2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Plenary II :
Moving Upstream with Data and informed by People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Wisconsin Nurses Association (2023). https://www.wisconsinnurses.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CHCC-2023-Schedule-and-Session-Descriptions-4-14.pdf

Presenters

Evaluating Trauma History and Social Needs Among Incarcerated Individuals and Datablitz Report
*Dr. Ruth Cronje, Professor Emerita University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire

Returning to the Community:
A Quality Improvement Project for Systems Change
*Nycki Wallsch, Peer-Counselor, Free-Reclaiming Women's Freedom of the Chippewa Valley and Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO)
*Kelly Mahoney, BA Student, Administrative Assistant to EXPO
*Dr. Pamela Guthman, DNP, RN-BC, APHN-PHN, Ret. UWEC College of Nursing Professor

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Community Partners

Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO): Aims to end mass incarceration, eliminate all forms of structural discrimination against formerly incarcerated people, & restore formerly incarcerated people to full participation in the life of our community

FREE- Reclaiming Women's Freedom of the Chippewa Valley: Focused on the specific needs of women returning to the community, helping with access to housing, food, clothing, employment, and more, without judgement

Eau Claire County Human Services Department (ECCHSD's): Works to provide human services to the most vulnerable and needy residents of Eau Claire County, their programs impact over 10% of the population

Chippewa Valley Justice Action Team (Clear Vision Eau Claire and Joining Our Neighbors & Advancing Hope – JONAH): A citizen action group working to address poverty, mental illness, and incarceration.

Public Health Framework: Improving Population Health

- Assessment of population health using a comprehensive, systematic approach; with attention to multiple determinants of health

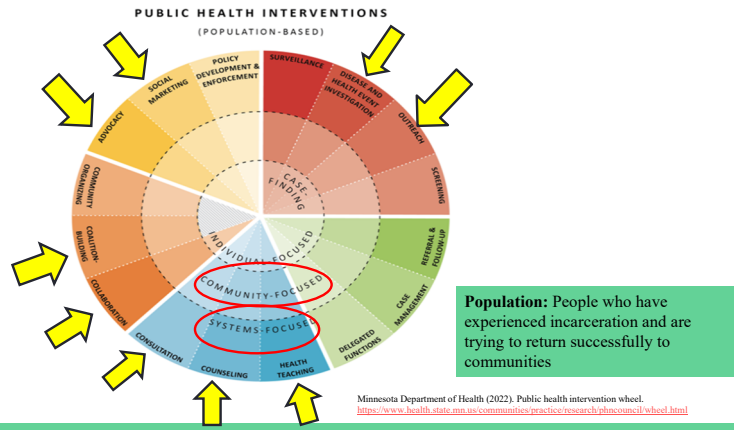- Focus on the health needs of an entire population (inequities and needs of sub-populations)

Population: People who have experienced incarceration and are trying to return successfully to communities

Ten Essential Public Health Services Wheel
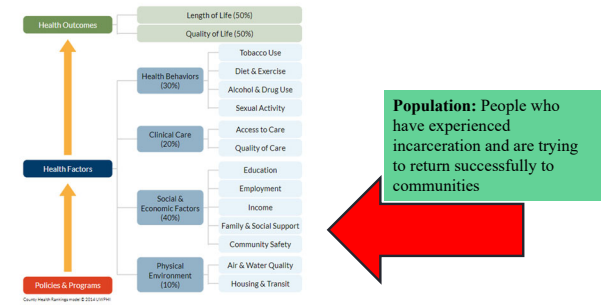
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023). 10 Essential services.
https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/publichealthservices/essentialhealthservices.html

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Public Health Framework: Improving Population Health

Population: People who have experienced incarceration and are trying to return successfully to communities

Minnesota Department of Health (2022). Public health intervention wheel.
https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/research/phncouncil/wheel.html

Public Health Framework: Improving Population Health
County Health Rankings Model

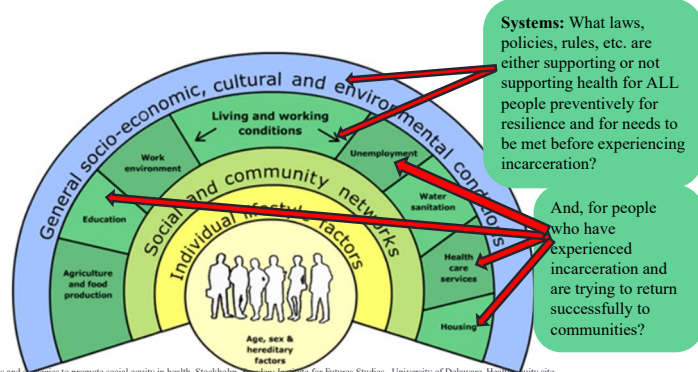**Population:** People who have experienced incarceration and are trying to return successfully to communities

County Health Rankings Model (2023). https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-mode

Public Health Framework: Improving Population Health
Social – Ecological Model and the Social Determinants of Health

Systems: What laws, policies, rules, etc. are either supporting or not supporting health for ALL people preventively for resilience and for needs to be met before experiencing incarceration?

And, for people who have experienced incarceration and are trying to return successfully to communities?

Dahlgren & Whitehead (1991). Policies and strategies to promote social equity in health. Stockholm, Sweden: Institute for Futures Studies. University of Delaware. Health equity site.
http://dehealthequityguide.weebly.com/old-6-policy-oriented-strategies.html
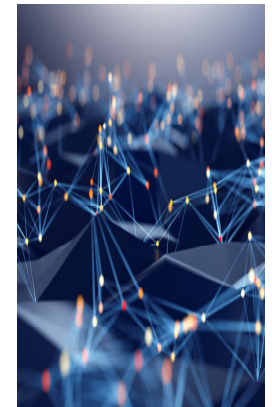
Community Assessment

1. Quantitative Data – Statistics from reliable source
- Prison Policy Project
- County, state and national US Census Bureau data,
- County Health Rankings
- Jail Datablitz survey and report. (e. g. information specific to those who were in jail).

2. Qualitative Data - Themes and survey responses

- Narrative responses from Jail Datablitz report
- Semi-structured interviews with folks from EXPO/FREE
- Stakeholder interviews (e. g. jail mental health specialist, social and human service workers, etc.)
- Incorporation of community-based participatory research methodology and thematic data analysis.

