Strengthening Relationships and Families Following Incarceration
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STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES FOLLOWING INCARCERATION

Operator:
Good day, everyone, and welcome to the Strengthening Relationships and Families Following Incarceration conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, it is my pleasure to turn the conference over to Andrea Strahan. Please go ahead.

Andrea Strahan:
Thanks so much, and hello everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families webinar entitled "Strengthening Relationships and Families Following Incarceration." My name is Andrea Strahan and I'm part of the Resource Center team. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today, and before we get started with the presentation there are a few housekeeping items I'd like to go over.

WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS
Andrea Strahan:
The audio for today's webinar will be broadcast through your computer speakers. Please make sure that the volume on your computer speakers is turned up so that you can hear the presentation.

WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS
Andrea Strahan:
New featured resources that will be discussed in today's webinar are available for you to download from the pod in the top right corner of your screen, designated with the word "Files." Please click the name of the file you wish to view and then the download button to open or save a copy of the resource to your computer.

The resources and videos shown today will also be available on our website www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org.

We'll be taking questions at the end of the presentation, but we encourage you to submit any questions that you have throughout the duration of the webinar. To do this, find the "Question and Answer" pod designated by the letters "Q&A" in the bottom right portion of your screen. Type your question into the open field at the bottom and then click the "Send question" button or press "Enter." You'll receive an automatic reply thanking you for your question and your question will be forwarded to the moderator. A recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a question and answer document will be posted to the “Past Events Archive” of our web site, www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org under the "Training, Technical Assistance, and Events" tab.
PRESENTERS

Andrea Strahan:
Our speakers today will be Robyn Cenizal, Project Director for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families; Chris Warland, Manager of Program Quality and Technical Assistance at the National Transitional Jobs Network; and Geneva Rodriguez, Surveillance Officer in Maricopa County Adult Probation in Mesa, Arizona. So with that, I will go ahead and turn the call over to Robyn Cenizal, Project Director here at the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. Robyn?

WEBINAR AGENDA

Robyn Cenizal:
Thanks, Andrea. And thank you all for joining us for today's presentation. We're excited today to have with us Chris Warland, who is the lead author on "Healthy Relationships, Employment, and Reentry," a research-to-practice brief recently published by the Resource Center. He will be sharing highlights from the newly published brief and providing insights on the interrelated effects of relationships, employment, and reentry. Chris will be followed by Geneva Rodriguez from Maricopa County Adult Probation. Geneva attended an Integration Institute hosted by the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families last year. She joins us today to share lessons from Maricopa County, the importance of prison reentry planning for families, and employment strategies. After Geneva, I'll return to you to tell you a little bit more about the Resource Center and how we can support stakeholders like Geneva and you in your efforts to be more -- more holistically serve families. I'll also show a brief video and then we'll open the floor for questions and answers. As Andrea mentioned, you can type your questions in the grey box to the right of your screen throughout the presentation and she will facilitate the Q&A at the end of the presentation. You can ask general questions or you can direct your questions to a specific presenter if you prefer.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR HEALTHY MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES

Robyn Cenizal:
So let me start by telling you a little bit about the Resource Center for those of you who may be joining us for the first time. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families is funded by the Office of Family Assistance and managed by ICF International. Our mission is connecting healthy marriage education skills and safety-net services as an integrated approach to strengthening families.

SAFETY-NET SERVICE PROVIDERS

Robyn Cenizal:
So when we talk about safety net services, we use the term to refer to Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies such as those listed in the diagram, including child support, child welfare, Head Start, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, better known as TANF, as well as Workforce Investment Boards and their community partners. As you can also see in the diagram, healthy marriage education skills include interpersonal skills such as communication and conflict resolution, along with critical skills such parenting and financial literacy. Although the Resource Center -- oops -- went too far, I apologize. Although the Resource Center supports a broad group of
stakeholders we recognize the need for targeted products that speak directly to the needs and nuances of specific stakeholder groups or special populations such as the research-to-practice brief highlighted here today. This brief is available on our website and can also be downloaded from the grey box to the right of your screen. With that brief overview, I'd like to welcome Chris so he can tell us more. Chris?

THE INTERRELAT TED EFFECTS OF RELATIONSHIPS, EMPLOYMENT, AND REENTRY

Chris Warland:

Thanks very much, Robyn. My name is Chris Warland and I'm with the National Transitional Jobs Network. I'd like to start off just telling you a little bit about the Network and what we do. The National Transitional Jobs Network is a national coalition of program providers, policy advocates, researchers, government officials, and other stakeholders who have an interest in supporting employment solutions for the chronically unemployed and people who face barriers to employment, specifically through subsidized employment and transitional jobs programming. We do that by performing policy advocacy and also by providing assistance to the employment services field in the form of creating papers and briefs and other resources, providing direct assistance and consultation to employment programs, and building coalitions to support effective programming. So, if you have any further questions about the NTJN or if you'd like to access some of our other resources or sign up for our electronic newsletter or contact me directly, you can do all of that through our web site, which is www.TransitionalJobs.net. So, thanks very much for that.

NEW PUBLICATION

Chris Warland:

So the new publication that we're talking about today really explores all of the interrelations between healthy relationships, employment and economic opportunity, and successful reentry into communities from incarceration. The way this paper was put together, we really looked at both what we could learn from the research evidence and the academic literature as well as what we could learn from the experiences of effective program providers that are currently working to integrate services to address all of these interrelated factors. So we have both a section that really kind of delves into the research evidence, everything that we could learn from program evaluations, experimental studies, and other academic resources and then we interviewed a number of providers and asked them for their anecdotal experiences and what they've observed in their programming about how these factors interrelate and then to provide some really concrete, actionable, useful programming recommendations for other providers or organizations that are looking for a way to deliver programming that really leverages some of these positive relationships that we discovered throughout the course of developing the paper.

