



W15. Positive Reentry After Incarceration

Wednesday, June 5, 2019
4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Moderator:

- Tanya Howell, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Washington, D.C.

Presenters:

- Lindsey Cramer, Research Associate, The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.
- Dontre Crawford, Program Participant, Family ReEntry, Inc., Young Fathers Reentry Project, Bridgeport, Connecticut
- Darin Goff, Program Director, Washington State Department of Corrections, Tumwater, Washington
- Dae McKnight, Program Manager, Family ReEntry, Inc., Young Fathers Reentry Project, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Tanya Howell: Welcome to Positive Reentry After Incarceration. I don't have bios, so I'm going to have them introduce themselves and tell you a little bit about what they'll be presenting today.

Lindsey Cramer: Good afternoon. My name is Lindsey Kramer. I'm a research associate at the Urban Institute. The Urban Institute is a large nonprofit research organization in Washington, D.C. and is approximately 500 researchers strong. I focus on criminal justice research and am in the justice policy center. A lot of my work over the past seven to 10 years has focused on the impact of incarceration on fathers, children and families.

Today I'm going to focus on two overarching takeaways. First is what we know from the research and the literature about the impacts of incarceration on families, as well as the innovative practices and strategies that are really bubbling up in the field as ways to help mitigate those impacts of incarceration. We know from the research that it's important to support fathers and families, both while incarcerated, and after they're released and back in the community. We know that implementing services and programs designed for fathers and incarcerated parents is challenging, both in a correctional setting and in the community. While we don't have a lot of rigorous research to really be able to say what works or what doesn't, we know that there's a lot of lessons on promising approaches.





A lot of these numbers might be familiar to you, but we know that the scope of the problem is quite large. 2.7 million children have a parent currently incarcerated; and more than 5 million children have had a parent incarcerated. Those are probably underestimates, a.) because they're a little bit old at this point, and b.) those do not count parents involved in jails or in the early stages of the justice system at arrest, pretrial, etc. We know that parental incarceration disproportionately affects children in families with lower incomes and minority families. It's an extremely stressful and traumatic experience for children and can lead to instability and disruption in the family structure, as well as the child's economic or residential supports.

Further, we know that incarceration limits a parent's ability to fulfill his or her familial roles and responsibilities, and maintaining contact and communication between an incarcerated parent and his or her child is really challenging in a correctional setting for several reasons. There are many policies and operating procedures that govern how that contact and communication should work in a prison or a jail. Many times, incarcerated parents are far away from their children and families, so there's a large distance to travel if a family wants to go visit a loved one. The actual cost of making a phone call and the cost of transportation can be very expensive. In addition, there is the emotional toll a family may feel having to travel long distances to visit. There are also feelings of fear and shame on the part of the incarcerated parent, as well as their children and family members. In addition, the families feel a lot of frustration and confusion around navigating a correctional policy around how to visit a loved one. When is a visit supposed to happen, are there certain things they can or cannot wear? Knowing all of that information and trying to navigate to stay in touch with a loved one can be very challenging.

In some facilities, because there is that limit on contact and communication between an incarcerated parent and his or her children, we know that incarceration can have adverse impacts on families, can really challenge the healthy functioning of a family unit; and again, cause the loss of financial or emotional support for the incarcerated parent as well as the family members.

In response to these negative impacts, or as ways to help mitigate these impacts, there's some innovative and promising strategies that we've begun to see being implemented in the field. These practices can include a range of things, a lot of which you are probably very familiar with such as parenting programs, parenting workshops, coached telephone calls, family visit days, contact visits, making prison and jail visit lobbies and visiting rooms more child or family friendly by having toys and activities for the children and families, and having dedicated lines or visiting hours for family members. Those types of practices that are designed to really allow families to interact and contact and communicate with each other have the ability to help strengthen those relationships and maintain them while a parent is incarcerated. They also help mitigate the harmful impacts of incarceration. Lastly, what we've seen is that those family





friendly practices can also help an incarcerated parent as they're released and transitioning back into the community.