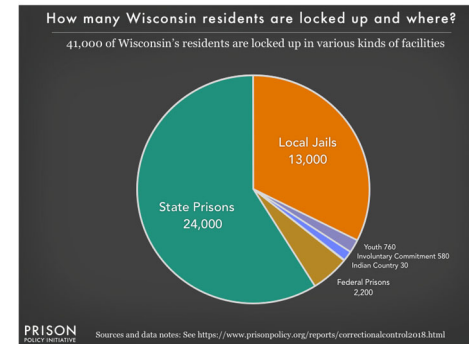2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
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Community Assessment

Today, Wisconsin's incarceration rates stand out internationally

INCARCERATION RATES
COMPARING WISCONSIN
AND FOUNDING NATO COUNTRIES

Country	Rate
United States	664
Wisconsin	663
United Kingdom	129
Portugal	111
Canada	104
France	93
Belgium	93
Italy	89
Luxembourg	86
Denmark	72
Netherlands	63
Norway	54
Iceland	33

Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html

"The research shows Wisconsin is locking people up faster than other states and internationally" (Prison Policy Project, 2023, para 1)

Prison Policy Project (2023). Mass incarceration: The whole pie 2023. [Report]. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html

Community Assessment

How many Wisconsin residents are locked up and where?

41,000 of Wisconsin's residents are locked up in various kinds of facilities

State Prisons 24,000
Local Jails 13,000
Youth 760
Involuntary Commitment 580
Indian Country 30
Federal Prisons 2,200

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE
Sources and data notes: See https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2018.html
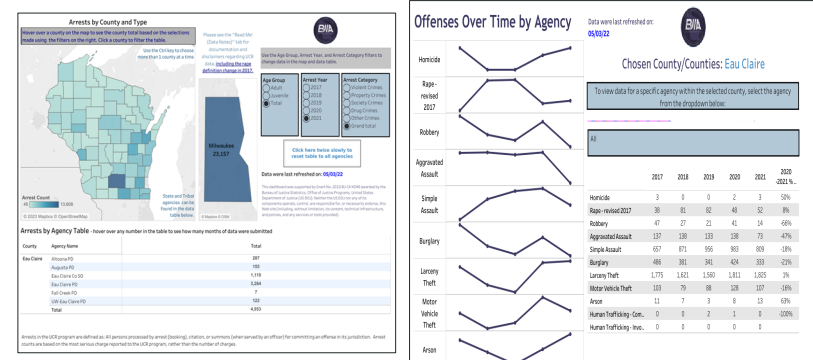
(Graph: Alexi Jones, December 2018)

Wisconsin's incarceration rate is 663 per 100,000 and is "...locking up a higher percentage of people than almost any democracy on earth" (Prison Policy Initiative, 2023, para 2).

Prison Policy Project (2023). Mass incarceration: The whole pie 2023. [Report]. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html

Community Assessment

Racial and ethnic disparities in prisons and jails in Wisconsin

Whites are underrepresented in the incarcerated population while Blacks, Latinos and American Indians are overrepresented.

Compiled from 2010 Census, Summary File 1.

Prison Policy Project (2023). Mass incarceration: The whole pie 2023. [Report]. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html

Community Assessment

Arrests by County and Type

Offenses Over Time by Agency

Chosen County/Counties: Eau Claire

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020 -2021 %
Homicide	3	0	0	2	3	50%
Rape - revised 2017	36	81	82	48	52	8%
Robbery	47	27	21	41	14	-66%
Aggravated Assault	137	138	133	138	73	-47%
Simple Assault	657	871	956	983	809	-18%
Burglary	686	381	341	424	333	-21%
Larceny Theft	1,775	1,621	1,560	1,811	1,825	1%
Motor Vehicle Theft	103	79	98	128	107	-16%
Arson	11	7	3	8	13	63%
Human Trafficking - Com...	0	0	2	1	0	-100%
Human Trafficking - Invo...	0	0	0	0	0	

Wisconsin Department of Justice(2022). Uniform crime reporting. Eau Claire county.(https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-offense-and-arrest-data-agency

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
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Community Assessment

16% Adults Smoke

8% adults uninsured 8.2/10 score on access to healthy foods and food insecurity

Adults report their mental health not good 4.5 days of the last 30 days

26% report excessive drinking

10 drug overdoses (since 2010)

12% of children in poverty (EC) 12.5% Poverty Overall (EC) Vs. 11.3% (Dane Co).

47% of deaths related to alcohol – impaired driving

78 injury deaths/100,000

14% report severe housing problems and cost burden

Eau Claire 2019 crime statistics show a 0.1% decline in total index crimes (from 2015).

1,983 property crimes: (341 burglary +5.6%; 1,552 larceny-theft -6.9%; 87 motor vehicle theft -1.1%, and 3 arson

231 Violent Crimes: 80 for rape at +263%; 21 for robbery at +23.5%; 130 for aggravated assault for +35.4%

County Health Rankings (2023).Eau Claire county. https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/wisconsin/eau-claire?year=2023
United States Census Bureau (2022). Eau Claire and Dane county. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/dunncountywisconsin/IPE120221#IPE120221
Wisconsin State Records (n.d.) Eau Claire county. https://wisconsin.staterecords.org/eauclaire

Community Assessment: Healthy People 2030 - Incarceration

*Between 1980 - 2014, US incarceration rate **increased by 220 %** (state and federal policy changes with harsher sentencing rules (e. g. three strikes" and mandatory minimum sentences).

*Higher rates of **incarceration** among racial and ethnic groups, Black and Hispanic and people with lower levels of education.

*Women with incarceration hx are **at greater risk of** HIV/AIDS, HPV, other STD's and **suffering more ACEs** (trauma, physical and sexual abuse)

*Number of older adults (50 yrs +) in prison is growing; without equitable resources to support.

*Study found **only 18% of older individuals** incarcerated were prescribed meds to treat mental health

*Within 2 weeks following release, those returning to the community are **129x more likely** than the general public to die of a drug overdose.

•**7% of all U.S. Children** experienced incarcerated parents, and **children are 5x** more likely to enter criminal justice system than children of non-incarcerated parents

•**65% of individuals who are incarcerated** meet the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)-IV **criteria for alcohol or other drug dependence or abuse**

*Within 3 years of release, **2 out of 3 people are rearrested and more than 50 %** are incarcerated again.

*People face obstacles reintegrating into society after release (problems with family, jobs, housing, health, and difficulty adjusting to new circumstances).