FATHERHOOD, RELATIONSHIP, AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMING

Chris Warland:

So one of the things that we should probably do to kick this off is just to define the -- these related fields that we're talking about and there are a lot of providers that exist sort of solely within one of these areas of service delivery and there are others that
encompass all of them to some degree. But healthy relationship programming primarily focuses on helping individuals develop healthy relationship skills and those skills can include things like commitment, conflict resolution, establishing safety within relationships, effective parenting and coparenting, and in some cases, financial health and financial literacy in order to support healthy relationships and, in many cases, marriage. Fatherhood programming is very similar. It supports fathers’ involvement and engagement with their children, as well as healthy relationships with an individual’s coparent and in many cases, the children’s biological mother, assistance with learning how to provide financial support, emotional support, as well as acting as a role model for one’s children. And then employment programming, we’re talking specifically today about employment programming that serves people with barriers to employment or who are chronically unemployed or disconnected from the labor market and that really is designed to help them to not just find work, but be successful and advance within the competitive labor market and that can include services like job search assistance, help with placement or referrals for interviews, training and skill development including soft skills like personal interaction, getting along with co-workers, getting along with supervisors, punctuality, things like that, as well as hard skills including occupation-specific skills or transferrable skills that can be applied in the workplace. And then finally, supportive services to help people remain successful and stay in the workforce, including supportive services that range from things like transportation and child care assistance all the way up to substance abuse and mental health assistance, and incorporating other things like access to tools, appropriate clothing, clothing for interviews, things like that.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND EMPLOYMENT

Chris Warland:

And we really wanted to look at how all of these fields could provide integrated services in order to leverage some of the benefits that we saw and some of the relationships that we saw between these various factors. And then we really did, as we looked at the research literature, discover that there were very strong connections between all of these factors.

So beginning with healthy relationships and employment. We found very strong relationships between economic opportunity and employment and advancement and earned income and the health of relationships. And we found, as we did with all of these factors, that the relationship works both ways. So, healthy relationships really have a positive impact on employment outcomes and employment and earned income and economic stability have a really strong, positive impact on healthy relationships. So, for example, some of the key findings that we discovered: married men and fathers who were engaged with their children work more hours and earn more money than men that are not married or not in serious relationships, or men that are not engaged with their children. So, we really believe that being engaged with your children as a father or being, you know, married or in a committed relationship, really compels individuals to work more; that they feel that, you know, that level of responsibility that comes with, you know, being engaged with your families really kind of serves as an incentive to work more hours, earn more money, to advance in the workforce. And the converse is also true, that men who are not in serious relationships and men who are not engaged with
their children have a tendency to be less economically stable, to work less, and to earn less money. So, this is a relationship again that we see going both ways. And higher earnings and economic stability are really correlated with marriage and healthy relationships as well. So that means that, for example, as couples earn more income and become more economically stable, they're more likely to get married. And the opposite is also true: as couples' economic stability and earned income go down, they become less likely to be married. So that we find in general that poverty and economic instability can serve as deterrents to marriage.

We also found that economic stability and employment and increased earnings really have an impact on the health of relationships; the more economic stability there is in a relationship, the more stable and healthy that relationship is because as economic stressors impact relationships, they have a tendency to destabilize those relationships and make the individuals in those relationships, you know, less satisfied with the relationship. We also found really strong relationships among non-custodial fathers if they're employed and providing economic support and meeting their obligations, they have better relationships with their children and better relationships with their children's mothers. And we found that, you know, the researchers speculate -- and this is something that we heard from program providers as well -- that by providing the economic support and meeting the obligations to their families, it allows fathers to have more access to their children and also to have stronger relationships with the mothers of their children.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND REENTRY

Chris Warland:

So we found also that there was a really strong relationship between strong, healthy relationships and successful reentry into communities after incarceration. Of course, a lot of what we saw in the literature indicated that there were, you know, lots of negative impacts on families, relationships, and children associated with incarceration. We also looked into the number of incarcerated mothers and found that there was an especially negative impact on relationships and children when mothers are incarcerated. But the good news is that all of these factors that we're talking about -- marriage, strong relationships, strong family relationships -- are really protective factors and help with successful reentry from incarceration. So if you've got stronger relationships, if you're more engaged with your family, if you receive more family support, all of these things are having really significant impacts on your successful transition out of incarceration, including things like, you know, people self-report fewer new crimes committed, less drug use, and fewer technical violations of parole. And these are all associated with these strong family relationships. People exiting prison often report family relationships and family support as the number one factor in helping them to stay out of prison, to remain crime-free and to not recidivate. So, that's quite often one of the most important things.

Another thing that is worth mentioning here that is not on the slide is that not only do we find that the healthier relationships and family support play a really strong role in helping people successfully transition out of prison, but we find that programming that has the goal of strengthening family relationships—so family counseling, family reconciliation,
and other programming that’s aimed at strengthening those relationships—also has a positive impact on successful reentry from incarceration. So, not only is there a positive correlation, but programming intended to build and strengthen these relationships does have a positive impact on an individual’s ability to successfully reenter communities from incarceration.

CHILD SUPPORT, EMPLOYMENT, AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Chris Warland:

We also really looked a lot at child support and how child support enforcement and child support obligations are interrelated with employment and healthy relationships and family relationships. One thing that we found -- and this is something that we hear all the time from lots of providers that work primarily with non-custodial parents -- is that strict child support enforcement alone can have some unintended consequences and some negative impacts on marriage, on a parent’s willingness to coparent with the other parent of their children. It has the potential to have negative impacts on relationships with children, and in some cases, can provide some obstacles to accessing employment. So, these are all kind of negative impacts that are associated with just enforcement alone.

The good news is that we saw that providing assistance with employment and access to employment can have a really positive impact on an individual’s employment, an individual's ability and you know, the actual outcomes of them being able to meet their obligations to their families and, in turn, can help improve things like engagement with one’s children and things like that. So, even though enforcement alone can sometimes act as a deterrent to some of these positive outcomes, by offering access to employment you can kind of turn the tables and really start to see some positive impacts that include both an individual's ability to meet their obligations and meet their own needs and work more and earn more income and as a result, strengthen some of those relationships.

And we really are seeing that both at the Federal level and at the State level in many States, that we're seeing an important shift toward helping non-custodial parents to meet their obligations in part through access to employment programming.

Also, there are some really important things happening around the way child support is treated with regard to people who are incarcerated in the past and still is the case in some States where incarceration will be regarded as voluntary unemployment and so, an individual, while they're incarcerated, has this experience of having these arrearages accrue so that by the time they exit prison they have really unsustainable amounts of child support arrearages that they don't really have a chance of paying off. And so, there are some really important changes happening in some states. For example, California, the State of New York, Oregon, Massachusetts, all allow for the suspension or the modification of child support orders while a non-custodial parent is incarcerated and you know, in recognition of the fact that somebody who is incarcerated just can't continue to stay current with their orders because they're not earning any income. Other states that are really rolling out some innovative outreach and education efforts for non-custodial parents who are incarcerated and that includes States like Connecticut, Michigan, Washington state, New Jersey, that -- that have outreach programs to incarcerated parents to really help them understand what their options are and to provide them with some assistance in meeting their obligations once they exit prison. And there also -- there's a series of grants to State child support agencies that are being implemented
now through the Office of Child Support Enforcement to help those agencies develop employment services programming for non-custodial parents to help them to, once again, meet their obligations, meet their own basic needs, and earn income and advance in the workforce.

