

2022

African American Men's Experiences with Reentry Programs with Employment and Wraparound Services

Trelles Evans
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Trelles Evans

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

African American Men's Experiences with Reentry Programs with Employment and
Wraparound Services

by

Trelles Evans

MBA, Indiana Wesleyan University, 2011

BS, Indiana University-Bloomington, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

The problem that was addressed in this study is the high cost that communities pay when African American men returning home from prison do not receive proper resources to prepare them for returning to the community and then end up reincarcerated due to criminal behavior and violations of parole or probation. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the daily lived experiences of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who receive real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs. No research was found that explored the daily experiences of those individuals who took part in these programs. The theory of inoculation was used, as it offers guidance on ways to understand how the learned behavior associated with transitional employment-based reentry programming is maintained. Using a qualitative, phenomenological design, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with eight African American men. The data were coded using the in vivo and eclectic processes to generate themes used to answer the research question. Although many barriers and challenges were brought up throughout the interviews, participants showed great pride when describing where they are today and indicated their success was due to different elements of the program and family support. Those who work with these individuals should benefit from a better understanding of the barriers that the participants identified as well as the supports that they found beneficial to their success. This information could be incorporated into program design to continue to benefit those participating.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate my work to those individuals who have spent time in the criminal justice system who are navigating themselves back home to their family, friends, and communities.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Gregory Hickman, my chair. You have been one of my biggest supporters from the first day I entered your class. You gave me confidence, mentorship, and tough love to get me through this journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Kelly Chermack. You led me through my qualitative journey. I appreciate your guidance and care throughout my journey. Dr. Rebecca Stout, thank you for being a part of my committee and helping me through my journey. I want to extend thanks to the entire Walden team for allowing this opportunity!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The challenge for those who have had contact with the criminal justice system is not always transparent (Harding et al., 2018). The price of recidivism is a challenge for the criminal justice system in the United States that flows through the state level to the federal level (Bender et al., 2016; Seigafo, 2017; Willison, 2019). In 2015, approximately 45 states reported imprisoning individuals through running facilities; providing food and programming to inmates can cost just under \$4.3 billion (Mai & Subramanian, 2017). The average cost per inmate per state is approximately \$34,000 (Federal Register, 2019; Mai & Subramanian, 2017). The effects of being released after incarceration are detrimental not only for the person involved but also for the general public (Bender et al., 2016; Seigafo, 2017; Willison, 2019). In 2018, approximately 600,000 prisoners were released back into their communities throughout the United States (McKay et al., 2018; Semenza & Link, 2019). Although many researchers have different ideas of what affects the recidivism rate, they agree that employment and low education play a significant factor in individuals reentering their communities (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011; Semenza & Link, 2019). Having limited education and employment are vital components that are a source of recidivism (Ellison et al., 2017; Looney & Turner, 2018; Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017).

The topic of prison reentry has expanded since the 2000s, specifically around recidivism causes (Gill, 2017; Seigafo, 2017; Whittle, 2018). Researchers who have studied and evaluated reentry programs have addressed health, education, substance

abuse, housing, and employment concerns for those integrating back into their community (Hamilton & Belenko, 2016; Link & Roman, 2017; Seim, 2016).

Unfortunately, what connected components decrease recidivism through transitional employment alongside case management through reentry programming have not been addressed (Bender et al., 2016; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018).

Background of the Study

Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated who encounter reentry services have a lower rate of returning to prison and go on to live productive lives (Gill, 2017; McNeeley, 2018a). There is a chance that those who provide reentry services may create barriers to those reentering their communities rather than aiding a successful reentry (Doleac et al., 2020; Kendall et al., 2018). Those individuals who have had some type of intervention post-release showed a reduction in recidivism (Berghuis, 2018; Cowell et al., 2018; McNeeley, 2018). Reentry programs consist of various methods and curricula that lead to mixed successful reentry outcomes.

Pre or post reentry programming that either provides employment and or wrap-around services produce a lower recidivism rate and successful reintegration into the community (Bender et al., 2016; Gill, 2017). Without continuous intervention during post release for reentry programs that provide treatment, the risk is higher for a negative outcome (Banta-Green et al., 2020). The length of time post-release and accessibility aid in determining successful outcomes as those returning to their communities seek treatment and care (Martin et al., 2019). Although there have been researchers who have presented alternative reentry approaches, which are mentoring and delivering wrap-

around services to prisoners who are getting ready to return home, there are common outcomes around successful reentry and wrap-around services (Doleac, 2019; Severson et al., 2011; Willison, 2019).

Reentry programming has many components that can play a factor in the outcome of an individual. Reentry programming that includes subsidized housing has a more substantial impact on recidivism than any other components (Garland & Wodahl, 2017; Labrecque & Smith, 2019; Zgoba et al., 2020). Programs that provide housing for individuals who are returning home on a transitional basis allow those individuals to reenter their communities successfully (Garland & Wodahl, 2017; Kirk et al., 2018). The focus on employment and subsidized housing does influence recidivism (Garland & Wodahl, 2017; Whipple et al., 2016).

Reentry programs that provide wrap-around services aid in lower recidivism rates and successful reintegration (Gill, 2017; Hill et al., 2017; Kendall et al., 2018). Specific services should be obtained to contribute to the success of those individuals reentering home from prison (Cooley, 2019; Western & Simes, 2019). Essential elements of services for those reentering their community successfully include individualized programming such as mental health attention, substance abuse attention, housing, soft skills training as well as support services (Belknap, 2016; Cooley, 2019). Alternative methods for successful reentry practices such as strength-based reentry programming, where men pre- and post-release created outlets to produce a strong support group that supports individuals who have been previously incarcerated, indicated successful reentry (Hunter et al., 2016; Mowen et al., 2018).

Substance abuse is a hindrance to those returning home from prison (Hagan et al., 2018; Hamilton & Belenko, 2016; Kendall et al., 2018). Support and programming from reentry programs might give a person suffering from substance abuse a stable platform when returning home. There is a lack of follow up for those who have been formerly incarcerated, and increased attention brought to treatment processes within the prison when pre-release services for the treatment of substance abuse and mental health were identified (Finlay et al., 2017; Hamilton & Belenko, 2016; Lowder et al., 2015).

Race and gender play a role in the opportunity for those returning home from prison (Muentner & Charles, 2019; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018; Stansfield et al., 2020). African American men are incarcerated at a higher rate than other races (Tucker, 2017). Reentry, family reunification, and recidivism are factors that African American men struggle with even after completing reentry programs (Muentner & Charles, 2019; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018; Stansfield et al., 2020). There are a variety of programs and techniques that those who enter reentry programs use. It is necessary to understand the experiences of those who have reentered their communities and completed reentry programs attached to wrap-around services and employment to determine what indicates successful reentry.

Problem Statement

African American men are incarcerated six times more than White men, which means there are more African American men with life barriers (Fosten, 2016; Tucker, 2017). Researchers, prisons, legislation, and program designers have designed reentry programs based on what barriers exist for individuals who have been formerly

incarcerated while reentering to their communities, such as criminal behavior, violations of parole or probation, and compliance (Severson et al., 2011; Vignansky et al., 2018; Yesberg & Polaschek, 2019). Reentry programs are created to reduce recidivism and are customized to address substance and mental health issues, education, and housing through community case management (Kendall et al., 2018; Potts & Palmer, 2014; Skinner-Osei & Steptean-Watson, 2018). The intentional focus on the barriers that those were previously incarcerated face trying to reenter their community hinders the lowering of recidivism rates through real-life experiences (Lockwood & Nally, 2016; Semenza & Link, 2019). The real-life, meaningful experience that is missing in reentry programs is a place to transition upon immediate release that captures employment with wrap-around services (Lockwood & Nally, 2016; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018; Semenza & Link, 2019).

Reentry programs that focus on addressing the barriers that those have been formerly incarcerated face while reentering their communities such as housing, employment, and transportation have shown a decrease in recidivism (Hill et al., 2017; Miller, 2013). Some reentry programs provide vocational training while still incarcerated. Others offer training upon release to address obtaining employment, which helps those who have been formerly incarcerated overcome the barrier of work (Hill et al., 2017; Lockwood & Nally, 2016; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018). Therefore, the problem that was addressed in this study is the high cost that communities pay when African American men returning home from prison do not receive proper resources through reentry

programming that does not prepare them for real-life circumstances and feel forced back into the life of crime that prevents successful reentry and higher recidivism rates.

Although the aforementioned research regarding reentry programming increasing successful reentry shows important findings, I found no research that explored the daily experiences of those individuals who were previously incarcerated who took part in reentry programming that provided real-life transitional employment with case management wraparound services that aided in successful reentry opportunities. Given such, further research was warranted that could explore those who receive real-life transitional employment with case management wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs in an effort to address the documented problem of the high recidivism rate amongst the highest age range of offenders, which is between 30 and 50 years old (Seigafo, 2017; Visher et al., 2016; Whittle, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the daily lived experiences of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who receive real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs. Due to a loss of faith in the rehabilitation of prisoners, there has been a decline to support reentry programs that encompass skills training and case management, which caused for an increase of resources in those areas (Doleac et al., 2020; Frankie et al., 2017). Employment-based reentry programs can help those returning to their communities from incarceration reintegrate into society without repeatedly returning to prison (Lockwood et al., 2017; Semenza & Link, 2019). Helping change laws and

increasing community support for those with employment, education, and training will be a step toward a more robust crime-free environment.

Research Question

What are the daily lived experiences of African American men between 30 and 50 years old who have received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs?

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I used the theoretical base of McGuire's (1961) theory of inoculation. McGuire provided insights into keeping the point of view and beliefs consistent with the constant attempts to change them. Attitude is the center of the theory of inoculation (McGuire, 1961). The inoculation theory points out that behavior is influenced by how people think, what they believe, and how they behave (Compton et al., 2016; Ivanov, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018; Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). Subsequent research and application of McGuire's theory offer guidance on ways to understand how those who have been previously incarcerated maintain the learned behavior associated with transitional employment-based reentry programming (Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). Most individuals reentering their community after incarceration fail because they have never been employed and never have followed the rules (Lockwood et al., 2017; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018).

People are persuaded daily by their environment (McGuire, 1961). The theory of inoculation involves building resistance to persuasion by providing alternative vantage points to combat the individual's beliefs (Compton et al., 2016; Compton et al., 2019;

Ivanov, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018). Understanding the theory of inoculation offers clarification on how components like communication, structured work environments and social interaction are used to help defend the beliefs of those being influenced (Compton et al., 2019; Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). I used the inoculation theory as a model to show how to provide small doses of information such as building a support system or positive social interactions for those who have been formerly incarcerated to develop a defense to what they have been exposed to through reentry programs. With the use of this theory, I understood how reentry programs change the criminal behavior of those who have been influenced not to be persuaded by thinking through the repetition of learning a new point of view as I explored the daily lives and experiences of participants.

A threat is one of the factors in the act of defending oneself (Banas & Richards, 2017; Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). A wall of defense is put up when a person feels threatened. The wall of defense is a learned behavior that causes a negative attitude that affects criminal behavior (Sims, 2016; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018). The theory of inoculation was used in this study to show how the gaps in research of transitional employment with real-life, meaningful work are paired with intensive case management wrap-around services to change the attitudes and behaviors of those reentering their community. Additionally, the inoculation theory was useful to cast light upon the components of reentry programs and the behavior changes of those formerly incarcerated. Interview questions were developed to extract the experiences of those who completed reentry programs, and lastly, programs can be developed and improved based on findings in this study.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was phenomenological. A phenomenological approach is best when used with two to 30 participants (Cypress, 2018). The phenomenological method is used to interpret real life experiences through research questions that ask about specific experiences or situations (Cypress, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). Therefore, with the use of the phenomenological method, it was relevant to describe individuals who have been previously incarcerated experiences of returning home from prison who have completed transitional employment programs with wrap-around services to understand if the participants were successful in reentering their community. This phenomenological approach is a good fit for understanding the phenomena of the life experiences of those reentering their communities after incarceration. A phenomenological researcher attempts to leave behind biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences (Cypress, 2018; Hoffding & Martiny, 2016; Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenology can be defined as an investigation and description of a phenomenon as experienced by people living in the situation (Cypress, 2018; Hoffding & Martiny, 2016; Neubauer et al., 2019). The study explored the partnerships with the Department of Corrections, community jails, and community centers that serve reentry clients and how they support successful reentry.

African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who have been formerly incarcerated were recruited as participants for this research. The participants were those who attended reentry programs that included an employment experience and case management wrap-around services attached. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by WhatsApp and Zoom. Recording of the interviews were done with the use of my cell

phone. The recordings were transcribed verbatim. In vivo coding was done manually. I noted the appearances, the language used, the environment, and the participants' behavior in the interviews. I transcribed the participants' responses using the app Otter.ai and analyzed them. I then coded the answers and compiled themes from the interviews (see Bergeron & Gaboury, 2020; Constantinou et al., 2017). I used NVivo software to help me analyze the data. After analyzing, coding, and recoding the data, I started to develop the interpretation of those coding schemas to answer the research question (see Bergeron & Gaboury, 2020; Constantinou et al., 2017; Roddesness et al., 2019).

I used a sample size of eight participants that have completed reentry programming. Saturation was met at that point. I collected data from eight participants. This method was consistent with getting to the core of the phenomena while looking through the lens of the theory of inoculation, learning from the participants collectively and individually (Cypress, 2018; Rosenthal, 2016). Small sample sizes, often 10 or less, are most common in phenomenological studies (Cypress, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). A smaller sample size provides for a deeper, richer dive of exploration into the lived experiences of individuals who have been previously incarcerated who have entered reentry programs that had work experiences and intensive case management attached. The minimal recommended sample size for a phenomenology study is two participants; therefore, a sample size of eight was sufficient (Cypress, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019).

I used purposeful sampling, which uses small samples of information-rich cases for in-depth study (Benoot et al., 2016; Cypress, 2018; Kendall et al., 2018). I supplemented my recruitment with snowball sampling, which is the use of participants

referring others that they know to participate in the study, which can be done virtually or in person (Marcus et al., 2017; Vieira et al., 2018). Using snowball sampling through social media, I was able to place information about my research on a platform so that those being referred had a place to contact me for the participation. The group consisted of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 with high-level crimes, which are the highest risk to recidivate (Tucker, 2017; The United States Department of Justice, 2019). The specific criteria needed to be eligible to participate were individuals who have been formerly incarcerated and between the ages of 30 and 50 who have engaged in reentry programs that provided employment and case management wrap-around services. The participants had committed any felony offense. They were out of prison and had completed any additional supervision.

Participants were excluded if they did not meet the criteria. I vetted the requirements by asking the participants if they had a felony background, entered a reentry program, and found employment through the program assistance. The purpose of the group of participants was to describe the typical experience of those who have been previously incarcerated who have participated in a reentry program that provided transitional employment and case management wrap-around services. Those individuals who had been formerly incarcerated ended up in my sample once vetted because they met all the study criteria. All participants were asked to participate in the study by flyers, social media posts, and communication about the study.

Definitions of Terms

Co-occurring disorders: Co-occurring disorders are substance abuse issues combined with mental health issues while being incarcerated (Perry et al., 2019).

Combination of wrap-around services and employment: Reentry programs that combine case management wraparound services and employment include a component of soft skills and hard skills training (Cook et al., 2015).

Individualized programming: Individualized programming and plans help identify specific areas to work on for the ex-offender (Hill et al., 2017).

Post-release: The term is used for individuals who were previously incarcerated who receive services after being released from incarceration (Hill et al., 2017).

Pre-release: The term is used for those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who receive services before being released from incarceration (Hill et al., 2017).

Recidivism: Recidivism refers to the rate of a person rearrested with a new crime that returns to prison after 3 years of their original release date (Mamun et al., 2020).

Reintegration: Reintegration is the act of a person who has been formerly incarcerated returning their community upon release (Miller, 2014).

Strength-based reentry program: This term describes reentry programming that is provided pre or post-release creating an outlet to a strong support group upon release through relationship building (Hunter et al., 2016).

Support system: A support system is a group around those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who provides positive reinforcements to the individual that promotes successful reentry (Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018).

Transitional programs: Transitional programs are programs designed to assist those who have been previously incarcerated to begin to reenter their communities through bridging services that may start pre or post-release. (Miller et al., 2019).

Assumptions

Individuals who have been incarcerated have a higher success rate of not returning to prison if they have gone through reentry programming that has provided employment opportunities and wrap-around services either pre or post-release (Berghuis, 2018; McNeeley, 2018a; Visher et al., 2017). Reentry programming involves creating programs that help alleviate barriers that those leaving prison face when returning home. It has been argued that wrap-around services are vital to the removal of obstacles while reentering communities (Doleac, 2019; Willison, 2019). Equally important, community-based reentry programs that are composed of components that focus on the reintegration of family and neighborhoods are the reasons for successful or unsuccessful recidivism rates (Lugo et al., 2019; Stansfield et al., 2020).

Other assumptions include a sampling strategy and snowball sampling conducive to recruiting an adequate number of participants. The participants in this study received training from employment and wrap-around based services through interviews. I also assumed that enough participants would meet the criteria so that I could make a successful analysis of their real-life experiences.

Another assumption related to this study is that providing employment-based reentry programming post-release was the link to successful reentry (Flatt & Jacobs, 2018; Lehmann et al., 2020; Lockwood et al., 2017). Researchers should be cautious when making presumptions that employment without any other interventions will support successful reentry for whether services were provided pre or post-release (Link & Roman, 2017; Seim, 2016). Although employment-based reentry programs post-release provide successful recidivism outcomes, it was also shown that the individual's education played a significant factor (Ellison et al., 2017; Lockwood., 2017; Tonseth & Bergsland, 2019). It cannot be assumed that providing employment-based reentry programming with wrap-around services alone will offer the critical components for a triumphant return with a reduction of recidivism without education or training being considered.

Scope of Delimitations

African American men have the highest rate of incarceration and are incarcerated 6.4 times higher than other races for violent crimes (Franke et al., 2017; Tyler & Brockmann, 2017; The United States Department of Justice, 2019). The average amount of time served for a violent crime by African American men is 13.4 years (Tucker, 2017; The United States Department of Justice, 2019). I sought eight African American male participants for this study who have attended reentry programs with employment and wrap-around services attached. I searched to find men between the age of 30 and 50 who have previous felony convictions.