*Only 11% of individuals who have a substance use disorder receive drug treatment while incarcerated

* 1 in 12 released from incarceration are in the hospital by 90 days.

American Academy of Family Physicians(2023). Incarceration and health: A family medicine perspective [Position paper]. https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/incarceration.html
Healthy People 2030 (n.d.) Incarceration. Literature summary. https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/incarceration

Community Assessment

Approximately 5820 people are released from WI's state's prison and jails annually

(Prison Policy Initiative, 2023)
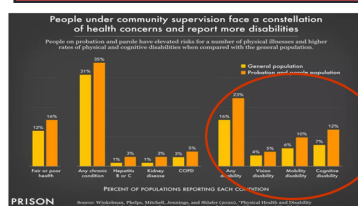
"…**people under community supervision have high rates of substance use and mental health disorders and extremely limited access to healthcare…**"
(*Prison Policy Project, 2023*)

Jail Datablitz

Evaluating Trauma History and Social Needs Among Incarcerated Individuals

Dr. Ruth Cronje, Professor Emerita University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
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Factors associated with criminal activity were significantly present in the Chippewa Valley

- **Poverty**
  - 42% of households in Eau Claire County are income-insecure (ECC) according to ALICE report)
  - 36% in Chippewa County
  - 21% in Dunn County

- **Insufficient mental health resources**
  - 1 provider for every 320 residents in Eau Claire County (2020 County Health Rankings)
  - 1 provider for every 1110 residents in Chippewa County
  - 1 provider for every 640 residents in Dunn County

- Lack of data regarding trauma history, mental illness, and unmet social needs among individuals entering Chippewa Valley jails

Community Partnership

- University Honors Program (UHP) students and faculty from University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire
- Clear Vision Eau Claire (https://www.facebook.com/ClearVisionEauClaire/) Chippewa Valley Justice Action Team
- Department of Justice staff from Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties
- Eau Claire County Department of Human Services
- Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO) (https://expowisconsin.org/) and the FREE team (https://www.wispolitics.com/2023/free-helps-unveil-dignity-for-incarcerated-women-girls-legislation)
- Joining Our Neighbors Advancing Hope (JONAH) (https://jonahjustice.org/)

Created a composite screening instrument in Qualtrix:

- Wisconsin ACEs module of CDC's Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System
- Adult Resilience Measure-Revised (ARM-R) from Dalhousie University
- Traumatic Brain Injury Identification Method—Short Form from Ohio State University
- Brief Jail Mental Health Screen (BJMHS)
- "Homebrew" housing insecurity survey created by UHP students in partnership with EXPO members (pilot tested in spring of 2019)
- Demographic data (age, gender, race, employment status prior to arrest, educational attainment, jail status and incarceration history in the county)

How we screened

- Two 1-week periods when UHP students entered jails to screen:
  - October 2019: Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties
  - March 2020: Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties
- Anyone present in the jails on screening days and willing to talk with us was eligible to be surveyed
  - Adhered to UWEC IRB standards of informed consent

- **123 total individuals surveyed**

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
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How we analyzed our data

- Used Chi-square tests to compare findings from different counties
- Compared October 2019 results to March 2020 results
- Used Chi-square tests to compare various associations within the data (n=123)
- Consulted individuals with lived experience (DOJ, DHS, EXPO/FREE, individuals in Eau Claire County Jail) to solicit interpretations of findings
- Compared our findings to data captured upon entry by ECC's DOJ
- Compared our findings to published literature

To note about our methods

- Convenience sample, not randomized or controlled
  - Small n (total of 123 persons screened)
  - Less than 60% response rate

- Partnered with multiple stakeholders with various forms of lived experience of incarceration

- Students (NOT county staff) conducted the surveys

What we found

4/25/20

23

Brief Jail Mental Health screening

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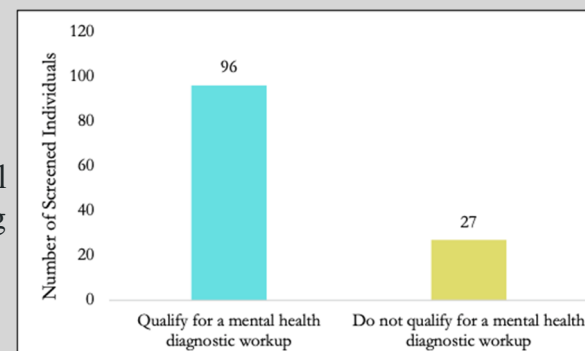
History of Traumatic Brain Injury
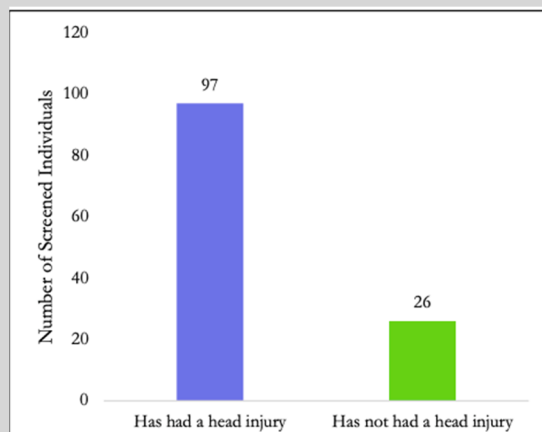
Housing insecurity
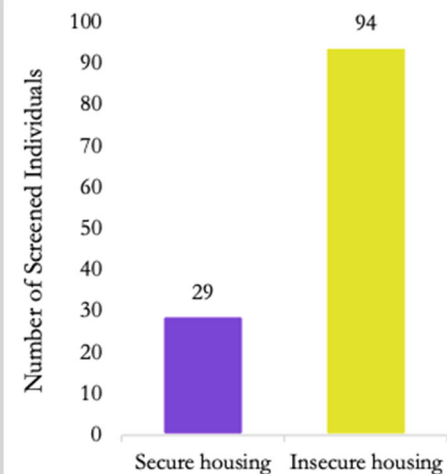
Housing Insecurity Status Prior to Incarceration
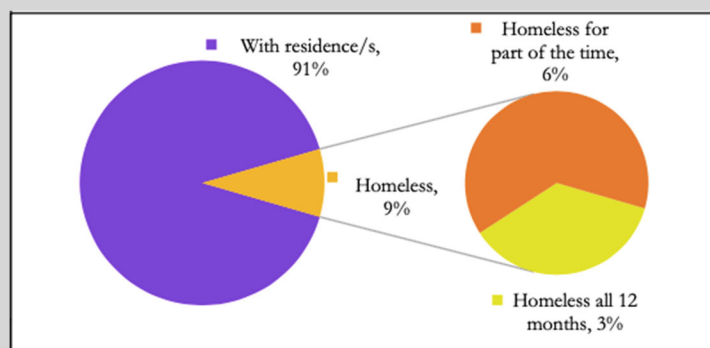
Post-Release Housing status