LESSONS FROM PRACTITIONERS

Chris Warland:
So when we talk to practitioners -- and these are all things that we learned from our review of the literature and then once we finished that literature review, we ended up interviewing a lot of practitioners who we knew were successfully integrating services to help to leverage and take advantage of some of these positive relationships between healthy relationships, successful reentry, child support, fatherhood, etc. And what we found is that everything that the practitioners told us really closely mirrored what we learned in the literature. We found that when we talked to practitioners, they all saw that there was a positive relationship, for example, between employment and healthier relationships and they saw that that association worked both ways. They all, in general, saw that there was a real strong case to be made for providing integrated services between all of these fields and gave some really good kind of practical advice for how to implement that service integration. They all told us -- and this is kind of one of the things that is kind of a common-sense observation, but we think it's really, really important -- is just to note that all of the healthier relationship skills that participants learn in healthier relationship programs are the same kinds of interpersonal skills that can help an individual be successful in the workplace. So, if you're in a healthy relationships program and you're learning conflict resolution, conflict resolution is an interpersonal skill that's also going to be really, really helpful in helping you to get and keep a job. And, you know, the -- the -- the opposite relationship is true as well, that if people are learning soft skills in an employment program that include things like conflict resolution and strengthening interpersonal relationships, there's the potential there to help in their personal relationships as well. So, these skills of cooperation and conflict resolution really are kind of universally applied in both the home life and work life.

All of the practitioners also saw really strong relationships between fatherhood and employment. And once again, they reported that they saw these correlations going both directions, that by helping individuals strengthen their parenting skills and build their engagement with their children, that those fathers were compelled to work more, that they were more motivated to work more and earn more money so that they could provide that support to their children and their families. And also, when individuals' employment rates went up, that also increased and improved their engagement with their children and their relationships with the mothers of their children. And so, there's a really strong case to be made that any fatherhood programming that is seeking to strengthen fathers' engagements with their kids should absolutely include an employment component because by improving employment outcomes, you can also improve engagement with kids. And, you know, the same is true for employment programs, should really look for ways to leverage those strengthened family relationships as a way of boosting employment outcomes. There was also, in many cases, but not all, a strong relationship observed between healthier relationships and successful reentry.
The majority of the providers that we spoke with saw a strong relationship between reentry and healthier relationships mostly because they saw that by providing some stability at home and improving those relationships at home and the increased desire to meet parental obligations, these were all motivating factors in reducing the amount of new crimes committed or technical violations of parole, or things like drug use that can result in re-incarceration. So, there was also some speculation on the part of providers that it was largely domestic crimes that were reduced as a result of building these stronger relationships, that, you know, to the extent that relationship programming and healthy relationship services were able to reduce criminal justice system involvement, it was through reductions in domestic crimes that can result from instability in relationships. Practitioners, interestingly, also thought that one of the things that impacted this strengthening of relationships as a result of employment was that parents, particularly fathers, are strongly motivated by the role of provider and that there was improved self-esteem resulting from the ability to provide financially for children as well as reductions in the amount of stress in relationships that were the result of financial stress. So these are all factors that the providers saw as impacting that strong relationship between healthy relationships and employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chris Warland:

So, moving on to the recommendations that we were able to make as a result of what we found in investigating this paper. We really looked at a couple of different types of recommendations. We looked at recommendations for program providers and we looked at recommendations for social safety-net providers. And all of these are primarily focused on really trying to make the most of these interrelated effects that we see and the idea is that if you really see a strong, positive correlation between, for example, employment and healthy relationships, then any initiative or program that has as its primary focus to increase employment outcomes should also look at the ways in which they can incorporate healthy relationship training or coursework as a means to improve the outcomes that they care most about, which would be, in this case, employment. One of the things that the -- all of the practitioners that we interviewed told us -- and there was broad common use of this term "holistic" -- all of the providers that we spoke to talked about taking a holistic approach to services and that means having a perspective of serving the whole person and not looking at the individual just as a non-custodial father or a child support obligor, not just looking at the individual as someone who's unemployed or needs help in finding work, but to really take a holistic look at the whole person and to put together a set of individualized services that can help that individual meet all of their needs.

One thing that some of the programs that we spoke to did is -- they co-enrolled participants in, for example, fatherhood and work readiness programming so that anybody who's engaged in a program for the purposes of fatherhood programming is automatically going to be co-enrolled in some kind of work readiness or employment training and job search assistance programming as well, just so that any of the advantages of employment and economic advancement can be captured to help boost those -- that fatherhood engagement and those goals and vice-versa. There are also cases in which programs just really kind of integrated their curriculum and coursework so
that as opposed to being co-enrolled in separate program tracks, that there was just a single curriculum that incorporated all of these aspects so that someone is simultaneously learning work readiness skills and parenting skills and healthier relationship skills.

All of the programs also really emphasized the need to have access to a broad range of supportive services. It's often the case that an individual program can't provide all of the necessary services in-house and so things like referral relationships and partnerships become really, really important in order to provide a comprehensive range of supportive services. And so, one of the things we've learned about this kind of partnership is that quite often these partnerships are reciprocal, meaning that a good referral relationship with another service provider partner would mean, you know, I will refer my participants to you, for example, if they're in need of housing assistance and you, as a housing services provider, will refer your participants to me if they need assistance with employment or if they need assistance with building their healthier relationships, things like that. So that kind of informal and reciprocal partnership appears to be the most common type and seems to be pretty successful.

All of the providers also really noted that building positive trusting relationships was critical to effective program delivery and all emphasized the role of mentoring as a means of building that trusting, positive relationship with program participants. So with regard to some of the other program recommendations, we really see that in general it's important that programs just kind of be aware of how these factors affect each other and be prepared to really -- to leverage those positive impacts. So, if you're working with job seekers, always be prepared to communicate to them how much more they're likely to earn and how much more they're likely to work if they've got positive relationships at home and they've got a positive relationship with their spouse or their partner and positive relationships with their children and how that's associated with better earnings and more successful employment. So any time there's a good correlation there, to be able to use that to your advantage.