As we're all aware, when an incarcerated parent returns to the community or is released from prison or jail, they face a lot of challenges. There's the immediate pressure to find housing, a job, and report to probation or parole. A lot of them face mental health or substance abuse challenges, so they're trying to seek those types of services and treatment. There are a lot of other basic needs such as identification, transportation, clothing, food, etc. We know they face a lot of challenges upon their release and family members try to help them address these challenges, even if they are facing similar ones themselves. The more programs and services provided fathers, the more successful they will be with reentry. Family support is also critical, both pre-release and post-release, in supporting the parent.

A few considerations based on our research. We've seen programs be successful when they're ultimately flexible; willing to meet families where they are. If they're not quite ready for the relationship clash, maybe that comes a little bit later, or if they're not quite ready for another type of service you offer. Just being flexible and really trying to adapt your services or your schedule or your suite of services to where the families are and what they need. By flexible, I mean in the sense of responding and being adaptive to changes in your local policies and context. Building effective partnerships, both with other government agencies, community-based organizations or nonprofits to really help provide wraparound and more holistic services to the family.

Leveraging opportunities in institutional and community environments. What we've seen here is pre-release. Maybe it's more feasible or successful to implement more classroom-based or workshop-based services; but on the outside perhaps a father can't fit that into his schedule based on all the other competing demands on his time. Be flexible and willing to adapt programs, services and schedules to meet the dad's needs.

Lastly, be willing to make mid-course corrections. Always try to learn from what you're implementing; feedback from participants, etc., to be able to change things up if they're not resonating with the participants.

Darin Goff: Welcome, My name is Darin Goff and I've worked for the Department of Corrections for 31 years; 28 of it in prisons, all of it program related. Twelve years in the women's facility in Gig Harbor, Washington, and about 15 years in the men's Monroe Correctional Complex, which is the largest and most complex facility in the state of Washington with all custody levels. Everything I've done was program related and I can say of all the jobs that I've had, the one I'm currently in is the most rewarding. I'm really blessed and happy to be the manager for the Strength in Families program. We are one of the [OFA] ReFORM grantees.





We were awarded a grant in the fall of 2015. We're a strength-based program focused on positive father and child engagement, healthy partner relationships, enhanced education, and employment opportunities.

Our vision is for children to live safely at home, enjoy positive relationships with their parents and care providers; and be supported by families who have the necessary skills and access to the resources and services to thrive. We try to support those families and give them those necessary skills, and needed resources, beginning with the father.

Our program was identified when the grant was written for counties in rural southwest Washington that had a high percentage of fathers who were incarcerated. Four counties were targeted for prisons that support those areas; but it's somewhat complicated because no two prisons are the same. They don't house all the same type of individuals. When I came into this program, a few months after it started, I identified fairly quickly that we're going to fall short of the numbers because those counties are so rural that it looks good up front, but once you start drawing down on those facilities, there's not enough numbers coming in through reception to fill them up in the time frame that we needed. So, we added a fifth county, Pierce County, which isn't as rural, but it provided our program with a lot more diversity. We are in five counties and four prisons. The skill-building classes that we offer focus on parenting, healthy relationships, education and employment readiness, transition planning with instructors, case managers, and education and employment navigators. We are there to support a successful transition. The case managers and navigators work post-release as well, providing ongoing case management.

We have special counsel and professional counselors. Our case managers aren't expert counselors, so they'll encounter each situation case by case and engage a professional counselor to work with both the participant and family members.

Our classification system is nine months pre-release and six months post-release. It is a long time to hold on to some of these men because there's so much going on. Our classification system has competing priorities. You may have a court-mandated program and a department of corrections mandated program, chemical dependency program, or you may have someone who can't be at a facility with someone, so we're constantly juggling all these things to get our men completed in time. In order to do that effectively, we have to start the recruitment process well before the nine months. The nine months reflects when they're actually in the program, but when you are recruiting, we have 12 correctional facilities in the state of Washington, 10 are male, and they're quite a distance, so we have to start looking at other facilities for men who qualify well in advance, and get them in our facilities so we can get them into our classes.