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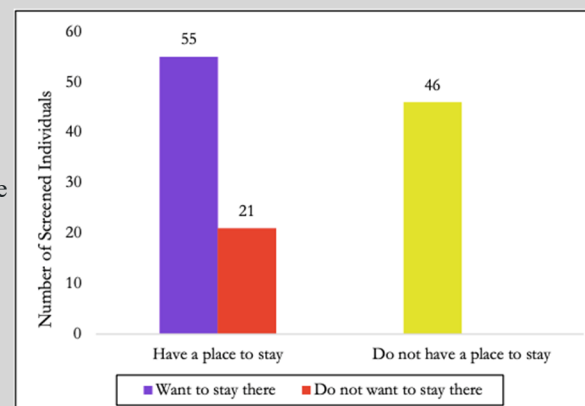
What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

- Toxic stress: frequent and enduring events over time that spike cortisol

- Abuse (sexual, physical, emotional)
- Neglect (emotional, physical)
- Household dysfunction
  - parental domestic violence/abuse
  - household substance abuse
  - household mental illness
  - parental separation or divorce
  - incarcerated household member

Birth to five

- 90% of brain development happens in pre-school years
- Brain development is **experience-dependent**
- Brain makes pathways based on experiences— whether negative or positive
- Neuroplasticity

High ACEs Scores are associated with:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Depression
- Alcoholism
- Fetal death
- Illicit drug use
- Liver disease
- Risk for domestic violence
- Multiple sex partners
- Unintended pregnancies
- STIs
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts

ACES and incarceration: what the literature says

- Children with incarcerated parents/caregivers experience five times as many ACEs as their counterparts without incarcerated parents
- High ACEs scores are associated with risk-taking behaviors, including alcohol and drug abuse and self- and other-directed violence
- Most ACEs studies exclude individuals who are incarcerated

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Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

16% of general population has ACEs score of 4 or more

One individual reported so many traumatic childhood experiences, there were "too many to count."
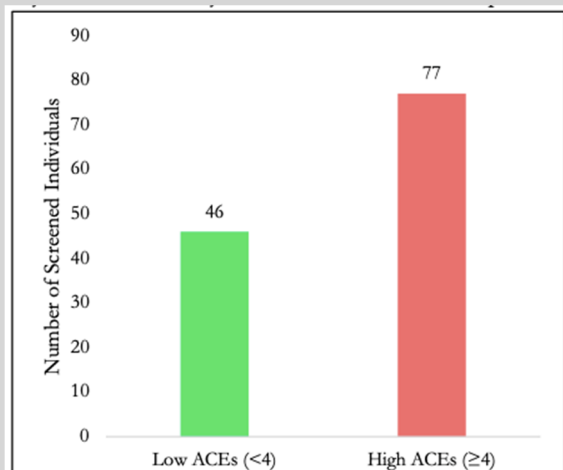
Individuals who had been removed from custody as children

"Not legally, but my grandparents took care of me because my mom was a drug user."

"They should have"

"[because I had] weed- growing parents [and my] dad was a heroin addict."

Another who answered "no" reported they were "the only kid who wasn't out of four."
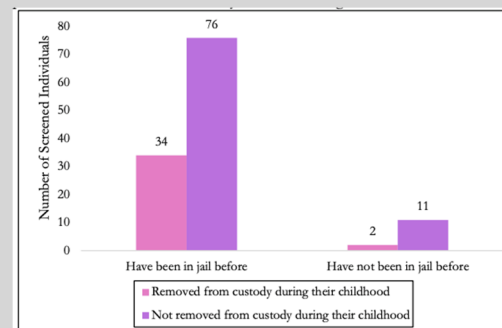
Resilience
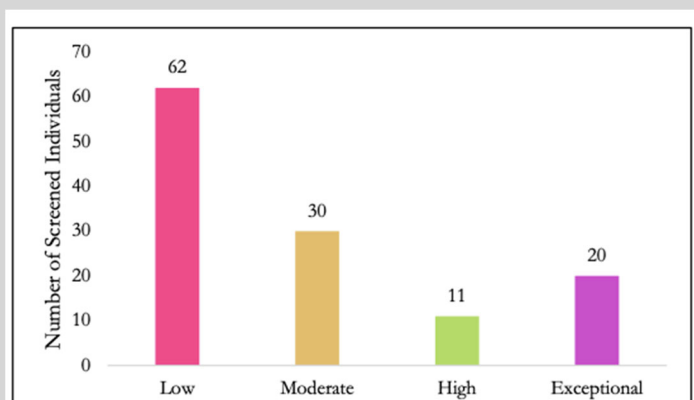
Low resilience was significantly associated with signals of mental illness

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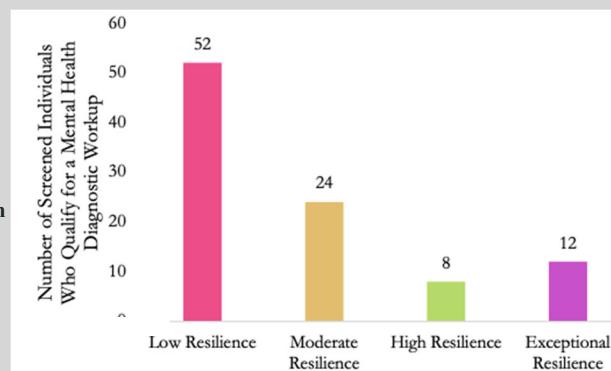
Family support was associated with resilience

Number of Screened Individuals

Felt supported by family: Low Resilience 19, Moderate Resilience 20, High Resilience 10, Exceptional Resilience 19

Did not feel supported by family: Low Resilience 43, Moderate Resilience 10, High Resilience 1, Exceptional Resilience 1

