



**White House FBCI National
Summit on Prisoner Reentry
Call for Papers**

**November 27-28, 2007
Los Angeles, CA**

**Papers Presented By:
Trident Workforce Investment Board
The Transformation Network
Welcome Home Ministries**

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Introduction

Each year more than 650,000 inmates are released from Federal and State prisons and return to their communities and families. According to the Department of Justice, more than two-thirds of returning inmates will be rearrested within three years of their release from prison. Addressing the tremendous human needs associated with recidivism requires that Federal, state, and local decision-makers partner with nongovernmental organizations—for-profit and nonprofit, faith-based and secular—to promote jobs, transitional housing, education, substance abuse treatment, and positive mentoring relationships.

President Bush and his Administration recognize the human tragedy of recidivism—including its tremendous costs to society, victims of crime, and offenders. President Bush has placed unprecedented priority on breaking the tragic cycle of recidivism. He stated in his 2004 State of the Union Address, “America is the land of the Second Chance, and when the gates of prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.”

The White House FBCI National Summit on Prisoner Reentry highlighted the national importance of prisoner reentry and the impacts, trends and, challenges of pre-release and post-release programs that help ex-prisoners transition back into society and employment. Special emphasis was placed on the effects that faith-based and community organizations and the correctional system can have on positive outcomes for ex-offenders.

As part of the overall theme of the National Reentry Summit, the “Call for Papers” sought to capture new information on whether an ex-offender’s sustained participation in and completion of pre-release programs in a correctional system or post-release services or programs through faith-based and community organizations increases or decreases recidivism. The authors of chosen papers had the opportunity to present their research at the National Reentry Summit.

Research on Faith-Based and Community Organizations and Reentry

A Model for Prisoner Reentry: The Trident (South Carolina) Area Welding Initiative

A White Paper prepared by Christine DuRant, Johnna Murray, Louise Rainis, Ed.D., and Paul L. Connerty for the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: A National Summit on Prisoner Reentry-November 27-28, 2007 Los Angeles, California. A conference hosted by the US Department of Justice, and the US Department of Labor.

History

In January 2001, President George W. Bush created Centers for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives in five cabinet departments- Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (ED), Labor (DOL), and Justice (DOJ). During the past six years, U.S. Government resources have helped local efforts in addressing numerous social issues. Featured programs include: Compassion Capital Fund, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, Assess to Recovery, and Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative.

For purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative. Specifically, details of an innovative and collaborative pre-release vocational training program will be provided.

Prisoner Re-Entry Defined

According to the Urban Institute in their publication, "Outside the Walls", prisoner re-entry is the process of leaving prison (or jail) and returning to society. All prisoners encounter similar obstacles and barriers to life on the outside. If the re-entry process is successful, there are multiple benefits in terms of an improved, safer public and long term reintegration of the former prisoner. Successful outcomes are seen in the labor force, in the community, in the schools, with family, and religious organizations. Overall, successful re-entry benefits the local community, the local economy as well as the broader society.

Program Abstract

A production surge in the manufacture of blast resistant vehicles purchased by the United States Department of Defense, created a corresponding demand for certified welders in the Charleston, South Carolina area. Simultaneously, County officials at our local detention center were meeting with staff requesting job placement assistance for non-violent inmates. This assistance could include training, certification, or an attempt to place the former inmate in a full time position.

It was at this juncture that a connection was made. There was a booming segment of businesses needing skilled, certified welders and an increasingly growing pool of virtually unemployable people. (Oftentimes, it is difficult to obtain employment with local companies if one has a criminal record—no matter how benign the offense was.) A partnership was formed. A goal was set. A public-private venture was born.

To date, 63* detention center residents have gone through this innovative program. Upon completion of the training program, when hired, they can expect to experience 100% wage increase.

