“Like Going Up a Flight of Stairs”: Returning Citizens on Reentry Success

by

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A dissertation accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Counseling Psychology

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Summer 2026

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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For returning citizens newly released from prison, post-carceral reentry represents a complex task. Academic study of post-carceral reentry emerged and accelerated in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Extant research has begun to explore factors that influence the reentry experience, with a guiding objective to improve reentry outcomes, for the benefit of returning citizens and society at-large. Extant research has generated empirical support for a variety of variables related to reentry success, but the field has been limited by two problems that this study seeks to address: (1) Definitions for re-entry success have been overly-dichotomized, often reducing success to simple recidivism-avoidance and missing nuance and sophistication (2) Definitions for re-entry success have largely been generated by researchers themselves, neglecting to incorporate the perspectives and definitions of returning citizens, themselves. Particularly neglected have been the reentry success definitions of returning citizens who identify as female or Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. This study asked two research questions: (1) How do returning citizens define reentry success? And (2) What differences in success definitions exist along lines of gender and racial identity?

This study draws upon qualitative data sets from two recent mixed-methods studies of reentry: The Mentoring Study (*N*=26) and The Way Home Study (*N*=29) that were conducted in 2018 and 2020, respectively, in partnership with Sponsors, Inc., a local reentry-support non-profit organization. Semi-structured interviews were transcribed and coded for *a priori* themes

generated by returning citizens in previous studies as definitions of reentry success. Data analysis software was used to compare thematic definitions of success by gender and racial identity.

Findings support a previously proposed two-dimensional model of reentry success incorporating both intrapersonal well-being and interpersonal reintegration (both social and systemic). Notable and novel findings include key definitions of success in the well-being dimension, including mental health and perseverance, and in the reintegration dimension, including social reintegration with family and significant others and systemic reintegration via community contribution. The study revealed some preliminary differences in definitions of reentry success as delineated by gender and racial identity. Study limitations and implications for practice, policy, and research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge how collaborative this project—and my academic career and life—have been. I hope to convey that my singular name on the title page stands in the place of a village of people who have lent their time, energy, wisdom, and love to support this project and my progress toward this degree. I want to first acknowledge the returning citizens who lent their voices to this study. I believe you have invaluable insight into confinement and freedom that all of us can benefit from hearing about. Thank you for your gracious participation. I hope that you're all experiencing wild success, by your own definitions.

My committee has been instrumental in shaping my development as a researcher, student, and person. They have improved the quality of this project tremendously. When I was an undergraduate, Dr. Ellen Scott became a mentor in both academia and life, modeling holistically healthy priorities that I continually seek to emulate. Thank you, Ellen, for having believed in and advocated for me at so many points along this journey. Jo has served as a valued methodological consultant on every project that I've worked on. Jo, thank you for teaching us to conduct sound qualitative research. Even more, thank you for modeling kindness, humor, balance, and compassion in your approach to this work and to life. As my advisor, Jean has provided invaluable support throughout my graduate journey, championing my holistic well-being. Jean, it's hard to imagine having moved through this program—while starting a family— without your warm partnership and wise guidance. Thank you. Early in the program, I enrolled in a course taught by Dr. Atika Khurana, where her presence was notably graceful, authentic, and inspiring. Dr. Khurana treated us with palpable dignity. Thank you, Atika, for conveying such sincere kindness and steadfast belief.

I also want to acknowledge Jean's "Dream Team" of criminal justice researchers, with gratitude for the friendship and spirit of collaboration that I encountered there. Bobby Ortega provided particular belief and practical support that were instrumental in my path toward doctoral study in psychology. In the final stage of data analysis, Grace Nelson agreed to join this project as a research assistant. Grace's contributions were invaluable; her keen perspective undoubtedly enhanced the quality of our methods and findings. Thank you, also, to Danette Roberson and the CPHS departmental administrative team for your steadfast support and kindness. Thank you, Alex Weintstein, for your formatting support. I want to acknowledge my peers in this program, especially the 2020 cohort. Thank you all for your friendship along the way. May students of psychology continue to center the study of the soul, embodying the role of love in cultivating its well-being. Almost-finally, I want to acknowledge my family. Mom, Dad, Alison, Johnny, Aunt Sara; Tana, Steve, Haley, Marshall, Reid, Wells, Mina: Thank you for loving me so faithfully. Brooklyn, Rowan: I love you both completely. Shannon, words fail.