The curricula we use are Parenting Inside Out, which was developed by one of the program advisors, Dr. Mark Eddy, and Walking the Line [developed by PREP]. The curricula aren't just in our four facilities, they're in 11 of our State of Washington facilities. Part of the Parenting Inside Out curriculum is to teach parenting skills and caring for a teddy bear in prison. You can see men walking around the big yard with their teddy bears in a sling. You would have never seen that 13 or 14 years ago, but it's a testament to change in prison culture. I've had men tell me, "I'm not going into that program, Mr. Goff. I don't want anything to do with it. I'm not carrying a bear around."

Walking the Line is more relationship building. It's a 22-hour curriculum with six hours of extra credit. These classes are so popular that men who aren't part of our program, but want to be, line up knowing they're not going to get into the program. We could probably fill up three classes every cohort, just because the word of mouth is so strong.

These are the sort of foundational pieces of our program, preparing men to get out. We don't tell them "Here's how you parent." We give them skills; they determine how to parent as they see fit for their family and their own situation. Some of our men that are several months from getting out, and many of those men have done a lot of time, have started applying those skills. Maybe they have a difficult correctional officer on their tier, if they didn't have this class it might have sent them sideways and they would have ended up in the hole and not been able to complete the program. Those skills start to apply right away, and I think the best thing about communication is that they learn about their own ability or lack of ability to communicate and work on their communication skills.

Job readiness is another key piece of what we do to prepare them for release. We want them to hit the ground running in order to give them the best opportunity to work that they can. We always say, "When you get out, we want you to get a job, get a better job, and get a career." Our staff, especially our education and employment navigator, works with them along that line. Some may come in and say, "I have no job skills. All I ever did, Mr. Goff, was sell drugs from the time I was 14. I'm 24 now. That's all I know." Last I checked salesman is a job skill, right? And you know where in your neighborhood you needed to go and how to do it, that's marketing. "They do have skills, they just need to be redirected and applied correctly."

Hopefully when they get out, the goal is that they hit the ground running with a good job and we have staff that are alongside of them, so the same people helping them on the outside were working with them on the inside. There's a comfort level, rapport, and there's trust. Our case managers have to develop those transition plans with the fathers, but what they really need to do is to re-establish that rapport. They need to be able to sit down and have good, active listening skills, ask the right questions; and sometimes there's enough barriers that are built in with some





of our participants that it just takes time. You're not going to make that happen in a time or two or three, you're going to have to go several times to be able to make this work.

Case managers are building rapport with fathers and then help them develop a transition plan. This will take multiple engagement sessions. I have a lot of admiration for my case managers.

The education and employment navigators spend as much time in the institution during pre-release, as they do post-release. Their role is critical in helping them [the fathers] develop skills early on, rather than waiting until they are on the outside; because, sometimes when they get out, they're gone. We've had men that we've helped get scholarships for trade schools and have men that are working at going to college.

Dae McKnight: My name is Dae Muhammad McKnight. I work for Family Reentry. Family Reentry started in 1984 as a support group for men at the Isaiah House in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was a halfway house for men returning to the community. Now the agency provides reentry intervention and family and children programs in eight municipal regions, two parole districts, and five prisons. One important feature of the organization is that 12 years ago they wanted to create a reentry program. A couple of men sat at the table, one of them being Mr. Kenny Jackson, who really pioneered this. He told them, "If you want reentry to work, then you have to have successful ex-offenders involved in the reentry process. They embraced this concept and they went to the Delancey Street Project in San Francisco, studied that model, took some components from it, brought it back, and created the Fresh Start Program, which became the program model for all the other programs that dealt with reentry.