An innovative welder training program was designed to meet this critical shortage of trained welders. Multiple partners included the following seven local collaborators:

- 1) Charleston County, South Carolina, Government,
- 2) Charleston, County, South Carolina, Detention Center/ Sheriffs Department,
- 3) South Carolina Employment Security Commission,
- 4) Trident One Stop Career System,
- 5) Regional manufacturers including a private firm that supplied classroom and welding booth space and experience with their product—a ballistic and blast resistant armored vehicle manufactured primarily for the United States Department of Defense,
- 6) Trident Technical College, and
- 7) *readySC*, the State of South Carolina's Technology and Training Program.

Program results have exceeded all partner expectations. For example, the detention center reports a 86% decrease in recidivism. A very important fact is that certified welders earn \$12-16 dollars per hour and an annual salary can yield up to \$45,000 when overtime is included as part of a certified welders income.

This innovative program offers a skill training that is certified, portable, and in high demand. The substantial wage provides the inmate with a livable and sustainable income. The intersection of these factors have created a brilliant solution for reducing the rate of recidivism in the local area while responding to filling the growing demand for trained welders.

Program Development

The program was designed to achieve four specific objectives. These objectives are as follows:

- Develop a public-private partnership,
- Create an opportunity for the detention center population to obtain a marketable skill, portable credential, long term employment, and a self sufficient wage,
- Establish a workforce system supported training program in response to

* 73 inmates attended the training. However, some were released from the detention center before the training commenced and were not considered in the wage and related calculations

- industry demand, and
- Create opportunities for regional employers to acquire and train workers from an untapped pool (detention center population).

The confluence of multiple facts were instrumental in solving the problem of finding and training a labor force that could be hired to fill the unmet and immediate need for skilled welders. The following issues needed to be addressed:

- 39 Regional businesses seeking trained welders,
- Projected need for more than 225 welders by December 2007,
- Current welder training programs at capacity,
- Manufacturers import skilled welders,
- Underutilized workforce available (inmates) but have barriers to employment.

Once the detention center was identified as the recruiting source for trainees, the lead manufacturing firm needed to agree to use this unconventional applicant pool. They were receptive to the idea and offered to provide company facilities for the training, a safe training environment, and materials throughout the training period with the promise of good wages and benefits to those students successfully completing the training.

It is important to note that many of these inmates have been incarcerated resulting from child support payment delinquencies. The irony of this scenario is that while they are jailed, they have no means of earning wages and therefore, their debt increases exponentially while behind bars. It is a vicious cycle and one that very few are able to break free from successfully. Another tremendous outcome of this program is that the company's payroll department has agreed to manage the financial details of garnering the wages to cover the court ordered child support payments for all applicable inmates. This ensures that families and children in the community are being cared for and breaks the cycle of recidivism for the employee.

Program Design

A key component of this innovative pre-release vocational training program rests with the contributions of the detention center. As such, their role includes the following:

- Assess inmate interest,
- Recruit inmates for training,
- Verify no history of violent crime,
- Evidenced recidivism rate (at least three times in/out of the detention center),
- Demonstration of work ethic by working in the detention center's kitchen,
- Eligible for work release status, and
- Provide transportation to the training/work location.

Implementation Process

The demand to find, train, and hire certified welders was critical. There was little time to implement traditional program development processes. For this program, the list of activities included:

- Meeting with detention center staff,

- Formulating a plan with private partner to train on-site,
- Identifying resources,
- Developing curriculum with the Technical College staff,
- Orientation/screening at detention center for inmates,
- Providing contingencies for recently released inmates,
- Process Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligibility and certification,
- Applicant screening and job postings with SC Employment Security Commission,
- Welding classroom and hands-on training, and
- Graduation and Career Fair.

The five week curriculum was designed to include topics such as:

- Job Expectations,
- Basic workplace safety,
- 150 hours flux core welder training,
- 30 hour per week class structure,
- Interactive trainer/trainee environment, and
- Employer observation period.