- Low Resilience
- Moderate Resilience
- High Resilience
- Exceptional Resilience
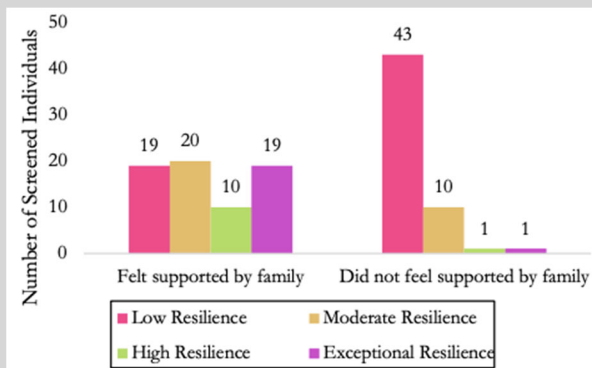
Sense of community belonging

Number of Screened Individuals

Felt like they belonged: Low Resilience 9, Moderate Resilience 6, High Resilience 7, Exceptional Resilience 17

Did not feel like they belonged: Low Resilience 53, Moderate Resilience 24, High Resilience 4, Exceptional Resilience 3

- Low Resilience
- Moderate Resilience
- High Resilience
- Exceptional Resilience
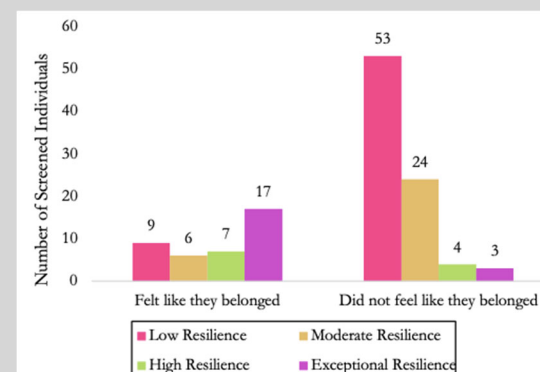
BUT!

- No association between resilience scores and ACEs scores
  - 74% of individuals scoring "low" on resilience had an ACEs score of 4 or more
  - 50% of individuals with "exceptional" resilience had an ACEs score of 4 or more

- We need more data!!

Big picture lessons

- Mental health issues are present in our jails
- We need more mental health resources in our jails
- We need diagnostic workups for individuals with signals of serious mental illness and history of brain injury
- Individuals with histories of significant ACEs are present in our jails; they require trauma-informed care
- Many of the individuals in our county jails face housing insecurity upon release

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Returning to the Community:
A Quality Improvement Project for Systems Change

Contributors:
- Spring and Fall (2020 and 2021) – University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire College of Nursing and Health Sciences 428 Students

Community Partners:
- Eau Claire County Human Services Department
- Eau Claire County Jail
- The Chippewa Valley Justice Action Team (CVJAT) as part of Joining Our Neighbors and Advancing Hope (JONAH)
- Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO)
- Free-Reclaiming Women's Freedom of the Chippewa Valley

University of Wisconsin Eau Claire

We acknowledge that UW-Eau Claire occupies the sacred and ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples. We honor the land of the Ojibwe and Dakota Nations.

Returning to the Community:
A Quality Improvement for Systems Change

Project Goal & Objectives:
To raise awareness about the gaps and resources needed to support people as they return to their community after having experienced incarceration.

Returning to the Community:
A Quality Improvement Project for Systems Change

- Support individuals who are returning to the community by using a modified photovoice technique
- Provide narratives to support the quantitative data from the Jail Datablitz through a qualitative photovoice methodology
- Identify barriers and address program gaps important for success and health when returning to the community after incarceration
- Long term goal: support future program improvement through enhanced understanding and by actively engaging people who have lived experience

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Interviews/Methodology

- Phone call and/or video conference platforms using semi-structured questionnaire
- EXPO facilitated and coordinated outreach for interviews

Spring 2020 – 6 interviews
Fall 2020 – 9 interviews
Spring 2021 – 5 interviews
Fall 2021 – 6 interviews
Total = 26 interviews
- Fall 2021 - 2 separate focus groups (EXPO & FREE) – group discussion and testimonies specific to health care experience(s) related to incarceration
- Attendance – in person and online
- EXPO attendees – 7
- FREE attendees – 6

**UWEC IRB was consulted and this project was noted to be quality improvement

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
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Interviews/Methodology

- **Students used therapeutic communication techniques during the interviews:**
- **Active listening**
  - **Asking open ended questions**
  - **Using clarifying statements**
  - **Summarizing points**
  - **Acknowledging feelings**
  - **If participants became uncomfortable at any time, they had the right to remove themself from the conversation**
- **Peer Counselors - offered and available during and after the interviews if participant interested**
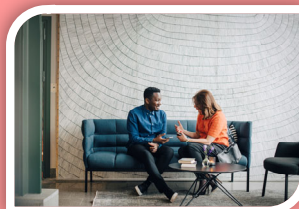
**UWEC IRB was consulted and this project was noted to be quality improvement

Documents Used

- **Project Abstract**
- **Interviewee Consent Form**
- **Returning to the Community Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire (based upon research)**
- **Social Media Interviewee Recruitment Flier**

RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY

Share your story

Semi-Structured Questionnaire and Population

- Semi-structured questionnaire

  - Developed by nursing students (Spring 2020) using the following resources and reviewed by EXPO representative
    - Ex-offender questionnaire; (It's Possible Inc., n.d.)
    - Reentry challenges; (Li, M., March 2018)
  - Population:
    - Sample size: Convenience and Small (26 total interviews over 4 semesters)
  - Limitations:
    - Convenience sample
    - All populations may not be equitably represented in the data
    - Biases

Semi-Structured Questionnaire
(Individual and Focus Groups) and Methodology

- ☐ Read statement to obtain verbal permission
- ☐ No demographic data obtained for protection and privacy of participants; very vulnerable, at-risk population
- ☐ 14 possible questions

Reavis JA, Looman J, Franco KA, Rojas B. Adverse childhood experiences and adult criminality: how long must we live before we possess our own lives? *Perm J. 2013* Spring;17(2):44-8. doi: 10.7812/TPP/12-072

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

**Semi-Structured Questionnaire Questions
(Individual and Focus Groups) and Methodology**

- The morning you were released from jail/prison what were some things you needed, but didn't have access to (clothes, clothing, housing, etc.)?
- Where did you go after you were released from jail/prison? Did you have a place to live when you were released from jail/prison? If so, did you feel safe living there? Do you have a place to live now?
- What resources were offered to you around housing, food, clothing when you were released from jail/prison?
- If so, would you change anything about how the way resources were offered?
- What difficulties have you had in getting a job when you were released from jail/prison? If so, can you describe those difficulties? If not, what was helpful to you in getting a job?

