account for this percentage?
 - ∞ Do you think there is adequate mental health care in your state's prison system?
Why or why not?
4. Access the National Alliance to End Homelessness's Web site,
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/focusareas/reentry>, read the brief article "Reentry," and take notes.

5. Discuss the following questions:

- ∞ What is the main challenge that this article addresses about offenders re-entering society?
- ∞ How widespread is the problem of homelessness for this population? Why is it so pervasive?
- ∞ How do you think that being mentally ill compounds the challenges of being homeless? Offer at least three concrete hardships faced by the mentally ill homeless.
- ∞ What models are available that have shown to be effective in working with mentally ill offenders?

6. Access the National Alliance on Mental Illness's Web site,

http://www.nami.org/gtsTemplate09.cfm?Section=Grading_the_States_2009, and click on your home state and the detailed report card.

7. Discuss the following questions:

- ∞ What grade did your state earn?
- ∞ Does this grade surprise you? Does it disappoint you? Why or why not?