

Serving Formerly Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Assault

A Webinar for Advocates and Victim Service Providers

September 26, 2019

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Welcome



Allison Hastings

Project Director

Vera Institute of Justice

Agenda

- **Overview of the problem and barriers to services:** Allison Hastings, Vera Institute of Justice
- **Reaching and Preparing to Serve Formerly Incarcerated Survivors:** Dave Rini, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)
- **Serving Formerly Incarcerated Survivors:** Kenton Kirby, Neighbors in Action
- **Putting it all together**
- **Questions & Answers**

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims is a one-stop shop for victim service providers, culturally specific organizations, criminal justice professionals, and policymakers to get information and expert guidance to enhance their capacity to identify, reach, and serve all victims, especially those from communities that are underrepresented in healing services and avenues to justice.

We are supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (2)

Our communities of focus are victims who are:

- Immigrants or Limited English Proficient,
- Men of color,
- Women of color or from other historically marginalized populations,
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning,
- Children,
- Older adults,
- People with disabilities or people who are Deaf, and
- Formerly incarcerated.

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (3)

We are a collaboration among:

- Caminar Latino
- Casa de Esperanza
- Common Justice
- FORGE
- The National Children's Advocacy Center
- The National Center for Victims of Crime
- The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later in Life
- Vera Institute of Justice
- Women of Color Network, Inc

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (4)

We are working to:

- increase the number of victims who receive healing supports by understanding who is underrepresented and why some people access services while others don't;
- design and implement best practices for connecting people to the services they need; and
- empower and equip organizations to provide the most useful and effective services to crime victims.

Vera Institute of Justice Center on Victimization and Safety

- Works to improve access to healing services for all victims of crime.
- Focuses on groups of people who are at elevated risk of harm, but have less access to healing and avenues to justice, including:
 - People with disabilities,
 - People who are Deaf,
 - Incarcerated people, and
 - Formerly incarcerated people.



Sexual victimization before, during, and after incarceration

Facts and figures

Barriers to services

Opportunities for healing

Most people in jail or prison were victims first

In his study of 122 (107 men and 15 women) people who returned to the Boston area post-incarceration, Bruce Western found that **prior to incarceration:**

- 40% had witnessed someone being killed
- Nearly half were beaten by their parents
- 1/3 grew up with family violence
- 16% reported being sexually abused
- Half were seriously injured while growing up

Many experienced sexual violence prior to incarceration

1999 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics:

- Nearly **6 in 10 women** in state prisons had experienced physical or sexual abuse prior to their incarceration.
- **69%** reported that the abuse occurred before age 18.

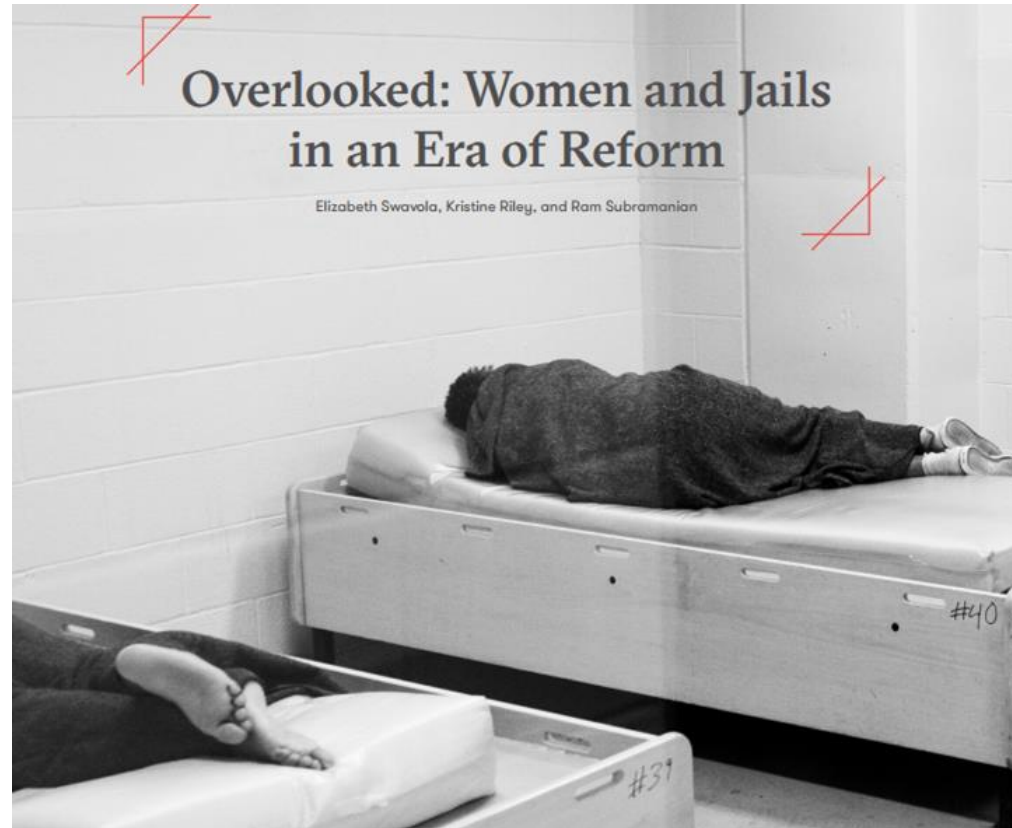
1998 study of men in a NY state prison:

- **68%** experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect before age 12.
- More than **1:3** experienced severe childhood physical abuse.

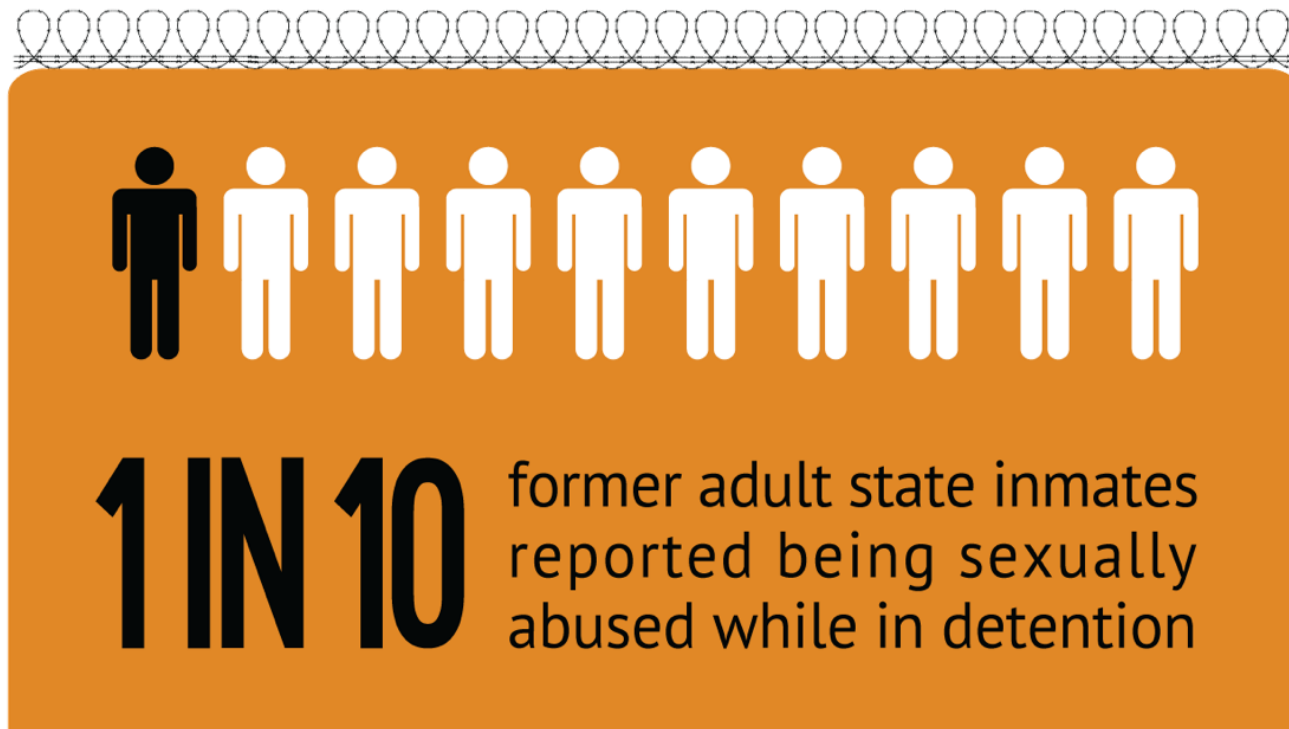
Most women in jail have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence

Histories of victimization are nearly universal for women in U.S. jails:

- 86% have experienced sexual violence
- 77% have survived intimate partner violence



Many people behind bars experience sexual abuse during their incarceration



Courtesy of Just Detention International Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sexual Victimization Reported By Former State Prisoners, 2008* (May 2012).

Faces of survivors



Photos courtesy of Just Detention International

What happens when people return home?

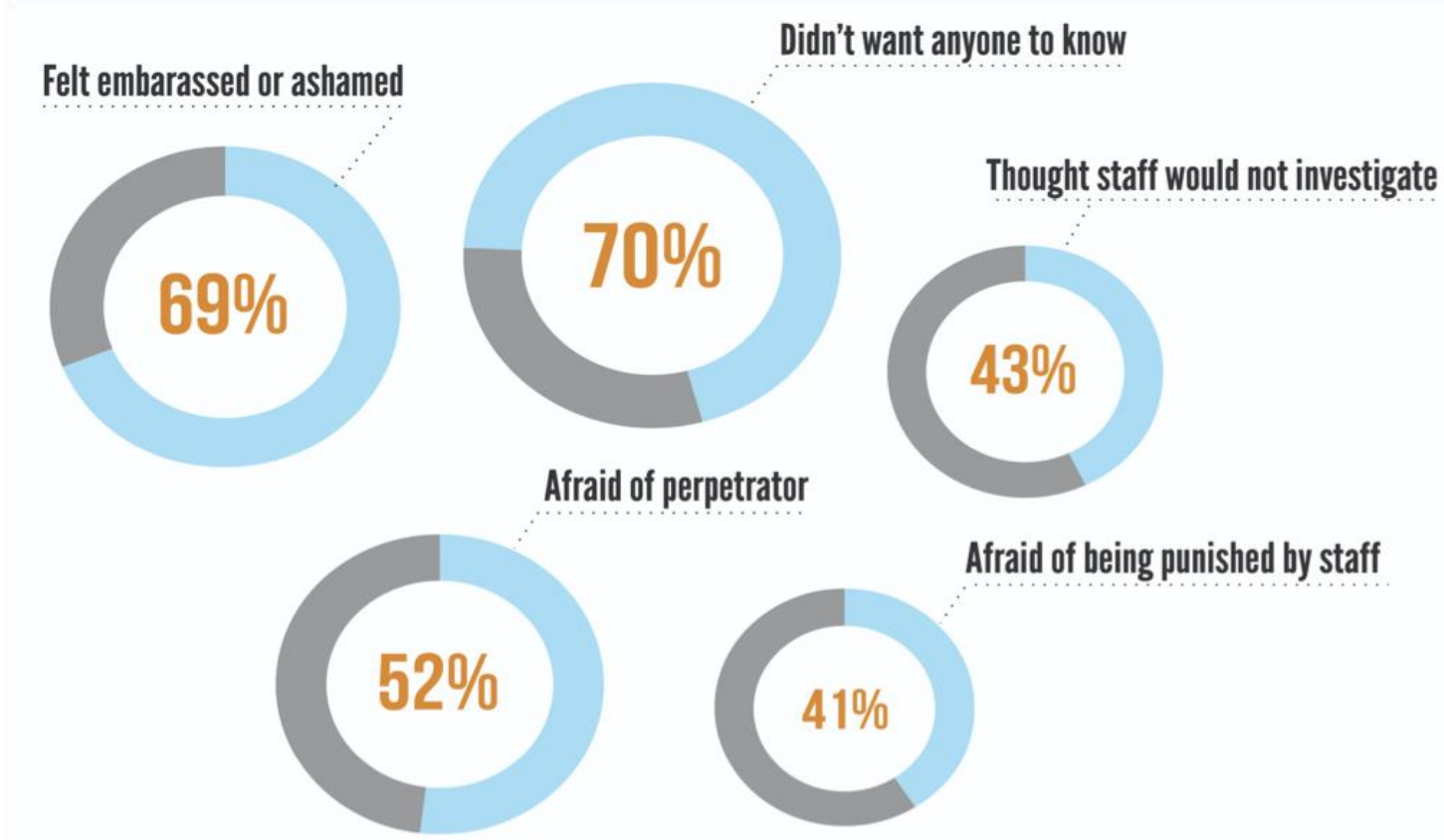
Of the 122 participants Bruce Western's Boston Reentry Study, **1/4 had been threatened or attacked since returning home.**