- What types of re-entry education programs were offered to you to participate in(transitional programs, half-way houses, Huber)?
- What types of mental health and/or addiction treatment programs were offered to you? If so, how did that help you? If not, how do you think these programs would have helped you and how so?
- What kinds of challenges are you facing right now?
- What types of mental health or addiction treatment services were offered to you?
- What childhood or life experiences do you think may have impacted your life's journey?

Reavis JA, Looman J, Franco KA, Rojas B. Adverse childhood experiences and adult criminality: how long must we live before we possess our own lives? *Perm J.* 2013 Spring;17(2):44-8. doi: 10.7812/TPP/12-072

Semi-Structured Questionnaire Questions (Individual and Focus Groups) and Methodology

Photovoice

Through this project, we are trying to narrate stories of how those who have been incarcerated through pictures.
- If you could draw or describe a picture of what your life was like before incarceration, what would that look like?
- What is that picture now?
- How do you hope that picture looks like in the future?
- What are some things that are preventing you from getting to what you picture your future looks like?

Focus Group Discussion Questions

"Did you notice any barriers specifically related to healthcare?"

"What attitudes and/or discrimination have you commonly noticed when receiving healthcare?"

Reavis JA, Looman J, Franco KA, Rojas B. Adverse childhood experiences and adult criminality: how long must we live before we possess our own lives? Perm J. 2013 Spring;17(2):44-8. doi: 10.7812/TPP/12-072

Focus Group Recruitment
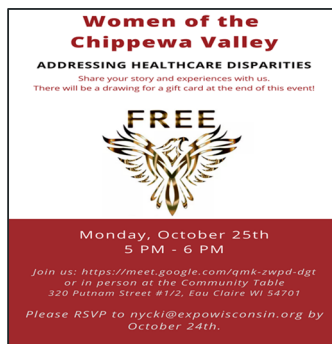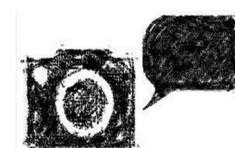

FREE Focus Group Flyer
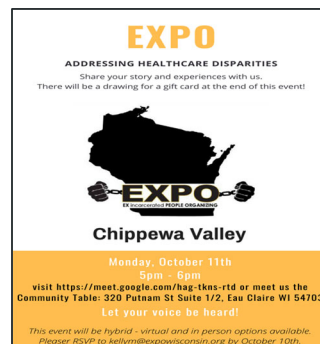
EXPO Focus Group Flyer

Photovoice (Modified)

Photovoice is a process in which people – usually those with limited power due to poverty, language barriers, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, or other circumstances – use video and/or photo images to capture aspects of their environment and experiences and share them with others (Rabinowitz).
- Interviews were not able to be face-to-face with the individuals.
- Cameras could not be provided
- Participants were asked to describe a picture of their life before being incarcerated to now
- Images of what they were describing were found on copyright free image websites and edited through google draw

Rabinowitz, P. (2021.) Section 20. Implementing Photovoice In Your Community. from https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Stakeholder Interviews

- Interview with a social worker, Human Services representatives, counselors
- Main barrier for those impacted by incarceration trying to return to the community was safety and security.
- Importance of safety and security
  - Housing
  - Funding for counseling
  - Prevention of re-entry into jail

People with incarceration history need a stable place to live before addressing health issues, learning new skills, and finding jobs to support themselves.

Data, Data Collection, Analysis, and Results

- Interviews were conducted in pairs of students
- Student roles: Interviewee and Recorder
- All Students: reviewed data individually, color coded identified themes, and organized
- Data was then cohesively discussed and assessed based on common recurrent themes from stakeholder interviews and inclusive of focus group notes
- Saturation was obtained
- Comprehensive themes were identified

- Photovoice (pictures of life before, life now, and future)

- Themes from narratives from qualitative data from interviews

Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration:

"Drugs and empty pill bottles."

Life Now:

"Being on the couch watching TV with my kids."

Future:

"On top of the world with everyone that is suffering too. They are standing there too because they have been helped."

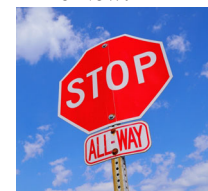Participant during Spring 2020

Photovoice

Life Before

"A giant web of thoughts and tangled cords."

Life Now:

"Like a dead stop with no chance of moving forward."

Future:

"I hope the cords are very organized. Making steps forward by making the right choices."

Participant during Spring 2020

14

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration:

Life Now:

"Puzzle pieces. I am putting the pieces of my life back together."

Future:

"A complete puzzle. I've built a lot of strength in my faith and am making a lot of progress on my goals."

"At first glance, everything seemed ok. I had kids, a house. But underneath the surface I was using and blacking out."

Photovoice - Participant during Fall 2020

Photovoice

Life before Incarceration:
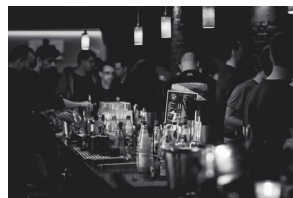
"Sitting at a bar with a lot of people laughing around me while I sit in solitude with alcohol. I had a lot of negative thoughts and was feeling hopeless."

Life Now:

"A big smiley face. I'm very content with the people in my life."

Future:

"A smiley face with gray hair. I just want to die sober. I feel that if I die sober, everything leading up to that point will be a good life. A productive one. A happy one."

Photovoice - Participant during Fall 2020

Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration:

"A picture of me in a hotel room, with it packed to brim with everything I could own. I would dumpster dive to find new things. I was wishing I had something else going on, but not enough ambition to do it."

Life Now:

"Me and a pitchfork with a bale of hay and sweat coming off my forehead. I keep throwing a bunch of hay behind me, but the pile in front of me keeps getting bigger."
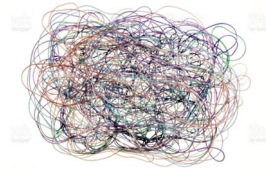
Future:

"Classic white picket fence, green grass, swings, me and my spouse and kids grilling."