Individuals without a felony were excluded from the study. Non-African American men and women were also excluded. Anyone who did not attend reentry

programming that had employment and wrap around services attached were excluded from this study. Those chosen were able to provide insightful information on real-life experiences of searching for basic integration back into their communities. Participants were recruited through a local organization that is designed specifically to support those who are reentering to their communities from incarceration. The organization was chosen to help find willing participants that feel safe and comfortable to deliver open, accurate information for the study. I had the organization's coordinator sign a letter of commitment that states that the coalition would allow me to post flyers on their social media platforms, on their website, and in their physical location. Using a coalition where those who have been previously incarcerated go to interact with people like themselves helped me as the researcher remove biases to ensure the population is treated fairly (Cypress, 2018; Maxwell, 2020).

Limitations

Reaching out to participants through social media can be a limitation because participants might not feel comfortable exposing their life experiences to someone they have met through social media. I used the local organization's social media pages for individuals who have been formerly incarcerated to ensure the population is comfortable and open with their environment in which they can share.

I provided a clear and defined description of my research project from beginning to end so that each participant could fully understand the scope of the work. I made the interview questions clear and concise so that I could draw the best information from the participant (Hoffding & Martiny, 2016; Joaquim et al., 2020; Rosenthal, 2016). During

the process, I ensured the participants knew they had the right to answer what questions they want and to stop the interview whenever they become uncomfortable. I also used the process of triangulation by gathering sources from scholarly articles, personal experiences through interviews, and government websites to ensure I collected enough data to reach saturation and credibility (Cypress, 2018; Joaquim et al., 2020).

I foresaw another limitation of this study of not finding enough people with felony backgrounds that have completed reentry programs. Not having a sufficient number of participants will not provide adequate data that will help answer the research question in this study. To avoid this limitation, I recruited through a local reentry facility and used purposeful and snowball sampling to gain participants with felony backgrounds.

Qualitative research can create concerns during a study. Rigor, conformability, flexibility, and credibility must be addressed to prevent bias from a research study (Joaquim et al., 2020; Liao & Hitchcock, 2018; Machackova & Smahel, 2018). To avert bias, I followed the interview guide created when performing interviews with the participants. Confidentiality was crucial to success in building a relationship of transparency with participants. I linked my research findings from interviewing participants to the reality of those who have been formerly incarcerated and completed a reentry program that had employment and wrap-around services attached. As the researcher, I ensured the research data did not go more in one direction over another. I united a team of professionals in reentry to engage in conversation about the process to alleviate any bias and ensure the process was being conducted properly.

I provided detailed information about the study verbally and in writing to the selected participants. Each participant was asked to confirm understanding of a consent form electronically, and all participants' names were changed to protect their identity. These measures were put into place to protect myself and the participants during the overall process (Joaquim et al., 2020; Zeleeva, 2019). I continued to check and recheck the data to ensure findings are from the participants and not my point of view (Joaquim et al., 2020; Zeleeva, 2019).

The coordinator of the local organization signed a letter of agreement with me to eliminate an additional limitation to this study where they may have been some misunderstanding of the role of the researcher and the agency where the participants were gathered (see Appendix A). The organization was used to post flyers to recruit participants. The letter of commitment addressed the description of the population that was being sought and details of the study. All documents, releases, consents, and data collection are stored on a password protected computer in an electronic file.

The final limitation acknowledged in this study is that the participants might not be open to share their authentic experiences. Those that have been formerly incarcerated build a wall to protect themselves while in prison to make it through the time needed to serve (Semenz & Link, 2019; Silver et al., 2020). Because barriers are built while in prison, it takes time to remove those walls when reentering their communities (Anderson et al., 2018; Semenz & Link, 2019; Silver et al., 2020). I have written in my interview guide an explanation of my connection with the population I sought and icebreakers that helped make the participant more comfortable.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study addressed the gap in understanding the experiences of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who have received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs. This study provided insight into those reentering their communities after incarceration and focused on understanding their successful reentry (Hunter et al., 2016; Senanayake, 2019). The key groups that could benefit from the research in this study are the Department of Corrections, nonprofit organizations, state legislators, and local employers. Because employment is one of the most significant barriers to those who have been previously incarcerated reentering to their communities, transitional services must be put into place to ensure success and the prevention of returning to prison or the increase in the recidivism rate (Eisenberg, 2020; Gill & Wilson, 2017; Visher et al., 2017). Therefore, those returning home can become contributing citizens and positively impact society.

This study gives researchers insight into the barriers that keep individuals who have been previously incarcerated from being successful (Garland & Wodahl, 2017; LaCourse et al., 2018; Wolfer, 2019). The research shapes how incorporating transitional employment with case management services into reentry programming can bring out new concepts for the justice system. Reentering citizens between the ages of 30 and 50 will obtain on the job training through meaningful employment while overcoming their barriers and then apply the skills into real-life settings. The study may impact employment laws, inform criminal justice policies, and shed light on the high rate of

recidivism (DeHaan et al., 2019; Severson et al., 2011). Therefore, more employers may be opened to hiring individuals who have been previously incarcerated. Those who have been incarcerated will be able to become self-sufficient and not feel forced to commit another crime; hence, the people of the communities will welcome those individuals who have been previously incarcerated returning home, which will allow for a safe and healthier environment (Doleac et al., 2020; Eisenberg, 2020).

Summary

It can be a long journey from incarceration to returning home. There are barriers that those returning home from prison face daily, and without intervention, there is little to no hope for a successful reentry (Seim, 2016; Zortman et al., 2016). Suppose the effects are adverse after an individual who has been formerly incarcerated has completed reentry programming that included an employment experience alongside wrap-around services. In that case, the recidivism rate will be high, which harms the community in which the ex-offender is returning. If the results are positive after an ex-offender completes reentry programming that has included an employment experience alongside wrap-around services, communities' recidivism rates will be lower (Chan & Boer, 2016; Pandeli & O'Regan, 2020).

My study highlighted the makeup of reentry programming and the impact of the criminal justice system positively decreasing recidivism through employment and wrap-around service-based programming. I would like to see reentry programming adapt components that will lead to successful reentry by obtaining sustainable employment and removing barriers for those who have been formerly incarcerated. If those returning home

are equipped with the appropriate tools, they can reenter their community and become successful contributors to society once again. The effect on communities can be profound as crime rates and poverty can be decreased.

Chapter 1 discussed the introduction, problem statement, research question, significance, theoretical framework, terms, and limitations related to my study. Chapter 2 will review the literature gathered throughout the study to understand the barriers that individuals who have been formerly incarcerated face, how barriers are removed, and reentry programming components.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Those returning home from prison face many obstacles along the way.

Employment is one of the most substantial barriers that a person returning home from prison must face (Nally et al., 2014). If a person had a job before incarceration, there is a likely chance it will not be available to them once they leave prison. Even if employment is obtained after a person has been incarcerated, removed from society, and removed from the support that helps people move through life, 49% will be terminated within the first 3 months of employment (Nally et al., 2014). Long periods of incarceration may cause a weakened ability to interact with society (Visher et al., 2005). Being incarcerated changes lives and the behaviors of those behind bars (Vignansky et al., 2018).

Intervention through reentry programming is needed to increase life meaning and self-worth (Vignansky et al., 2018).

The federal government started reentry programming by providing support for the Serious and Violent Offender Initiative (SVORI) in 2002 (Severson et al., 2011). SVORI was an attempt to provide service pre- and post-release by rehabilitating interventions to those who have been incarcerated, which lead the way for other reentry programs (Severson et al., 2011). The Second Chance Act of 2008 authorized by the federal government was an instrument that was used to allow nonprofit and government agencies to provide services for individuals who have been previously incarcerated to remove barriers of reentry such as housing, education, employment, and substance abuse, presently know as reentry programming (Wikoff et al., 2012). Reentry programs were

created within local communities, jails, and prisons (Wikoff et al., 2012). Reentry programs were a way to encourage the community to accept individuals who have been incarcerated (Severson et al., 2011). Components such as program length, partners, and curriculum are crucial to success when designing a reentry program (Severson et al., 2011).

Components and implementation of reentry programming related to those individuals reintegrating back into society through employment and case management services have been studied for understanding of barriers pertaining to successful reentry (Berghuis, 2018; Cook et al., 2015; Doleac et al., 2014; Duwe, 2015; Fabrabee et al., 2014; Gill, 2017; McLemore & Waren Hand, 2017; Temple et al., 2020; Varjavand et al., 2019; Willison, 2019). The studies have been limited in addressing real-life transitional employment with case management wrap-around services that provide successful reentry and provide successful reentry opportunities for those who have been formerly incarcerated in the efforts to address the documented problem of high recidivism (Potts & Palmer, 2014; Whittle, 2018). A review of the literature also showed that limited data exist on the experiences of reentry programs that provided real-life transitional employment opportunities. No studies focus on African American men between the age of 30 and 50 who completed reentry programs that provided transitional employment experiences. The limitations of the current research reinforce the need for more research in this area. The purpose of this phenomenology qualitative study was to explore African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs.

Obtaining and maintaining employment are obstacles that those returning home from prison face, but I focused on a discussion on individuals' experiences after receiving intervention post-release. I explored those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who entered a reentry program and their experiences. The discussion included transitional employment, intensive case management, soft skills, and hard skills. Unemployment of individuals who have been previously incarcerated is a contributing factor to an increase in the recidivism rate (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Although there are mixed reviews on reentry programs regarding recidivism, there are positive results that employment decreases recidivism (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). The support that reentry programs provide, such as soft skills and training, helps maintain employment (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Additionally, if individuals cannot stay employed, it can negatively affect recidivism.

The hiring practices of those who have been formerly incarcerated have been investigated, and it has been determined that those who return home from prison are not a protected class and have been discriminated against when receiving job offers (Nally et al., 2014). Another fact that was discovered was that African American men who have been previously incarcerated have an even harder time finding employment after incarceration (Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018). The principal theme of state and local policies has been how the employment of those who have been previously incarcerated has the potential to reduce recidivism. To solve the problem of unemployment for those individuals who have been formerly incarcerated is to find employment and maintain it by exploring the barriers of reentry.

In this chapter, I begin with a description of the literature search strategy used for this literature review. I then move to present the origin, description, and rationale of the theoretical framework. In the next section, I discuss the literature related to concepts with a review of current studies that include the conception of reentry programming and what remains to be studied on that topic. This chapter ends with a summary of major themes, what is known about the discipline of reentry programming as well as gaps in the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

Online repositories used included the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC), U.S. Department of Health Services, U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of Justice to review research that contributed to the problem statement. The online repositories helped established gaps in the research and rationale for the methodology of this paper. Each repository provided state and federal specific data, publications, and white papers that were absent from the scholarly review. Articles selected for this research are related to those who have completed reentry programs and ex-offender's successful reentry. The following keywords were searched during this research project: *re-entry programs, ex-offenders, employment, recidivism, unemployment of ex-offenders, transitional employment for ex-offenders, successful reentry, behavior modification, and barriers for ex-offenders*. Abstracts were used to scan the articles for relevancy for the research study.

I searched peer-reviewed articles, books, and the following databases: Criminal Justice Database, Google Scholar, Sage Journals, and EBSCO from the years of 2010

through 2020. Initially, my search did not provide enough information; therefore, I sought seminal articles before 2010 to be included to ensure the review of literature on reentry programming, employment, and case management services were exhausted. I also used formative articles to provide a foundation for the theoretical framework presented in this study. After completing searches on the terms related to my research, I located articles that narrowed down topic-related key terms from after 2010.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was based on McGuire's (1961) theory of inoculation. The theory of inoculation is a social psychological/communication theory that explains how beliefs or attitudes can be protected against the influence of surroundings or others, somewhat like how the body defends itself from the common flu after a vaccination (Szybillo & Heslin, 1973). McGuire provided insights on how to keep the point of view and beliefs consistent with the constant attempts to change them. Attitude is the center of the theory of inoculation in that it points out that behavior is influenced by the way people think and believe (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Inoculation refers to a substance or mindset introduced into the body that will cause a response that will protect the body or mind (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). The components of the theory include threat, refutational preemption, delay, and involvement (McGuire, 1961).

The first component of the inoculation theory is a threat that represents a barrier to a negative attitude is present (Banas & Richards, 2017; Dillingham & Ivanov, 2016). A threat is seen as a catalyst to resisting negative messaging or behavior (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Sims (2016) viewed a threat in the inoculation process as the

acknowledgment of an attitude or behavior that is at risk. It has been suggested that the presence of a threat will lead to a push to resistance (Banas & Richards, 2017). With a threat present, it gives an opportunity for the mind to create resistance to fight off the risk (Sims, 2016). Motivation derives from preparing an individual to build a defense in the presence of a threat and build immunity (Compton et al., 2016; Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). The threat can be in many forms, such as communication with others, which can affect the outcome of a situation, or in this study, how an ex-offender would speak to their employer or communicate within their communities.

The second component of the inoculation theory is refutational preemption, which is the response to a negative situation at the intimal act and the thought process of the action (Farkas & Anderson, 1976). Refutational preemption is when a person addresses the attitude or behavior first; then, it is addressed by pre-work or messaging that will prevent the behaviors from occurring in the future (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). When given a dose of refutational defense, one can build resistance to fight off attacks they see as their norms (Briggs & Harwood, 1983). Preemptively warning or prebunking involves developing a mental defense against negative settings (Roozenbeek et al., 2020). In this case, once an ex-offender is put into a difficult situation, they must change their behavior from what they consider the norm in a criminal environment.

The third component of the inoculation theory is involvement, the ability to resist persuasion. According to the theory, a person must repudiate their beliefs or condition of their environment to prevail against the persuasion of the norm around them (Infante, 1975; Ivanoa, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018). To confirm the modification of attitudes or

beliefs, the one receiving the inoculation treatment will need to be able to actively defend their beliefs and attitudes as if it was second nature (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). With the ex-offender population, a person has lived in a prison environment. In this case, the power of those who have lived in a prison environment lies within themselves to make a conscious decision to change or fight against what they know as normal.

The final element of the inoculation theory is delay, which is the amount of time after inoculation has occurred and the time between more attacks on a person's attitude or behavior (Banas & Rains, 2010). In this case, as those who are returning home from prison have been released, they need to be able to stand their ground on non-criminal behavior in the real world after leaving reentry programming when faced with real-life decisions on attitudinal influences (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Because the effect of the inoculation decreases over time, it has been indicated a booster of information is needed to continue to increase the positive impact of the original inculcation (Maertens et al., 2020). In this case, the process of change begins in prison, and reentry programming is used as the booster, as it should continue as a person reclaims their spot in society. The inoculation theory has been proven to be efficient in most cases (Banas & Rains, 2010; Maertens et al., 2020; Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Still, it has been criticized at times for not having a clear impact on behavioral changes or attitudes because of the limited amount of time after the participants were inoculated (Banas & Rains, 2010; Maertens et al., 2020; Matusitz & Breen, 2013).

In the early uses of the inoculation theory, evidence was provided that the behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions can be changed with the assistance of specific

messages that were strategically used to refute previous information (Szybillo & Helsin, 1973). For example, when placed in a cultural environment, people can experience cultural shock without the intervention of small pieces of the new culture being inserted into their lives (Briggs & Harwood, 1983). Cultural shock is subdued when the person can resist their old cultural beliefs and embrace the new ones (Briggs & Harwood, 1983). In the above example, individuals were provided information gradually on the new culture, which prevented them from falling back into their old cultural ways (Briggs & Harwood, 1983).

Individuals who are given small doses of positive information build resistance over time to ward off negative behavior in the future (Briggs & Harwood, 1983). Inoculation messages enhance the power to fight off negative attitudes and build strength to prevent those attitudes from reemerging (Sims, 2016). According to Maerten et al. (2020), 97% of scientists agree that humans' intervention changes behavior, attitudes, and norms. The process of humans driving messages of change has been effective for up to 44 days, with a booster of information given after the initial messages (Maertens et al., 2020). Inoculation messages effectively protect from behavior reemerging, but due to the amount of time after receiving messages, some say there was no significant change in behavior after 2 weeks (Banas & Rains, 2010).

The magic number of the length of time on when the inoculation begins to stop working is undetermined and still requires more research (Maertens et al., 2020). Due to the need for more research on the length of time, the fourth component of the inoculation theory delay becomes noteworthy to ensure messages have an impact, building resistance

between the amount of time between attacks of negative behavior (Banas & Rains, 2010). Resistance becomes more robust with a longer length of time of the injected messages (Ivanov, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018). The time between the threat reoccurring and initial inoculation will lead to a positive change (Ivanov, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018).

The theory of inoculation is widely known in the field of communication and was used to show how an unknown object can affect how people react to a specific situation (Compton et al., 2019). The resistance of persuasion has been lifted as being a significant component in the study of communication (Cronen & LaFleur, 1977). The theory was used in several other fields such as policy preferences, advertising, and health (Compton et al., 2016; Kim, 2013; Niederdeppe et al., 2014). The theory of inoculation can be used in many ways. Despite the multi-use of the theory, the common thread is changing behaviors and attitudes by providing a different narrative through small doses of information (Compton et al., 2019; Cronen & LaFleur, 1977; Niederdeppe et al., 2014). The information delivered is to provide protection while returning to old behaviors or attitudes, much like a defense to fight off a virus that will return (Infante, 1975).

The term inoculation derives from a biological or medical context (Compton & Craig, 2010). A medical analogy of subjecting a person to a virus where the body can build resistance from that virus was used in suggesting policy preferences by inserting messages to people to offset counter messages that they will encounter in the future (Niederdeppe et al., 2014). Inserting messages is said to persuade or lead the mindset to make specific policy preferences (Niederdeppe et al., 2014). With the same analogy being used in the field of corporate advertising, messaging is used to build resistance to

negative news in corporate crises (Kim, 2013). The inoculation theory was also used to confer resistance to persuasive influence through the health domain to prevent negative attitudes toward health behaviors such as dietary patterns, safer sex, and physical activity (Compton et al., 2016).

In a different medical setting, the prevention of sexual harassment was observed using three elements of the inoculation theory (Matusitz & Been, 2005). In the case of sexual harassment, a medical student was warned or prepped that a patient would come in and show sexual interest in the medical student (Matusitz & Been, 2005). To weaken the attack, once the medical student recognizes the illicit behavior, the student can turn away the patient (Matusitz & Been, 2005). At that point, the medical student has been faced with adverse conditions and has to defend themselves by not acting on that behavior (Matusitz & Been, 2005).