And then specifically for child support enforcement, we see a real need to continue to use employment as a key tool to help non-custodial parents meet their obligations and that, you know, one of the things that we hear in the fatherhood and child support field a lot is that there's a difference between a deadbeat and someone who is dead broke, and that by recognizing that non-custodial parents, in order to meet their obligations, need earned income and that by helping them to earn that income, you're going to boost the rate at which they're able to meet their obligations and to regard employment services as a key piece of your service delivery in the field of child support enforcement is really, really key and we're seeing more and more of that and we're very encouraged by the fact that that's the direction that child support is headed.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT'D

Chris Warland:

And then also with regard to the safety-net service providers, public benefit systems, TANF, etc., should continue to support employment programming as part of the way to achieve their goal of supporting family well-being and child well-being. Workforce development and the public workforce system in particular should continue to recognize
that healthier relationships and responsible fatherhood are an important way of boosting employment outcomes for participants. And also, fatherhood programs and programs that support healthy relationships should continue to have employment and employment services as a central part of their programmatic goals and the services that they offer as a means to achieve their goals of strengthening family relationships and stability. Alright, at this point, I am pleased to turn the presentation over to my co-presenter, Geneva Rodriguez, from Maricopa County.

MARICOPA COUNTY ADULT PROBATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRISON REENTRY PLANNING FOR FAMILIES AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

Geneva Rodriguez:

Thank you, Chris. Hello everyone and thank you for tuning in. I’d also like to thank the presenters and the other presenters and my hosts today. My name is Geneva Rodriguez with Maricopa County Adult Probation. I've worked with probation for 17 years and the last four years I have worked in prison reentry. And the last, I would say, two years, family planning reunification with inmates and their families. Now one thing I do want you to know that I do have a tendency to mix up inmates and clients because while they're in DOC we call them "inmates" and when they come out we call them "clients." So, if I interchange those words, please understand that I'm talking about the same -- the same thing. Our group, or my unit, was specifically designed to help reduce the amount of recidivism with inmates coming out of DOC. And we initially started with identifying what we considered to be critical needs; getting the Social Security card, driver's license, making sure they have their birth certificate, that sort of thing. And slowly as the program went on, we learned, which I wish I knew Chris before this all happened, was that family support is critical, absolutely critical, in -- in reducing the amount of recidivism with an inmate or client.

REENTRY FAMILY ISSUES

Geneva Rodriguez:

Now having the lack of family support really has a tendency to affect how they -- how successful they are with probation. So, for example, if you've got a family to go home to, you've got a roof over your head, usually have someone to drive you around to get your driver's license, your Social Security card, court dates, that sort of thing. The lack of family support, you kind of have to do that on your own.

And sometimes we found out that while inmates were in custody, family members have passed away, their support group has passed away, and they've been in for well over ten, 20 years, and the support system that they had when they went in is now gone. The other thing we learned was those who were parents in DOC coming out, lack the parental skills that they needed when returning to the family. The grandparents or in-laws are taking care of the children and they have a different style of raising the children and now they're ready to give the parents, you know, full custody of the kids and the parent has no parental skills at all in how to deal with basic things like communication, discipline, just basic things that, you know, as a parent you learn, but if you've never learned that and all of a sudden you have three kids to raise you have no idea how to communicate and which kid likes, you know, American cheese versus, you know, Swiss cheese. Simple things like that. The other thing we ran into was inmates or clients were
diagnosed in custody as having a mental illness, something the family was not aware of, or something that the family kind of ignored, and having to deal with that. Some families were accepting, some families wanted to help; it kind of explained a few things on why someone was acting that way. And then other families wanted to pretend it never existed. So, having to deal with that. The other thing was when we met with offenders after being released is the stigma of being an ex-offender. They always felt that everybody knew they were an offender. You know, if they went to the grocery store that, you know, they felt that everybody knew they just came out of DOC. So, for those of you who don't know what "DOC" is, that means "Department of Corrections." So, if -- if -- they're in the grocery store in line, they have that -- that feeling that everybody knows they just got released and they get real uncomfortable. And that leads to the high anxiety. We've learned that a couple of guys would go to the grocery store just to buy a gallon of milk or some bread, and they couldn't stand in line. They couldn't even go to the grocery store. Basic things like that that you would consider easy things to do, but they had been in solitary confinement for an extended period of time. They haven't been out in public for a while and that anxiety level was high. In addition to that, they also had a high anxiety when dealing with family members. I see them in the prisons, and we're not allowed to shake hands. They're sometimes cuffed through the entire interview. They're in a cage and then I tell them, "Well, I'll see you next weekend at home." Well at home, I can shake their hands, you know, mom is giving them a hug, that type of thing. So the anxiety of having to deal with personal -- people interactions is something that they're not used to dealing with.

DO'S AND DON'T FOR REENTRY

Geneva Rodriguez:

Now, through our experience with this, we found some do's and don'ts with dealing with family and reunifications. One of the things we encourage families to do is to get the -- the family member who's just returned -- trying to adjust to their surroundings. They had to adjust to being in prison, they need to adjust to coming back out. Some families expect them to immediately jump out the door and start finding a job and having no issues whatsoever. And sometimes they're able to do that. They have no issues. But sometimes, you know, like I said, they've been in solitary confinement for two years and being, you know, at the bus stop, just walking down the street, causes a lot of anxiety. And we have to let family members know that they're not being lazy, you know; they're not just sitting there on the couch because they don't want to look for job. It's because they have a lot of anxiety about going out and having that one-on-one and talking about, you know, what job skills they have or don't have and where they've been for the last two years. Understanding that they -- they spent a lot of time in their cell planning for an unrealistic future. So there they are in their cell, thinking that "Oh, as soon as I get out I'm going to find a job, I'm going to buy a house, the family's going to move in, we're all going to have a wonderful time. We're going to go camping, we're going to go to the beach, we're going to do all these great things." And, well, we all want that American dream. They don't have the skills to do it, and I think Chris kind of talked about, you know, they don't have that soft or hard skills that they need in order to provide for that family or to get that employment that would actually pay that type of wage to provide for that family the way they expect to. They also put unrealistic timelines on themselves.
They expect to get a job within a week or two. And it's that, you know, high-paying, $20, $30 an hour pay that just isn't out there. And they have that -- that inability to speak up at an interview to -- to sell themselves and then that goes back to that stigma of, "Well, they didn't hire me because they know I'm an ex-offender." And having to get them out of that -- out of the family -- that way of thinking and supporting them and saying, "Hey, you know what, just because you didn't get a job in two weeks doesn't mean that, you know, you failed us in any way."