Photovoice - Participant during Fall 2020

Photovoice

Life BeforeIncarceration:

"Gas theory, a bunch of scribbles and lines and things that sometimes come together and sometimes it's just a gray cloud just covering you in chaos."
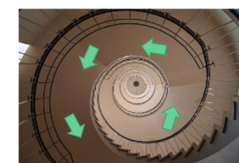

Life Now: "An upward spiral, I am in a lot better shape mentally, and much happier than I was."
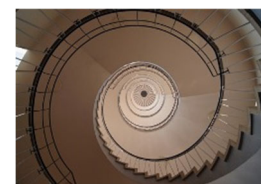
**Future:** " An upward spiral but with these little steps and X's going up"

"Arrows meaning, I know where to go, I have a path."

Interview Participant

15

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
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Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration:
"Someone in a big bubble, I can see the world but am not a part of it."
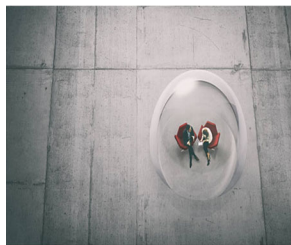
Life Now: "A guy on a mountain screaming into nothingness saying the world is mine, he makes his own destiny."

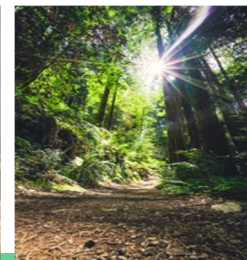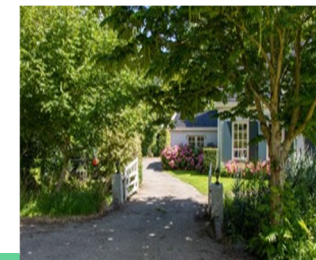**Future:** "In a spaceship, taking on the word and life, being successful."

Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration:
"Clouds, storms, lightening"-before."

Life Now:
"Outside with green trees, sunshine, birds and flowers."

Future:
"A small house with a yard for my son to play-us just being together."

Photovoice

Life Before Incarceration: "A tornado, life was up in the air, it was chaos."

Life Now: "Family broken into pieces, not together."
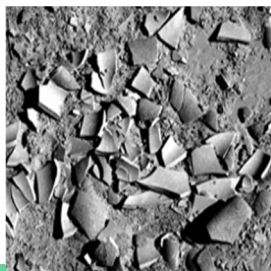
Future: "Me and my son, no money issues."

Participant Descriptions: Life Before Incarceration

"It was like a dark desert."

"If I was high, I could tolerate what he was doing to me."

"My childhood was traumatic."

"Felt worthless as a child."

"I was sexually assaulted as a child."

"Parents were drinkers and I grew up thinking 'that is the way people live."

"Was not until like the 78th charge until I got offered treatment."

"Empty drug bottles."

"A little kid taking a bunch of colors of crayons and just scribbling like crazy."

"Would relieve stress by getting high."

"Tornado causing chaos."

16

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Participant Descriptions Before Incarceration

"I had a lot of negative thoughts. I would be feeling hopeless."

"A big, black hole. It was pretty sick."

"A mess...all strung out...a hot mess."

"Separated from society."

"Chaos."

"Scary, unknown, risky, stupid…"

Participant Descriptions: Trying to Return to the Community

"They changed their mind when they saw my record."

"Feel like I was stolen of my treatment."

"I did not have a safe place to live."

"It is very important that the community sees us for who we are and not the labels that we have."

"Getting a job was hard because of my record, gaps in employment, and no schooling."

"Went to my parents house, went back to drug houses, slept in my van because there was nowhere else to go."

"Need someone to let me know what my options are."

"Roadblock after roadblock getting a job because of conviction history."

"I got released unexpectedly in the middle of a winter night in shorts and a t- shirt, and with no phone or no money."

"There's not a day I won't be judged."

"A release plan was helpful after prison."

Participant Descriptions: Trying to Return to the Community

"Puzzle pieces. I am putting the pieces of my life back together."

"I was in a dark place, and had to be in a dark place, to be where I am now."

"A lotus flower, growing from the mud."

"A long road. I have to walk down a long road to get to where I want to go."

"I have to put up barriers and not engage in toxic relationships."

Participant Descriptions of Future Vision and Potential Barriers

"I need to fight my addiction and be comfortably mentally."

"Finally walking towards the light at the end of the tunnel."

"Making steps forward."

"I am being very optimistic about the future."

"On top of the world with everyone that needs help."

17

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Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Participant Descriptions of Future Vision and Potential Barriers

"The happiest and healthiest
I've ever been."

"My own self-sabotage."

"A mirror being put back
together again."

"Codependency."

"Be a productive member of
society."

"Mental status...fear of
relapse."

"Classic white picket fence, green
grass, swings, grilling…"

"No one will ever give me a
home loan."

Comprehensive Themes

- "Too many to count"
  - Childhoods were often traumatic, with exposure to drugs, alcohol, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. Many individuals grew up in the system and find it hard to trust people.
- "Having unhealed mental health issues definitely led to my criminal history"
  - A lot of people who experience incarceration have mental health issues. Supporting mental and emotional health is critical.
- "I felt separated from society"
  - Isolation is an issue before incarceration (such as solitude with alcohol and drugs), while incarcerated (due to loss of pride) and after incarceration (due to not having access to needed resources and supportive relationships).
- "Being a felon, I felt like the odd were stacked against me...There's not a day I won't be judged"
  - Stigma and discrimination is present in healthcare, professional, and community settings. "We're not all monsters....It is very important that the community sees us for who we are and not the labels that we have."

Comprehensive Themes

- It's hard to move up
  - It's difficult to find a job that pays enough to afford transportation, childcare, continuing education, probation/parole requirements, and life expenses. A temp agency is required to find a job, yet individuals are turned down due to criminal backgrounds.
- "Finding somewhere to live was next to impossible"
  - There is a lack of affordable, safe, healthy, and alcohol/drug-free places to go after incarceration that support success. Rental companies and lending institutions discriminate due to incarceration history
- "Wasn't offered any resources for food...or clothing"
  - Food Share, food stamps, food pantries, and donated or discounted clothing are available, though have to be found independently, are complicated to access (require computer and language literacy) and are insufficient.
- "Process Seems Backwards"
  - There is difficulty getting a license, affording a car, and public transportation can be unreliable to meet job and parole requirements in a timely manner

Comprehensive Themes

- "I didn't know who to reach out to."
  - When individuals were specifically offered access to reentry programs, peer recovery groups, mental health and addiction support, and BadgerCare, many shared that the programs were helpful. People who were not offered programs and did not know how to access them, stated "it would have helped."
- "It's really important to know someone gives a...about you"
  - Healthy and supportive relationships can aid those returning to the community and who are in recovery. This may include counselors, peer support, healthcare workers, parole officers, family members, and significant others.
- "Nothing is going to stand in the way of reaching the future; being very optimistic and feeling strong"
  - Personal successes such as sobriety, returning to school, employment, and improved mental health drive individuals to overcome the systemic barriers

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Focus Group Comprehensive Healthcare Themes

- **Health Literacy**
  - "I didn't know what to do or how to do it"
    - Involves those with minimal knowledge (may have never been taught) how to navigate insurance, creating appointments, or generally take care of their wellbeing.