Subsequent research and application of the theory offered guidance on ways to understand how individuals who have been formerly incarcerated maintain the learned behavior associated with transitional employment-based reentry programming (Banas & Rains, 2010; Ivanov, Parker, & Dillingham, 2018; Matusitz & Breen, 2005; Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Counseling and support for returning home from prison are provided through reentry components such as education and life skills to prepare a defense when faced with counter-attitudinal attacks (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Providing reentry program activities is much like the rabies vaccination. The rabies virus is given as an inoculation to protect those who have not yet been exposed to the virus, yet it also defends those exposed to the virus (Niederdeppe et al., 2014). When a reentry program is

created, there are several components that those returning from the criminal justice facilities have encountered and some they have yet to encounter. After incarceration, most reentering to their community fails because they have never been employed and never have followed the rules (Nally et al., 2014).

The inoculation process is used in research by inserting an unidentified substance or mindset into a person to build resistance to that substance (Roozenbeek & Sander Van Der Linden, 2019). In this study, the substance or mindset introduced is a prison, and the substance injected to protect the body or mind is reentry programming. Those subjected to imprisonment are institutionalized and mirror the behaviors set in the forefront that involve criminal behavior (Ivanov, Sellnow, et al., 2018). I chose this theory lens to determine how reentry programs change criminal behavior and thinking through the repetition of learning a new point of view. A threat is one of the factors in the act of defending oneself (Compton et al., 2016). The wall of defense is a learned behavior that causes a negative attitude that affects criminal behavior (Skinner-Osei & Steptean-Watson, 2018). Farkas and Anderson (1976) indicate that providing assistance to help a person defend oneself provides more robust positive results, which is an indicator of how reentry programming assists in changing criminal behavior. A person's ability to resist what has been their norm has been said that a positive outcome depends on the knowledge or skill gains of how to continuously refute against that behavior (Farkas & Anderson, 1976). With intentional methods of changing attitudes and behaviors in place, the success rate of change in those behaviors and attitudes increases (Infante, 2009). In this study, reentry programs provide a structured curriculum on resisting prior criminal

behavior and attitudes to prepare those returning home to society. The theory of inoculation was used in this study to show how the gaps in research of transitional employment with real-life, meaningful work are paired with intensive case management services to change the attitudes and behaviors of those who are reentering their community through the resistance to persuasion.

Prisons were designed to house and rehabilitate those who have committed crimes through a viable approach of behavior modification (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Matusitz and Breen (2013) were the first to apply the inoculation theory to show the power in diminishing criminal recidivism rates through the application of reentry programming that reduces recidivism among prison inmate populations. The inoculation theory's premise was used to show the reduction in recidivism is much like a medical inoculation where a dose of a virus is given to ward off the disease (Matusitz & Breen, 2005). The belief is that providing persuasive resistance, cognitive restructuring, and behavior modification to those who have entered prison in doses will help those returning to their communities be prepared when faced with the decision to perform former criminal activities (Matusitz & Breen, 2013).

Individuals who received high involvement, like intensive wrap-around services, showed a stronger resistance to poor attitudes (Sims, 2016). In this case, providing doses of corrective activities and placing those returning home from prison into real employment settings will possibly provide defense against criminal behavior and will contribute to answering the research question of what are the daily lived experiences of African American men between 30-50 years old who have received real-life transitional

employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs. The reduction of recidivism has many factors that affect the communities that those who the criminal justice system enters have touched. First-time employment opportunities and wrap-around services with intensive case management activities provide a foundation for resistance to criminal behavior (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Through the strengths of the inoculation theory, behavior modification and learning are new ways to respond positively in adverse environments (Banas & Richards, 2017; Compton et al., 2016). The following sections expand the present study's primary concepts: reentry programs with intensive case management wrap-around services and transitional employment.

Literature Review

This study's primary theory is related to the behaviors of those who had been in incarcerated. The focus is on the exploration of those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who have completed re-entry programs. The research formed around the notion is upon those reentering their communities after being released from prison who have completed re-entry programming with intensive case management, and transitional employment that was dependent on employment success and those not returning to prison (Garland & Wodhl, 2017; McNeeley, 2018a; Nally et al., 2014). Those who overcome barriers while reentering to their communities have a profound robust chance of a positive outcome (Farabee et al., 2014; Hill et al., 2017; Vignansky et al., 2018). I discussed the barriers of those returning home from prison face and the components that make up reentry programs in the literature review below.

Reentry Programs

America is leading the nation in increasing incarceration rates which is a big factor of those that return to prison due to a failure in rehabilitating incoming formerly incarcerated citizens (Seigafo, 2017). Whether it is providing housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, mental health help, or providing soft skills training, there must be a structure to provide these services or failure is inevitable. Reentry programs are designed to ensure assistance to individuals who have been pervously incarcerated so that they do not return to prison (Visher et al., 2017; Zortman et al., 2016). In addition to provide assistance, reentry programs are designed to alleviate barriers for those returning home from prison (Zortman et al., 2016). The lack of services such as education, housing, substance abuse, and mentoring provided to individuals who have been previously incarcerated when leaving prison will have a higher rate of recidivism (Wikoff et al., 2012). Rehabilitation techniques are said to be more effective when a person starts engaging in programming while they are incarcerated and continues services after incarceration (Vignansky et al., 2018). Barriers that those individuals who have been formly incarcerated face are different from barriers a person who has never been incarcerated would face.

Barriers to Community Reintegration

In the United States, 4.7 million adults are under the supervision of parole or probation and the predominant race is African American men who are subject to face barriers such as employment, homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse (Franke et al., 2017). After conducting a search of the literature on employment and wrap-around

services in re-entry programs, I found an abundance of research focused on barriers faced by those returning home from prison (Farabee et al., 2014; Kendall et al., 2018; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018). The most forthcoming barriers were housing (Farabee et al., 2014), substance abuse (Kendall et al., 2018), support groups (Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018), co-occurring disorders (Miller, 2014), lack of education (Luther et al., 2011), and mental illness (LaCourse et al., 2018). Semenza and Link (2019) used the term *cumulative reintegration barriers* to describe the variety of hurdles set forth for those who return to their community from prison. Individuals that have had criminal justice involvement experience additional barriers such as childcare and debt related to the specific situation; however, there has been limited review of how the barriers affect the health of those who have been formerly incarcerated (Semenza & Link, 2019). Anticipating the needs of those returning home will increase successful delivery to help remove barriers, however, before aiding in removal of reentry barriers, the obstacle of getting program participants to the services must be removed (Wolfer, 2019). The barriers that those who return home from prison face were determined to have an impact on gaining employment and successful reentry (Nally et al., 2014).

Employment

Employment is viewed as an indicator of success (Augustine, 2019). Being employed provides financial and emotional stability. Although employment is a critical factor in positive reentry, the more significant barrier for those reentering to their communities is finding an employer that will invest and hire them (Augustine, 2019). Factors such as the degree of conviction, safety for businesses, and the length of

conviction influence hiring managers' hiring decisions (Griffith & Young, 2017).

Employers do not share a consistent evaluation process when considering hiring those who have been formerly incarcerated (Griffith & Young, 2017).

Employment provides a sense of self-sufficiency and independence (Nally et al., 2014). When a person is released from prison, employment among other rehabilitation efforts is needed to reduce recidivism (Pandeli & O'Regan, 2020). Transitional employment is necessary before a person can successfully hold a job after prison (Severson et al., 2011). Severson et al. (2011) found that having a temporary or transitional job without additional interventions had no bearing on lowering recidivism.

Individuals with a history of incarceration need an income to pay for the necessities in life, such as housing, food, and clothing. Klinker-Lockwood and Nally (2016) examined the effect of race, education, and employment on offenders returning to society and found that African Americans who were incarcerated have a higher recidivism rate because they return to higher poverty-stricken areas with limited opportunities for employment. Although African Americans showed a high risk of recidivism when not being employed, it was determined that regardless of race, having a job after being released from prison has an impact on recidivism (Klinker-Lockwood & Nally, 2016). Those who were released from prison had more of a difficult time finding employment when there was a lack of education (Silver et al., 2020). The lack of education limits skill sets, which prevent employability (Klinker-Lockwood & Nally, 2016).

Education

Recidivism decreases among those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who were educated versus those that were uneducated (Shippen et al., 2017). Those returning home from prison who were employed after release without any other social service interactions showed success for the short term; however, the results of success in the long term diminished (Berghuis, 2018). Employment is an indicator of recidivism, but education or employment could affect recidivism (Sedgley et al., 2010). The argument of education versus employment playing the most significant factor in recidivism had been debated among many researchers (Ellison et al., 2017; Klinker-Lockwood & Nally, 2016; Lockwood et al., 2012; Sedgley et al., 2010). Having skills would benefit those individuals who have been formerly incarcerated post-release, not return to prison (Sedgley et al., 2010). Those who have limited education post-release may not find employment that promotes self-sufficiency and may result in repeat offending (Lockwood et al., 2012; Sedgely et al., 2010). Those who attend college have a less likely chance to recidivate (Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). Although the risk of returning to prison lessens upon higher earned credentials, any level of education such as soft skills that include problem-solving, interpersonal communications, and self-esteem also will decrease the rate of recidivism (Sokloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017).

Education is a barrier to those reentering their communities that affect employment, thereby living a sustainable lifestyle free of crime (Luther et al., 2011). Due to a lack of education, employers are reluctant to hire those who have been formerly incarcerated (Luther et al., 2011). Individuals who have been perviously incarcerated have a stigma placed on them from the time they enter prison, which provides a substantial

barrier when searching for employment within the poverty-stricken community they return home to (Luther et al., 2011). Inmates that had received some type of education while incarcerated have a lower recidivism rate due to finding better employment opportunities post-release (Sokoloff et al., 2017).

Education comes in a variety of avenues. Education that comes directly from correctional facilities aide in postive educational octcomes that lead to sucessful employment oportunties post-release (Reed, 2015). Vocational and educational training programs enhance job readiness skills and aid in the reduction of recidivism (Agbakwuru & Awujo, 2016; Wikoff et al., 2012).

Housing

Housing is a barrier that those who have been formerly incarcerated face while on their journey to returning home (McNeeley, 2018b). The perplexing problem of where a person will lay their head at night affects daily interpersonal communication and personal hygiene (Farabee et al., 2014). The physical space of housing where an individual who transitions home from prison plays a role in their successful reentry due to their support (McNeeley, 2018b). Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated who go into structured residential homes immediately after prison have a better chance of not returning to prison than those who are released directly into their community (McNeeley, 2018b).

The barrier of employment and housing are often tied together as an individual needs to be able to afford housing and employers may be reluctant to hire someone who does not have stable housing (Gill, 2017 Because housing is a barrier that those returning

home face, it has been a component for most re-entry programs. Although providing housing to individuals who have been previously incarcerated did not indicate a direct link to reducing recidivism, a person having housing had more of a successful life experience (Farabee et al., 2014).

When individuals who have been incarcerated are released into the same community that they were incarcerated in, it plays a factor in the individuals' behavior and whether their criminal activity will return (Kirk et al., 2018). Without assistance, individuals returning home from prison are forced to return to their previous living arrangements because they face the barrier of finding suitable housing due to criminal background checks, restrictions on public housing, and large deposits (Whipple et al., 2016). There should be a conscious effort to move individuals who have been previously incarcerated out of the community they were arrested in to provide a pathway to successful reentry (Kirk et al., 2018). There are successful reentry programs that produce results that indicate the critical elements of services for those reentering their community successfully, including individualized programming (Gill, 2017). Each person has individual characteristics. The process of finding out what each person is facing and then determining how to approach that barrier is key to their success.

Support Systems

The place a person resides after incarceration is created by the people around them in which they are released. Not having a support system is another barrier that individuals who have been formerly incarcerated face when returning home (Skinner-Osei & Stepteanu-Watson, 2018). A support system starts with the people that surround

someone when they return home. Strengths-based re-entry programming that can be completed pre and post-release is a community based process that requires the collaboration and support of family, the prison system and community organizations (Hunter et al., 2016). Strengths-based programming is when community based organizations identify barriers of those returning home from prison through an assessment and create a strong barrier removal plan by working with the entire team that is supporting the individual returning to that specific community (Hunter et al., 2016). Strengths-based programming created an outlet to generate a strong support group supporting the those who have been formerly incarcerated into successful re-entry (Skinner-Osei & Steptean-Watson, 2018). After a person has paid their debt to society through incarceration, they may be stigmatized by their communities while searching for basic needs such as housing, employment, education, or healthcare; consequently, help is needed through the form of a support group (Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017). It is hard to build a support system while in prison and keep that connection (Agbakwuru & Awujo, 2016). Therefore post-release programs have a negative connotation at times.

Support systems provide whatever the individual involved in the criminal justice system can't seem to carry on their own at that moment (Hunter et al., 2016). Barriers that individuals who have been formerly incarcerated carry can have multiple pieces. One piece is the barrier of having someone to lean on or give guidance when things look dark (Cochran, 2014). Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated who do not have visitors or support while in prison have less of a successful outcome when returning home to that very same group (Cochran, 2014; Widdowson et al., 2018). Even if there is a strong

relationship with family or friends, being incarcerated diminishes that relationship and increases stress, family dynamics, and economic situations (Smith & Young, 2017). Support systems that consist of negative influences such as others who interact in criminal behavior has a negative impact on recidivism (Taylor & Becker, 2015). When trying to build a new beginning outside of prison, it can be difficult without having positive supports that can be a source to confide in other than deferring to a substance to self-medicate or return to previous criminal behavior with times get rough (Widdowson et al., 2018).

Substance Use and Abuse

Substance use and abuse, often combined with mental health issues, are additional barriers to reintegration and avoiding recidivism (Hamilton & Belenko, 2016). Many incarcerated individuals do not have access to suitable housing, education, or stable employment before entering prison (Cooley, 2019). The lack of essential needs causes strain on a person who has been formerly incarcerated and can cause trauma that may induce self-medication ; therefore, there is a higher percentage of substance abuse during and after incarceration (Cooley, 2019). With approximately 600,000 individuals being released from prison, about 65% of those returning home have a substance abuse disorder (Semenza & Link, 2019). Substance abuse is one of the leading factors for negative recidivism rates, affecting one-third of the male population being released (Kendall et al., 2018; Wylie & Rufino, 2028). Substance abuse is another significant barrier that individuals who have been previously incarcerated face when returning home, which can

affect them pre and post-release. Illegal drug usage is a negative predictor of successful reentry (Western & Simes, 2019).

Through the use of illegal drugs, self-medication may be used by those touched by the criminal justice system to void out pain and escape reality (Vignansky et al., 2018). Substance abuse presents a high risk of recidivism, finding employment, and all-around unsuccessful reentry (Bunting et al., 2018). Participation in treatment programs is lower for those who have been released from prison for various reasons, including lack of health insurance, lack of motivation, and resources (Finlay et al., 2017). Those that encounter more than one barrier tend to have a hard time re-acclimating to society (Miller, 2014). Americans show increasing substance abuse usage and continue to search for resources to produce positive outcomes (Hamilton & Belenko, 2016). Successful creation of services for those pre-release has been delayed because of the high treatment cost (Cooley, 2019). Therefore, individuals who have been perviously incarcerated who suffer from substance pre-release have a more challenging time post-release with treatment without intervention (Cooley, 2019).

Kendall et al. (2018) presented a review of re-entry programs that address drug and mental health disorders. Housing, support services, and soft skills training are the key components to help those reentering their community with substance concerns enter successfully (Kendall et al., 2018). Substance abuse and mental health can affect anyone, but it can be more prominent depending on what race you are and what your upbringing is like pre-incarceration (Ray et al., 2017). Having substance abuse treatment pre and post-release for those who need it helps with the overall process's success. A roadblock

such as substance abuse is challenging within itself for those returning home from prison without the strain of mental health concerns as well.

Mental Health

Mental health is also a barrier that an ex-offender faces when returning home from prison due to the stress of being arrested and incarcerated as well as reacclimating to life in a community (Mahaffey et al., 2018). As mental concerns within the prisons started to grow in the mid-1990s, Mental Health Courts (MHCs) were created to combat mental health issues (Lowder et al., 2016). There is a relationship between mental illness, emotion-oriented coping interaction, and arrest due to direct victimization encountered while being in prison (LaCourse, 2018). Those victimized through incarceration have been found to recidivate sooner than those who did not have victimization experiences (Wylie & Rufino, 2018).

The link between mental health and victimization is that those victimized experience psychological issues due to traumatic events in the past, going back as early as childhood (Wylie & Rufino, 2018). Victimization and abuse are considered a potentially traumatic event (PTE), which exaggerates the need for trauma-informed care for those who have been formerly incarcerated reentering their communities (Piper & Berie, 2019). Although inmates do not receive proper screening, finding the primary source of what causes the mental diagnostics, then determining treatment, can help reduce the probability of a person returning to prison (Nwefoh et al., 2020). Numerous components can be like a puzzle trying to make the pieces fit and cause a lull into successful re-entry (Miller, 2014). Those who face co-occurring disorders show collateral

effects on re-entry programs (Miller, 2014). The lack of follow-up to that group that coexists with multiple conditions increases attention to those who are currently incarcerated's treatment processes (Miller, 2014). Those being released with mental illness and who use an emotion-oriented coping style are less likely to recidivate (LaCourse et al., 2018). Emotion-oriented coping styles are when individuals regulate adverse emotional reactions to stress, fear, anxiety, fear, sadness, and anger (LaCourse et al., 2018).

During the transition of those formerly incarcerated returning home, services and treatment can decline. Mental health is one of the first services that are dropped during the transition from prison to home (Mahaffey et al., 2018). The transition can be difficult for various reasons, whether that is because a person may feel they no longer need services, have limited access to services, or may not know where to find the necessary assistance (Bakken & Visher, 2018). Individuals who have been previously incarcerated can also drop mental health services due to prisoners being misdiagnosed and receiving treatment that is not needed; therefore, may be more successful post-release in finding employment and stable housing (Brown et al., 2019). The non-continual mental health services, in conjunction with the other barriers of those reentering their communities, can cause mental health conditions to become exaggerated (Nwefoh et al., 2020). Obstacles such as lack of employment were a significant factor in a decline in mental health, particularly in African Americans, which increase recidivism rates (Mahaffey et al., 2018).