Investment Costs

As with any training program, there are costs incurred. However, when multiple partners are available, the costs can be shared. Dollar amounts invested for this program can be recorded as follows:

- WIA Investment \$167K
- readySC Investment \$41K in equipment
- Training space \$ 40K -private partner
- Material, equipment, & consumables \$42K
- Transportation to/from class & staff time from all partners

Program Results & Other Benefits

This program has been highly successful. Everyone wins. The inmates have a skill that is credentialed, portable, and provides a sustainable income. The outcome reduces the possibility of a return to a prison facility. To date, the rate of recidivism with program participants is less than fifteen percent. The company has access to a dedicated and motivated workforce that arrives promptly and ready to work thanks to the transportation provided by the correctional facility. The education system enrolls a population that has previously been underserved. The local One Stop Career System invests WIA funds to develop a trained workforce that will be hired to meet an industry demand.

Other program benefits include the following:

- Inmates renovated the training facility,
- \$161,280 paid in child support arrears,

- Children of inmates added to employer benefit plans,
- Reduced rate of recidivism,
- 7 females entered the training program, and completed training in non-traditional employment field,
- Only one inmate re-incarcerated for non-payment of child support after leaving employment.

Areas of Concern

As with any program, there are areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. Several issues have surfaced and need to be addressed. Specifically, they are as follows:

- Identify Trainees with job readiness needs and address those needs before training commences
- Strengthen relationship with inmates to encourage maintenance of relationship during training and after placement
- Diversify employer placement opportunities after training (avoid all eggs in one basket)
- Engage family court and enhance judicial involvement, i.e., tour training site, tour plants, and provide progress reports
- Prepare inmate for housing and transportation upon release,
- Promoting Support system (Father to Father and Second Chance)
- Life skill programs on topics of money management, parenting, counseling and additional education and training.

Conclusion

Overall, the program has met with great success. Three detention center classes have been conducted with special emphasis on attracting incarcerated females to nontraditional employment opportunities.

The education providers and the One Stop Career System responded quickly to fill an urgent need from regional employers. They identified inmates as a talent pool to train as welders. This was a creative solution for all partners.

This program serves as a model and can be replicated as a pre-release vocational training program that has a proven history of reducing the rate of recidivism, increasing the frequency of child support payments, and contributing to the local economy.

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Transformation Network:

Lowering Recidivism & Raising Employment for Ex-offenders

Daniel G. Phillip
Transformation Network

The Transformation Network was founded by Dan Phillip in 1999 as a faith-based non-profit organization providing a welfare-to-work program for women. It was noted that many of the women participating in this program were living with and/or had children with men who were frequently offenders or ex-offenders. In an effort to bring stability to the family unit and improve the quality of life for the entire community the Transformation Network moved from welfare-to-work efforts to ex-offender-to-work programs and began serving ex-offenders upon their release from prison and/or jail through the Liberty's Door ex-offender reentry program.

The faith-based organization has grown to specialize in two areas: job-to-career programs that improve the job retention rates within the manufacturing environment and the reduction of jail and prison recidivism rates for ex-offenders. Transformation Network has the only reentry approved programs in the Mansfield, Ohio, parole region (encompassing 15 counties) as designated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections for a Job-to-Career program and a Family Life Skills program. In the near future, only organizations with approved programs by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections will receive referrals from the State of Ohio.

The goal of Transformation Network is to help each ex-offender leave the lifestyle of life-repeating problems (i.e. drugs, out-of-wedlock births, alcoholism, unemployment, etc.) and to help the ex-offender understand that they can have an improved quality of life for themselves and their families. The Transformation Network has proven that recidivism rates are directly correlated to ex-offenders' ability to renew their minds. In other words, to train themselves to base decisions on the truth and facts of a matter instead of the feelings and lies associated with it.

LIFE SKILLS

Each ex-offender referred to the Transformation Network will participate in and satisfactorily complete the Life Skills component of the program; it is evident that once an ex-offender begins Life Skills they are able to maintain employment longer than in previous years (see Exhibit A). Life Skills utilizes the 20-25 hour computer-based training program *Targeting Success*. Participants may complete the training at their own pace, and will take pre- and post-tests for each of the eight sections which comprise *Targeting Success*.