This program that we're presently talking about today took components from that Fresh Start Program. It was a grant, the Young Father's Reentry Program from the Second Chance Mentoring grant. This program incorporated fatherhood services, comprehensive reentry case management services, and peer mentors. One of the keys of the program was linking up these young men with successful ex-offenders who had navigated through the reentry process, and then they would go back and link up with these men prior to getting out and help guide them through that process and any reentry hurdles that they faced upon going home and being released back to the community.

The goals of the grant were to strengthen families, enhance quality of life for children of incarcerated parents, and try to reduce recidivism. We know if you reduce the recidivism in a dad then you reduce the possibility that this might be a generational cycle, because of what the children are exposed to. I have personal experience with that. I am a child of incarcerated parents. Both parents were incarcerated, and I was incarcerated. Family Reentry gave me an opportunity to give back to my community. For the past 10 years I've been going in and out of





prisons facilitating reentry groups. I was once incarcerated with a 25-year sentence. I served 17 and a half years of that sentence. I've been home for 13 years by the grace of God.

We were able to accomplish what we did with a great collaborative effort on this grant. We collaborated with three agencies. Our program and our agency Family Reentry. I acted in the capacity of program manager. Our fatherhood facilitator did an excellent job and had a lot of experience with young dads. Our case manager, Ebony Epps from the RYASAP Organization was excellent. She worked with young people for many years.

One of the downsides of the federal grants is they may last for a three-year run, and then we have to try to be creative and still provide services because we still have these fathers engaged, but we have no resources for them. Ebony has been great coming up with gift cards, finding ways to integrate them in other reentry programs that we have, and assisting them in getting the services needed through those other programs.

We know that evidence-based research suggests that the client should be engaged six months or more prior to release to get them to move to the action stage of the change process, where a lot of them might be in a pre-contemplative or contemplative state of change. I tell the men that because I had that experience, "If you don't change while you in here, the only thing that's going to change when you're released is your address. So, if you want your life to get better, there's some things that you're going to have to do cognitively while you here, before you're released, because the only thing that's going to change is just your environment, but you're going to be the same individual." Change does start inside the prison. That evidence-based research is just common knowledge.

We conduct intake criminogenic needs assessment using the LSI-R (Level of Service Inventory-Revised) form, to determine what the needs are of the client and then address those needs by building a treatment plan based on it. We have them participate in the fatherhood reentry groups. We use the 24/7 Dad curriculum, but it's a hybrid with the Inside Out Dad, and some material from the Change Company; because, although 24/7 Dad does a great job, it doesn't address the things that are concerning reentry needs. The group is open enrollment, a perpetual group cycle until they're released into the community, and then the client file is transferred to our case manager Ebony upon release and she serves their basic needs.

Post-release is when they get to Ebony. This is not an in-the-box program, this is an out-of-box program. I know I might function in the capacity of program manager, but I understand that you can't operate within the guidelines of black and white. Just because I'm the program manager, I don't mind if I have to take a young man to get his ID, birth certificate, or to a job interview, because unfortunately some young men can't catch public transportation. If they go to another





side of town to catch the bus, they could lose their life. They may belong to one gang and can only go into a certain side of town. Sometimes we have to actually drive them to the job interview or drive them to work until we can figure something out. This is an out-of-the box program, it's not just in terms of what's listed as a standard practice.

Ebony offers resume preparation, pre-employment skills, job readiness, and employment referrals through private sectors. One of the wonderful things we instill in them is, "Listen as each one, teach one, what you get you give back." They'll get a job and call us and say "Hey, they're hiring here." One of our new guys just got out and he'll get him in there. So, word of mouth referrals through the men that are in the program really helps a lot.

We focus on basic needs when they get out. They need an ID because they can't move around and navigate in society without identification. We help them with job search attire, obtaining their driver's license, OSHA training so they can work on a construction site, if that's their interest, register all of them for selective service, because they're all 17 to 24 years of age. Once they register for selective service in Connecticut, I'm quite sure it's all over the country, they'll be eligible for the WIA grant where they can go to the Department of Labor, the Worker's Investment Act, and it will pay for them to obtain job skills such as barber school, cosmetology, nurses' aid, a Class A, or Class B CDL tractor trailer license.