Reentry Programming Best Practices

There are multiple components that make up re-entry programs that would be considered the best practices in re-entry programming. Those components were building a support system (Skinner-Osei & Steptau-Watson, 2018); enduring behavioral therapies (Wilson et al., 2005); providing employment (Hill et al., 2017); providing mentors (Koschmann & Peterson, 2013); and healthcare (Mahaffey et al., 2018). Some re-entry programming is delivered pre-release, which is offered inside of the facility (Luther et al., 2011). Other re-entry programming is provided post-release, which is delivered after an individual has been released from the facility back into their community (Severson et al., 2011).

Pre-Release Versus Post-Release Programs

The difference in pre-versus post-re-entry programs is the components that make up the specific programming. While some believe pre-release planning is the key to successful re-entry, others believe that post-release activities provide a more significant opportunity for a lower recidivism rate (Luther et al., 2011). Some re-entry programs offer both pre and post-release components. Re-entry programs must address each individual with a person-centered approach, whether the services are delivered before or after release to prevent reincarceration (Vignansky et al., 2018). Gender-responsive programs, which are programs intended to cater to the gender of the client, are most effective within the prison and outside the prison (White, 2012). Services should be provided pre and post-release to be successful (White, 2012). Once an individual starts something, success depends on the motivation within them to continue. Re-entry

programs that offer solely pre-release activities have an inconsistent impact on lowering recidivism (Visher et al., 2017). Individualized programming and the activities' sequence have a more substantial effect on reducing recidivism, whether pre-or post-release (Visher et al., 2017). On the contrary, programs that provide increased services for re-entry programs from pre-release up to 3 months post-release do not show a big difference in reducing recidivism (Lattimore & Visher, 2013). However, those individuals who receive intensive services pre-release with a warm hand-off to post-release services produce a decrease in new crimes reported (Lattimore & Visher, 2013).

Re-entry programming designs that are composed of three components: completion of pre-release re-entry assessments, identifying resources, and having a support team that consists of the same case manager who provides services pre and post-release have negative impacts on recidivism (Severson et al., 2011). In the models where the support team consists of parole or a probation officer alongside the case manager, there is no effect on recidivism (Severson et al., 2011). In the first re-entry program assessments, those who had experienced re-entry programs were at a higher risk of recidivating than those who had not participated in any programming (Severson et al., 2011). With all the components in place: the appropriate team, a warm handoff from pre and post-release as well as adequate resources, there has not been enough research on the length of time of engagement that is most effective for pre or post-release programming to imply accurate results (Severson et al., 2011). Over the past ten years, re-entry programming has progressed.

Wrap Around Service Components

For the past 15 years, wrap-around services have been traditionally used to address families that have children with emotional or behavioral issues (Walker & Sanders, 2011). Wrap-around services have since been implemented in various ways, such as mental health, education, and those touched by the criminal justice system (McCarter, 2016). Wrap-around services are not just services, but a planning process of specific community team-based resources used as a holistic approach to resolve problems (Coldiron et al., 2020; Matthews et al., 2019). Having wrap-around services integrated into reentry programs are favorable to reentry programming; however, there has been limited research on how reentry program components are delivered to those reentering their communities (Willison, 2019). Components of reentry programs need to be in place to address the barriers of those reentering their communities face (Willison, 2019). Reentry program operators that combine wrap-around case management services and employment have reported positive employment results with individuals who have left prison not returning to prison (Cook et al., 2015).

Having employment with wrap-around services helps people remove several barriers instead of just employment (Cook et al., 2015). The combination of employment and wrap services provided a form of education, such as soft skills training on interacting with others to help maintain employment (Ellison et al., 2017). Those individuals who were currently incarcerated took advantage of educational programs in conjunction with a combination of services while in prison had positive impact on recidivism (Tonseth & Bergsland, 2019). The rate of those returning to prison slowing depends on the type of educational programs provided and the length of the programs supplied in prisons to help

an individual who has been formerly incarcerated gain the appropriate skills and or knowledge to obtain gainful employment (Ellison et al., 2017).

Those returning home from prison who enter re-entry programs with wrap-around services produce positive results (Cook et al., 2015). Still, there is a contrast that some say that employment is the only reason for those individuals not returning to prison and shows that wrap-around services have no bearings (Cook et al., 2015). Re-entry programs that include wrap-around services as a holistic approach do not deliver consistent positive re-entry outcomes; however, the argument is not in the service delivery model but through the implementation of the re-entry model (Willison, 2019). Through the process of measuring re-entry, the measure of success on recidivism cannot be complete without looking at the entire picture of what the definition of success is for a person who has returned home from incarceration (Wilison, 2019). There has been a limited view of measuring the incremental progress that individuals who have been formerly incarcerated show from the day of exit (Willison, 2019). Taking a holistic approach and combing wrap-around services with employment positively impact the lives of people returning home from prison by reducing recidivism (Doleac et al., 2020). Wrap-around services that are implemented into programs that focus on those with behavioral needs can strengthen the success rate of those returning home (Coldiron et al., 2020). Understanding the lived experiences of individuals that have gone through re-entry programs that combine wrap-around services can tell a more exceptional picture.

Building Support Systems

Building components to a reentry program created from inside the community where the individuals will be returning to rebuild their lives have proven tremendous success (Schmitt-Matzen, 2019). The theory behind building a reentry program from the inside out starts with the notion that barriers encountered by those individuals who have been formerly incarcerated returning home are removed by the community resources in which we all live (Schmitt-Matzen, 2019; Stacer & Roberts, 2018). Communities have the power to provide services such as housing, healthcare, and employment. Instead of those who have been formerly incarcerated venturing out on their own to build a support group, the suggestion is that social service providers and agencies that assist that group of individuals who have been formerly incarcerated focus on providing the support needed for successful reentry (Taylor & Becker, 2015). Communities and those developing reentry programs working together can begin to address the need of those reentering society as a whole (Schmitt-Matzen, 2019). The backbone of some communities is faith-based organizations. As individuals are being released, it has been recognized that faith-based reentry services needed to increase and have emerged over time (Stacer & Roberts, 2018). Having a religious affiliation through the community provide instruments for desistance (Stacer & Roberts, 2018). Religious groups are a form of support that some of those who have been formerly incarcerated find are beneficial in their recovery (Mowen et al., 2018). Those engaged in a religious support group pre and post-release have a significant impact on reducing substance abuse, which reduced reoffending (Mowen et al., 2018). The support that is started and continued plays an essential factor in not returning to prison (Mowen et al., 2018). There are still unanswered questions about

whether the interaction of religious groups alone increases those formerly incarcerated's rehabilitation (Mowen et al., 2018). Men released from prison that indicated they have participated in religious rehabilitation programs have a lower reincarceration rate (Vignansky et al., 2018).

Positive relationships come in a variety of forms. The support given to formerly incarcerated individuals has been instrumental in life changes (Vignansky et al., 2018). The combination of barriers that those who are returning home from prison face added with the way society perceives that population enhances the need for social support (Mahaffey et al., 2018). The demand for support and dependence increases when society puts stigmas on those formerly incarcerated and directly reflects a person's mental health (Mahaffey et al., 2018). There is a difference between positive and negative supports built around a person despite having any prison contacts (Taylor & Becker, 2015). Peer or support groups had no bearing on recidivism (Taylor & Becker, 2015). Other factors are put ahead of having a support group when leaving prison, such as substance abuse, mental health, and victimization frequency while incarcerated (Taylor & Becker, 2015).

Those who surround themselves with individuals who have positive life goals return to prison less frequently than those who placed themselves back in the negative environment from which they lived before incarceration (Vignansky et al., 2018). Negative supports can bring about stress for an individual as they may place high demands on a person returning home from prison, such as money, housing, and entertainment (Vignansky et al., 2018). Support systems should be composed of any positive network that surrounds a person after incarceration, consisting of family, friends,

or faith-based groups (Mahaffey et al., 2018). Spouses or significant others that spend time with those in prisons until they return home provide positive results in the long term for the individuals who return home and the entire home environment (McLeod & Bonsu, 2018; Widdowson et al., 2019). Although most returning home from prison prepare for a positive reunification with their families, it can be challenging to reconnect due to family norms, financial strain, and daily routines (McKay et al., 2018). It is crucial that the support built around a person returning home from prison is positive and does not influence negative behavior (Widdowson et al., 2019). Living in a negative environment without a support system, no job, and dealing with the additional stressors that go along with having a criminal background continue to be the barriers that those who have been formerly incarcerated face when returning home unless there is some intervention (Skinner-Osei & Steptau-Watson, 2018). African American males showed positive progress with re-entry, family reunification, and recidivism after completing a re-entry program, which provided resources for building those supports, which increased knowledge for those who build re-entry programs (Skinner-Osei & Steptau-Watson, 2018).

The builders of reentry programs take alternative approaches. An alternative approach to reentry is mentoring and delivering wrap-around services to prisoners who are getting ready to return home (Koschmann & Peterson, 2013). Peer mentoring is a component in reentry programming that is apart of the transformation from a criminal mindset to one of desistance (Matthews et al., 2020). Mentors can define and shape the outcome of successful reentry by defining the path in which those who have been

formerly incarcerated follows (Kenmore & Seungho In, 2020). Mentoring helps communicate how to navigate through the process of reentry for those who have never gone through it (Koschmann & Peterson, 2013). Having a mentor that has experienced what a person has gone through is not the same as having a support system that can include family or church members (Matthews et al., 2020). Having a support group is highly essential to the success of a person reentering their community (Cochran, 2014). People need to build positive relationships post-release because support groups bring social ties to their communities (Cochran, 2014). The response required is through reentry programs. However, the key is what components are necessary to have success (Franke et al., 2017).

Behavior Modification

Use of Therapy. The four walls that confine those who are currently incarcerated go beyond the concrete cement and extend to the outside once they are released, and de-prisonization is needed to begin successful reentry (Crichlow, 2014). Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated, specifically African American men, get their manhood challenged through weaponization and prisonization (Crichlow, 2014). Prisonization is the process of conditioning oneself of the prison culture and building upon the facility's length of stay (Martin, 2018). The longer a person stays in prison affects their behavior and psyche (Shlosberg et al., 2018). Cognitive-behavioral therapies help with interventions in changing mindsets such as criminal behavior. Behavior modification can be a pivotal part of successful reentry (Wilson et al., 2005). Individuals that have been incarcerated make moral decisions that caused an outcome that led them to prison. Moral

judgments are right judgment calls versus what is wrong or good versus bad (Aharony-Goldenburg & Wilchek, 2016). Behavior modification can be used to change individuals' mindsets (Wilson et al., 2005). Those reentry programs that incorporate Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) into the curriculum will affect individuals who have been formerly incarcerated experiences through reentry programs (Wilson et al., 2005). MRT is a process that forces you to deliberately make conscious decisions (Ferguson & Wormith, 2013). The use of MRT lowered recidivism and improved interpersonal components (Blonigen et al., 2018; Ferguson & Wormith, 2013).

Attitudes and Motivation. The motivation and attitude of a person can dictate how their day will go, whether it will be positive or negative. A Criminal Attitude Program (CAP) is also a program used for behavior modification that measures criminal attitude, lifestyle changes, and motivation that produces positive recidivism outcomes (Simourd et al., 2016). Changes in behavior during prison time are just as significant as those continuing to be changed when released into the community (Yesberg & Palaschek, 2019). The situation one is put in and the magnitude of how a person is rewarded affects whether dishonest behavior will change or continue (Gerlach et al., 2019).

Addressing Trauma. The prison population is 90% men and 98% of those men have experienced at least one traumatic experience in their lifetime, and most have experienced that in prison (Pettus-Davis et al., 2019). Those who enter prison experience trauma and trauma-informed care strategies are needed to subdue the trauma that occurred during incarceration (Chaudhri et al., 2019). Trauma-informed care interventions through reentry programs will provide behavior modification to those

returning home and support successful reentry (Pettus-Davis et al., 2019). In the trauma-informed care model, specific interventions are delivered to those who have experienced the trauma and those in the support group that aid in the reintegration back into communities (Chaudhri et al., 2019). Factors of behavior modification can vary.

Hope. There is no correlation of treatment designed to change criminal behavior directly impacting the decrease of recidivism (Yesberg & Palaschek, 2019). Hope is one of the most influential factors in behavior modification and successful reentry for those formerly incarcerated (Vignansky et al., 2018). Hope is affixed to a person's motivation and the progression of one's goals, whether it was education or employment (Vignansky et al., 2018). Those who are returning home from prison must make changes in their lives, such as moving from a structured environment to having little to no positive supports, and it must begin while they are still incarcerated through internal and external motivation (Martin, 2018). Individuals who have been incarcerated learn prison behaviors to survive and are deprived of pro-social activities such as outings and gatherings that bring cheerfulness (Shlosberg et al., 2018). An Intersectional Model of Desistance assists those returning home to move away from a criminal mindset through community connections, direct activities, and support (Glynn, 2016). People must have positive things to look forward to when returning to their communities (Martin, 2018). Happiness is a vital component of the amount of hope a person has from within (Wong, 2019). The more hope a person has, the higher their chances to succeed in vocational or educational programs through the reentry process (Vignansky et al., 2018). Hope might be the only emotion that gets an individual through their prison experience. Reentry programs that

identify the risk that removes happiness, hope and provide tools for de-prisonization are keys to successful reentry (Shlosberg et al., 2018; Vignansky et al., 2018; Wong, 2019).

Education and Vocational Training

Education and vocational training are one of the most crucial tools to have after being released from prison and the prevention of returning (Augustine, 2019). Re-entry programs that combine wrap-around case management services and employment have positive employment results for those who were previously incarcerated not to return to prison (Cook et al., 2015). The combination of employment and wrap services provided is a form of education, such as soft skills training on interacting with others to help maintain employment (Ellison et al., 2017). Having employment with wrap-around services allows people to remove several barriers instead of just employment (Cook et al., 2015). Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated need aid to understand how not to break the law again while working to be a productive citizen.

Although there is no differentiation between women and men for financial stressors in prison, working for little to no money, paying for medical care, and trying to stay in contact with family members does not set individuals up for a successful reentry (Harner et al., 2017). An element of wrap-around services that should be provided before those who have been formerly incarcerated receive employment is education on their crime and laws around employment (Augustine, 2019). Those returning home from prison and who do not want to recidivate seek aid through reentry programming that provides education on finding legal work that will provide a sustainable living wage (Augustine, 2019). With the barrier of spatial mismatch, which is where low-income individuals live

and where the actual jobs are, those returning home from prison have to fight for employment opportunities (Sugie & Lens, 2017). Space and location are a vital component during job searches (Sugie & Lens, 2017). In state prisons, 65% of the population are incarcerated before receiving a high school diploma or other educational opportunities (Fullilove et al., 2020). Due to changes to industries, technology, and jobs, individuals who have been out of society need the training to prepare for employment (Sugie, 2018). Employment without any other interventions provides life skills learning, daily structure, life satisfaction, and a sense of self-worth (Sugie, 2018).

Having a work history affects a positive outcome when returning home from prison (Harding et al., 2018). Job skills deteriorate the longer a person stays in prison; therefore, reentry programs that include work programs and or education aid in successful reentry (Agbakwuru & Awujo, 2016; Fernandes, 2020; Harding et al., 2018). Providing vocational training and or education to individuals who are currently incarcerated and post-release, individuals who have exited from prison, is the solution to low education and low employment skills (Sedgley et al., 2010). A higher level of education or skill set will render a faster employment rate (Zimmerman, 2016). Those who completed programs like the state-recognized Florida Spector Vocational Program (FSVP) showed the impact on reentry outcomes that indicated significantly lower recidivism rates (Hill et al., 2017). FSVP is a vocational work program that focuses on pre-release programming where individuals did not return to prison within months of their release; however, individuals did not increase employment in the three months of their release (Hill et al., 2017). Although the lack of education is identified as one of the

largest probabilities to aid in recidivation, individuals who are currently incarcerated who took advantage of educational programs while in prison had a small impact on recidivism (Ellison et al., 2017; Fullilove et al., 2020). Not all education comes in a traditional form. A health-giving environment with a community-based approach post-release had a more substantial effect on employment earnings when returned to society than obtaining a GED pre-release (Jensen et al., 2020). Because it is difficult for those returning home from prison to acclimate, it takes community integration to provide prosocial activities and learn how to build interpersonal relationships to become hireable (Moore et al., 2018). Funding for educational programs in correctional facilities are dependent on low recidivism rates and passing test scores; however, the focus should shift to incorporating programming outcomes of how well a person progresses based on their environment (Walker, 2016). Most individuals who attend educational programs that have been touched by the criminal justice system have no study habits and the lack of skills for motivational success and can be an overwhelming experience; therefore, programs should include elements to counteract those barriers (Baranger et al., 2018). Depending on the type of educational programs provided and the length of the programs supplied in prisons, it will help an ex-offender gain the appropriate skills and or knowledge to obtain gainful employment (Ellison et al., 2017).

There are positive results for those who enter re-entry programs with wrap-around services; however, some say that employment is the only reason for those individuals not returning to prison and shows that wrap-around services have no bearings (Cook et al., 2015). Taking a holistic approach and combining wrap-around services with employment

makes a positive impact by reducing recidivism (Doleac et al., 2020). Understanding the lived experiences of individuals that have gone through re-entry programs that combine wrap-around services can tell a more exceptional picture.

Mental Health

Individuals that return home from being incarcerated have a high risk of dealing with mental health issues (Bakken & Visher, 2018). There are multiple stages within the criminal justice system that those with mental health concerns may encounter. Mental health can manifest from stage one at arrest to incarceration to reintegration (Bakken & Visher, 2018). Mental health intervention is needed for those released into their communities after incarceration (Mahaffey et al., 2018). Reentry programs can add specific components that help comfortably reenter those individuals who have been formerly incarcerated to their communities. The involvement of community partners has a significant factor in reentry programs' success by providing accessibility and easy navigation through their local healthcare providers (Miklósi, 2020; Vail et al., 2017). Community-based post-release reentry programs that offered tools of prevention and coping skills had positive outcomes for recidivism (Angell et al., 2014). Guidance through the healthcare system is not easy to navigate, and having specific one on one guides would aid in successful reentry post-release (Vail et al., 2017). After incarceration, programs that provide interventions for mental health decrease the rate of returning to prison (Mahaffey et al., 2018).