After participants have completed the self-paced Targeting Success training they are then placed in a three-day class entitled *Transformational Life Skills Training* that will prepare them for job ready status. The purpose of the class is to expose the individual to a structured learning environment requiring punctuality and consistent attendance. Each segment of the *Transformational Life Skills Training* builds on previous segments; ex-offenders must successfully complete all five segments of the training. Career Direct Guidance Assessment and Financial Goals and Budgeting are also available to participants.

The Transformation Network's Liberty's Door Coordinator facilitates this component of the Liberty's Door process. Once a participant completes Life Skills the Liberty's Door Coordinator works with the Executive Director to place the ex-offender in the TNet-Works! workplace development program or into private employment with a local employer. It has been noted that when ex-offenders do not successfully complete the Life Skills training their job retention rates are well below 50%. Further, it has been observed that ex-offenders' ability to excel on the job coincides with their capacity to excel in their personal lives; therefore, Life Skills has proven to be the most beneficial component of the reentry process.

Targeting Success

Section One: Goal Setting

Participants will learn how to develop short-, mid-, and long-range goals in six areas of their lives: (1) health, (2) finances, (3) relationships, (4) recreation, (5) spiritual, and (6) work. After completion of this section individuals will have written goals to work on with a Transformation Network Aftercare Specialist.

Section Two: Resumes

Ex-offenders will develop different resumes for various job and career opportunities. Once this section has been completed the participant will have professional resumes to distribute to an array of employers.

Section Three: Job Search

Participants will learn how to be successful in searching for jobs and careers and in speaking with future employers about their felonies, convictions, and work history.

Section Four: Cover Letters & Applications

Ex-offenders will create cover letters to distribute along with the resumes they have generated and will learn how to complete an employment application containing the question: Have you had a felony within the past seven years?

Section Five: Interviewing Skills

Participants will watch mock interviews to learn how to properly present themselves to a potential employer for meaningful employment.

Section Six: Basic Personal Finance

Ex-offenders will learn what the cost of living is in the area in which they reside and how to budget their earnings.

Section Seven: Saving and Investing

Participants will learn how to save and invest for short-, mid-, and long-range financial goals.

Section Eight: Community Networking

Ex-offenders will learn the importance of networking with people and organizations to obtain meaningful employment.

Transformational Life Skills Training

Segment One: Paradigm Shifts

This segment equips ex-offenders with the ability to change the way they think. Following this segment they will clearly see that two people view the same problems in life, but view them differently. Further, participants will solve problems individually and collectively. *Paradigm Shifts* is the cornerstone of transforming an ex-offender's belief that there are no good opportunities available for felons.

Segment Two: Priority Management

This segment works with the concept of time management but from the perspective of priority management. The ex-offender quickly learns that time can be managed to produce an effective life or one that is highly unproductive. If one invests in the wrong priorities, no time management techniques will improve that person's quality of life. Each participant is required to develop priorities and action steps that will be followed and directed by Transformation Network Liberty's Door Coordinators and Aftercare Specialists.

Segment Three: Discovering the Genius Within

Each ex-offender participating in this section will identify their God-given passions. Through techniques, activities, and conversations in the class each participant will build their action plans. Participants will learn that passion overcomes one's lack of skills, education, and talent.

Segment Four: Mission Statements

Each participant will develop and memorize a personal mission statement. This statement will create focus and add clarity to their day. Individuals are taught that a mission statement should be one sentence and can be recited at any time and in any given situation. There are three components to each mission statement: *Impact Value(s)*, *Action Word(s)*, and *Whom You Want to Serve*. Participants must be able to recite their mission statement by memory before graduating from this training class.

Segment Five: Communication Skills

Ex-offenders will learn that the essence of communication is going out of their way to fully understand the other person before they themselves should try to be

understood. Focus is placed on three forms of communication: verbal, voice tones, and body language.

