

*Yvonne M. Perret, MA, MSW, LCSW-C*



*Executive Director*

*Advocacy and Training Center*

Yvonne M. Perret, MA, MSW, LCSW-C, is a psychiatric clinical social worker with over 45 years of experience. She is the Executive Director of the Advocacy and Training Center in Cumberland, MD. She has co-authored a book on children with disabilities (in its third edition) as well as two book chapters and several articles on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and related mental health topics. She has written curricula on several topics including: mental illness, homelessness, recovery, co-occurring disorders, self-compassion, and identifying and working with shelter residents' strengths. She has also written one on brain damage and homelessness for the New York State (NYS) Office of Temporary Disability Assistance. She trains New York City and NYS shelter staff on these curricula.

Ms. Perret is the primary founder of SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR). This is a national program that includes a SOAR Technical Assistance Center based in Albany, New York, which is funded by Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). SOAR focuses on assisting adults who are homeless with accessing SSI/SSDI in an expedited way. It helps them begin their recovery both from homelessness and mental illness and any co-occurring disorders. In 2001, the Baltimore SSI Outreach Project, on which SOAR is based and which Ms. Perret directed, was named a Best Practice Program by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In 2005, this project was named an Exemplary Practice Program by SAMHSA. As part of SOAR, she is the lead author of *Stepping Stones to Recovery* (funded by SAMHSA) and *Stepping Stones to SSI/SSDI* (funded by Housing and Urban Development Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS). These are two curricula that focus on assisting individuals with accessing SSI/SSDI and beginning recovery. The first curriculum centers on individuals with serious mental illness and any co-occurring disorders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The second focuses on people with HIV/AIDS. The emphasis in both is on using benefits as

tools in recovery. Ms. Perret has worked in 47 states promoting SOAR and working with community teams, including Social Security and Disability Determination Services, to promote collaboration, training, and planning.

Ms. Perret has also trained and worked extensively in co-occurring disorders, mental illness, and other mental health-related topics. She has presented at numerous mental health and other national conferences and is the recipient of several awards for mental health advocacy. Most recently, she was named one of Maryland's Top 100 Women by the Daily Record, which is the Maryland publication for government, business, and legal news.

Since 2014, she has been an instructor on youth, adult, older adult, and veteran curricula and a trainer of instructors for Mental Health First Aid USA. She also serves as a consultant to On Our Own of Maryland, a statewide mental health peer advocacy program.

Ms. Perret has a master's degree in journalism.