Finally, I want to acknowledge fellow students whose freedoms to live, study, and speak in the US have been impinged upon in the present political climate. My lay-understanding of history suggests that the slope toward unjust—albeit legal— state-enacted violence can be a slippery one. Yikes. I doubt whether any law yet prohibits writing words of protest in a dissertation. In case any does: I want to formally express here my protest of this executive branch's apparently merciless use of its power to evoke fear and consolidate power. I believe that subversive mercy is the most powerful protest of oppressive power that I have to offer. May merciful love transform the hearts, minds, souls, and wills of those exercising oppressive power—and of us all. In the name of such love, I present to the committee this dissertation.

DEDICATION

For the same five years that I have been dancing through this psychology program named for the study of the soul, my wife's wildly liberating love for me has been the primary sculptor of my own soul. I dedicate myself anew to you, Shannon, and to our marriage, and to the spirit of love who lives in you, it, and our soul(s).

In the seafaring vessel of our windswept marriage, I have been set repeatedly free by your myriad, ever-widening mercies. The lonely prison walls of an illusory separate self have dissolved into a river of unitive distinction. I have been set free from prisons of dualistic consciousness and faux objectivity, into transcendent gardens of subjective, paradoxical delight; freed from a prison of certainty into fields of not-knowing wonder; from prisons of secret, insecure shame and deceit into deeper, fuller, more authentic, honest, and nakedly intimate presence. I have been freed to receive love more deeply, fearlessly; rainwater for my thirsty soul. I have been freed to surrender my tight grip on reality; to practice over and over letting go; emptying and opening myself vulnerably, only to see a frighteningly flickering flame faithfully rekindled and rekindled and rekindled; to fall and fall and fall again into the ways of *ubuntu,* of ordinary *shalom*. I've been freed from prisons of clever reason and smug intellect to return to the soil of my body: to feel what I feel, to awaken and return to my childlike senses—grace-soaked organs in a jar of clay; freed to share with you burdens and have you see and lick my wounds and tears; freed from pious self-seriousness, by irreverent laughter and play; freed to perceive the whispering winds of love rippling within and without; freed to believe in it, trust it, dance with it; freed to follow its lead, breathe it in, sit utterly still and let its silence echo through me, tenderly shaping; freed to laugh as I wonder: When were we ever not free? When were we ever not we? When will we ever then cease? How much freer will then your love be?

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Chapter I: Introduction

At the end of 2021, the population incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the United States exceeded 1.7 million (Fair & Walmsley, 2024). Of those incarcerated, approximately 95% will eventually be released (Hughes & Wilson, 2003; Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Travis, 2005). In 2020 alone, over 549,000 sentenced prisoners were released from U.S. state or federal correctional authorities and reentered communities (Carson, 2021), reflecting annual averages for the decade. This equates to more than 1,500 persons who are emancipated each day. For formerly incarcerated individuals—increasingly referred to as "returning citizens" to confer dignity of the individuals (Graham et al., 2015)—release represents the commencement of a complex process of reentry and reintegration into free society.

While modern public perspectives on criminal justice have their origins in the 18th century, modern criminal justice research can be traced to the middle of the 20th century (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2019). Meanwhile, research on the reentry process emerged and accelerated in the last quarter of the 20th century (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2019; Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Worldwide approaches to criminal justice were long oriented primarily toward punishment before oscillating between orientations of punishment and rehabilitation during the past half century (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2019; Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Parallelling this, broader-scoped interest has emerged with regards to how returning citizens navigate the transitions from society to prison and back again (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2019). During the 21st century, research exploring how returning citizens, and society, experience various aspects of post-carceral reentry has proliferated (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2019).

Extant research has examined many variables associated with reentry success. To understand what elements of the reentry experience are most salient for success, researchers have

examined biological, cognitive, emotional, and social factors. Empirical research suggests that these factors shape the reentry experience for returning citizens by facilitating or impeding success. For a complete list of references, please see Appendix A.

Biological constructs are often grouped under the umbrella of basic needs and may include less ostensibly biological constructs such as finance, transportation, clothing, or employment (Gwynne et al. 2020; Luther et al. 2011; Taxman, 2004). Some of the isolated biological factors that have received attention from researchers have included the importance for reentry success of good nutrition (e.g., Costopoulos et al., 2017; Maruca et al., 2021; Testa & Jackson, 2019; Welsh & Levya, 2020), ample sleep (Testa & Porter, 2017), adequate shelter (e.g., Beck et al., 2023; E. I. Bowman & Ely, 2020; Hoffman et al., 2023; Mathlin et al., 2024), good medical health, hygiene, and access to the healthcare and pharmaceutical systems (e.g., Amaya et al., 2023; Barnert et al., 2020a; Fahmy & Mitchell, 2022; Hall et al., 2022), and substance use support (e.g., Fachilla, 2023; Griffin et al., 2020; Mathlin et al., 2024; Nichols et al., 2021).