Career Direct

Career Direct Guidance Assessment: Career Interest and Educational Requirements will produce a 30-page report on career matches, career action plans, personality matches with careers, and educational requirements for appropriate career matches.

Financial Goals and Budgeting

Participants will have the opportunity to complete a budget based on needs and then a budget based on potential jobs available to the ex-offender.

LIBERTY'S DOOR

Since implementing job-to-career programs in 2004 the ex-offenders coming through the Liberty's Door program have achieved nearly a 70% job placement and retention rate. Currently, there are Liberty's Door programs in the following Ohio counties: Ashland, Huron, and Erie. Transformation Network is contracted by the Department of Job and Family Services within each of these counties to provide employment training, education, job placement, and job retention services. In May 2006, Liberty's Door was selected as a *Best Practice* program in Huron County, Ohio.

Liberty's Door is a multifaceted approach to a complicated issue—transforming an ex-offender into a productive, law-abiding citizen. Liberty's Door approaches this daunting task with a process of development and a plan to reduce recidivism rates, increase both job placement and retention rates, and improve the quality of life for the ex-offender and the community in which the individual resides (see Exhibit B). Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the ex-offenders who effectively complete the Liberty's Door process are placed in positions of employment and nearly 70% of those individuals retain their jobs for at least 1 year. To achieve our low recidivism rate of less than 15% and high job retention rates of at least 65% each ex-offender must successfully complete all phases of Liberty's Door as described below.

Liberty's Door: Phases of Reentry

1. Any agency, organization, church, business, or individual may refer an ex-offender to the reentry program as long as the proper forms are completed and then mailed, delivered in person, faxed, or e-mailed to Transformation Network.
2. The applicant will be contacted for an interview with a representative of Transformation Network. The referring agent may participate in the meeting if deemed appropriate.
3. Following the interview, the individual will receive notification whether acceptance into the program has been granted. A class schedule will be distributed at that time.

4. Ex-offenders entering Liberty's Door will be held accountable for promptness, attendance, and participation in classes and must complete all required assignments. Failure to comply with the above-mentioned tasks may result in dismissal. Participants may reapply without the guarantee of admission.
5. Workbooks containing all the information and materials needed to complete Liberty's Door will then be distributed to participants.
6. A graduation ceremony will occur on the last day of class and each participant will receive a certificate of completion with a reference letter from Transformation Network.
7. An opportunity to attend a job fair following the end of class sessions will be provided for individuals who satisfactorily complete assignments.
8. After completing the pre-employment process the individual will be placed in job ready status; concurrently, Transformation Network job developers will work with local employers to place graduates in appropriate positions of employment.
9. Graduates will continue to receive support from a Transformation Network mentor and job coach in their endeavor to secure employment and improve their quality of life.

TNET-WORKS!

The TNet-Works! workplace development program provides ex-offenders with the opportunity to secure a career with a private employer. Individuals successfully completing Life Skills may be eligible for placement in TNet-Works! On-the-job development through TNet-Works! affords ex-offenders the opportunity to learn respect for authority and accept the daily responsibilities of their job and family needs. This is primarily accomplished by working in an authentic job setting.

Transformation Network contracts with manufacturers to package their products; in turn, as many as 15-20 ex-offenders at any given time are employed through TNet-Works! Participants package automotive components or handle items in a powder coating factory to obtain work experience. This real-world job functions as a work skills and people skills development laboratory. The recidivism rates for individuals completing this program are less than 8% in most instances (see Exhibit C), due greatly to the efforts of the Transformation Network Aftercare Specialists who meet with employed graduates up to three times per week to continue their mental, emotional, and spiritual development.