The last thing we encourage the family and the inmate to do is to discuss parenting strategies if children are involved. I've actually sat down with a family -- the family actually requested I come to the prison with the parents of the inmate, and the inmate had three children and she was due to be released in about two months. And the family wanted to sit down on what her obligations were on probation, and that's what I went over. And then they went -- the parents on their own talked to their child about how, "This is how we've been disciplining the children; this is their schedule for school; what we expect when you get out is to do the A, B, and C. We don't expect you to drive them to school because you don't have a car yet, we'll do that portion of it, but we do expect you to do the discipline, we expect you to provide them with the food in the morning," that type of thing. So, having that discussion before they get out so that everyone understands the roles and knows their roles was a tremendous help so when she got out, everybody knew what was going on and that the -- her parents -- the inmate's parents, were in full support of whatever discipline she felt was necessary for whatever the child did to deserve a discipline or, in some cases, you know, how to reward the child.

**DO'S AND DON'T FOR REENTRY**

Geneva Rodriguez:

Some of the things that we found weren't a good idea was a “welcome home” party. Now, I know everyone is like, “A welcome home party? Everybody, you know, wants to welcome their family member home after being gone for several months, years, whatever the case is.” Now, we -- we're okay with home parties. The thing we want, though, is them to wait at least a week or two before giving that -- that party out. And the reason is, is because speaking to the clients themselves, they request that type of timeline. I had a gentlemen who -- whose parents were in a church, they had a huge congregation. He had been in DOC for seven years. He was under a lot of restrictions and when he got out his family threw -- the family and the church threw him a huge welcome party. There was at least 200 people at this party, and he had complete strangers walking up to him, giving him a hug. Now he hadn't hugged or touched another person in several years, not in that manner, and it really freaked him out. And in fact, he ended up leaving the party and calling his probation officer to say, "I need to go to a halfway house because I can't handle this. I can't handle this -- this one-on-one type of thing with people I don't even know giving me a hug." And it was -- it was from the clients themselves who say, "You know what, these home parties aren't working for me." We had one incident where a family -- small family, threw a little party for him when he got home and his uncle came up to him and offered him marijuana and a beer, and he told his uncle, "I have to go see my probation officer tomorrow. What are you doing?" So, the
clients themselves ask for that timeline. "I don't mind a party, just give me some time to -
- to acclimate to being back."

Unrealistic demands. Sometimes families, like I said, want them right out the door, start
looking for a job, start taking care of the family, that type of thing. Well, that's perfectly
fine if you were, you know, on vacation for two weeks. You could handle that type of
thing. But if you haven't been around children in years, that's going to be very difficult. I
don't know if you've been to the grocery store where a kid's throwing a tantrum, how you
handle kids throwing a tantrum -- if you haven't done it in years or even been around that
child in years? Another thing that they -- they demand is that they get a job that does pay
an unrealistic amount. They don't have those skills that Chris was talking about and
those demands then add pressure to them coming out, whether they're a mom or dad,
trying to provide for their family, but at the same time trying to adjust to life back in the
community.

Guilt reminders. Kids are great with this. They say, you know, "Mom, Dad, it wouldn't be
this way if you hadn't gotten locked up. You wouldn't have missed my play at school; you
wouldn't have missed last Christmas." That type of thing. Don't -- don't let the children do
that. And talk with the inmate about, you know, kids have a tendency to do this, yes, and
how to deal with it. How do I tell my kids, "Okay, I understand that yeah, I did miss
Christmas and I understand that I was incarcerated and it is my fault, but now I'm here
and we're moving on." That type of thing. And it's very difficult as a parent to have to
deal with that type of guilt. Assuming that they have no problem functioning in society,
like I said before, they get home. First thing the wife or the mom or, you know, dad does
is say, "Hey, go to the 7-Eleven down the street and buy a gallon of milk." Well, the last
time he went down the street to go anywhere was, you know, 15 years ago. And
although it's only two blocks away and it's just a gallon of milk, that's a lot of stress.
That's a lot of anxiety for someone. And we've had issues where people go and run that
errand and get sidetracked because their -- the anxiety and stress is so much they don't
want to go back to the family because they just couldn't handle a simple task like getting
milk. A conflict in parenting styles goes back to what I discussed before. Without a plan
on who is going to be the parent once the biological parent is home, that can cause a lot
of conflict with communication, discipline; it causes a lot of stress with everyone
involved. Who does the child actually listen to? Is it the parent? The grandparent? Who
has more control if there's not support within that family structure on who is actually the
disciplinarian? That can cause a lot of problems and confusion with the children. The
children are kind of like stuck in the middle. You know, do I go in my room? Do I not go
in my room? What's going on here? So having that plan in place can save quite a bit of
dysfunction and stress for all parties involved.

OTHER THINGS WE LEARNED

Geneva Rodriguez:

The things we learned when dealing with this population is, don't assume. Sometimes
we've maybe done too much. Sometimes we give them too much time to adjust and then
they start meeting up with old friends, they start to go back to their old habits. So, giving
them small tasks to do, we've learned, works out better. Don't assume that they -- they
know how to parent. They may say, "Oh, yeah, you know, I've got a 15-year-old
daughter and I heard that she's -- she's staying up til 2:00 and her curfew's 2:00 and I'm going to stop that as soon as I get home. I'm going to put a curfew on her at 9 p.m."

Well, sounds great, but how do you tell a 15-year-old girl who's been going out since, you know, she's been 13 that she now has a curfew? How do you communicate that? And a lot of them say, "Well, I'm her dad and I can tell her to do whatever I want." Well, that's not always the case. And it's where, as Chris mentioned, those fatherhood programs, those motherhood programs, come into play on how to communicate to their children on why they want them to be home at 9; that they're concerned about their safety, they're concerned about their well-being. That type of thing. And conveying that in a way that the child understands and is more cooperative rather than, you know, putting down the fist and saying, "Hey, this is how it's going to be." The other thing we learned was that the time in custody doesn't necessarily correlate with their ability to cope. Somebody who might be in DOC four months will have a -- might have a harder time coping with coming back out than somebody who's been in for, you know, three or five years. It has to do with that family structure. Some of them have great family structure where for the last three to five years the family has been coming to visit once a month every two weeks, giving them updates on what's going on with the family, keeping that communication link open. And letting them know "when you get home you will have a place to stay, we're helping you out with transportation," that sort of thing. The guy who's been only in for four months may have had no communication whatsoever with the family. The last time he was there, they were being evicted so he doesn't even know if they're homeless or they've got a place to stay. So, the amount of time necessarily doesn't always correlate with what they have to deal with when they get out.

The importance of communicating with the families before and after release. We call the family before the inmate is released to talk about what type of issues that might come up. So, for example, "Are you even willing to take him in? He says you are. Is that true? He's concerned about transportation; will you be able to provide transportation? Is there anyone else in the household who is on probation or parole that may, you know, cause some sort of conflict with his residence?" That type of thing. So, we do before and after calls. Once they're released, the probation officer meets with them, meets with the family and discusses what's -- what's expected of them and what we plan to do with probation and what their obligation is and what his obligation is.

