



Pathways for Parents after Incarceration



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Background

- Today, 45% of Americans have experienced the incarceration of an immediate family member (Enns et al., 2019). This can have significant impacts on all members of a family unit including children, romantic partners, caregivers, and extended relatives.
- Men often use the reentry period to renew and maintain family relationships, to invest in their family roles, and to regain influence in their children's lives (Charles, Muentner, & Kjellstrand, 2019), all of which are potential buffers to the risk of reoffending and reincarceration (Visher, Bakken, & Gunter, 2013)
- Active father involvement leads to a number of positive outcomes for children, including more optimal cognitive development, academic achievement, self esteem, emotional and behavioral regulation, and social competence (Marsiglio, Day, and Lamb, 2000)

Current Study

Pathways for Parents After Incarceration is a study involving fathers, caregivers and children impacted by parental incarceration. We are trying to learn how to best support families when fathers return home from prison or jail. The program includes 8 weeks of a parenting skills class (Parenting Inside Out or PIO), therapeutic peer support group, and family engagement activities.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to help participants learn effective parenting skills and gain social support from other families, so their children can receive the best care possible.

Eligibility

People are eligible to participate if they meet the following criteria: (1) are a father 18 years or older, (2) have a child between ages 3-17, (3) have regular contact or play a parenting role in some way, (4) were released from prison or jail in the last 5 years, or (5) are the caretaker of children with a father who meets the criteria.

Participant Demographics

N=20
(9 Fathers/11 Caregivers)

Data were collected in an interview format before the intervention, directly after the intervention, and again three months later. Questions were asked regarding their personal demographics, incarceration history, family dynamics and quality of relationships, and later about their satisfaction with the administration and content of the program itself.

Fathers

Min age= 29
Max age= 52
Average age= 38

White= 22.2%
Black or African American= 44.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native=11.1%
Mixed Race=22.2%

Some high school or less= 11.1%
Some college= 55.6%
Technical or vocational degree=22.2%
Four-year or bachelor's degree=11.1%

Unemployed= 55.6%
Employed= 44.4%

Number of children:
ranged from 1-7 children



Caregivers

Min age= 27
Max age= 73
Average age= 38

White= 27.3%
Black or African American= 45.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native=9.1%
Mixed Race=18.2%

Some high school or less= 18.2%
High school diploma or GED = 9.1%
Some college= 54.5%
Four-year or bachelor's degree= 18.2%

Unemployed= 54.5%
Employed = 45.5%

Number of children:
ranged from 1-14 children
(including grandchildren)

Criminal History (father data only)

Prison populations have exploded not because of substantial increases in criminal behavior, but rather because criminal justice responses to offending have gotten more severe. Re-incarceration has become the default response to technical violations while on parole. Instead of responding to the needs of people from marginalized and oppressed communities, parole agencies primarily serve a management function, identifying “risky” individuals and reincarcerating them. This cycle of imprisonment, release, and reimprisonment leads to greater stigmatization and increased difficulty reintegrating into communities (Lin, 2010).

Maximum number of times convicted of a crime:

10

Maximum number of times sent to prison/jail:

35

Participant Satisfaction

“[As a group] we are able to, you know, break through barriers, break down walls and actually be vulnerable to each other and know that we can help each other be accountable. [We] learn how to be better caregivers, partners, communicators... you know, people. Not just at home but in our communities. That’s what needs to happen and that’s what’s happening right now is that PIO is helping people in the community and inside the home.”

-Father response

“You know, just from having this program in our lives, changed a part of who we were for the better. I’m so proud of him [father]. Like I said before, he’s definitely changed into a better man, and he’s happy now. I see a smile on his face a lot more and if we didn’t have this program, he wouldn’t be that. I know that for a fact. So, this is definitely beneficial.”

-Caregiver response

83%
rated this program as
“very helpful”

100%
would “strongly
recommend” this
program to others

“I think that it did help my dad a lot because he could relate to people. In our family, its hard to relate to him, so especially when he was living by himself and all of his kids left, I think the program helped him know that there was other people that just got out of jail and had kids too. I think it helped him and my grandma a lot, especially with their bond... My dad’s attitude has changed for the good. He’s more understanding with people and he isn’t as quick to judge or be nasty about stuff. He has more of a positive outlook on everything.”

- Child response



Community Partners

This study was conducted in collaboration with:



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References

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