W15
Positive Reentry After Incarceration

Presenters:

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Fanning the Fatherhood FIRE:
A National Fatherhood Summit
June 4-6, 2019 | Nashville, Tennessee

Lindsey Cramer
Background

• A growing body of research supports the importance of family-focused practices for incarcerated fathers – during incarceration and following release.

• However, implementing family-focused practices in correctional settings and community settings can be challenging and there is limited research on best practices – but plenty of lessons on promising approaches.
Parental Incarceration: Far-Reaching Impacts

• Approximately **2.7 million** children have a parent currently serving time in a correctional facility.

• More than **5 million** children have experienced parental incarceration in their lifetime.

• Parental incarceration:
  • Has disproportionate impact on children in families with lower incomes and minorities.
  • Is stressful and traumatic for minor children.
  • Can create or contribute to economic, residential, and social disruptions for children.
Parental Incarceration: Far-Reaching Impacts

- Incarceration inhibits parents’ abilities to fulfill familial responsibilities.

- Father-child and father-family communication/contact is challenging during incarceration for several reasons:
  - Correctional policies and practices that govern contact and communication.
  - Distance of facilities from where minor children (and their families/caregivers) live.
  - Phone calls and in-person visits to facilities, which can be cost prohibitive for families.
  - Feelings of fear and shame among incarcerated parents, children, and their caregivers.
  - Feelings of frustration, confusion, and anxiety navigating correctional institutions and their policies.
Hidden Victims: Children and Families

• Parental incarceration can:
  • Have adverse impacts on families.
  • Challenge healthy family functioning.
  • Cause loss of emotional/financial support for intimate partners, co-parents, caregivers, other family members.

• Interventions/practices have the potential to:
  • Repair and strengthen the relationship between children/families and incarcerated individuals.
  • Mitigate the potentially harmful consequences of incarceration on families and children.
  • Facilitate successful reentry for formerly incarcerated fathers.
Return to Community

• Family members do often provide significant support:
  • Particularly in immediate post-release months.
  • Despite their own resource limitations and service needs.

• Returning fathers have a range of needs:
  • Housing, employment, education, skill building.
  • Mental health and substance abuse treatment.
  • Identification (driver’s license, birth certificate), transportation, clothing, food.

• Service needs are related to reentry success.

• Family support pre-release and post-release is associated with reentry success.
Other Considerations

• Programs should:
  • Be flexible.
  • Adapt to changing needs of participants and family.
  • Respond to changes in policy and context.
  • Meet families where they are.
  • Build effective partnerships.
  • Leverage opportunities in institutional and community environments.
  • Work collaboratively with community partners
  • Be willing to make mid-course corrections.
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Darin Goff
Strength in Families program

- Office of Family Assistance grantee since October 2015.
- Community-centered, skill-based, pre- and post-release supportive services for reentering fathers.
  - Strengthen positive father-child engagement.
  - Support healthy partner relationships.
  - Enhance education and employment opportunities.

- Vision - children will be:
  - Living safely at home.
  - Enjoying positive relationships with parents and care-providers.
  - Supported by families who have necessary skills and access to resources and services needed to thrive.
Program Structure

Pre-release (up to 9 months):

• Skill-building classes focused on parenting, healthy relationships, employment and/or education readiness.
• Transition planning with Instructors, Case Managers, Education/Employment Navigators.
• Intensive, solution-focused counseling with willing family members and participants to support successful transition.
• Video visits with partners and/or children on approved visit list.