- **Interactions/Attitudes (with healthcare personnel)**
  - "They assumed that I was drug seeking based on my history"
    - When this population seeks care, they are often met with negative attitudes (nonverbally: folding arms, sitting further back in chair), and purely defined as being a person who has been incarcerated.

Comprehensive Healthcare Themes

- **Mental Health**
  - "Difficult to heal and recover because of the barriers to accessing mental health services, as well as a lack of follow up."
    - Ratio of population to mental health providers in Eau Claire is 320:1; Wisconsin: 490:1; U.S. rates are 400:1 (The Community Health Assessment Planning Partnership Committee, 2021)
    - More than half people in the correctional facility with mental health problems (Healthy people 2030)
    - Inadequate mental health treatment and resources
    - Lack of and inappropriate mental health and medical treatment while incarcerated
- **Lack of resources**
  - "Cannot come up with out of pocket expenses, constant struggle for medical, transportation, and housing needs."
    - Unreliable transportation, difficulty receiving driver's license
    - Financial struggles

Comprehensive Healthcare Themes

- **Healthcare Coverage**
- o "Hard to find someone who I am comfortable with, and I can't just shop around."
- o "Insurance isn't good enough."
- o "BadgerCare is cut off when one goes to jail."
  - 51% report treatment is too expensive (The Community Health Assessment Planning Partnership Committee, 2021).
  - Struggles with the general lack of healthcare coverage, applications, long waiting lists, and limited choices

- **Downstream Thinking: "get them in, get them out"**
- o "Our system is set up where you can't get the help you need until you deteriorate to a certain point."
- o "Nobody wanted to know my story, they just wanted to fix my symptoms."
- o "People there to catch you when you mess up, but there isn't anyone to prevent it from occurring in the first place."

Comprehensive Healthcare Themes

- **Feminine Health**
- **Inhumanity and Lack of Empathy**
  - "That's not my problem" when a woman who was incarcerated missed distribution of hygiene products when she was in the shower."
  - Menstruation: Costs money
    - Takes long time to get them, difficult to access, especially if have a heavier period, not always able to access when needed (bleeding through).
  - Family and Children
    - More than 1 million children have incarcerated parent(s), more likely to be in poverty and homeless (Healthy people 2030).
    - Kids rarely have access to mental health when parents are incarcerated
    - Incarceration is a family struggle.
- o The vast majority of women in prison have been victims of violence prior to their incarceration (American Civil Liberties Union et al., 2005). Including: domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, and child abuse.
- o Importance of building trusting relationship and rapport with HCP essential for recovery and overall health.

2023 Correctional Health Care Conference
Plenary 2 - Moving Upstream with Data and informed by
People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

Correctional Officer (CO) Data (Sp 2021)

- Survey (12 Questions) to COs in Chippewa Valley x 1wk
- 16 anonymous responses out of 59 Cos; 27% participation rate
- Question: "What changes would you suggest to the "system" to assure success for people to return to their community successfully after experiencing incarceration?"

Responses:

- *"Change probation, "it is supposed to reduce the number of people in the system, instead it constantly forces people to come back because of harsher regulations, it is constantly given out to almost everybody and as a result people have a lot of contact with police brought in almost nonstop...",*

- *"...offer more resources and help in general when leaving jail, assure a solid plan before leaving jail."*
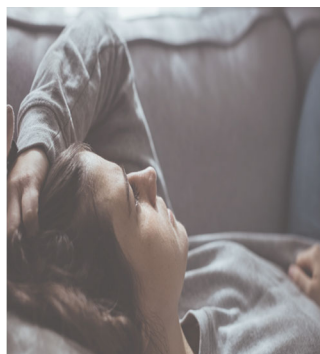
Identified early intervention as the best way to address mass incarceration within the justice system.

Outcomes

- Limitations to all data (have not repeated, no demographics, not generalizable)
- Not a standardized, tested survey.
- Small convenience samples, and not necessarily representative to generalize to the entire population
- Specific to this community.
- Nursing students identified their own stigmas and biases, and were challenged to develop enhanced understanding of people's lived experiences.
- Students learned about the importance of the nurse as a change agent through advocacy.
- Data collected used to elevate awareness about the gaps and barriers and the need for programmatic improvement and systems change incorporating prevention (focus on housing, mental health and addiction treatment services, health care, transportation, etc.)

Recommendations

1. Project continuation and data collection to form comprehensive recommendations for improved programmatic and systematic changes (e.g., peer support mentoring and services).
2. Use the data and narratives to advocate for populations affected by structural racism and the stigma associated with having been a part of the justice system when trying to successfully return to the community.
3. Share the data with community partners, public and private organizations and policy makers to support discussions regarding quality improvement programmatic and policy changes aimed at systems change.
4. It is vital the community collectively intervenes to diminish the gaps and barriers around mental health, adverse childhood experiences, addiction disease, transportation, housing, employment, and poverty to address health inequities in the Chippewa Valley
5. Continue to address gaps in healthcare related environments and support the importance of partnered advocacy as healthcare workers.
6. Exhibition to showcase personal connections and humanize issues about what is happening in the correctional system.

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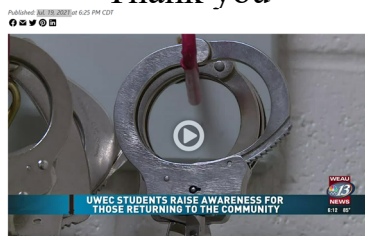People with Lived Experience in Correctional Systems

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Thank you

Published: Jul. 19, 2021 at 6:25 PM CDT

UWEC Students Raise Awareness for Those Returning to the Community

UWEC STUDENTS RAISE AWARENESS FOR THOSE RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY

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