In 1997 the first Mental Health Court (MHC) was established to provide structured, specialized treatment programs for those who have been incarcerated and

suffer from mental health issues (Lowder et al., 2016). The criminal justice-involved who graduated from an MHC has shown a decrease in recidivism (Lowder et al., 2016). In 2002, the government gave mental health reentry programs a chance to expedite making an impact due to the Serious and Violent Reentry Initiative (SVORI) (Veeh et al., 2017). Reentry programs followed the three-tier modeled design that included the first phase a pre-release assessment to assess the risk of recidivation and the tools determined to mitigate those risk; the second phase of intensive services being delivered right before release and the final stage of community engagement and follow up from six months to one year after release (Veeh et al., 2017). Reentry programs that followed the SVORI model had positive recidivism results, particularly around new convictions (Veeh et al., 2017). Mental health programs that use coping mechanisms are more successful than most that show a high recidivism rate that deals with emotion-oriented coping that affect diversion decisions and avoidable stress situations (LaCourse et al., 2019). Additional components that help with successful reentry are trauma-informed care, resources, and focus on self-esteem-related training (Belknap et al., 2016). People with a history of mental health illness are more prone to problems post-release than those who do not have a history of mental health illness pre-release (Bakken & Visher, 2018). Those who had reported mental illness pre-release appeared to struggle more with barriers during their incarceration time, but due to intervention, struggled the least post-incarceration (Bakken & Visher, 2018).

Substance Abuse Treatment

Mental health and substance abuse often appeared simultaneously throughout my research as an essential component of reentry programming. According to the National Institute of Health (2020), 65% of the prison population have a substance use disorder, with only 11% receiving treatment. In 2011, 27% of 4.8 million individuals that were under supervision were recognized as having substance abuse disorders (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016). With the high rate of substance abuse disorder in prisons, reentry programming should address the issue post-release to contribute to successful reentry (Zortman et al., 2016).

Pre or post-release substance abuse treatment may be value-added to those who are returning home. Prerelease substance abuse programming plays a more critical factor in successful reentry; however, post-release substance abuse treatment is more relevant (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016; Jaegers et al., 2016). Individuals involved in a family-based training model prerelease were less likely to be rearrested within one year of their release (Lurigio et al., 2016). Additionally, those who returned to prison had a longer length of sobriety before reincarceration (Lurigio et al., 2016). Individuals with co-occurring substance abuse disorders who entered a prerelease reentry program focused on cognitive-behavioral change that provided job readiness and offender treatment for substance abuse showed lower recidivism rates due to treatment and employment (Miller & Miller, 2017). Those who enter post-release services need to be closely followed because individuals who continued to receive treatment after release showed an increase in recidivating (Miller & Miller, 2017)

Post-release substance abuse treatment programs have a negative effect on recidivism, others argued different results. Program participants that lived in a halfway house for post-release substance abuse treatment were less likely to be reincarcerated within one year of their release (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016). Those living in a sobriety home also showed a lower rate of parole violations that led to recidivating (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016). Agencies that used the Access to Recovery model and focused more on a holistic approach to reentry saw positive recidivism outcomes (Ray et al., 2017). The Access to Recovery model is an initiative funded by the Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that provides a dual approach of wrap-around services and a clinical aspect (Ray et al., 2017). The lack of community resources, family networks, and corrections staff that can address the barrier of substance abuse is detrimental to successful reentry among those who suffer from substance abuse disorders (Bunting et al., 2018). Community advocates such as caseworkers aid that will help with sobriety and therefore leads to successful reentry (Kendall et al., 2018). A collaboration model needs to be in place through reentry community programs, the criminal justice system, and reentry treatment centers to aid in successful reentry (Hamilton & Belenko, 2016). Additional findings indicate that three components should be added to reentry services: trauma-informed care, the second is more illicit severe drug testing while on supervision, and finally, an expanded Medicaid program to prevent self-medication (Western & Simes, 2019). Those that used the GRIP model, which has four components that focused on understanding the impact of violence on victims, mindfulness, stopping violence, and emotional intelligence, experienced lower recidivism rates (Cooley, 2019).

There is an indication that intervention for those with substance abuse disorder has a higher positivity rate for staying out of prison longer than those who do not have intervention (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016). Understanding the components of reentry programs that provide services for substance will help with understanding the lived experiences of those that have gone through reentry programs.

Summary and Conclusion

The literature reviewed offered insight into those who have completed re-entry programs from several recent studies in the world of the criminal justice system. The research focused on critical components in re-entry programs, behavior modification, employment, and case management services. The findings of these studies highlighted a combination of internal and external factors of the re-entry process. The process includes changing criminal behavior, pre and post-release interventions, employment-focused programming, vocational training, substance abuse, alternating approaches to wrap-around services, and family reunification (Hill et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2018; Skinner-Osei & Stepteau-Watson, 2018).

The review further offered insight into the literature supporting the gap of this study. The study design was to address the understanding of the experiences of African American males between the ages of 30 and 50 who have completed re-entry programs that had case management services alongside transitional employment opportunities, specifically understanding the changing of criminal behavior embedded in the case management curriculum (Wilson et al., 2005). I found insight into the foundation of re-

entry programs alongside the experiences and outcomes of participants who completed programming.

These studies were limited in providing real-life experiences of those who faced a combination of barriers who obtained jobs upon reentering their community. The literature review also did not identify research that offered solutions to the barriers that those reentering home faced. Also, further exploration needs to identify what are the experiences of those who have removed barriers they had after completing a re-entry program.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological study was used to explore the lived experiences of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who receive real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs. I attempted to understand the experiences of entering a reentry program composed of real-life work experiences and wrap-around services from the inside perspective of African American men and their reentry journey into their communities. In this chapter, I included the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, the methodology, and issues of trustworthiness for this study, concluding with a summary of the research method.

Research Design and Rationale

I conducted a phenomenological study that examines this question: What are the daily lived experiences of African American men between 30 and 50 years old who have received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs? A qualitative study involves data gathered by a researcher through firsthand opportunities such as focus groups, interviews, or simple observations (Belotto, 2018; Cypress, 2018). Qualitative studies can have different disciplinary roots; some derive from interdisciplinary, theoretical physics, sociology, or linguistics (Lo et al., 2020). A phenomenological qualitative inquiry of the framework's disciplinary roots derives from philosophy (Lo et al., 2020). Unlike other qualitative studies, a phenomenological study explores the writings, ideas, and thoughts of experts on the topic

being researched (Ellis, 2019). The idea is to focus on the lived experiences of those most experienced in that area of study (Belotto, 2018).

Although I choose a phenomenology study, there are disadvantages to this approach, such as policymakers at times give low credibility to the results due to the data being gathered from the participants' lived experiences in the study, and it can therefore be seen as subjective (Cypress, 2018). Pros and cons exist in every chosen research tradition. However, the advantages of choosing a phenomenological study in this case outweigh the disadvantages. Some advantages of a phenomenological study are opportunities to contribute to the development of new theories (Cypress, 2018). Another advantage is that the data gathered are often considered more "natural" because they are received from people who have experienced the phenomenon firsthand (Cypress, 2018).

I attempted to understand the phenomena of African American men's manifested experiences of going through reentry programming on their journey to successful reentry (Neubauer et al., 2019). I attempted to gather subjective data through semi-structured interviews with the participants (see Strijker et al., 2020). Using a thematic analysis, I went through the data and identified common themes (see Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

A quantitative study was deemed unsuitable, as I wanted to understand the personal experience of those who have completed reentry programming with real-life employment opportunities connected with wrap-around services. I wanted to understand the impact on individuals completing reentry programming and recidivism and what is considered successful reentry. A quantitative study is used when processing statistical numerical data and variables (Tomic et al., 2018). Quantitative analyses are more

oriented around economics and natural sciences (Strijker et al., 2020). Qualitative analyses are used primarily with research questions and context inclusive of psychology, sociology, and or human geography (Strijker et al., 2020). My study did not require analyses of variables or numerical data based on my research question.

Role of the Researcher

In this research effort, I portrayed the role of a qualitative research data collection instrument, an interviewer, and an observer. As the data collection instrument, I asked the question in the interview and asked follow-up and probing questions to retrieve more information from the participant. As the researcher, I created an Excel filing system to hold data collection and organized the information gathered. As an observer, I documented body language, eye contact, and non-verbal cues from the interviews. Field notes, analytical memos, and an interview guide were composed once information was assembled (Rosenthal, 2016).

I did not have a previous professional or personal relationship with the participants, so I had to build trust. In order to do so, I created a safe and an open environment for the participant. Building trust with the participant is the key to a successful interview (Lafrance, 2018). I built trust with my interviewees by letting the participants know I was open and honest throughout the process and that I would not be sharing their identity. I talked through each step to ensure each party knew the expectations of the interview. I found common ground by explaining why I wanted to understand their lived experiences. I also built rapport by including ice breakers and discussing my experiences with those reentering their community from prison. Having

the environment set up before the interview, having an interview guide to follow during the interview, and asking open-ended questions portrayed a solid image that I was prepared and knowledgeable. The interview guide was easy to read, including the process of how things went before, after, and during the interview (see Kallio et al., 2016). I had the virtual recording set up before time with a blank background to avoid distractions, and I followed my interview guide.

I conducted semi-structured interviews. I choose to use semi-structured interview questions because I wanted to leave room for enriched discussions (Joaquin et al., 2020). As the researcher, I wanted to control the interview, but at the same time, I wanted to leave room for flexibility to allow for deviation, which allowed me to gather more insight from the interviewee. During the interviews, I was able to have direct interaction with the study participants and was able to gather sufficient data and control the narrative. At the end of the interviews, I allowed the participant to ask questions and get further clarification before I moved on to explaining the next steps of the study (Kahle, 2017).

Having processes in place to prevent unethical acts in a qualitative study from occurring is the responsibility of the researcher. To prevent biases during the study, the researcher must ensure trustworthiness through credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Halbesleben, 2011; Machackova & Smahel, 2018). The researcher must ensure transparency throughout the process of the study. From recruitment to the interview, to the data collected through the findings, I shared the findings of widespread of the lived experiences of those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who have completed reentry programming (Mootz et al., 2019). I started with finding common

ground with the participants by sharing why I wanted to conduct the interview, and I provided detailed explanation of the entire process. I shared my personal experience with understanding the criminal justice system. Providing a team of professionals throughout the study to review the project mitigated and ensured the concerns of my bias of being a human service professional in the field of reentry crawling into the project (Mootz et al., 2019). I had reentry specialist review the interview questions and monitor the process.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The target population is African American men who have had felony convictions between the ages of 30 and 50 years old that have completed reentry programming composed of real-life work experiences and wrap-around services. If they were on electronic monitoring or any form of supervision, they were excluded from the study to ensure that no stipulations related to their release and supervision were violated. The population of individuals who have been formerly incarcerated selected in my study were not identified as a vulnerable population, as they are not incarcerated or on any type of supervision but were provided informed consent and voluntarily agreed to participate. I used purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to obtain participants for this research study.

Purposeful sampling is used by a researcher who wants to select participants that are considered knowledgeable and or experts of a phenomenon (Kendall et al., 2018). The researcher must choose the most appropriate strategy that aligns with the best selection process. Purposeful sampling was most appropriate for this study because it

provided me the opportunity to recruit people who were individuals who shared their lived experiences of being a person who had been involved with the criminal justice system, their barriers, and what they see as successful reentry. Using this participation selection process, I was able to better the opportunity to receive unbiased rich information from the participants included in the study (Joaquim et al., 2020).

Snowball sampling was also used to obtain participants for this research study. Snowball sampling was used to allow current participants to share my flyer with future participants which was done virtually or word of mouth. Additionally, I used social media and flyers through the local organization to recruit participants. With the use of social networks, the technique of people referring people to the study was helpful, as people were more likely to recruit individuals that were in their immediate circles (Fabiola & Ignasi, 2012). However, the fact that individuals referred people they know can lead to numerous biases. Therefore, snowballing was not the only method of recruitment.

I posted flyers on the social media sites of the partner organization and at their physical location. I added a link directly to the flyer on social media through SurveyMonkey (see Appendix B) to allow the participants to complete the inclusion criteria and provide their preferred contact information. Those who saw the flyer at the location of organization were able to use the link as well to show interest in the study.

After reviewing the list of participants who wanted to participate, I choose African American men who have completed reentry programming that combine employment opportunities and wrap-around services. The selection of the participants for

the study were only individuals that met the specific inclusion criteria. After the surveys were reviewed and the selection process was completed, I contacted each participant using their preferred contact information and provided my contact information. My preferred contact method was through phone, email, or social media messaging. I then arranged a time with the participants to begin the interview. I conducted the interviews via video; no in person interviews were selected, therefore no inperson interviews were conducted. All interview's audio was recorded. Because the consent form is the first page of my survey, I did not read the consent form before the interview started and did not receive verbal confirmation before proceeding. I recruited six to 15 total participants and stopped at eight when saturation was met.

Instrumentation

Demographics

I gathered demographic information in two ways for this study. Through SurveyMonkey, I created a questionnaire that provided credibility to the demographics required for this study; those questions consisted of asking the participants' age, ethnicity, and gender (Appendix C). Additional questions were asked during the interview and placed on the interview guide that again confirmed the participant's age, gender, and ethnicity (Appendix D). Additional questions on the interview guide under the demographics section included questions such as how many children the participant has and their marital status. To qualify for the study, the answers were consistent with helping answer my research question, including being African American men between the ages of 30 and 50. Some of the follow-up demographic questions helped paint a

complete picture of the participants, such as having multiple children and whether they have a spouse or support system in place.

Interview Questions

I conducted interviews where I asked open-ended questions to ensure I had the flexibility to proceed through the process conversationally and to allow the interviewee to have an opportunity to express their experiences. The interview was semi-structured to ensure an understanding of the participant's real-life experience (Joaquim et al., 2020). I prepared an interview guide with pre-written, well-thought-out questions to help with following the process and keeping the interviewer on track. The interview guide had questions that help bring out the participants' lived experiences and make them feel comfortable as they tell their encounters (Joaquim et al., 2020). The interview guide also was packaged with all the forms needed to have a successful interview such as the direction of what the day will be like and the consent forms.

I was the first data collection instrument by conducting interviews that gathered and recorded information such as responses to the interviews, observed body language, and listened for speech patterns to ensure I provided a complete view of information. I used my cell phone to record the interviews so that I could review the audio as many times as needed and to provide accurate accounts of the process.

The semi-structured interview process for this study was created through interview questions that were developed as a result of countless research articles around re-entry programming. I used 20 open-ended interview questions found in Appendix D as the instrumentation method to collect data for this study. Each question was designed to

draw out single concepts with a specific focus at hand to elicit stories of their experiences (Joaquim et al., 2020). I prepared eight probing questions and an opportunity for pause if things got too uncomfortable for the participant to continue. I closed with a wrap up that allowed for additional information about life after returning that the interview would like to share. Table 1 below outlines the interview and probing questions.

Table 1*Interview and Probing Questions*

Demographic questions	
Question 1	What is your age?
Question 2	What is your gender?
Question 3	What is your ethnicity?
Question 4	How many children do you have?
Question 5	Do you have a significant other?
Question 6	Tell me about your family.
Question 7	Tell me about your background.
Question 8	Tell me about what led you to prison.
Question 9	How long has it been since your last release date?
Interview questions	
Question 1	Tell me about your experiences while in prison.
Question 2	How do you feel about being incarcerated-Emotions?
Question 3	How has being incarcerated impacted your life?
Question 4	What factors in prison helped you get through your day?
Question 5	Tell me about the day of being released from prison?
Question 6	Upon reentering your community, how were you able to speak openly about your time in prison?
Question 7	Define successful reentry into your community.
Question 8	Tell me about your concerns when you reentered your community.
Question 9	What were your biggest barriers you faced when you returned home?
Question 10	How did you hear about your reentry program?
Question 11	What type of wraparound (case management) services did you receive through your reentry program?
Question 12	What type of employment services did you receive from your reentry program?
Question 13	What type of industry are you currently working in?
Question 14	What led to your decision of not wanting to return to prison?
Question 15	How has participating in a reentry program impacted your life?
Question 16	Tell me about your feelings of respect- what does that look like?
Question 17	What type of relationships have you had pre- or post-release that were meaningful?
Question 18	Tell me about your lack of trust in people- what does that look like?
Question 19	Who are you able to trust prior to incarceration and after incarceration?
Question 20	Please share any other thoughts or comments you would like for me to know.
Additional probing questions	
Question 1	Tell me more about what led to your decisions that led you to prison. (Q8)
Question 2	Tell me more about your trust levels prior and after incarceration. (Q18)

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment

Before moving forward with conducting my study, I waited for Institution Review Board (IRB) approval. I reached out to the local organization and received permission to post flyers to their social media sites, and in their building by completing a letter of commitment (see Appendix A). Upon IRB approval (Approval no.11-02-21-0754835), I proceeded to post my flyers (see Appendix B) on their social media pages and in their building to start the recruitment process. I provided a description of the project, inclusion requirements, demographic questions, and a link directly on the flyer that provided an eligibility questionnaire through SurveyMonkey (see Appendix C). The questionnaire survey allowed me to remove participants that do not meet the eligibility requirements of the study. I collected the participant's questionnaires and begin to reach out to the participants to set up interviews.

Participation

Those who decided to participate in the study had clicked the link provided in the flyer. After the participant had answered the eligibility criteria, the first point of contact was made. When the participant choose to continue with the survey, they went on to the next screen which included the overview of the study and the explanation of each participant's confidentiality as well as the consent form.

After reading the consent form and agreeing, the participant answered yes, and continued with the process in the survey. The process consisted of scheduling the interview time and place, and the options were: face-to-face, via Zoom, WhatsApp,

Google Hangouts, or Facebook chat. Before the interview started, I reminded the participants their audio would be recorded and received verbal confirmation. The interviews were completed within 30 days of starting. On the survey, the participant selected which option was best for them and provided contact information. The participants then choose the best interview time. The schedule was be made to be flexible to align with the best timing for the participants. The interviewers were given flexible options Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 am -11:00 pm EST weekly until the study had reached saturation.

Whether the process of a face-to-face interview were selected or video chat, each interview was directed to be in a safe, quiet, confidential place. The chosen location allowed each participant to be comfortable, allowing the person to share and build a rapport with me as the interviewer. In the survey the participant selected a location. I provided options for a safe location for each selection. If the participant selected a virtual interview, I provided suggestions such as having the interview in a locked room such as a bedroom, office, or bathroom and using headphones to ensure others do not overhear the interview. The suggestions were be included in the consent form. Although, I had selected a location at the local library, where there is a private room with a door in a neutral location, none of the participants selected an face-to-face interview. Therefore, I did not have to reach out to the participants via messenger to provide details on a location.