Post-release (up to 6+ months):

• Case Managers and Navigators help build skills learned pre-release.
• Ongoing case management. Primary areas of focus:
  • Access to key services and resources.
  • Job search assistance.
  • Family reintegration when possible (counseling available).
  • Development of long-term plan for participant/family success and ongoing community support system.
Curricula – offered 3-9 months pre-release

Parenting Inside Out®
- Evidence-based parenting skills training program developed for criminal justice involved parents.
- 8 sections/28 modules - 15 weeks/60 hours.
  - Communication and Problem Solving
  - Parenting Children as Individuals
  - Parenting Through Family Challenges
  - Transitioning to the Community

Walking the Line
- Research-based curriculum from PREP, Inc. – 28 hours.
- Focus on improving relationships prior to release and managing expectations/employing effective strategies after release.
  - Understand how your experiences/issues can fuel conflict.
  - Recognize communication danger signs, handle anger & stress.
  - Gain skills needed to navigate reentry into society successfully.
Job Readiness – examples of topics covered

Job Seeking Skills
- Resumes, Cover Letters
- Find your strengths, skills, abilities
- Labor market information, job search strategy
- Interview skills
- How to keep your job

Other Workshop Topics
- Handling money, budgeting
- Pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship programs
- WorkSource offerings
- Reentry Mythbusters
- Education options/career planning
Case Management – pre- and post release

Role of Case Managers:

- Develop family transition plans with fathers, including goals and milestones.
  - “Walk alongside” to develop “participant-driven,” strength-based plans.
- Build relationships with community service providers.
- Help fathers and families access resources and services in the community.
- Conduct in-person meetings pre- and post-release.
- Follow a family-focused approach – work with fathers and their families.
- Celebrate successes with fathers and their families!
Role of Education and Employment Navigators

• Lead individual/group meetings focused on education, training, job goals.

• Work with prison facility staff to register participants for *Job Seeking Skills* class (and *College Readiness*, if interested).

• Help fathers identify skills, abilities, strengths, areas to improve, employment barriers.

• Participate in Transitional Planning and Case Management meetings with other *Strength in Families* program staff, participants, facility staff, and/or family.

• Support fathers post-release to help them understand systems, access resources and services.

• Develop community partnerships to support access to necessary reentry services.
  • WorkSource programs, Vocational Rehabilitation services.
  • Job readiness/Job retention, Money Management workshops.
  • College application, enrollment, financial assistance.
Background

• *Family Reentry* began in 1984 as a reentry support group for men at the Isaiah House in Bridgeport.

• The agency now provides intervention, reentry, and family & children programs in:
  • 8 municipal regions/judicial geographic areas.
  • 2 parole districts.
  • 5 prisons.
Young Fathers Reentry Program

The Power of Peer Mentoring

Second Chance Mentoring grant (2015-2018):

• Fatherhood services.
• Comprehensive reentry case management services.
• Peer mentoring with successful ex-offenders in community.

Goals:

• Strengthen families.
• Enhance quality of life for children of incarcerated parents.
• Reduce recidivism.

Program Manager: Da’ee Muhammad McKnight
Fatherhood Facilitator: Salah Hanaif
Case Manager: Ebony Epps
Client Engagement
Pre-Release

• Clients are matched with a successful ex-offender mentor 6+ months prior to release.
• Intake and criminogenic needs assessment (LSI-R).
• Fatherhood/reentry groups.
  • Inside Out Dad + hybrid of various curricula.
  • Perpetual group cycle until released into the community.
• Client File transferred to Case Manager for development of Reentry Plan.
Client Engagement Post-Release

• Resume preparation/pre-employment skills.
• Employment referrals through private sector.
• Focus on basic needs:
  • ID’s (birth certificate, Social Security card).
  • Job search attire.
  • Driver’s license.
  • Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) training.
  • Referrals for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services.
  • Registration for Selective Service.
  • Referrals for Adult Education.
  • Diaper bank for children.
Client Engagement
Post-Release

- Peer mentor assistance to help clients navigate successful community reintegration.
- Social services referrals for co-parent or primary caregiver.
- Family participation in community cultural enrichment events for dads and families.
- Client and co-parent participation in post-release fatherhood survey.
Dontre’s Story

• Dontre Crawford will discuss the program and its implementation from the perspective of a young father

• The importance of having Successful EX-offenders involved in the reentry process
Questions and Answers
Stay in touch with us!

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