While working at a designated worksite participants are evaluated weekly in a number of areas (attitude, relationship building skills, timeliness, initiative, and flexibility); participants may attain a maximum score of 25. Individuals reaching a score of 21 or higher achieve *Core Group Status*, and obtain a financial bonus of up to 12% of their weekly earnings. If a participant attains *Core Group Status* for six consecutive weeks he or she will qualify for the next level within TNet-Works!—potential for placement with one of the private employers that have partnered with Transformation Network (the private employer typically provides a higher wage than Tnet-Works! as well as benefits). In contrast, if a participant does not achieve *Core*

Group Status that person may face suspension and will be asked to attend learning sessions with an Aftercare Specialist before allowance into the TNet-Works! program is granted once again.

Participants who have achieved *Core Group Status* a total of nine times in a 12 week period have been referred to the Reineke Company, Inc; Pinnacle Powder Coating, Inc.; J. H. Routh Packaging Company; Busch and Thiem, Inc.; Septic Products, Inc.; as well as other employers. Transformation Network has been successful in placing ex-offenders in full-time employment and helping them to retain their position with the employer (see Exhibit C). To date, more than 75 ex-offenders have obtained work through TNet-Works!; 69% of those placed into positions of employment are still working.

Further, Transformation Network has started its second workplace development program in partnership with Pinnacle Powder Coating, Inc. Ex-offenders in Huron County, Ohio, who are considered job ready, may be eligible for the program. At present, Transformation Network has placed 16 ex-offenders in this program and 11 are still employed—a 69% job retention level.

CNC MACHINING TRAINING

Transformation Network focuses on obtaining jobs and careers for ex-offenders in the manufacturing sector. This employment sector is one of the largest employers in the 15-county Mansfield Parole region. Manufacturers around the country are unable to find an ample supply of people willing to work in manufacturing, particularly in CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) machining. The Transformation Network has developed a CNC machining training program in Erie County, Ohio, for ex-offenders.

It has been observed that once ex-offenders acquire a usable skill their job retention rates increase. Participants who consistently maintain their employment in the TNet-Works! workplace development program in Huron and Erie counties will qualify for this 12-week CNC machining training program. Transformation Network has partnered with a local career training center to have this program exclusively designed for ex-offenders. Participants will receive a certificate of completion honored by manufacturers employing CNC operators. Once participants complete this training they will be placed in employment with a local manufacturer upon three weeks following graduation earning an hourly wage of \$11-15. Transformation Network will train 12 CNC operators per year.

AFTERCARE

Aftercare is the final step in the process of transformation. Transformation Network Aftercare Specialists meet with participants of the TNet-Works! workplace development program up to three times per week. In addition, while participants endeavor to secure employment with a private employer they may utilize a 12-Step program modeled after the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, one-on-one mentoring, General Education Development classes, and support groups available through Transformation Network.

EXHIBIT A – Transformation Network Job Retention Rates

County Category	Ashland	Erie	Huron	Totals	%
Job Ready Participants	38	26	55	119	
Employed after Job Ready	25	17	40	82	69%
Job Retention	19	12	25	56	68%

EXHIBIT B – Three County Compilation of Liberty’s Door Data since August

2004

Ohio Counties	Ashland	Erie	Huron	Totals
Ex-offenders enrolled in Liberty’s Door work programs	80	117	152	349
Ex-offenders moving into job ready status	38	26	55	119
Ex-offenders placed in employment after job ready status	25	17	39	81
Percent of ex-offenders employed after placement in employment	66%	66%	71%	68%
Ex-offenders retaining employment	19	12	24	55
Percentage of ex-offenders retaining their employment	76%	71%	62%	68%
Recidivism rates for ex-offenders retaining their employment	6%	12%	8%	8%
Dollars put back into communities where ex-	\$293,930	\$194,551	\$345,821	\$834,302

offenders live				
Payroll taxes generated through ex-offenders payroll	\$51,870	\$34,332	\$61,027	\$147,229
Child support dollars generated yearly by ex-offenders	\$10,140	\$22,568	\$39,208	\$71,916
Dollars saved by the State of Ohio for recidivism rate reduction	\$792,000	\$506,000	\$1,122,000	\$2,420,000