Data Collection

Once the interviews were set and confirmed, the next steps of the interview process began. Each interview was recorded via cell phone and captured audio and to ensure the researcher can capture every bit of information. I utilized my created interview guide, which included 20 open-ended interview questions that helped gather in-depth information from the single event of the experiences after re-entry programming (Joaquim et al., 2020). The interview guide helped me as the researcher be prepared with what to ask, when to ask, how to ask the interview questions and provided an introduction to the interview and a closing to the interview (Joaquim et al., 2020). Although the guide was used, it also allowed for flexibility within the interview, so the participants were able to add to the content as they saw fit. After the interviews were completed, the researcher let the interviewees know that they are closing out the interview and provided details of what happen next. The researchers let the interviewees know that their time is appreciated and that they might be contacted for follow-up questions for clarity. Each interviewer was transcribed by using Otter.ai verbatim. Otter.ai is software that transcribes oral meetings. After the transcripts are completed, I sent a copy to the participant via email to validate the interview (Roberts, 2020). The original recording was stored with the researcher as the official file.

Data Analysis Plan

As I gather data for my research study, I kept the individuals confidential by using pseudonyms or alias. A pseudonym is used in a qualitative research study to protective the names of the participants used in the study (Given, 2008). Pseudonyms are used well with vulnerable populations or populations where information can be detrimental if

exposed, such as criminal behavior (Given, 2008). I used AAM1 for African American Male 1, AAM2 for African American Male 2, continuing in order. The only other individuals that will have access to my interview recordings, transcripts, and knowledge of participant identities will be my committee members.

After I gathered the interviewees' data, I began to review the data by transcribing the conversations using Otter.ai. Once I transcribed the discussions, I manually coded each interview. Using thematic analysis, I identified and analyzed patterns or themes of those who have participated in reentry programming where employment and wrap-around services were attached within the data collected (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). First, I familiarized or compiled my data using NVivo (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The next step I took is I disassembled my data by coding it (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). With the use of NVivo, I was able to identify different relationships in the data. The eclectic process was used to create codes by using the first impression of the data coming straight from participants' responses (Deane et al., 2020). After several cycles of coding, I reassembled my data by looking over the codes and generating themes that emerged during the process of understanding the experiences of those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who participated in reentry programming that had employment and wrap-around services combined (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The data was collected in NVivo. Next, I reviewed the data and searched for themes to ensure I am not missing anything (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). After reviewing themes, I then started interpreting the data by defining and naming the themes found (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Finally, I wrote up my conclusion and findings (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I continued the process until no new themes or patterns were brought to the forefront; at that point, saturation was met (Rosenthal, 2016). Saturation was met after I continued to see the same themes emerging (Guest, 2020). At the point saturation was met, I ended the process. If saturation had not been met, I would have gone back to the list of vetted participants and start the interview process until saturation was met.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is imperative to have evaluated through the research study. To ensure that this project is valid, I must ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To determine the quality of the research findings, I addressed transferability, dependability, conformability, and credibility (Rosenthal, 2016). I established content validity through the attempt to measure if the study answered the question of the lived experiences of African American males that completed reentry programming consisted of real-life employment and wrap-around services (Rosenthal, 2016). With the use of triangulation, I provided trustworthiness in the interview protocol development stage (Yeong et al., 2018). I used the interview protocol refinement steps: (1) interviewed, and researched question alignment, (2) inquiry-based conversations, (3) received feedback, and (4) piloted interview questions to determine and improve the quality of the interview data (Yeong et al., 2018). To ensure my interview questions aligned with my research question, I reviewed many articles about reentry programs (Roberts, 2020). I also developed an interview matrix for each question to ensure alignment with my research question (Yeong et al., 2018). I designed

my questions around inquiry-based conversations by understanding those who have reentered their communities after incarceration and who have entered reentry programs (Roberts, 2020). From the interviews, I verified the outcomes of successful reentry. I also had a group of reentry experts review the interview questions and provide feedback to ensure they were suitable and able to draw out discussions that will answer my interview question (Roberts, 2020). Finally, I tested the questions by conducting mock interviews with the same reentry experts (Yeong et al., 2018). The reentry experts consisted of three case managers who have worked in the field of reentry for a combination of 15 years. The convened team of experts provides reentry services for those returning home from a local non-profit.

Credibility

Credibility can be established in research studies through triangulation, which is the method that uses multiple data sources for data collection (Ellis, 2019). Credibility is the process of pairing the research with the data and ensuring it is accurate (Ellis, 2019). I addressed credibility by linking the interviewee's data to plausible information drawn directly from their experiences (Rosenthal, 2016). In my research study, triangulation was used to establish credibility through scholarly articles, government websites, and interviews. I have read many peer-reviewed articles and government sites to learn about the population of those who had been incarcerated. I used the articles to understand and familiarize myself with reentry programs and those returning home from incarceration. Data collected from government websites helped me gain knowledge of demographics and recidivism rates. I continued the interview process until I started to see similar

themes arise over and over, and at that point, saturation was met. Saturation is when the researcher cannot find new information from the data set (Joaquim et al., 2020). I tested the validity of the interviews through member checks. I provided a copy of each participant's interview to the interviewees and a copy of the final research paper upon its completion to ensure I captured everything accurately. I also provided a detailed description of the research study process through an informed consent form to ensure rigor of the project (Ellis, 2019). I have convened a group of professionals in the field of reentry who are not directly involved in my study to review interview questions and follow my research processes throughout the study. The reentry professionals were not privy to any raw research data. I used the data gathered from the interviews to understand the phenomena of those returning home who have entered reentry programs and their successful reentry.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which data can be transferred from one research project to the next (Maxwell, 2020). In my research study, I provided details on individuals who have been previously incarcerated and who are African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who are considered the highest to recidivate and are not currently on any form of supervision. I sought out participants who have entered reentry programs that provided employment experiences and wrap-around case management services. The African American men selected for this study were asked to share their lived experiences of reentry programs and their successful reentry. I also provided

information on where the men are recruited and how they begin the interview process. I then closed with details of the qualitative interview process.

Dependability

Dependability is the process of validating the data by establishing if the researcher will get the same results if the study is done more than once (Maxwell, 2020).

Dependability is difficult in a qualitative study but essential (Maxwell, 2020). To obtain dependability through triangulation, I utilized scholarly articles, government websites, and interviews with African American men who participated in reentry programming. I had a group of reentry professionals in the criminal justice field, through a local nonprofit, review my data collection process. The group was not given any raw data collected. Updates were sent before data collection, during data collection, and after data collection with a requested response within one week. I created an audit trail to capture my raw data, documentation of my process, and notes to accomplish confirmability.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the researcher's process of validating the data by checking it multiple times and ensuring it is available and accurate for all to review (Maxwell, 2020). Creating an audit trail allowed me to track where the data was being pulled and for the data to be checked and rechecked by multiple sources. I created confirmability through reflexivity by documenting original quotes and provided events and actions that helped form my interpretation of the data. Rigor was established by utilizing a team of professionals in the reentry field that convened periodically throughout the study, from developing the research questions to reviewing the study's process and direction. The

group was used to continually review reflexivity and any bias that I might have brought to the table as a researcher. The reentry experts do not have access to raw data or direct contact with the study participants. I created a journal to capture my journey and have open discussions with the convened group of reentry professionals I worked with throughout my study.

Ethical Procedures

When diving into a person's lived experience and letting the story be told, that person's perspective can lead to ethical concerns while engaging in a qualitative research study. Potential ethical concerns can come across during a qualitative research project. It is the researchers' job to put protocols in place to ensure the integrity of the project (Fotrousi et al., 2017). Protocols such as having a secured system in place to organize and document your data, have each participant acknowledge a consent form, and provide a clear explanation of the project's guidelines will help ensure the research's trustworthiness (Fotrousi et al., 2017).

I have chosen the partnership organization to display flyers as a resource to where those who have been formerly incarcerated frequent for guidance and information. The organization was selected to ensure there would be no conflict of interest with my organization. The local organization has entered into a letter of commitment (LOC) found in Appendix A. with the researcher to give specific guidelines on the research project. The LOC guidelines defined each participant's part in the research project, the purpose of the project, who was recruited, and the project's scope.

Once approved, I posted a flyer on the selected social media sites that included a link that led directly to a survey that vetted out eligibility requirements. Once the participants cleared the eligibility questions and the logistics of the study, they were asked to go to the next section, which was the consent form. The consent form included how their identity will be protected and how the participant has the right to remove themselves from the study at any time. Within the survey, the participants were also given a confidentiality agreement to review before the interview begins to reassure the participant that the data will be handled with care (see Appendix C). At the beginning of the recorded interview, I reminded the participant their audio was recorded. I created a virtual folder to capture the LOC. When gathering participant information, each participant was provided a pseudonym to protect their names (Given, 2008). All data gathered is stored in a password protected file and only given to those on a need-to-know basis. Gathered data will be destroyed a minimum of three years after the research study is completed and closed with IRB.

Summary

This phenomenological research study consisted of eight African American males between the ages of 30-50. Several documents and forms were completed before, during, and after the start of this study. These forms included pre-recruitment questionnaires/flyers, informed consent forms, and confidentiality agreements (See Appendices A-E). The researcher gathered data through three methods and provided interviews with the eight participants. Issues of trustworthiness were addressed through strategies described with the researcher. Created documents, audit trails, and efforts to

keep data safe were put into place to address ethical concerns throughout the study. The next step is to present the data that has been collected.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain a deep understanding of the day-to-day lives of those who entered reentry programming and their successful reentry into their communities. This study helped me to understand this phenomenon in-depth (Kendell et al., 2018). The research question used in this study was: What are the daily lived experiences of African American men between 30 and 50 years old who have received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs? In this chapter, I discuss specifics around my processes used for this study, such as the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and concluding with the results of this study.

Setting

Participants of this study were offered to interview via online platforms: Zoom, WhatsApp, or Facebook Messenger, and an option for face-to-face in-person interviews. The procedures were followed as outlined in Chapter 3. Due to COVID-19, none of the participants chose in-person interviews, so all interviews were done virtually. Only one participant chose WhatsApp, and all other participants chose Zoom as their option. My study was posted via a flyer on a local nonprofit's social media sites and their bulletin boards at their facility. Participants used the link on my flyer to answer criteria questions. If the participants qualified for the study, the survey went directly into the consent form then into an option to select a date, time, and platform preference for their interview. I made myself available from Sunday through Saturday, 8 am to 11 pm EST. I allowed for

flexibility, as two holidays fell between my 30-day period when I started my interview process.

As I began to schedule interviews with participants, I provided suggestions for private, distraction-free locations to conduct the virtual interviews. I informed the participants that selecting a suitable location would allow us to communicate throughout the interview without interruptions and deliver clean content for recording. Before each interview started, I asked participants to silence their phones. There were limited to no interruptions or outside interference during the virtual interviews.

Demographics

The participants of this study consisted of eight African American men. To be eligible for this project, participants needed to be between 30 and 50 years old. The participants' ages ranged from 31 to 50. Each participant was no longer under court-ordered supervision and had completed a reentry program that included employment-based services along with wraparound services. The participants were given pseudonyms that were sequenced AAM1 through AAM8. Participants' demographics were as follows:

- AAM1: Male, 31-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programming with employment services and wraparound services, four children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM2: Male, 42-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programming with employment services and wraparound services, two children, no father figure growing up.

- AAM3: Male, 49-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, eight children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM4: Male, 35-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, six children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM5: Male, 33-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, three children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM6: Male, 43-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, five children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM7: Male, 50-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, two children, no father figure growing up.
- AAM8: Male, 37-year-old, African American, under no supervision, complete reentry programing with employment services and wraparound services, one child, no father figure growing up.

Data Collection

As a sample size, typically used in a study like this, I recruited eight individuals (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I used purposeful sampling, which uses small samples of information-rich cases for in-depth study (Benoot et al., 2016; Cypress, 2018; Kendall et

al., 2018). I supplemented my recruitment with snowball sampling, which is the use of participants referring others that they know to participate in the study, which can be done virtually or in-person (Marcus et al., 2017; Vieira et al., 2018).

Triangulation was used through scholarly articles, government websites, and interviews in my research study. I have read many peer-reviewed articles and government sites to learn about the population of those who had been incarcerated. I used the articles to understand and familiarize myself with reentry programs and those returning home from incarceration. Data collected from government websites helped me gain knowledge of demographics and recidivism rates. I continued collecting data with the interview process.

Prior to the start of the interviews, I sent the link for the virtual platform. I sent the link seven minutes early to allow time for myself and the participant to make any adjustments needed for setup, such as connectivity issues or audio concerns. I began each interview with a basic introduction, the purpose of the interview, a layout of how long the interview should last, an explanation of the pseudonym, and gave time for any last-minute questions. Each interview lasted between 55 and 89 mins. The interview's audio was recorded by my cell phone to keep the recordings all on the same platform despite the selected virtual platform.

There were no variations in data collection as outlined in Chapter 3. I used the semi-structured interview process, which included my interview guide. Six out of the eight interviews did not require the use of additional probing questions, as they were very detailed and often had overlapping answers. Although some answers overlapped, to

maintain the project's integrity, each participant was asked all questions. Because the participants were so detailed with their responses, I did not have to reach out for clarity or additional questions.

Data Analysis

After each interview concluded, I began to review the data by transcribing the conversations from my cell phone using Otter.ai. Once I transcribed the conversations, I manually coded each interview. Using thematic analysis, I identified and analyzed themes of those who have participated in reentry programming where employment and wrap-around services were attached within the data collected (see Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). First, I compiled my data using NVivo (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Then, I disassembled my data by coding it (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). With the use of NVivo, I was able to identify different relationships in the data. The eclectic process was used to create codes by using the first impression of the data coming straight from participants' responses (Deane et al., 2020). After several cycles of coding, I reassembled my data by looking over the codes and generating themes that emerged during the process of understanding the experiences of those individuals who have been previously incarcerated who participated in reentry programming that had employment and wrap-around services combined (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The data were collected in NVivo. Next, I reviewed the data and searched for themes to ensure I was not missing anything (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I followed the inductive approach method by formulating codes derived for the participants. I was able to develop codes based on participants using similar language and describing similar experiences. After reviewing

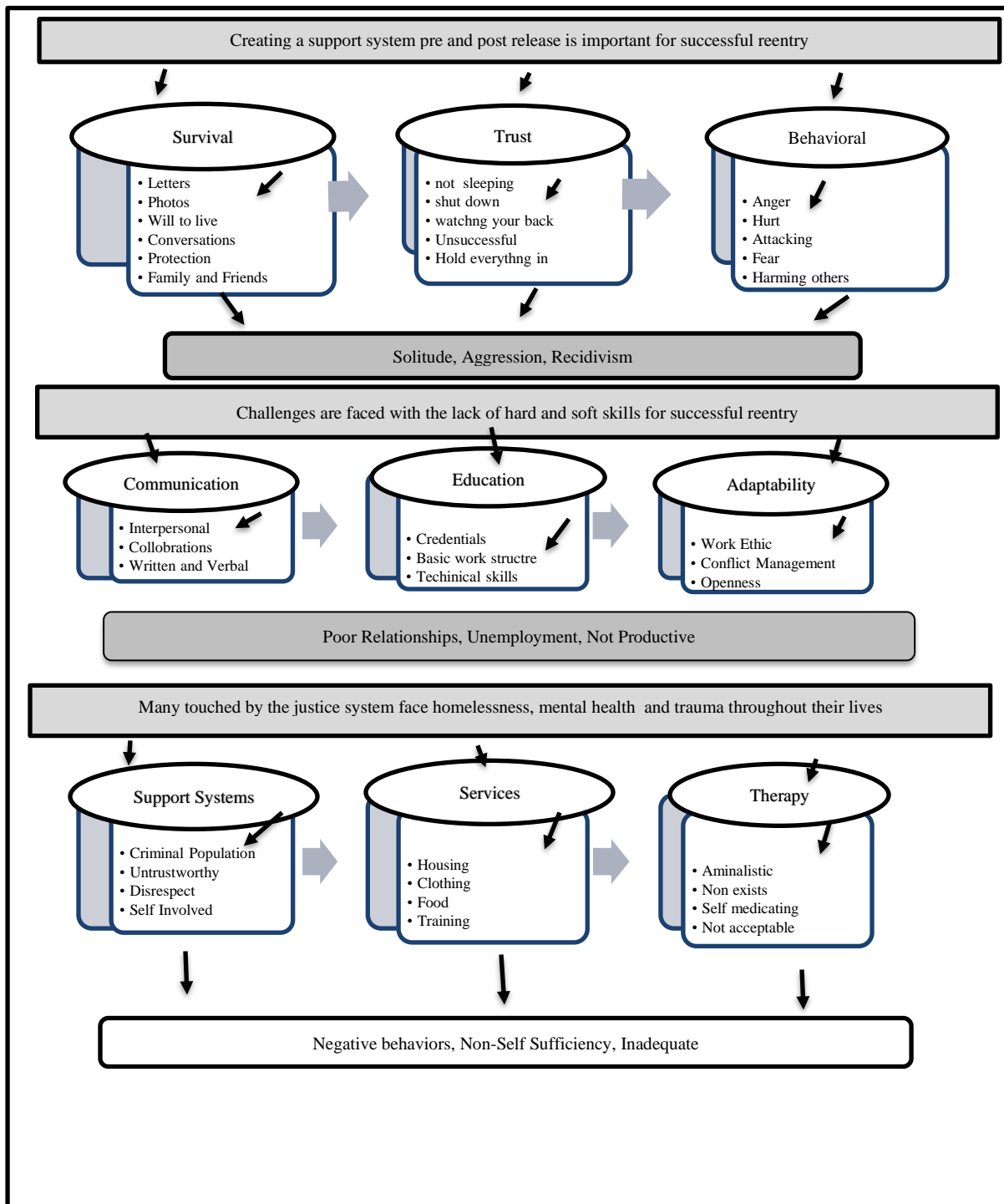
themes, I started interpreting the data by defining and naming the themes found (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). There were terms and phrases that were used consistently by the eight participants through the interview process. Continually through the conversations, the participants discussed “family” was a key to them successfully getting through their incarceration, although none of the participants had father figures in their lives.

Finally, I wrote up my conclusion and findings (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I continued the process until no new themes were brought to the forefront; at that point, saturation was met (Rosenthal, 2016). Saturation was met after completing this process with eight participants after I continued to see the same themes emerging (Guest, 2020). At the point saturation was met, I ended the process.