We also make referrals for adult education in order for them to finish their high school diploma. There's basic needs for the children, and also social service referrals for the co-parent or the primary caregiver. It's holistic for the whole family.

Peer mentor assistance. As we mentioned, they meet their mentor prior to getting out and continue to work with them post-release. All the mentors are formerly incarcerated individuals and help guide them through a lot of situations that other people may not understand. Social services referrals for co-parents and primary caregivers are offered. Family participation in community cultural enrichment events with dads and family include helping them with toys for the children for Christmas and a Father's Day dinner. We have a client, co-parent participation, and post-release fatherhood survey. When they first come to the program, we give them the 24/7 Dad pre-fatherhood survey. At the end of the program, they are given another post-release fatherhood survey that one of our evaluators designed, which is to assess where their skills are as a dad and if they have been enhanced. The data is used for substantiation of the practices of the program.

Before I introduce Mr. Dontre Crawford, I just want to play a minute and 20 seconds from a fatherhood dinner we had.





Recording: Say your first name and what would you like to say about the program?

Speaker: My name's Jerry. The program helped me a lot. Yeah, it's helpful. These are some good guys.

Speaker: My name is Nestor. This program made me see things in a different way. Taught me tips on how to become a better father, how to be there for my child. Honestly, without this program I don't think I would be able to do what I do now for my child, to be patient and all that. So, shout out to Dae. Thank you all.

Speaker: My name is Eric. I just came out today. Program showed me a lot. Showed me how to stay out of jail and do the right thing and be there for my son.

Speaker: This program taught me how to be a better father and how to come home and transition and get a job and do what's right.

Speaker: My name is Terry Stackhouse. This program has helped me with prioritizing the stuff I need to do and keeping me in line. I want to thank Dae for that. Thank you.

Dae McKnight: Thank you. I'd like to introduce Mr. Dontre Crawford. He was a program participant and is going to talk to you about his experience in the program, and the importance of having successful ex-offenders involved in the reentry process.

Dontre Crawford: Good afternoon. My name's Dontre Crawford and I'm a participant in the fatherhood program. I'm 25 years old and have two children. My son Avery is six, and my daughter is one. That's my baby, I can't go anywhere without her. Going through this process has been amazing. I was incarcerated for firearms and drugs. At the time my fiancé was six months pregnant. I stayed in jail until my daughter was seven months old. Before I was released, I reached out looking for help. The facility I was in had a program where I could communicate with others that had been in my situation. They listened and gave advice. They were helping me. I needed somewhere to go once I was released. One of the peer managers of the program was able to get me into their residential facility.

As I transitioned back into the world, there were so many trials and tribulations. The facility held my ID and the program helped me get a new one and my driver's license. My resume was up to par. My first week home I landed a supervisor's position for a big company called WIS International, an inventory service. I worked there for five months, but it wasn't for me. I left and went back to school. My mentor chewed me out for leaving, but I landed something better. I was sitting in the car, waiting for my fiancé to come out of work. My mentor called and said, "Hey, I





got something for you, I want you to go check it out." He knows I'm a chef. I've been cooking for the last six or seven years. I went and sat down with the manager and landed the job. Right now, I'm sitting on a salary that I never thought I would make. I believe that the ex-offender that's helping us is excellent. It's like I wouldn't want to learn music from an art teacher. I would want to learn it from a musician. So why wouldn't I want to learn how to be successful coming from incarceration from somebody that's already done it and been in my shoes? It's been mindful for me. They still help to this day. I get phone calls, "Hey, come pick this up. Hey, what you doing? We want to see the children. Hey, we're doing this function, dinner." They called me around Christmas and said, "Hey, bring the children and your fiancé, we're having a dinner here." It was nice. It's been a blessing. And they do everything they can to really help. There's nothing else I would ask for coming from that type of transition.