EXHIBIT C – Tnet-Works! Data

Category	Ex-offenders
Total number of ex-offenders completing TNet-Works! since 2006	38
Total number of ex-offenders moved into employment with private employers after TNet-Works!	25
Percentage of ex-offenders moving into employment outside of TNet-Works!	66%
Total number of ex-offenders retaining their jobs after being placed in outside employment	19
Percentage of ex-offenders retaining their jobs after being placed in outside employment	76%
Recidivism rate of ex-offenders who are placed in outside employment	6%
Dollars saved by the State of Ohio for reducing recidivism rates (based on \$22,000 per person per year to incarcerate 35 ex-offenders not returning to prison)	\$770,000.00

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Dramatically Reducing Recidivism Through Long Term Participation in a Faith Based Program: The Story of Welcome Home Ministries

Objectives

- To share the development of Welcome Home Ministries (WHM)
- To describe community based participatory action research
- To present the comprehensive program and fundamental markers of success

Development of WHM

- Chaplain begins service at Vista Detention Facility
 - Incarceration model developed and needs identified
 - Nurse Colleague – National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) funded post doctoral fellowship in community based interventions
- HEALTH PROMOTING ORGANIZATIONS MODEL:
INTERVENTION LEVELS WITHIN AN ECOLOGICAL
FRAMEWORK

Early Research with Welcome Home Ministries

- A community faith-based program for women released from jail or prison
- Goals:
 - Fully develop WHM as a Health Promoting Organization
 - Implement interventions to support their successful transition to the community
- Initial Methodology: Community Based Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action Research

- Definitions
 - “Action research is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and member of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation.” (Greenwood and Levin, 1998)
 - “Collaborative approach to inquiry that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems.” (Stringer, 1996)

Desirable Future: Create

PAR 1999 Participants and Action Plans

- Participants
 - 21 Formerly Incarcerated Women and 5 Community Volunteers
- Action Plans
 - Programs - Jail Visits & Follow-ups
 - Transportation - Sponsored Rides
 - Housing - Sponsored Housing

Community Awareness - Presentations
External Resources - Legal
Fund Raising – Events

Key Outcomes

- 18 (85.7 %)
- Created Healthy Lives
- Participated in Peer Leadership Roles in WHM
- Have not Returned to Jail/Prison
- 16 (76%) Serve as Peer Program Leaders

Early Lessons Learned

- Through Participatory Action Research Women Released from Jail
- Addressed Real Life Problems
- Constructed Meanings in the Inquiry Process that led to Social Action
- Achieved Remarkable Group and Individual Level Accomplishments
- Credibility/Validity & Usefulness
- “Credibility/Validity of the action research knowledge is measured according to whether actions that arise from it solve problems (workability) and increase participants’ control over their own situation” (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 105)
- Results Demonstrate the Usefulness of Action Research with Vulnerable Populations

Source: Parsons ML. Health promoting organizations: A systems model for advanced practice. *Holistic Nursing Practice*. 1999;3(4); 80-89.
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WHM Development: Next Steps

- Incorporation
- Grants
- Successful Community Outreach
- Successful Collaboration with Department of Labor and Health and Human Services
- Two WHM Offices and Comprehensive Program

Current WHM Peer Led Programs, and Roles

- Peer Reentry Coordinators
- Community Peer Case Managers
- Peer Mentors
- Peer Led Support Teams
- Community Outreach Teams
- Prison Chaplains

Fundamental Markers of Success

- Key Peer Leaders since 1999
 - Program has collected data from October 1, 2004 through September 28, 2007
 - 315 women entered into the data base
 - 233 women of the original N were contacted during a six month follow-up
 - At the time 1.4% reported using substances, and
 - 3.5% had some involvement with the criminal justice system
- The Participants' Future Plan November 3, 2007

Selected Publications

Parsons, M.L., Warner-Robbins, C. (2002). Factors That Support Women's Successful Transition to the Community Following Jail/Prison. *Health Care for Women International*, 23(6), 6-18.

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