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Agenda Overview

- Meet the Presenters
- Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Overview
- Model Practice Document
- Partnership Building
- Partnership Building: Putting it Into Practice
- Partnership Building: Getting Started
- Open Q & A
Meet the Presenters

- **Hilary Cuthrell (PhD)**, Correction Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections
- **Trina Sexton**, Warden York Correctional Institution Connecticut Department of Correction
- **Nancy Correa (DrPH)**, Practice Administrator, Public Health Pediatrics-Texas Children's Hospital
- **Pajarita Charles (PhD)**, Assistant Professor, Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work-University of Wisconsin-Madison
Share with Us!
An Estimated....

2.3 Million People Incarcerated

2.7 Million Children Affected by Parental Incarceration
Model Practices For Parents in Prisons and Jails  

1. Partnership Building  
2. Training & Core Competencies  
3. Intake & Assessment  
4. Family Notification & Information Provision  
5. Classes and Groups  
6. Visitor Lobbies  
7. Visiting  
8. Parent-Child Communication  
9. Caregiver Support  
10. Family-Focused Reentry

Partnership Building & Innovative Practices

What do we mean by partnership building and innovative practices?

Identifying various types of partnerships to assist in implementing innovative practices to keep children connected with their incarcerated parents.
Partnership Building: Share with us!

- Why is partnership building important for your facility/organization/affiliation?

- What types of support would be helpful for your facility to receive through collaborative partnerships?

- Do you have some examples of current partnerships in place to support parent-child contact and communication?
Partnership Building

*Developing core partnerships with external entities is necessary for instituting and maintaining successful, comprehensive practices for parents in your facility!*

- Correctional staff will play a large role in establishing, overseeing, and carrying out these practices, but it is unreasonable to expect them to implement each one alone.
- Engage with local organizations and institutions and government agencies
Partnership Building

Consider having the following in place before building partnerships:

✓ Knowledge of community-based organizations, local institutions, or government agencies that would be valuable partners

✓ Participation in local collaboratives or coalitions of justice-related agencies and community organizations (e.g., reentry coalitions, working groups, task forces)

✓ Resources to execute contracts and agreements with service-providing organizations
Partnership Building: Identifying Potential Partners

Your facility may be able to partner with many types of organizations, institutions, and government agencies or entities, including:

Community-based Organizations
Local institutions
Local government agencies and entities
Working Groups
• Building Partnerships and Implementing Innovative Practices: Putting it Into Action!
Needs Assessment Components

- Literature review
- Data collection through the jail intake form
- Key stakeholder interviews
Key findings

• 50% of incarcerated individuals in the Harris County Jail have at least one child under the age of 18
• 7% of children in Harris County have a parent that spends time in Harris County Jail each year—92,000 children
• 61% provided all or most of the money to support the child(ren)
• 62% of incarcerated parents lived with their child prior to the arrest
• 92% of incarcerated parents had been to prison or jail before
Interview Themes

- Basic needs
- Emotional support
- Knowledge & communication
- Jail and prison practices that are more sensitive to children
- Pervasive cycle of incarceration

“The [correctional officers] are rude and it makes you not want to go... it makes you feel incarcerated so we stopped visiting.”
Recommendations

• Programs and services
• Screening, identification, and referrals
• Education and information
• Child-sensitive practices
• Visitation

Results

- Improvements in the visitation check-in process
- Child-friendly spaces in the lobbies
- Parenting classes for incarcerated and pregnant mothers
- Resource fairs
- Special events with contact visitation
- Partnership with Public Defender’s Office
- Expansion of services for children with incarcerated parents
Partnership Building: Putting it Into Practice

Pajarita Charles, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Developing & Implementing the Partnership

- Collective effort with interested parties
  - Dane County Jail
  - UW-Madison
    - Social Work
    - UW-Extension

- NIC Family Connections pilot site (2018)

- Goal
  - Develop and implement family-focused practices and parenting skills programming (e.g., Parenting Inside Out)
Bringing Parenting Classes to the Jail

- Regular planning meetings
- Curriculum & supplies selection, training, budgeting
- Student intern to assist with preparation
- Develop program documents (e.g., attendance sheets, screener)
- Child-friendly visits
Evaluation and Monitoring

- Observed classes and offered feedback on fidelity
- Attended weekly meetings with “parent coaches” (social workers) to problem solve and offer support
- Developed pre- and post-test evaluation tools
“...I was under the impression that there wasn’t much that I could learn because I felt like I was a great parent already.”