The last thing is that we've learned is not all families are able to provide personal hygiene packs for these individuals. It sounds odd, but every now and then we might hit a family who's on really hard times and they're not able to provide simple things like shaving cream, shavers, a t-shirt, with the cold weather a jacket, that type of thing. So, being able to provide that type of thing is -- is helpful and useful and helps them with their self-esteem as well.

NEXT PHASE

Geneva Rodriguez:

The things that we're working on now here in probation is -- is pre-release group orientations in the prisons. I actually go into the prisons and I discuss everything from the new Affordable Health Care Act and how that's working out. We talk about
fatherhood programs, motherhood programs, resources that we think they might need. If they choose to use them, great. If they don't, you know, it's always available for them.

More work with the family. Right now, like I said, we do phone calls to -- to see how the offender is going to be provided for before they're released. Now we're starting to do family orientations where we actually have the families meet in a -- an area and we discuss what prison life is like and that adjustment period that -- that they should look at. We also discuss resources with them as well to let them know, hey, you've got a new member of the family coming in, another mouth to feed and here's a place that you can get food boxes, clothing, that type of thing. And then also provide resources for the children. The parenting program and when you have young adults who are -- who are wanting to speak about their feelings on why dad's been gone for so long; their frustrations, their anger towards the whole situation. We provide child counseling as well -- resources, anyway, for them to deal with that type of issue and then the confrontation between the child and the client and how the child felt and why they feel the way they do about their time away.

WHAT WORKS FOR FINDING EMPLOYMENT?

Geneva Rodriguez:

What works in finding employment? Well, resources like Chris. Chris, I wish you were here in Arizona because we could sure use another resource like yourself, but wonderful resources are available for everyone who gets out of DOC. We have mentorships that we can do with everyone, both male and female, getting out of incarceration. We have classes that we can provide them with. But when it comes to job skills, I, here at probation, teach a job skills class and -- but I only teach it once a month and sometimes that's helpful; most times it's not because everyone gets out different times. But we have a lot of resources that we can send them to, to help them with job skills, how to do a resume, how to do interviews and talk about that ex-offender situation; how to own being an ex-offender and that -- you know, they will get rejected at, you know, at interviews and how to deal with that, not to get discouraged.

Overloading them with too much to do. Families have obligations that they want them to commit to, and we, with probation, have other obligations that we want them to commit to; treatment classes, that type of thing. And understanding what the family expects, what probation expects, not overloading them with too much to do is something that we've learned to -- to watch out for. Another thing Chris kind of touched on was providing them with some skills and opportunities, learning those soft and hard skills, being supportive towards them, encouraging them to continue to get educated so that they can get that -- that job and create that American dream for themselves and for their family.

Lastly, providing them with clothing resources. We have self-esteem events for the ladies get their -- their hair done, their nails done, get them suited up with different outfits so that when they do go out to job fairs or whatever they're looking their best.

IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Geneva Rodriguez:

Last, the importance of collaboration. We, probation, obviously can't do this alone. I don't think any agency can do this alone. And I think Chris kind of hit on that on, you know,
vice-versa kind of things if you -- if you send them here, I can provide them with housing, if you send them to me, that type of thing, we can help them with drug treatment or whatever the case is. Collaborations, we've got halfway houses that will take money from -- taking -- take them with no money down, which is very important because a lot of these guys don't have the ability to pay for a halfway house once they're released from DOC. We have an agency that will pick them up from the prison sometimes if they don't have the ability to have transportation to get from here to there. We have an agency that's willing to do that and they will take actual bus tickets for them to do that. We also have agencies that help out with clothing, that type of thing. So having partnerships, collaborating with others, and the way we started was, we kind of listed what we needed and then we kind of searched for -- for agencies that can help with what our needs -- mention our needs, basically, with our -- with our agencies in our area. So, with that, I'm going to hand it off to Robyn and she's going to let your little -- let you know a little more about resources that are available. So, Robyn?

Robyn Cenizal:

Thanks, Geneva. Thank you so much for that presentation and thank you, Chris, as well. It's wonderful to hear not only the research and the promising practices, but actually hear stories of how this actually works on the ground, so it's very exciting. I want to take a few minutes just to revisit the Resource Center and discuss some of the ways that we can support efforts to integrate relationship education skills.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATION AND HOW CAN THE RESOURCE CENTER HELP?

Robyn Cenizal:

For those of you out there who are doing this work who may not have already thought of how to integrate these skills or consider the different aspects, we heard a lot of interesting things that both Geneva and Chris talked about in terms of relationship skills and parenting and how all these things impact the families in their reentry efforts.

MESSAGING IS IMPORTANT

Robyn Cenizal:

So, one of the things that we learned early on with the Resource Center work is that messaging is tremendously important. Not everyone understands the impact a couple of family relationships can have beyond the home and we heard both Chris and Geneva talk about interpersonal skills like communication and conflict resolution. These are core components of healthy relationship education and are extremely important in all relationships, whether it's family, work, community, etc., and I thought it was interesting to hear Geneva talk about how sometimes the folks who are reentering find it easier to communicate their needs and concerns with the folks that they've been working with at the prison versus directly with their family members. So it's very interesting -- that role that Geneva's group has been able to play there.

The other critical skills that we focus on are parenting. Again, we heard Geneva talk about how important parenting is, and we talk about financial education. You know, in theory, families learn these skills in their family of origin, but that doesn't always happen and typically our society doesn't offer an opportunity to learn these skills in a non-punitive way. So, thinking about ways to integrate these into various service delivery
systems is the focus of the Resource Center so that we can make these skills available to help families who are in transition and families in general. And talking about these skills in a way that makes them relevant helps us frame the importance of making relationship education skills available to all families, particularly low-resource families.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Robyn Cenizal:

So the statistics that you see here come from a Juvenile Delinquency and Family Structure research brief that summarizes the 20-year longitudinal study. The brief concluded that a potential for future juvenile delinquency among youth can be significantly diminished by providing parents and juveniles with skills for relationship strengthening, personal growth and family enhancement. Now, why is that significant? Because if you look at these different stats, you can see the cycle of typically incarcerated individuals. 70 percent come from single-parent homes. Boys who grow up without biological fathers are three times more likely to commit a crime, and children of divorced parents up to six times more likely to be delinquent. So, looking at these statistics we can see that there is a cycle often created in families around crime, and each of these red arrows actually represents an opportunity and intervention point where appropriate service providers might consider integrating relationship education skills as an effort to help break the cycle.