After reaching saturation, I developed a thematic map (see Figure 1) that helped me organize my raw data (Strijker et al., 2020). The codes that emerged are in the double squared boxes and consist of words and small phrases representing the text to centralize concepts and verbiage directly from the participants’ interviews. The category terms that emerged from the data were survival within incarceration, trust for people, behavioral issues, communication, education, adaptability, support systems, services, and therapy and are located in the ovals above the doubled squared boxes. Categories were created based on the experiences of the participants from what they shared thought the interview process. I followed the process of collecting codes to create themes within the data collection (Deane et al., 2020). The themes are depicted in the rectangle boxes.

Figure 1

Codes, Categories, and Themes of African American Men Who Completed Reentry Programs With Employment and Wraparound Services



Note. The double squared boxes reflect codes, the ovals indicate categories, and the rectangular boxes refer to themes.

Theme 1: Creating a Support System Pre and Post Release is Important for Successful Reentry (Survival, Trust, Behavior)

Participants expressed how they could not get through their pain and suffering while incarcerated and after without the support of family, friends, and caseworkers from reentry programs. They expressed how they could not have been successful without proper support. Several participants discussed how they could not have survived or trusted anyone without having support through this period in their lives. As AAM2 stated, “If it was not for my sister, who kept encouraging me to get some skills and go through this program, I would have probably ended back in that place.” He went on to discuss how his sister was the only one he could trust inside or outside of incarceration. At one point in the interview, AAM2 broke out in tears as he discussed how he remembers being so angry “at the world.” He went on to talk about how he learned from his case manager how to turn his anger into productive energy. AAM2’s sister was part of his support group along with his case manager as he transitioned out of prison and back into his community

Many discussed how they acted out through anger or harming others when there was a lack of a support system in place. All the participants stated they were never taught the “proper way to respond,” as they did not have a father figure to teach them. AAM4 shared that, “If it were not for my six children and their moms, I would have gone back in

without a doubt.” The participant’s children came to see him weekly while incarcerated, and the mothers of his twins allowed him to go home to stay with their father after his release. The case manager of the reentry program helped set housing up between AAM4 and his mother’s children.

The category of survival was uplifted by participants heavily speaking about how they cherished all the letters, phone calls, and conversations from their loved ones that got them through to the outside. Many discussed how those items made them feel protected and used later by their case managers as points of concentration for success after being released. AAM5 shared, “You know those letters and pictures of my kids was my ‘why,’ and I knew I had to keep being productive with my life.” AAM8 stated, “When my caseworker asked me what is going to keep me out the big house while holding up a photo of my seven-year-old, I just melt, like a kid myself.” AAM 1 stated his “will to live” was his daughter. He continued to talk about how his caseworker helped him see his daughter again in person after not seeing her for 12 years.

Through the participants’ time of reentering their communities, some of the participants verbalized how having someone to be there for them to support them, encourage them, and make them feel safe helped them through many rough hours. Many discussed how having those people around them prevented angry outbursts, harming others, and or just giving up and committing another so they would return to incarceration. Many discussed having someone or something to live for helped with their success in reentering their communities and expressed gratitude to their case managers who help build that positive around them. Scholarly evidence shows that having a support

system is imperative to successful reentry (Agbakwuru & Awujo, 2016; Hunter et al., 2016; Skinner-Osei & Stepteanu-Watson, 2018).

Theme 2: Challenges are Faced With the Lack of Hard and Soft Skills for Successful Reentry (Communication, Education, Adaptability)

Many participants faced challenges of a lack of skills. These included education, technical skills, and workplace skills. Only one of the participants graduated high school and attended some college. None of the participants ever held a “formal” job for more than 3 months in their entire life. There were discussions around low to little formal education and learning more from the “streets.”

AAM1 shared in the interview that he had graduated from high school and attended 1 year of college and that he felt overwhelmed with “life” and started using drugs to manage. The drug usage began to get out of control, leading him to drop out of college. Then, he became a pizza delivery driver; however, he stole money and was “locked up” after just 6 weeks. When AAM1 was released from prison, he disclosed he had never really worked before. He stated he felt overwhelmed again, as he “had nothing.” He stated that he would probably be “dead or back in the place” without the program (referring to the reentry program) he entered. AAM1 stated he learned “how to behave at work.”

Often the participants spoke of not understanding the rules when in a work setting. When the topic of work came up during the interview, AAM6 appeared uncomfortable. When questioned about the apparent discomfort, AAM6 replied, “I used to feel like an idiot when people on the outside talked about work.” He went on to say, “I

only knew the streets; I barely went to school back in the day.” “I learned through street education.” AAM6 dropped out of high school at 9th grade but obtained his GED while incarcerated. He spoke about how he struggled after being released to get along with his coworkers. He stated that “they just did not understand him.” AAM6 talked about his experiences of his attempting to work at his first job ever after he was released. He stated, “it was the worse time of my life, those four days of work.” He went on to say, “it should have been the best time of his life, but one of the other workers got in my face, so I punched him.”

Participants disclosed that failure would have occurred without some form of intervention either by a caseworker or the employer themselves. AAM6 was terminated on day four of his employment because he entered a verbal and physical altercation with his college. After being terminated, AAM6’s parole officer stated he had to be employed and recommended him for a reentry program. AAM6 stated that after completing the reentry program successfully, “life became easier, freer.” He went on to say that “after me gaining some skills and how to speak to people better, I was offered my dream job.” AAM6 is currently employed at a warehouse where he has been promoted six times in three years, held employee of the month two times, and took on a lead trainer role. AAM6 talked about how he learned “those everyday skills on a job by given a chance to practice it first through the program.” He described it as a “test run.”

Many of the participants spoke about their experiences attempting to get a job versus getting past the interview and maintaining the job. AAM3 spoke about his interview experiences.

I tried and tried to figure out what I was going to do when I got out. I went to a resume class when I was getting ready to be released, but they asked that question when I got to the interview. What was I doing in the past ten years? I froze and walked out. After that, I stopped searching until my PO (parole officer) got on my back. I tried to explain that I only had one skill on my resume. No one was going to hire me. It was not until after I started this program (referring to a reentry program) that I had help filling out my resume with skills that I had learned while in prison. I also learned how to talk and answer questions in an interview. I did not know that me learning to buff floors in prison would land me a good job like I have today. The program helped me get into a floor job where I was comfortable, and also, they were easy with me. They understood where I had been, and they just did not care.

Several participants spoke about the challenges of assimilating into a work setting from a prison setting. AAM8 spoke about how he lost his first job he had ever worked because he did not understand the position and simply didn't know how to ask for help. He stated that "everyone and everything was moving so fast around me, I just felt if I asked, people would clown me." AAM8 disclosed that his reentry program helped him learn how to ask for help and be prepared when learning new tasks. Two participants reported they would not have been able to find sustainable employment without using their reentry programs to obtain certifications for them in their fields. Researchers state employment and soft skills are pertinent to successful reentry (Ellison et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2020; Klinker Lockwood & Nally, 2016).

Theme 3: Many Touched by the Justice System Face Homelessness, Mental Health Issues, and Trauma throughout their Lives (Support Systems, Services, Therapy)

At some point throughout the interviews, all participants spoke about how they struggled with homelessness, their mental health, and the trauma of being incarcerated. AAM4 shared that he was anxious about leaving prison because he did not have a place to go and that he only had the clothes on his back that he went into incarceration in. He discussed his time at a shelter and how it "screwed" his mind of up even more. It was not until after AAM4 went through his reentry program that he found housing, mental health treatment, and a job so that he could provide for himself. AAM4 stated, "I felt like a man again, not like that caged animal, my case manager helped me buy my first pair of pants for my new job, and it was no turning back after that."

Many of the participants brought up how mental health therapy was "taboo" to black men. There was discussion around how the participants could not and did not know how to deal with the trauma they had experienced. It wasn't until after they entered reentry programs and started to trust their case managers that there was a realization that therapy is not a foreign object and was helpful. AAM7 shared, "people like me do not do the shrinks because it is not the cool thing to do." He shared that if others found out he was in therapy, he would be disrespected in his community. AAM7 spoke about how his community already looked down on "criminals" like him and that there was a lack of trust anytime, he was around. He went on to say, "I do not need to add anything else for people to judge me on by adding therapist to my list." AAM7 spoke about how he started to change his mind after self-medicating on drugs and alcohol after being released from

prison. He talked about how he didn't know what was wrong with him, but he needed something different with his life. AAM7 entered a reentry program and began alcoholic and narcotics anonymous. After gaining sobriety, AAM7 was able to obtain a job and maintain one.

When participants were asked what type of reentry program wraparound services were received, many participants mentioned basic needs such as housing, food, clothing, as well as some type of training and the connection to therapy. AAM2 focused on how much his case manager helped him with how to get food when he had no money and no job. He mentioned, "she taught me how to hunt for food, she didn't just give me food, and I appreciated that because I still use those techniques to this day." AAM5 shared, "I remember living in a shelter wondering where I would get my next meal from all while I slept with a knife in my hand up against a wall." AAM5 discussed how he had so many barriers that he was discouraged upon his release from prison.

After obtaining a job through his reentry program, AAM5 stated, "things seem just to start falling in place for me, I mean, I don't want or need for anything now" (as his eyes began to tear up). AAM2 also became emotional when speaking about his journey along his road to successful reentry at times. He talked about how he could not believe how flexible his job was when he had to be back at his shelter before locking down so that he could eat. AAM2 shared his employer worked with his case manager on his schedule, and after four weeks, he was placed in transitional housing, but today he has just purchased his first home.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was established in my research study through triangulation, which is the method that uses multiple data sources for data collection (Ellis, 2019). In my research study, triangulation was used to establish credibility through scholarly articles, government websites, and interviews I read many peer-reviewed articles and government sites to learn about the population of those who had been incarcerated. I used the articles to understand and familiarize myself with reentry programs and those returning home from incarceration. Data collected from government websites helped me gain knowledge of demographics and recidivism rates.

I addressed credibility by linking the interviewee's data to plausible information drawn directly from their experiences (Rosenthal, 2016). I continued the interview process until I started to see similar themes arise repeatedly, and at that point, saturation was met within eight interviews. I tested the validity of the interviews through member checks. I provided a copy of each participant's interview to the interviewees and a copy of the final research paper upon its completion to ensure I captured everything accurately. I also provided a detailed description of the research study process through an informed consent form to ensure rigor of the project (Ellis, 2019). The group of professionals in the reentry field reviewed interview questions and followed my research processes throughout the study. The reentry professionals were not privy to any raw research data. I used the data gathered from the interviews to understand the phenomena of those

returning home who have entered reentry programs and their successful reentry. The data was analyzed using the in vivo and eclectic processes to ensure authenticity and accuracy.

Transferability

In my research study, transferability was established by providing details on individuals who have been previously incarcerated and who are African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who are considered the highest to recidivate and are not currently on any form of supervision (The United States Department of Justice, 2019). Transferability is the degree to which data can be transferred from one research project to the next (Maxwell, 2020). I sought out participants who have entered reentry programs that provided employment experiences and wrap-around case management services through a local non-profit where individuals who had lived through incarceration frequent. I requested the local non-profit share my flyer on their social media sites and physical bulletin boards. The African American men selected for this study were asked to share their lived experiences of reentry programs and their successful reentry. The qualitative interview process began after the participant completed the link in my flyer and completed the eligibility survey.

Dependability

I obtained dependability through triangulation by utilizing scholarly articles, government websites, and interviews with African American men who participated in reentry programming. After each participant completed the eligibility survey, they immediately accepted the consent form directly from the survey if they agreed to move

with the study. After the consent form was completed, the participants selected their interview dates, times, and platform for their interviews.

Through a local nonprofit, I utilized the group of reentry professionals in the criminal justice field to review my data collection process. Dependability is the process of validating the data by establishing if the researcher will get the same results if the study is done more than once (Maxwell, 2020). The group was not given any raw data collected. Updates were sent before data collection, during data collection, and after data collection. I received responses within one week.

Confirmability

I created an audit trail to capture my raw data, documentation of my process, and notes to accomplish confirmability. Confirmability is the researcher's process of validating the data by checking it multiple times and ensuring it is available and accurate for all to review (Maxwell, 2020). Creating an audit trail allowed me to track where the data was being pulled and to be checked and rechecked by multiple sources. I created confirmability through reflexivity by documenting original quotes and providing events and actions that helped form my interpretation of the data. Rigor was established by utilizing a team of professionals in the reentry field that convened periodically throughout the study, from developing the research questions to reviewing the study's process and direction. The group convened six times throughout the project. The group was used to continually review reflexivity and any bias that I might have brought to the table as a researcher. The reentry experts do not have access to raw data or direct contact with the study participants. I created a journal to capture my journey and have open discussions

with the convened group of reentry professionals I worked with throughout my study. I also documented codes and categories, which helped me create a thematic map. All information is stored on my computer under a password-protected folder.

Results

The research question used for this study was: What are the daily lived experiences of African American men between 30-50 years old who have received real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs? The participants consisted of eight African American males. They varied in age from 31 years old to 50 years old. They all had completed court supervision but had been previously convicted of a felony. Each participant had completed a reentry program that included employment experiences and wrap-around services. Every participant had at least one child up to six. Three themes emerged from the lived experiences of African American men between the ages of 30-50 that completed reentry programming that included employment and wrap-around services. The themes explained the daily experiences that impacted their lives pre- and post-release of incarceration and the impact their reentry program played a role in their successful reentry based on the theory of inoculation. These are:

- Theme 1: Creating a support system pre and post release is important for successful reentry (survival, trust, & behavior).
- Theme 2: Challenges are faced with the lack of hard and soft skills for successful reentry (communication, education, adaptability)

- Theme 3: Many touched by the justice system face homelessness, mental health issues, and trauma throughout their lives (support systems, services, therapy).

How I arrived at these themes is detailed in the *data analysis* section of chapter 4 (also see figure 2).

Figure 2

Themes of African American Men who completed reentry programs with employment and wraparound services



The participants in this study shared their experiences of completing a reentry program with employment and wraparound services combined. Many participants shared their reentry programs helped build trust again by assisting the participant in building

positive support systems personally and professionally throughout the community. Some participants described how their case managers instilled in them how important a positive support system helps a person makes better choices in life. Reentry programs that provide knowledge on developing and maintaining a support system for those who have been formerly incarcerated through wraparound services and real-life employment opportunities may help lead to successful fulfillment and reentry.

Participants expressed their struggles in finding employment or career before entering their reentry programs. Some spoke of not having ever held a “legitimate” job. Many shared the multiple doors being slammed in their faces. It was not until completing reentry programs that provided real-life transitional employment opportunities that participants stated they started to have doors open for them. Soft skills such as how to interact in a workplace and hard skills such as on-the-job training gave the participants skills they had never obtained. Being physically on the job upon immediate release also provided participants to accumulate from a state of incarceration to their communities. Reentry programs that provide real-life employment experiences may lead to successful reentry.

As participants shared their experiences, they all shared how they never felt the same after returning from incarceration. Some choose to self-medicate through drugs and alcohol, and some choose to try to “push through.” All the participants stated that treatment through therapy was not an option in their communities due to bad stigma. While participating in their reentry programs, participants said they began to understand the normalcy of therapy and treatment and learned of the trauma they had experienced

through their incarceration experiences. Many started to understand “the why” behind their behaviors through services provided by their reentry programs, such as mental health treatment, trauma-informed care, and behavior modification techniques, which lead to securing basic needs like housing and employment. Reentry programs that provide wraparound services and employment opportunities can lead to successful reentry.

Researchers suggest that almost all individuals who enter the criminal justice system experience trauma, which can lead to mental health concerns but believe with proper treatment, individuals can be successful (Chaudhri et al., 2019; Hagan et al., 2018; Jaegers et al., 2020). Although many barriers and challenges were brought up throughout the interviews, all showed great pride when describing where they are today. When asked about defining successful reenter, all eight participants indicated their reentry program had a hand in their success. All stated they would recommend their program to someone else in their shoes upon reentering their communities. Despite challenges and barriers, the participants felt they had overcome many if not all of them along their journey.

Summary

Those who the criminal justice system has touched experience trauma, life barriers, and stigma that carries on even after release. Reentry programs have been put in place for over 20 years to help individuals navigate their journey home (Whittle, 20018). These programs consist of processes to help remove challenges that those face returning to their communities. There needs to be support, wrap-around services, and education to create successful reentry for those involved in criminal justice.

In the following chapter, I will disconfirm, confirm, or extend knowledge through peer-reviewed literature in Chapter 2. As a view through the lens of the inoculation theory, I will analyze and interpret my results and findings. I will include limitations to my study, recommendations for further research on this topic, implications of positive social change, and concluding thoughts.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the daily lived experiences of African American men between the ages of 30 and 50 who receive real-life transitional employment with wrap-around service opportunities through reentry programs with successful reentry. The result of this study aided me in fully understanding this phenomenon in depth. After completing eight interviews, the research question was satisfied by uncovering the lived experiences of those who had completed reentry programs with real-life employment and wrap-around services attached. More importantly, the data show the participants have not recidivated and went on to live successful fulfilled lives after incarceration. Themes emerged from the data set and were based on inoculation theory. The themes were connected to the literature review (see Chapter 2) and the observations and findings.

Interpretation of Findings

Interpretation of Findings in Relation to the Theoretical Framework

During this research process, I studied the experiences of successful reentry through reentry programming that included employment and wrap-around services through the lens of the inoculation theory. The findings from this study confirm the effectiveness of using the inoculation theory as the framework to explain the experiences those who have been formerly incarcerated face with employment, relationships, and influential behaviors (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Each theme demonstrates an important factor in describing how each individual who had been formerly incarcerated ingested

information through reentry programming that included employment and wrap-around services that influenced change in criminal behavior and activity. The study's participants show the relationships and the importance of reentry programming in the lives of those who have returned home from the criminal justice system. Three themes emerged from the data: support systems, education and training, and wraparound services.

The inoculation theory has been explored. Evidence has been presented that ingesting material is significant in changing behavior through theory development and application by building resistance to past criminal activity (Kim, 2013; Matusitz & Breen, 2013; McGuire, 1961). Support, training, therapy, and services were the ingested material that protected individuals against persuasion or influence in much the same way the body can protect against disease. Participants described how continuous interaction with their reentry program case managers reinforced the right path to follow and how having positive people in their circles helped keep them on the right track and prevented further criminal activities. People are persuaded by their environments, and the theory of inoculation provides alternative vantage points to combat individuals beliefs much like the reentry programming training provided (McGuire, 1961). Intervention through reentry programming of employment-based and wrap-around services in the lives of those individuals who have been formerly incarcerated resulted in criminal behavioral changes and successful reentry.