“Some of the skills I had already been using as a parent, but many of the skills were new to me or skills that I would never used before”

“You see in many cases parents are arrested without any warning. It could be a few hours after making their child breakfast, a day after they played at the park together, the morning after reading a book to them at bedtime. In either case, to a child it could seem like the parent just left them out of nowhere.”

“You see, from the time of a parents arrest until they are actually sent to prison, if that is the case, it could be months, even years, before the parent can physically bond with their child. For that reason, these contact visits mean more than you could ever imagine to our families.”

-Incarcerated Father, Dane County Jail
Expansions

- New county funded Family Connections Social Worker position (!)
- Criminal Justice Certificate interns (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- Child-friendly video visits (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- Grant proposals
- Parenting program pathways (e.g., community and in WI prisons)
Partnership Building: Putting it Into Practice

Trina Sexton, Warden York Correctional Institution Connecticut Department of Correction (Willard Cybulski)
Partnership Building: Putting it Into Practice

At Cybulski, the last stop for incarcerated individuals before they reach their release dates, the visiting room has been repainted green and pink and the incarcerated men are creating a giant mural of a white birch tree.

The visiting space will be stocked with toys and games. Officers are receiving training on how to interact with young children and teenagers to create a more welcoming environment and the incarcerated men are taking parenting classes.
Visiting Space: Before
Visiting Space: After
Family Dance and Visiting Enhancements-Laying the Framework

• 2015-shift in correctional philosophy
• Cybulski Community Reintegration Center
  ▫ Pathways-Health/wellness, recovery, educational/vocational, faith-based, Veterans, reintegration, family reunification, etc.
• Partnerships vital to linking incarcerated persons to pre-release programs and services and post-release supports.
  ▫ Reductions in recidivism, intergenerational criminality
Family Dance and Visiting-Building
Internal Partnerships

Staff

• Facility culture
• Staff training: three-prong approach to focusing on families
  • Understanding how incarceration affects family and children (trauma, stress, stigma, etc.)
  • Facility safety, public safety
  • New staff
• Involvement in the design and implementation
Family Dance and Visiting-Building
External Partnerships

- **State Agencies**
  - Office of Early Childhood, Department of Children and Families, Department of Social Services

- **Academic Institutions and Initiatives**
  - CT Children of Incarcerated Parents (through Institute of Municipal and Regional Policy through Central CT State University.)

- **Community Organizations and Non-profits**
  - Judy Dworin Performance Project
  - Community Partners in Action
Family Dance and Visiting-Building External Partnerships, cont.

- Incarcerated Parents
  - Focus groups
  - Painting of visiting room
- Members of the Community
  - Former justice involved individuals
- Critical partnerships for sustainability
  - Governor, CT legislature
  - Agency leadership
Partnership Building: Consider Your Role

How might correctional staff participate in the partnership?

Things to consider:
- How can you create staff buy-in?
- Which staff is best situated to assist—and when?
- How can you create continuous involvement?
Types of Partnerships: Getting Started!

Once you have determined the scope of your partnerships, it is important to consider the specific nature of the partnerships you would like to develop:

- **Informal partnerships.** These partnerships may include a working knowledge of outside entities and a willingness to share resources in support of instituting family-centered practices.

- **Formal partnerships.** These partnerships may include specific service, funding, and/or data sharing agreements, along with memorandums of understanding. Formality may allow for quantifying or measuring service delivery and partnership engagements by holding partners accountable and standardizing practices.
Day to Day: Getting Started!

Maintaining collaborative partnerships may involve the following...

- Meeting regularly
- Articulating expectations, roles, responsibilities, and resources on an ongoing basis
- Sharing resources including information, knowledge, expertise, and trainings
- Engaging partners in decision making and direction setting when appropriate
- Reviewing progress
Partnership Building & Innovative Practices- A Quick Assessment

• What can you take away from this webinar and use **tomorrow** in your work?
• What else do you **want to learn**? (what will you do a Google search on?)
• What **challenges** do you foresee to your ability to effectively execute the suggestions outlined in this webinar?
• What **resources or policies** do you need in place to help you implement the suggestions outlined in this webinar?
Questions?

Please submit your questions in the Webex chat!
Contact Us!

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Thank you!

- Thank you for your participation today! Please visit the National Institute of Correction’s website for more information about additional trainings and webinars.

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