INTEGRATING RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Robyn Cenizal:

So when we talk about integration, relationship education skills, it doesn't necessarily mean that you, yourself, have to facilitate a healthy relationship curriculum. We like to think of integration in levels and which level is appropriate depends on your agency and what your service delivery systems look like.

So here are some examples of what integration might look like in each of the three levels that we typically talk about. Basic engagement is Level One and this could be informational handouts to agencies that serve youth, parents, and families who are facing incarceration or reentry. Level Two is partnerships and we've heard both Chris and Geneva talk about partnerships with community organizations that offer healthy relationship programming or other services, and keeping in mind that these skills don't all have to be integrated together as part of a full package. It could be that you're referring to one of these partnership agencies for financial education or parenting, not necessarily both. And then Level Three is full integration, where we actually offer workshops on-site where families can access other support services. Families are more likely to take advantage of additional resources that are offered at a location where they already feel comfortable coming to access services. So that's what we refer to as full integration.

THE RESOURCE CENTER OFFERS

Robyn Cenizal:

So, as you think about your agency and how you might incorporate some of today's ideas, keep in mind that the Resource Center offers the following research that supports and promotes integration; resources, tips, tools, views, and to share with colleagues and
the families you serve; and training and technical assistance to support you in your efforts.

EXPERTISE BEHIND THE CENTER

Robyn Cenizal:

Additionally, the Resource Center staff offers both capacity building and topical expertise to support you in your efforts whether you need assistance with program design, organization development, policy analysis, strategic planning, or if you need additional expertise around family safety, family strengthening, asset building, or any of the other topics that are mentioned here. The Resource Center can support you with those.

So, the next thing that I want to do is take a few minutes to show you a brief video to give an overview of the Resource Center and then we're going to open the floor for questions. If you haven't already typed in your questions, please feel free to do so now and we'll be back soon.

THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR HEALTHY MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES

[Strong Families, Strong Communities: National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families video can be viewed at www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/media-gallery]

(Video) Narrator:

Strong families are the foundation of strong communities. Yet many families you serve struggle to achieve self-sufficiency and as service-providers you struggle to provide services to them within traditional safety-net service delivery systems. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families works with Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies to promote the value of healthy marriage and relationship education skills. We encourage their integration into safety-net service delivery systems as a holistic approach to strengthening the families you serve. We offer a virtual resource center available 24 hours a day that is user-friendly and easy to navigate. The website also includes success stories and a calendar of upcoming events. Our searchable library has over 300 resources, including research on promising practices that supports the need for and benefits of healthy marriage education skills. The library also includes stakeholder specific products developed by experts in the field, like tip sheets, fact sheets, and research-to-practice briefs. Visit our virtual training center to learn more about free training and technical assistance, including webinars and in-person and online training opportunities. If you can't find what you are looking for, we have a call center that is staffed Monday through Friday so you can speak to a live person. Healthy marriage and relationship education include interpersonal skills like communication and conflict resolution, as well as critical skills like parenting and financial literacy. These skills serve as the cornerstone of strong families. For more information on healthy marriage education skills visit www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org, info@HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org, 1-866-916-4672.

Robyn Cenizal:

Thank you, and now we're going to open it up for questions. Andrea?
Andrea Strahan:

Thanks, Robyn. And thanks so much to everyone for their presentations today. As Robyn said, at this time we'd like to transition to our question and answer period. We've had quite a few great questions submitted and I'm going to pose them to our presenters now. But I'd like to ask everyone to feel free to continue to submit your questions using the “Question and Answer” pod on your screen. So, our first question is for you, Chris, and it is, ”What, if any, differences are there in family services offered during incarceration and those offered upon release?” And then she specifies differences of programs that engage only the incarcerated individual and those engaging families on the outside.

Chris Warland:

Hi. Thanks very much for the question. And I might be -- this question might be a little bit outside of my wheelhouse, but I have talked a lot to providers about kind of making this connection between pre-release services and post-release services. And I know that, for example, a lot of grant opportunities available to serve people re-entering communities from prison actually require, as part of a program design, engagement before someone is released as well as after. And quite often, the emphasis of those -- those programs is on establishing a mentoring relationship so that an individual has some continuity pre- and post-release with a mentor that's providing them with, you know, some guidance on a one-on-one level. And that, I think, is based in research evidence showing that mentoring is a strongly evidence-based practice or program component for supporting successful reentry. That's basically most of what I know about pre-release and post-release services and the kinds of services that are offered prior to release. I've also heard a lot about the importance of, you know, very strong discharge planning in general and providing as many planning services as possible for an individual prior to release. What I don't know as much about are specifically what kinds of family reconciliation services take place pre- and post-release, but I did see as part of our literature review that -- that incarcerated individuals who receive relationship-focused or family-focused services pre-release do have or show better post-release outcomes as far as, you know, measures of recidivism and things like that. With a little bit more time, I'd be happy to -- to revisit some of the source material that we -- that we used to reach those conclusions to identify exactly what was involved in those -- those kinds of pre-release family and relationship programming but I'm not sure off the top of my head right now exactly what was entailed in those services. Hopefully, that helps.

Andrea Strahan:

Okay, thank you. And then this next question, I believe, is for Geneva. It is, ”What support systems do men have when they are released from prison?”

Geneva Rodriguez:

Good question. I love that question. We actually heard from inmates themselves who said that they would like to have a support group of just inmates to talk about the stresses, anxiety, of day-to-day life after being released the first three to six months. It is possible. There are agencies out there that provide that type of network. We have the Father Matters Program, we have Native American Fatherhood Program, Women's Resource Center, Native American Connections, they kind of help us out with that type of thing. Group discussions with ex-offenders. But we also have, with probation, we have
-- to be a little bit cautious because part of their -- their probation is not to hang around with other offenders. So, we try and balance that as best as possible. We make sure that it's done in a correct manner, that there's a counselor involved, that there's curriculum involved, that there's an agenda involved so that when they do gather together to discuss what they need to discuss or want to discuss, that it's sanctioned with probation and the court and gets things that they need to help them with adjusting. You know, for other individuals who haven't created their networking yet, that's something else that they'll need to work on and I would suggest going to the Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. They have some curriculum there that can help you get started with those types of groups if that's something you're hoping to start within your state or county or your agency. I'm lucky enough to have agencies in place that I can refer them to and as long as it's done in the manner the court requested everything's good to go. I hope that answers the question.

Andrea Strahan:
Great, thank you. And then Geneva, maybe you can answer this next one as well and then Chris, if you have anything you'd like to add you can speak to it as well. But the question is, "What specific topics are important to cover when teaching a parenting class to women in jail who will be released soon?"