Right now, my mentor is great. I can call him any time. I can call him middle of the night, and he will pick up. Things going on with this person, I need guidance on something, I don't know why she's crying, she's giving me a hard time, she's running around, what to do? He helps. It slows me down so I can take my time. I like everything nice and orderly and having somebody on the side that's been there and done it helps. This program is just wonderful. I couldn't speak more highly about it. It's phenomenal. I still attend some of the classes. They have fatherhood classes where you can attend and talk to other fathers. Being with my daughter is just a blessing every day. That's my sunshine right there. I couldn't ask for a better little girl. That's my story.

Participant: Are you at capacity? Can they elect to enter your program if they meet the qualifications, or do you have a wait list?

Darin Goff: We have several wait lists. Our classes are based on cohorts. Our next one is in July and we're going to be holding them at four facilities. We've been screening for those cohorts for all four facilities for months now, because these men are moving targets. They are moving all over the place. We have what is called a custody facility plan. When can we get this guy? When can we transfer him? Or if he's in a facility, is he going to stay there? Is he going to end up going to work release? That's why you saw some flexibility in that six to nine months, because we want our men to be completed. If they're going to go to work release, we don't have staff there. So, if they get pulled in the middle of classes, everybody loses.

So, is there a waiting list? There are multiple lists that we have for multiple cohorts at those facilities; and the lists literally change daily based on what is going on. One staff is dedicated to just monitoring, tracking, and screening for not just their criminal history, but for domestic violence. Are they going to be a good fit? Somebody on the panel this morning said, "You know, the last thing that we want to do is put one of our incarcerated individuals in a home that's going to endanger somebody." So, we're very cognizant of that. But I don't know if that's answering





your question. We have qualifications to get into each cohort, but if there's like four that are at a facility and qualify, and they have the right ERD for that cohort, they'll probably get in; but the department or the courts might have something else to say about it and we lose out.

Participant: It's a question about pitching this program to a facility that may not have this programming, because some areas are more willing to have this type of programming. I've been very lucky, but that's not a given from county to county. Do you have an approach?

Dae McKnight: I'm just going to say that recently in Connecticut, at one point in time, we were labeled as a Second Chance state. They say they were pioneering a lot of things. The governor came, cut the budget, and all that was just fluff. I'll tell you like it is. The Department of Corrections was willing to take whatever they could for programming and treatment if it was going to be free. So, when you have a grant that's coming outside of the Department of Corrections budget, it's not coming from their budget, they're definitely going to be interested in something like that. Approach the treatment people, Commissioner of Corrections and you get an MOU with them. I don't know how it works in other states, but it doesn't matter who's receptive to it or who's not. This is coming from the Commissioner and you have an MOU with them. They want it because it's free. They want whatever they can get that's free. If it's an outside funding source that gives you the edge.

I don't know if that helped you, but Darin has something for you as well.

Darin Goff: Correctional facilities are like their own little kingdoms and they all run a little bit differently. When I went to Monroe, it had five perimeters, minimum security, a unit dedicated to the sex offenders, closed custody, and what essentially is a mental health unit. I came there from a women's facility. The hardcore custody staff down the line saw me as somebody that came in and had a soft touch. They wanted nothing to do with me. They were like what's this guy from the women's facility coming here for? You have to prove yourself, get credibility, and change the culture to a point where you have to work and get key people on your side. At Strength in Families, we've had to go in and upfront because it doesn't necessarily pertain to just the program; but there's a lot of buildup to be done to break down these barriers. It's community-based and you have to cultivate the internal relationships as well, and that's ongoing, because just when you think you have everyone right here, somebody changes a position. You have to be persistent and hire staff who are staff or facility based. They know the work in those facilities, but they also know how and have compassion, because not everybody that works in corrections, unfortunately, has compassion. When I talk to our men in our program I'll tell them, "I'm hiring, you know me, and I'm hiring this kind of staff." No staff who are ever going to break the rules, but staff who are going to have compassion and are going to care.





Participant: I have a couple questions. First, in regard to recidivism in the five prisons that you have the program, have you been tracking that and what is the rate right now?