“As victims, the respondents were shot, stabbed, beaten, raped, and molested. But even beyond the familiar roles of victim and offender, nearly all respondents reported witnessing serious violence, and all reported fighting in which the roles of victim and offender were difficult to distinguish.”

-Bruce Western, *Homeward* (p. 80)

Many victims do not get help while they are incarcerated.

Barriers to reporting and services during incarceration



Courtesy of Just Detention International

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, "[Sexual Victimization Reported By Former State Prisoners, 2008](#)," May 12, 2012.

Even during reentry and after they have returned home, many victims do not get the services they need to heal.

Barriers to accessing victim services during reentry

- The language we use is not always the language formerly incarcerated survivors use
- False dichotomy of “victim” and “perpetrator”
- Stigma
- Reentry services and victim services are siloed
- Few trauma-informed service programs for victims/survivors who have an incarceration history

Opportunities for healing

- Victims of Crime Act rule change
- Efforts to address sexual abuse stemming from the Prison Rape Elimination Act
- Growing awareness among victim advocates and criminal justice reformers that people do not fit neatly into a singular category of “victim” or “offender”
- Pilot project between the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center and Office of Returning Citizens

Reaching and Preparing to Serve Formerly Incarcerated Survivors

Dave Rini, Incarcerated Survivor Support Program Manager,
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

Welcome Dave Rini



Dave Rini

Incarcerated Survivor Support
Program Manager

Boston Area Rape Crisis
Center

The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

- Founded in 1973
- Oldest and largest Rape Crisis Center in Massachusetts
- One of 3 independent rape crisis centers in Massachusetts



Incarcerated Survivor Support Program

Services:

- 12-hour hotline
- 24-hour medical advocacy
- Limited mail program
- Advocates for investigational interviews
- Inmate education and orientation
- Training and technical assistance



Returning and Healing Project



“Incarceration-Informed” (draft definition!)

1. Realizes the widespread impact (trauma, conditioning) of incarceration and understands potential paths for de-institutionalization
2. Recognizes the collateral consequences of incarceration for clients, families, and communities
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about incarceration into policies, procedures, and practices
4. Resists re-traumatization

Need-to-Answer Questions



Staff Needs

- Thoughts on the correctional system?
- Thoughts on racism/racial justice?
- Thoughts on working with men/male survivors?
- Does your staff look like the community you serve, *including* people in detention?