Geneva Rodriguez:
A couple of the topics that we do go over with the women, again, is -- especially for women -- is the guilt factor. We spend a lot of time with them discussing that sometimes kids will verbally say it. Some of them are too young to say anything, but they have that guilt of not being there for the first time they walked, for having them being put into foster care, that type of thing. So we kind of target that type of issue is the guilt, how to deal with it, how to move on, how to confront the child once the child has mentioned that they -- they're upset with the parent for mentioning that they weren't there for their birthday. Whatever the case is. And not dealing with the guilt, not showing them how to deal with the guilt is very defeating for the parent and they have a tendency to then self-medicate, and that's exactly where we don't want them to go. So, the guilt factor is number one. Number two is finance. I think Chris can talk about that a little more, but how to deal with money and before DOC, if they -- if they had a -- a job, they had money, income coming in, and the only person they had to take care of was themselves. Now they have, you know, a family of two, three, four infants that needs diapers, how to budget that type of thing. And the third thing we talk about is, just discipline. And dealing with -- what I talked about before, was who -- who -- what role is played by who? Who is the provider? Who is the disciplinarian? Is it a shared thing? That type of thing. To make sure that that's dealt with before they enter the family network so that everyone knows their roles. Chris, do you have anything to add?

Chris Warland:
Not too much. I think that, you know, that you did a really great job of kind of describing the key things to offer in the course of programming. The only thing that I really have to add is that, you know, in the course of doing the research for the paper we looked into the topic of incarcerated mothers specifically. We didn't find very much in the literature about effective practices in helping incarcerated mothers with things like family reconciliation, etc. All we really found was a description of, you know, just how harmful it
can be. One of the papers that we looked at described the separation of a mother from her children as absolutely the most damaging thing -- aspect -- of an individual's incarceration and that it has negative impacts on things like even a divorce, reducing the likelihood that a woman will reside with the father of her children, strains on mother/child relationships, and also a great deal of stigma. So, these are all, you know, obviously, you know, really profoundly negative things that happen when mothers are incarcerated and separated from their children. And I'm very happy to hear that you have some very, you know, kind of concrete recommendations that you shared with us for ways to address and mitigate some of these issues as mothers getting -- getting ready to get out, preparing for -- for her return home. So, thanks very much for that.

Andrea Strahan:
Okay. And then this next question actually builds on this. And I think it's geared toward you, Chris. It is, -- actually, it's either of you, so Chris maybe you can speak to it and then Geneva can give her opinion as well. "Are there any of you -- are any of you aware of literature geared towards incarcerated mothers, especially mothers in short-term incarceration? Weeks or months, instead of years."

Chris Warland:
You know, as I mentioned, when we were in the process of researching this and looking into this topic, you know, we really didn't discover a whole lot of useful recommendations for, you know, how to address some of the needs of incarcerated mothers. Based on what we found just kind of looking at the academic literature, there really does seem to be a lack of evidence about what works. What we didn't do as much of is look into what individual program providers are doing on the ground and what their promising practices are. And so I think that it's quite likely that there are additional services being provided in lots of other locations similar to what Geneva was describing and it would just be a matter of doing a little bit more legwork to identify what those are and seek those out. You know, in my work -- quite often I come up against sort of a -- an absence of evidence-based practices for -- to address a particular issue, but that doesn't mean that there aren't lots of promising practices out there that providers are using, you know, to effectively serve the people that they work with. But I can't speak to any right now that I'm aware of that are -- as far as literature, curricula, things like that, although I don't doubt that some of those exist.

Geneva Rodriguez:
Well, I can tell you that I currently work in the female prison here in Arizona. And a lot of the stuff that we go over with inmates is stuff that we came up with ourselves based on what the inmates outside suggested that we discuss. So, we didn't actually have -- we have, like, a basis of curriculum, but we added to that curriculum just based off of feedback we got from the inmates and from the moms and what they were dealing with. At first, it was quite a bit of scramble trying to figure out, well how do we help her with this situation? How do we help her get through certain things? Things we didn't really think we needed to consider, but came up. For example, the guilt thing. We knew that there was going to be some guilt issues but we thought, okay, well, guilt issues, she'll get over it. Well, now it really affected her. It really caused her to regress from her children; she didn't want to be around her children because every time she was with them she felt guilty or they reminded her of the guilt. So, that -- that -- those were little topics that we
then started integrating into a program and kind of created on our own. Like Chris said, I'm sure there are things out there. I just -- ourselves haven't come across them. We just kind of made them up on our own as a case-by-case basis and then just kind of integrated them into our program.

Andrea Strahan:

Thanks, Geneva. And then this is going to be our last question. If you have a question that didn't get answered today, again, we'll post a Q&A document to the website which will have answers to all the questions submitted. We'll get those from our presenters. But our last question today in the webinar is for you, Geneva, and it is, "What are good topics to get fathers involved more with their children when the relationship with the mother is not a good one?"

Geneva Rodriguez:

I've actually run into that situation where I've had a lot of fathers who are more active in the relationship with the children than the mothers are and some cases, the mother is still in prison and he's getting out a year or several months before the mother is, and in the meantime the mother has actually given up her rights as a mother and he now has full custody. So, when it comes to the father being a single father, we actually have some wonderful programs where, kind of mentioned before, where we have the groups of men getting together and discussing such an issue. We have groups of ex-offenders or just, you know, ex-offenders just trying to get by day-to-day, but we also have what -- Father Matters is actually an agency we use was specifically designed to help single fathers out. They have a support group; they also help them out with child's clothing, activities to do with your kids -- it's a monthly calendar -- you know, Sunday take them to the park, Monday read them a book, that type of thing. They also help out with mentorship. They help out with, you know, getting an apartment, employment, they also help out with, you know, furniture, basic furniture, that type of thing. So, we -- we've kind of lucked out in that situation when it comes to single fathers, but there has been -- I don't know if it's new or something -- but the last couple of years since 2013, I've actually run into quite a few fathers who are the sole parent now and they're kind of clueless, they're committed, but they're clueless, and having agencies, that collaboration, is very important because I, as an officer, have very little knowledge in how to support them and tell them what to do. So, having those agencies to rely on really comes in handy.

THANK YOU!

Andrea Strahan:

Great. Thank you so much, Geneva, and thank you again to all of our presenters today. Again, a recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a question and answer document will be posted to the "Past Events Archive" of our web site, www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org, and right now a feedback survey should be opening in your browser. If you could take a moment to fill out this brief evaluation, all of your responses are anonymous and it really helps us plan for our future webinars. So with that, I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today and have a great afternoon.