Darin Goff: I hesitate to say. We are tracking it. We're blessed in our state. We have a reentry division. I don't know if there's too many states that actually have a reentry division. It's pretty recent. We have a data manager and so I encourage a culture of curiosity; you know, is this working? Because you always want to go back and find out. We have two measuring sticks in Washington, at year one and at year three, but we've not been at it long enough to get to year three yet. We don't have enough numbers, we barely have enough for one part. Washington state has a 13% recidivism rate or return to prison rate at year one. Right now, we have two different numbers. This is going to be drastic. One says 6% and one says 10%, because there's two different measures, but it's still significantly less, at this point, than the state recidivism rate.

Participant: My other question is are your peer mentors volunteers or are they paid staff?

Dae McKnight: Actually, they receive stipends, and some of them are volunteers. So, it's mixed.

Participant: That was my question for Mr. McKnight. Would you use mentors if they were volunteers and specifically with them being ex-offenders, how did you recruit them? How did you incentivize them to maintain the relationship pre and post?

Dae McKnight: When we had the Fresh Start program, we had a network. I've been going into prisons for 10 years facilitating reentry groups. So, when a lot of men get out, and I wish I could paint a better picture for you, but when they cut that budget there were men still coming out and coming to the office and saying, "Hey, we need services." We didn't turn them away, we were scrambling to try to find resources, just like with our young men programs. We're in the network of people who are being released. By being in that network we fought hard for them through RYASAP (Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership), where they generated some funding where they could give the men that weren't volunteering stipends. Some of the men that were volunteering were already employed. Some of the men who have been out for maybe five months had trouble finding permanent work and were working through temp agencies. They were being very productive in the community with their reentry; and those were the ones that we got the stipend for. We are still trying to figure out how to be creative and create more opportunities to get them involved, where they can be paid for their services because they do a lot.

I had a young man call me around 2:00 a.m. He had nowhere to parole to. All the mentors have the same kind of mindset that we're never off-duty. His dad moved back to Puerto Rico and his





mom was living in Massachusetts. He was like, "I need to talk to you right now." I was like "What's going on?" He's like "I need to talk to you right now." I said, "Well, talk." He said, "I need to see you." He said he was in a rooming house with his girl and her sister was living there. The sister and her boyfriend were smoking crack. The boyfriend was also pimping the sister out, having her turn tricks in the apartment, and the parolee went and got a firearm to run the guys out of there. What do you do in a situation like this? You know, you are a mandated reporter. Do I report him to parole, pack him in, have DCF take him? He didn't know any other options, but even in the midst of it, he thought about calling one of us. I went there and was able to diffuse the situation, talk to him, have him give that firearm back to who he got it from, and we worked on a housing plan. The next day, we got him and his family out of there. It's tough, but you have to be out of the box.

Participant: I have a comment. I appreciate your transparency Mr. Crawford, that you're willing to say I need help. It's one of the hardest things that men have an issue saying. Also, being open enough to say, whatever time of day or night, it doesn't matter, you call us. I commend you for stepping up. I also commend you, too, Mr. McKnight, for not only saying I'm going to be there, but actually being there, because you know it's so easy for us to talk the talk between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., but when I clock out don't call me. I have my work phone here and I'm going to communicate with a dad all day today. It makes more of an impact when you really back up what you preach in the prison or jail. I go four days a week teaching 24/7, but the day that they get out and they literally say I'm going to call you and blow your phone up until your answer; and you pick up, and they say, okay, now I can trust what you're saying; because, you're not only telling me behind bars that you're going to be there, but you're actually there. So, I appreciate you being that consistent role model.

Dae McKnight: Thank you. But I have a mentor too who has been there for me. I'm not an island.