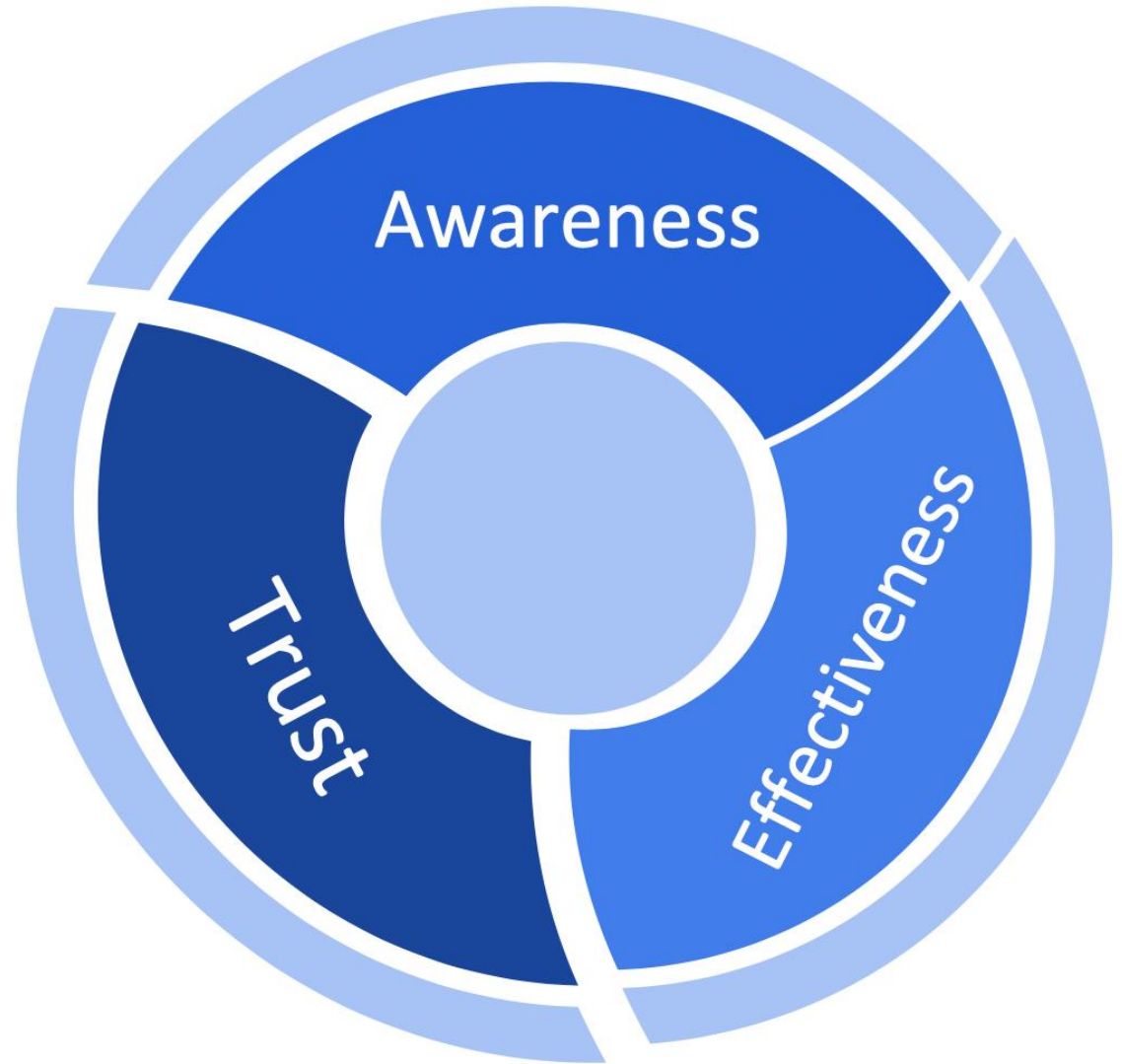
Protocol Rules

- What are the limits on working with perpetrators?
- How do you define “perpetration?”
- What are your mandated reporting obligations?
- Can you do remote service?
- Confidentiality concerns?

Logistics

- How do people get to you/your space?
- How much staff time/capacity do you have available?
- What does your intake process/pathway look like?