Interpretation of Findings in Relation to the Literature

Several components contribute to an individual who has been criminally justice involved experiences and can shape their outcomes post release of incarceration

(Berghuis, 2018). Reentry programs were designed to aid those who have been incarcerated return to their communities successfully through various elements (Berghuis, 2018; Whittle, 2018). Some activities are known to work better for an individual post release than pre-release (Brown & Scarbrough, 2019). Although pre and post released activities from reentry programs were discussed, participants of this study described how many components of their reentry program that occurred post release were most helpful through their experiences.

Support Systems

Individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system face many barriers to reentering their communities and often recidivate without intervention (Mowen et al., 2018). Researchers claim without reentry programming, successful reentry diminishes and increases the rate of returning to prison (Cochran, 2014; Finlay et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2016). Inside the prison walls, individuals build barriers to survive, leading to behavioral issues, distrust, and anger (Baranger et al., 2018). Researchers claim that receiving services that promote positive support pre and post-release removes barriers that will prevent unsuccessful reentry (Belknap, 2016; Cooley, 2019; Kendall et al., 2018). Most participants shared their experiences of having a barrier such as an “imaginary wall” around them. The participants spoke about how they used wrap-around services to remove that wall slowly and started to build trust and reduce anger as they completed their reentry program.

Many individuals who have been formerly incarcerated struggle with feelings of not belonging throughout their lives (DeHaan et al., 2019). This theme was demonstrated

in the interviews and involved components that derived from the time of entry into incarceration to the time of release. Major elements in this theme consisted of survival, trust, and behaviors. It is important to note that behavior is noted throughout the all the themes. Every participant had a child ranging anywhere from one to eight. Children became a motivating force for surviving incarceration. Photos, letters, and in-person visits were important to prevent feelings of unworthiness. After being released from incarceration, a support system that consisted of children, spouses, and case managers encouraged positive behavior.

Trust is something that researchers emphasized the importance of (DeHann et al., 2019). This was also seen in my data and resulting themes. The trust category within the support systems theme was important because the participants had issues building trust because they did not have support, whether pre-or post-release. As a result of not having a positive support system in place, lack of sleep, resentment, and withdrawal are behaviors that occurred in individuals who have been formerly incarcerated. Restricting conversations and shutting down locked out the negative and positive emotions (Lurigio et al., 2016; Mowen et al., 2018). The participants discussed trust while describing how they always sat or slept with their backs to the door. They spoke about how they sometimes ate paper that contained phone numbers or letters because they did not want people around them to have anything personal to them. Also, participants described how they only slept for a few hours at a time, as they did not trust their cellmate.

Behavior issues can derive from not having a proper support system in place (Gerlach et al., 2019). The behavioral category within the support systems theme

disclosed anger, fear, and harming others. The participants involved in the study discussed how not having a support person in place caused pain, and through that pain, anger was built. Verbal and physical fights frequently occurred as the individuals who have been formerly incarcerated expressed their feeling of loneliness. The feeling that everyone else was the problem produced violent behavior. With the aid of wrap-around services, positive support groups were built that changed the relationship-building mindset.

Education and Training

Those formally incarcerated fight battles to obtain and maintain employment (Anderson et al., 2018; Semenza & Link, 2019). The lack of education and technical skills have been said to be the critical reason for unsuccessful employment tenure (Kendall et al., 2018). Others indicated limited soft skills are why many individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system fall below the employment retention rate (Flatt & Jacobs, 2018; Matusitz & Breen, 2013; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018). The information I collected supported the previous research related to the lack of soft and hard skills being an issue after leaving incarceration. Participants indicated that the lack of soft and hard skills hindered their success. Participants noted that on-the-job training through reentry programming that provided real-life employment opportunities and wraparound services provided the structure and education needed to move to success. Participants made it very clear that the combination of training on hard skills and soft skills was key to successful outcomes. I also found information related to the formidable barrier of securing and maintaining employment. All participants in the study expressed

difficulty holding employment for more than 3 months at a time. The level of skills previously had played a significant factor in employment options for most of the participants engaged in the study.

Participants spoke about how interpersonal communication was one of the main reasons employment had ended, as it was a skill area they struggle with. Many talked about the difficulty of collaborating with others after being incarcerated. Inside the criminal justice system walls, the only form of collaboration that was recognized was working together to harm someone or take the place of authority. Verbal communication was a highlighted barrier, but written communication was also discussed. Individuals talked about how they wrote letters to loved ones but did not feel comfortable writing in a formal setting such as via email or communicating to an employer. After completing training in reentry programming, all participants shared they felt more comfortable with communication overall.

The lack of skills arose to the top after reports of no experience, no skills, and limited education were frequently discussed by my participants and also in the literature (Augustine, 2019; Baranger et al., 2018; Ellison et al., 2017). It was emphasized that the participants of this study did not have industry-recognized skills to be hired. Many participants expressed they had fabricated or created a fake resume to obtain employment. However, some participants were able to get jobs but could not maintain employment. After completing reentry programming, all participants stated they gained skills that allowed them to create a truthful resume based on skills they had gained while

being incarcerated. The results increased maintaining employment by obtaining certifications and soft skills training.

All participants involved in the study admitted to having low soft skills, particularly how to interact in a work environment. The affective category of adaptability within the education and training theme exposed conflict management, low work ethic, and a lack of openness. Individuals who have been formally incarcerated build walls to adapt to their environment in order to feel safe. After being released from incarceration, individuals did not let those walls down. When entering the workplace, there was difficulty adapting, which caused conflicts and ultimately ended in termination. The participants were able to speak openly about not understanding the importance of taking breaks at scheduled times, calling in when they cannot go to work, and resolving conflicts with co-workers. After completing reentry programming, participants discussed how they learned how to prepare to be professional in a work setting through repetitive training.

Wrap-Around Services

Most African American men in the criminal justice system do not seek mental health treatment even after being diagnosed (Bakken & Visher, 2018; Mahaffey et al., 2018; Nwefoh et al., 2020). Researchers show that after individuals are incarcerated, they are subjected to trauma that precipitates anger and other behavioral issues (Chaudhri et al., 2018; Pettus-Davis et al., 2019). Without proper treatment to address trauma, basic needs such as housing, clothing, and employment are difficult to acquire for those returning home from the criminal justice system (Bakken & Visher, 2018; Franke et al., 2017; Skinner-Osei & Stepteanu-Watson, 2018). Through the years, research has

concentrated on reentry programs and the components that make for successful reentry (Anderson et al., 2018; Mowen et al., 2018; Semenza & Link, 2019).

The elements that provide training, basic needs, and therapy are uplifted as contributing to successful reentry and a reduction in recidivism (Chaudhri et al., 2019; Franke et al., 2017; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018). As participants described their experiences of completing reentry programs that provided real-life employment opportunities and wraparound services, mental health treatment or the lack thereof was brought up many times. Participants discussed working in an environment that provided the wraparound services supported a healthy, safe environment where treatment and or therapy was welcomed. Because trust was built with the reentry case manager, participants stated they became open to treatment and coping mechanisms provided through the wraparound services of the program, which helped lead to brighter days and some successful outcomes per participant.

Many individuals who have been incarcerated face barriers such as homelessness, poor mental health, and trauma as they return home (Chaudhri et al., 2019; Mahaffey et al., 2018; Matthews et al., 2019). Participants in this study spoke openly about how not having people in place that supported them impacted their lives along their reentry journey. Many discussed how they felt disrespected and explained how the world seemed self-involved. The group of interviews shared how many times they felt alone, which led them to trust no one. They thought they only had those individuals they knew from being incarcerated; therefore, that is the population they felt the safest among. Although some felt they already had built a support system on their own, most spoke about how their

case managers were the first people they began to trust after incarceration. This was a sign of rebuilding respect for themselves and others. It was stated that their case managers were the building blocks to their foundation to successful reentry.

Individuals leaving the criminal justice facility return home with the clothes they entered in and little to no money (Tyler & Brockman, 2017). Many of the participants in this study disclosed they were forced to reside at the address listed on their discharge paperwork. It did not appear there were many choices for the individuals returning to their community, and technically, they were deemed homeless. All participants expressed their difficulty in securing housing due to their felony convictions. It was discovered that individuals who have been formerly incarcerated who participated in this study did not know where to find resources that could help them. It was discovered that basic needs, such as clothing and food, were lacking. Reentry programs provided an outlet to provide basic need resources such as housing, clothing, food, and training to help those participants in the study with successful reentry.

Although every participant recognized they had encountered mental health concerns specifically through the traumatization of being incarcerated, almost all participants discussed how they did not receive treatment before being released. Engaging in therapy was seen as unacceptable, and only those who showed physical characteristics or outbreaks were the ones that needed treatment. They spoke about feeling like animals being locked behind bars and discussed how they could not prevent animalistic behavior after being treated that way. Many spoke about self-medicating through drugs and alcohol, as they did not understand coping with their trauma. The

participants talked about how their case management helped them understand how much therapy was normalized and how it could help their current situation progress to successful reentry. Individuals spoke about how engaging in treatment changed their lives and that changes within themselves would not have occurred without the guidance given by their case management teams.

Limitations of the Study

I recruited eight African American men between the ages of 30 to 50 who had committed at least one felony conviction. These individuals had completed a reentry program that included employment and wrap-around services. I recruited individuals by posting my flyer at a local organization where individuals who have been formally incarcerated frequently to gather information and collaborate with likeminded individuals. The participants of the study felt safe and relaxed during the process.

During the analysis, I gained knowledge about the participants, such as they all did not have a father figure in their lives; they all had at least one child and had limited to low education or skills. Interviewing participants who had not completed the reentry program could have potentially changed the outcome of successful reentry. Additionally, all the participants were African American men between 30 to 50 years old. There could have been a different result if the participants were of other races and under 30 years old. There is also a possibility of different outcomes by interviewing participants with higher skills sets. Those with a positive support system in place could also produce a different result. All participants in the study had been incarcerated no less than five years. Different outcomes could have been produced if participants had been incarcerated less

than five years. Based on the variety of possibilities, there is a probability that the results of this research project could have been limited.

Recommendations

As incarceration rates continue to increase, there is a need for reentry programming for those returning home to their communities (Gill, 2017; Whittle, 2018). Without intervention after incarceration, individuals who have been released could have adverse outcomes and recidivate (Brown & Scarbrough, 2019). Researchers have shown that trained individuals that operate reentry programs provide positive outcomes for those returning home from incarceration through either employment, or wraparound services (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011; Semenza & Link, 2019). I demonstrated there is a need for more knowledgeable experienced experts in the field of reentry to provide guidance through reentry programming with employment and wrap-around services attached. Participants of this study indicated that their experiences through their reentry programs that provided real-life transitional employment opportunities and wraparound services provided intensive case management, soft skills and hard skills and support and without it they would not be where they are today.

The recruitment process for this study was appropriate as it allowed a perspective from African American men between 30 and 50 years old who have completed reentry programming that combines employment experiences and wrap-around services. However, the study did not account for individuals who were not African American men under the age of 30 and who had secondary education. Therefore, further research is needed from the point of view of other races of men under the age of 30 who had some

higher skills through secondary education to have solid evidence to build reentry programming that will benefit the population for successful reentry.

Implications of Social Change

Reentry programs have been around for over two decades (Gill, 2017; Seigafo, 2017; Whittle, 2018). However, it is essential to note the issues around re-entering your community after incarceration do not end with completing programming. Services, therapy, and training are not enough by themselves. In order to have full successful reentry without recidivation, positive social change needs to be a collaborative effort.

Implications for Positive Social Change

This study revealed a variety of components of the impact of reentry programs with employment and wraparound services on successful reentry. The results from this study suggest a positive impact on those who complete reentry programming. Basic needs, mental health treatment education, training and a support system are detrimental in the lives of those formerly incarcerated who have successful reentry (Bakken & Visher, 2018; Kendall et al., 2018; Mowen et al., 2018). Through the lens of the inoculation theory, known as the theory of conferring resistance to persuasive influence, reentry programs were the formula to deter criminal behavior (Matusitz & Breen, 2013). Individuals who have been formerly incarcerated should be given a second chance not only in their lives but in their communities without any fear or stigma.

Implications for Practice

The individuals that have been formerly incarcerated, support groups, advocates, program directors, case managers, therapists, faith-based organizations, parole officers,

judges, government agencies, employers, and legislators will benefit from this study. This research provides an informed understanding of the lived experiences of individuals who have been formerly incarcerated who completed reentry programs that combined real-life employment opportunities and wraparound services along their journey to successful reentry. The subjective experiences from the participants explained the obstacles they faced and how they were able to overcome them through completing their reentry program. Therefore, relevant reentry program components can be developed and implemented at the beginning of one's reentry journey. The origins of the road to reentry start when that person first interacts with the criminal justice system and could implement reentry components at that point. With the aid of reentry programs, providing real-life employment experiences will provide a transitional period for those returning home to their communities. It will genuinely offer a second chance and ultimately reduce recidivism.

Conclusion

Those returning home from incarceration affect not only their personal home lives but also the communities they reenter. Reentry programs with employment and wraparound services are necessary as over 600,000 individuals are released into their communities annually (McKay et al., 2018; Semenza & Link, 2019). Those formerly incarcerated face barriers of employment, mental health, relationship building, and basic needs as they return home to their communities (Anderson et al., 2018; Augustine, 2019; Kendall et al., 2018). Without intervention such as providing skills, training, and resources, there is a higher rate for individuals to recidivate and a lower rate of successful

reentry (Coldiron et al., 2017, Doleac, 2019; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018). Successfully reentry was defined by the study's participants as being able to be "self-sufficient" and being able to "provide legitimately" for their families with "self-confidence." Being placed in real-life employment environments where training, wraparound services, and treatment were allowed provided an environment that fostered successful outcomes for the participants.

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Appendix A: Letter of Commitment

Lena Hackett <[REDACTED]>

Thu 10/13/2021 12:37 PM

To: Trelles Evans

Dear Trelles Evans,

I have reviewed your research proposal and on behalf of the Marion County Reentry Coalition (MCRC) I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled African American Men's Lived Experiences with Reentry with Employment and Wraparound Services within MCRC. As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit participants by distributing research invitations, conducting assessment activities, and sharing the results with the stakeholders once the data is analyzed. Individuals' participation will be voluntary at their own discretion and will understand that this study is in no way connected directly with the MCRC organization.

It is to my understanding that the MCRC's only responsibilities include allowing you to post flyers/surveys on all our platforms including social media sites and distribute emails for purposes of your recruitment. The MCRC is not affiliated with this study and has the right to remove any flyers at any time if circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming the MCRC in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the MCRC's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Lena Hackett

Lena Hackett, MPH
Coordinator, MCRC
Community Solutions, Inc.

[REDACTED]

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic

signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix B: Flyer

Study seeks participants who participated in Reentry Programs

There is a new study called “*African American Men’s Lived Experiences with Reentry Programs with Employment and Wraparound Services*” that could help service providers and the criminal justice system better understand and help those individuals returning to their communities from prison. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences with reentry programs provided case management wraparound and employment services.

I am doing a doctoral study for Trelles Evans, a Ph.D. student at Walden University on a research project for African American Men and successful reentry into their communities.

About the study:

- Complete the initial Survey to match criteria
- Complete One 90 interview

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- African American Men
- 30-50 years old
- Previous Felony Conviction
- Participant in a reentry program that included employment and wraparound services
- Currently under no supervision
- Have reentered your community successfully

**To confidentially volunteer,
click the following link:
[https://www.surveymonkey
.com/r/9X89Z7S](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9X89Z7S)**

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

Reentry SurveyMonkey

1. What is your Age?
2. What is your Ethnicity?
3. What is your Gender?
4. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?
5. Are you currently under legal supervision such as: parole, probation or electronic monitoring?
6. Have you ever participated in a reentry program that provided employment and wraparound services?
7. If you be willing to participate in this research study, please read the consent form below and respond with a yes or no confirming you agree and understand the consent?
8. If you answered no, thank you for your time and participation and you are free to leave the survey. If you answered yes to question 7, please select your preferred method of contact and list your contact information.
9. What is your preferred method of participating in the interview? If you choose a virtual interview, please find a secure place to do your interview such as room with a door, your car, or a private restroom. If you choose an in-person interview, the interview will be conducted in a private room at the local library.
 - a. Phone with video
 - b. Email
 - c. Messenger
10. Select the best day and time for your interview from Sunday to Monday and from 8 am to 10 pm EST?

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

- Q1. What is your age?
- Q2. What is your gender?
- Q3. What is your ethnicity?
- Q4. How many children do you have?
- Q5. Do you have a significant other?
- Q6. Tell me about your family.
- Q7. Tell me about your background.
- Q8. Tell me about what led you to prison.
- Q9. How long has it been since your last release date?

Interview Questions

- Q1. Tell me about your experiences while in prison.
- Q2. How do you feel about being incarcerated -emotions?
- Q3. How has being incarcerated impacted your life?
- Q4. What factors in prison helped you get through your day?
- Q5. Tell me about the day of being released from prison.
- Q6. Upon reentering your community, how were you able to speak about your time in prison?
- Q7. Define successful reentry into your community.
- Q8. Tell me about your concerns when you reentered your community.
- Q9. What were your biggest barriers you faced when you returned home?

- Q10. How did you hear about your reentry program?
- Q11. What type of wraparound (case management) services did you receive through your reentry program?
- Q12. What type of employment services did you receive from your reentry program?
- Q13. What type of industry are you currently working in?
- Q14. What led to your decision of not wanting to return to prison?
- Q15. How has participating in a reentry program impacted your life?
- Q16. Tell me about your feelings of respect- what does that look like?
- Q17. What type of relationship have you had pre or post-release that were meaningful?
- Q18. Tell me about your lack of trust in people- what does that look like?
- Q19. Who are you able to trust prior to incarceration and after incarceration?
- Q20. Please share any other thoughts or comments you would like for me to know.

Probing Questions

- Q1. Tell me more about what led to your decisions that led you to prison. (Q8)
- Q2. Tell more about your trust levels prior and after incarceration. (Q18)

Tough/Sensitive Area Phrases:

1. I understand this is difficult for you, please take your time.
2. If you are uncomfortable, please feel free to pass the question.