Participant: I have a co-worker who's a mentor to me. You speak to men who come from absent fathers. My 30 plus years of my life and my father's been absent for over 28 of those years. As I teach what fathers are supposed to be and then I'm reflecting as I'm teaching, there's some hurt that's still there, but that's also what connects me to the next man; because, I'm able to say this is what your child is experiencing, this is what they're feeling. That's what keeps us bonded together even upon release. But then I also have to go back in here and say, look you have to help me. I'm preaching it, but I want to make sure I'm practicing it, so that I make sure I take care of things that are wrong in my own world. It's amazing work.

Participant: Someone spoke about the correctional culture. In Philadelphia we have a Commissioner who's been there about four or five years. She has a social work background and





is trying to create a culture where the correctional officers have a feel for the men who they are looking over. There's some resistance there, and then what happens is the inmate gets into this battle with the correctional officer because you know, they're in the hole. But because the correctional officer doesn't have this sensitivity about the men who they're supposed to be guarding, it becomes a problem. Maybe researchers could research the correctional officers, because they're part of the problem.

Darin Goff: I completely agree. What you're saying is common. Hopefully in the state of Washington, having a reentry division, in time, will help change that culture and having programs like ours will help open eyes. One of our program advisors who was the developer of Parenting Inside Out, Dr. Mark Eddy, and I talk all the time about the needs of corrections and corrections culture. It's huge, and in this country I can't believe that it's just isolated to the state of Washington, but the corrections culture when it starts to change and embrace some of the stuff that we're all talking about here, then you're going to see that red carpet roll out and it's going to become more common. Dr. Mark Eddy is a researcher, and he came and met with our secretary and some people to talk about that very thing and how we can actually start to do research around why it is the way it is, and how do we go about changing that. I don't have those answers, but at least other people are asking those questions as well.

Participants: I go to our local jail and teach a fatherhood class. I've never been in jail, but I make that connection with the men. I have never been in your shoes; however, I've been in the shoes of being a father. Not that am I am a perfect father, but I was able to raise two young men and graduate into college. I can relate to what you're saying in regard to having a mentor, where they see me as maybe that type of mentor, and they see that aspect of it. They come out and they say you know what, like you said, walk the walk, talk the talk. My phone is available to you, but you have to reach out to me first, because you need the help and you want the help. I definitely commend you Mr. Crawford, because you are a perfect example of a program really working. I think we're definitely headed in the right direction.

We just started our reentry program in our local jail that took three years to get. It took me eight months to get into the jail to teach. Like we're saying, we have to be persistent and keep knocking on doors.

Participant: What about employment and employment retention? Is that some of the statistics and data and research?

Darin Goff: We're looking pretty good, but it's so early.





Participant: With the six-month post, it's harder for them to get jobs, right? I mean, that's what I find at least. What about their ability to get work and find meaningful work? Are you seeing a difference between the other men? In your program is there something specific about your piece that might help

Darin Goff: Yes. We have such a small percentage, not many of them fit the profile.

Participant: In my community, which is a rural community in Cheyenne, Wyoming, there are certain employers in that community that will look for a sex offender because they know, once that guy has a job, he's going to kill it. He's going to go above and beyond. He'll be there early, he'll stay late. He covets that work. It's all because it is so difficult for them to get a job and they've really done their work, and because a treatment model is like a five-year thing, it's really intense for them, and the state is monitored closely. Now they still have to pay attention, because there are still men that are going to screw up. I just wanted to put that out there. It's tough.

Dae McKnight: Just to add to that, I think another statistic that's not looked at, which is a positive statistic, and I share this with the guys inside, is that out of that group of people who are released from prison that do become employed, 75 to 80 percent of them move up into a supervisory capacity. That's a fact. They usually end up being the shift leader. It's because of the drive and because of what Darin talked about, them tapping into some of their transferrable skills. Listen, if you can hustle on the streets...I tell the students when I'm trying to motivate them, I say there's no way you're supposed to go to a job and let a lame outwork you. Pardon my language, but this is what I have to do to motivate them, because when you're in the streets, you have to do four or five things at one time to be able to function or survive and live for the day. I'm saying take that negative thing that you have, transfer it into positive energy as motivation to propel you forward. And a lot of them are doing it.