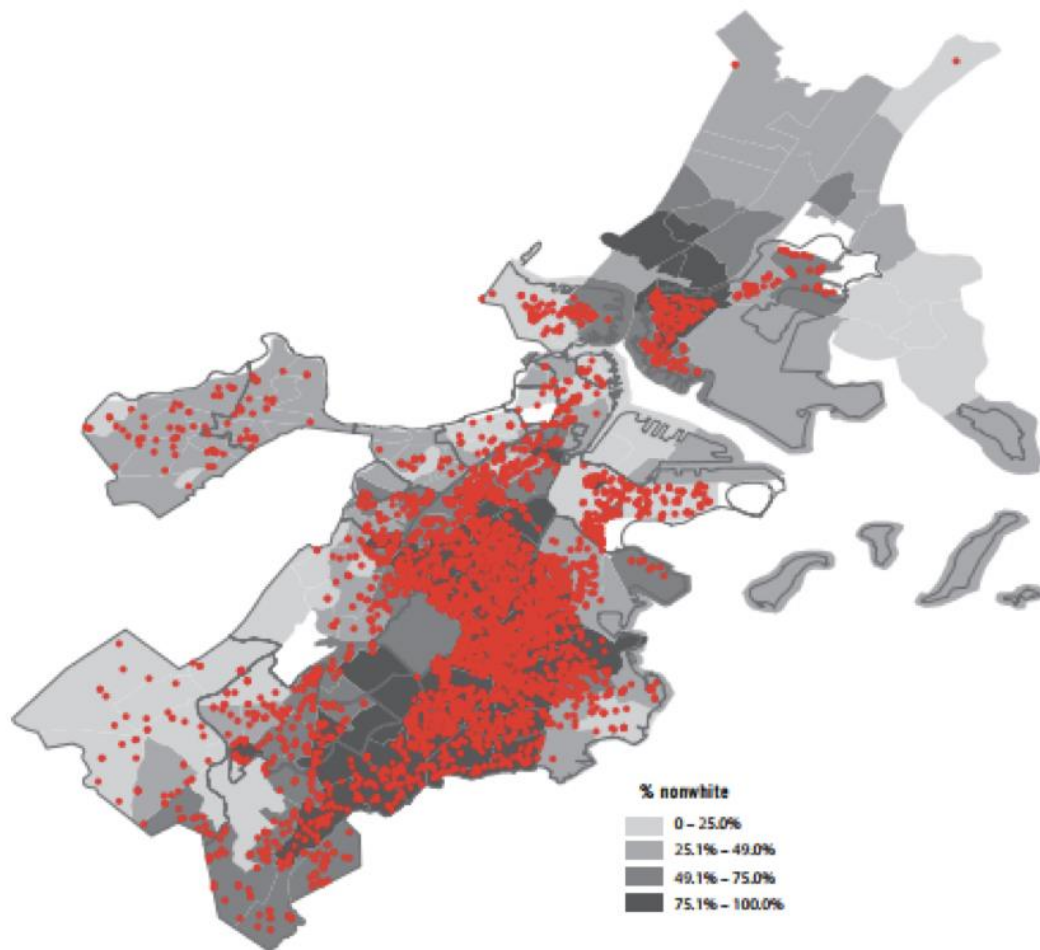
Three Necessities



Necessities: Awareness

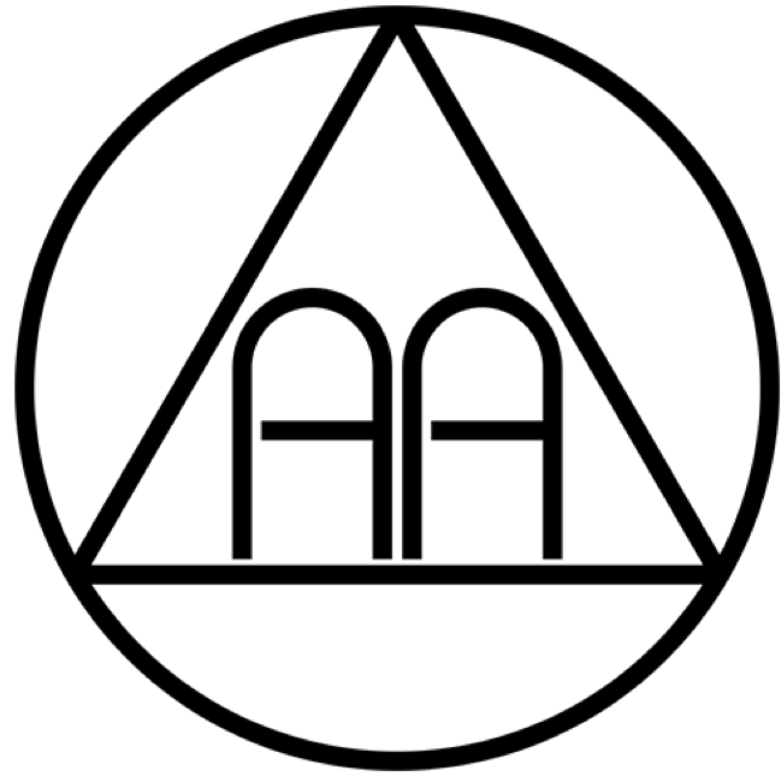
MAP 3

Releases from the Suffolk County House of Correction by
Neighborhood Race/Ethnicity, 2009-2015



In Franklin Field, more than 1 in 5 male residents age 25 to 29 were incarcerated during this six-year period; for Grove Hall, the figure was 1 in 6.

