

Incarceration, Reentry and Family Support

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Reentry Needs

- Employment
- Housing
- Medical care
- Family reunification
- Reintegration-meaningful life, part of a family and community

Reentry and Family Support

- Family provides a sense of belonging (Hairston, 1988; Martinez & Christian, 2009)
- Generates social capital (Wolff & Draine, 2004)
- Buffers material hardship (Harding et al., 2014; Western et al., 2015)
- Exceeds expectations for support (Naser & La Vigne, 2006)

Broader Study

- Key domains of reentry experience
 - Neighborhood connections
 - Incarceration experiences
 - Early release, later release
 - Family relationships
 - Support networks
 - Resiliency strategies and practices

Current Focus

- Mapping family support
 - Complexity of relationships
 - Highly dynamic
 - Expectations of reciprocity
 - Agency and the negotiation of support
 - Intersections with other needs

Participants

- 21 African American Males
- Ages 22-55
- Incarceration length ranged from 2 months to 15 years
- 62% released for less than one year, 38% released for over one year

Familial Support Contexts

- Support Available, Offered and Accepted
- Navigating Support Options
- Limited Support Options

Support Available, Offered and Accepted

I feel as though she, she been asked me to move with her since I was incarcerated. She said she help me with a lot of things. Help me find a job, help me get on my feet. At first I ain't want to when I first got out, and I feel as though I could do everything on my own, that I ain't need no help with some things, like and then I feel as though I was surrounding myself with the same people when I first came out so I just feel as though I needed to get away. (Tony, 2 years incarcerated, released for 3.5 months)

Navigating Support Options

I'm staying here, and I staying there. I'm not stable right now. I'm staying at a friend's house, sister, relative houses, like that. I'm back and forth. It's only been two weeks, so they ain't tired of me yet. Once you get thirty days, sixty days, the like 'oh, you aint' find a job yet?' You know how it go. (Dante, 7.5 years incarcerated, released 2 weeks)

Limited Support Options

I never really had a strong network, you know. My family's there, but they're all trying to make a way for themselves. I don't want to put a strain on her (his sister) with that relationship. We have a pretty good relationship, and I think I can do things on my own, but you know, unfortunately it means I have to go through the system. I have to, you know, work my way up. (Greg, 10 months incarcerated, released for 4 months)

Future Directions and Policy Implications

- Examine distinctions by relationship type
 - Romantic attachments in unique category
- Family members and connectedness
 - Implications for their own support networks
- Capturing family perspective and experiences
- Developing family supports that do not increase surveillance and control

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