University of WI-Extension
Cooperative Extension
Family Living Programs

The Role of Family in Reentry

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The Wisconsin Idea --

- Education should influence and improve people’s lives *beyond* the university classroom

- Cooperative Extension extends University knowledge and resources to people *where they live and work*. 
Focus Areas of Cooperative Extension

- Family Living Programs
- 4-H Youth Development
- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Community Natural Resource and Economic Development
IN THE U.S.

How many persons were admitted to U. S. Jails during the 12 months ending June 30, 2010?

a) 229,000 (population of Madison)

b) 603,000 (population of Milwaukee)

c) 5,700,000 (population of Wisconsin)

d) 11,000,000 (population of WI and Minnesota)
Local U.S. jails admitted almost 13 million persons during the 12 months ending June 30, 2010 (Minton)

What do 13 million people look like?
13 MILLION PERSONS...

...would fill 178 Lambeau Fields
6½ Million of these Inmates...

are parents of at least one child

(89+ Lambeau Fields)
IN THE U.S.

Millions of family members

Likely millions of U.S. children have a parent in jail

(Kemper and Rivara, Western and Wildeman, Poehlmann et. al.)
236,000 county jail admissions in 2010

How many are parents?

MANY MORE family members affected

(Wisconsin Department of Corrections)
HOW MANY CHILDREN?

- 1 of 50 children in the U.S. has a parent in jail \(^{(}\text{Kemper and Rivara}\,^{,})\)

- More common than:
  - autism
  - maltreatment (abuse or neglect)
  - juvenile diabetes
CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

- 2x – 2½ times higher risk for many problems, but can overcome risk with support (Murray et. al.)

- more likely to be involved in troubled behavior at school (truancy and failure), at home, with alcohol and other drugs and suffer from isolation or withdrawal (Gabel and Johnston)

- At significantly higher risk for behavior problems and involvement with criminal activity (Johnston)
WHY INVOLVE FAMILY?

When reentering...

- Who most often provides housing?
- Who provides financial support?
- Who provides transportation?
- Who provides help getting a job?
- Who is go-to for child care?

(diZerega, M.)
FAMILY!

- Incarcerated adults in contact with supportive family members do better when released

- Family support is one of the keys to successful reintegration
Visits from pro-social family members during incarceration can reduce and delay recidivism; timing of visits is key (Bales & Mears)

Contact between parent and child is key for successful reintegration (Conway and Hutson)

Family involvement can result in better employment outcomes and reduced alcohol and other drug use (Visher et.al.)
Research on Reentry and the Family

Research finds...

- Positive family contact while incarcerated → lower re-arrests and lower re-incarcerated rates (diZerega)

- Family approaches linked to lower recidivism among youth offenders
Prisoners say...

*What has been the most important factor in helping stay out of prison?*

family support

(La Vigne, Visher & Castro)
Strength-based Family Systems –

- Incarceration and reentry affects the entire family and its individual members
- Traditional and non traditional family sources of positive support
- Goals re: family well-being and self-sufficiency
**Correctional System Audiences** (one of many possible audiences)

- *Jail inmates* (sometimes prison populations)
- Probation and parole
- Huber
- Drug court clients
- *Families of incarcerated* (caregivers, partners, parents, children)
- Jail staff
Making an Informed Decision

- Programming priorities
- Educator skill, comfort level and safety concerns
- Educational resources and research
- Local support and partners
Education is one part of a comprehensive system-wide approach to addressing the needs of jail inmate and other correctional system populations.

Other Vital Parts –

- treatment (mental health and substance abuse)
- employment/economic stability
- housing
FAMILY SUPPORT IN JAILS

- Jail Visits and Family Contact
- Parenting Programs
- Life skills Education
- Preparation for Community Life

From “family is the problem” to “family is part of the solution”

- Soliciting input from family members
- Family specialists
- Staff training
Kid-Friendly Jail Visits

Mock visiting booths at Allegheny County Jail Pennsylvania
EXAMPLES OF FAMILY SUPPORT

- While in prison, Frank talks with his son by phone about his homework.
- When Donna is about to come home from jail, her pastor brings her a list of N.A. meetings in their community and offers to go with her.
- Even though Miguel’s grandmother is unable to visit, she accepts his collect calls and writes to him every week. Miguel knows that she is in his corner, and he plans to live with her when he gets out.

Jail visits are family- and kid-friendly.

Contact between the inmate and supportive adults is encouraged; for example, an uncle or pastor lends computer skills, helps fill out a job application, and shares name of a small-business owner he knows who has a job opening.
UW-EXTENSION EXAMPLES

- The DAD Thing
- Family Resiliency classes and newsletter
- CJCC
- Life skills education ($, family relationships)
SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Family Support

Employment

Treatment

Housing
“It was in March and they just came and got me and said I was being released. I had no coat, no ride, no cell phone. Nobody knew I was getting out. So I just started walking.”
Family Living Programs: Local Criminal Justice and Prevention

http://fyi.uwex.edu/families andcommunities/local-criminal-justice-and-prevention/

Find:
- Today’s PPT
- “Select Resources for Jail Reentry, Family and Reentry, and Children of Incarcerated Parents”
- Juvenile Delinquency prevention resources
- Alternatives to Incarceration