Necessities: Awareness (2)



Necessities: Trust

Staff Training

- Population knows it won't be stigmatized

Clear Protocols

- Population is only referred when appropriate

Accurate Collateral

- Population knows what to expect

Necessity: Effectiveness (or credibility)

Prison/Jail Knowledge

Local Re-Entry
Knowledge

Criminal Legal System
Knowledge

Safety Knowledge

Example: Effectiveness (or credibility) (2)



Cell Phone, 2005



Cell Phone, 2019

How to get the basics: effectiveness

- Talk to local re-entry agencies
- Find grassroots agencies run by formerly incarcerated people
- Get inside the walls, if possible
- Talk to inmate/prisoner councils, if you are allowed to
- Build up some concrete resources you can provide!

Getting ready

Train Staff,
Build Protocols

Build
Relationships

Market
Services

Serve
Survivors

Serving Formerly Incarcerated Survivors

Kenton Kirby, Director of Trauma and Healing
Neighbors in Action, Center for Court Innovation

Welcome Kenton Kirby



Kenton Kirby

Director of Trauma & Healing
Neighbors in Action
Center for Court Innovation



About Neighbors in Action

- Community-based organization working to end gun violence in Brooklyn: **Save Our Streets (S.O.S.): first Cure Violence site in New York**
- A project of **The Center for Court Innovation (CCI)**, a New York-based nonprofit that aims to advance the cause of justice reform and reduce incarceration

About Neighbors in Action (2)

- Heart center: those most at risk for gun violence
- All wrap-around services address the heart center, such as:
 - **Legal Hand:** storefront providing legal resources
 - **Youth programs:** high schoolers organizing to end gun violence
 - **Make It Happen:** therapeutic services addressing the trauma of community violence



PROMOTING SAFETY



HEALING



INVESTING IN YOUTH



HELPING NEIGHBORS



ORGANIZING



PLACEMAKING

Our work with young men of color who are trauma survivors

Make It Happen

- For young men of color between the ages of 16 and 24 who have been negatively impacted by community violence.
- We support participants in recognizing their trauma(s) and engaging in healing through:
 - therapeutic services,
 - intensive case management,
 - mentorship,
 - advocacy, and
 - movement-building.

What we've learned

- How to talk to formerly incarcerated people, particularly men and men of color, about the trauma they've experienced.
- Building trust is vital in beginning the conversation around traumatic experiences.
- Safety is a driving force in many decisions people make.

Helping formerly incarcerated people feel safe to access sexual assault services

- Getting comfortable as service providers to talk about sensitive subjects.

While creating a safe space to process with survivors

- Being transparent about what the process looks like.

We can't guarantee safety, but we can work to help someone be "safe enough"

Putting It All Together: Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Become incarceration-informed
- Gain comfort as service providers to talk about sexual trauma and incarceration without relying on clinical terms
- Build trust and credibility through staff training, responsive policies and protocols, and relationship-building within the community
- Create space and safety for people to talk about their experiences

Questions?

Contact information

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Citations

- **Slide 10:** Bruce Western, *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2018), p. 67.
- **Slide 11:** National Institute of Justice, *Early Childhood Victimization Among Incarcerated Adult Felons: Research Preview* (Washington, DC, 1998).
- Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Women Offenders* (Washington, DC, 1999).
- For the information on prior abuse before admission to state prison, see Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prior Abuse Reported by Inmates and Probationers* (1999).
- **Slide 12:** Shannon Lynch and others. *Women's Pathways to Jail: The Roles and Intersections of Serious Mental Illness and Trauma* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2012).