The psychological correlates of successful reentry that have been deemed important can be subdivided into two categories: affective correlates of successful reentry and cognitive correlates of successful reentry. Affective correlates refer to variables related to emotion and how returning citizens' emotional experiences influence reentry; cognitive correlates are those related to thought or mental activity and how returning citizens' thinking influences reentry. Affective correlates that decrease the likelihood of reentry success include trauma (e.g., Pettus, 2023; Rotter et al., 2005; Schappell et al., 2016; Stansfield et al., 2022); stress, anxiety, and fear, (e.g., Gonzalez et al. 2023; Martin, 2018; Osterman, 2023; Sandbukt, 2023); shame, guilt, or stigma (e.g., Abrams et al., 2023; Decaro et al., 2022; Seaward et al., 2023; VanderPyl, 2021); and

depression, sadness, anger, or hostility (e.g., Kim et al., 2023; Mathlin et al., 2024; Mowen et al., 2020; Porter & Novisky, 2017). Affective correlates that increase the likelihood of reentry success include joy, optimism, hope, and resilience (e.g., Abrams et al., 2023; Cid et al., 2021; Nolet et al., 2022; Ozturk et al., 2022). Several cognitive aspects have been demonstrated to correlate with reentry success. Prosocial thoughts and beliefs about self and others are associated with a greater likelihood of successful reentry (LeBel & Richie, 2020; LeBel et al., 2015; O'Sullivan et al., 2018). Optimistic expectations for reentry are also linked to increased likelihood of reentry success (Holder et al., 2021; Tewksbury & Copes, 2013; Vuk & Applegate, 2021). Cognitively targeted educational interventions have been shown to increase the likelihood of successfully reentering, as well (Aiello & Duffy-Comparone, 2019; Anderson et al., 2023; Wilson et al., 2005). Meanwhile, returning citizens with a diagnosed intellectual disability have been shown to experience greater difficulty reentering successfully (Chiu et al., 2020; Worthington & Rossetti, 2021).

In addition to biological and psychological variables, social variables have received substantive research attention for their relationship to successful reentry. These have included social support, ecological context, family support, institutional support, and peer relationships. Social support—broadly defined—has been shown to correlate with greater chance of reentry success (e.g., Fachilla, 2023; Kjellstrand et al., 2022; Timmer et al., 2022; Zelechoski et al., 2024). Ecological context is a construct referring to neighborhood, subculture, and community factors. It has received empirical support for its connection to reentry success. For instance, reentry success has been shown to be more likely when returning citizens return to vibrant, resource-rich, racially integrated, inclusive neighborhoods with a strong sense of community cohesion, order, and civic engagement, and low rates of surveillance, crime, and substance use

(e.g., Alward et al., 2020; Bell et al., 2021; Christian, 2022; Clark et al., 2023). Support from family members (e.g., parents, children, romantic partners) additionally plays an important role in reentry. Such support may be emotional, financial, vocational, legal, or the provision of housing or other basic necessities (e.g., Liu et al., 2023; Mowen et al., 2019b; Mowen & Boman, 2019; Sirois, 2019). People representing or encountered through institutions including religious institutions, the justice system, employers, and non-profit organizations may also be sources of helpful social support during reentry. Such places can provide critical support related to employment or vocation, accountability, housing, financial support, transportation resources, emotional support, access to mentor or prosocial peers, or spiritual direction (e.g., Konkel, 2020; Kriegel, 2019; Liu et al., 2023; Mowen et al., 2018). Finally, relationships with peers—herein referring to other returning citizens—have received attention from researchers studying correlates of reentry success, particularly when the peers help with avoidance of problematic behaviors (e.g., substance use, criminal acts), and provide help (e.g., emotional support, support with basic needs) or role modeling for successful reentry (e.g., Albert, 2024; Kjellstrand et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Moak et al., 2022).

The body of research referenced above represents substantive efforts to understand facilitators and barriers to reentry success. Yet it leaves the definition of reentry success vague and often overly simplified. This dissertation will seek to redress two limitations that hinder the utility of extant reentry research in informing helpful reentry policies and practices. The first limitation relates to research content. That is: *how* success is defined. The second limitation relates to methodological research process. That is: *who* has historically defined reentry success.

How success has been traditionally defined in the research on reentry has relied on both vaguely defined assumptions and an overrepresentation of recidivism as a single construct

representing reentry failure. Recidivism refers to a tendency to revert to a former condition or behavioral mode, especially criminality (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In extant reentry literature, recidivism avoidance often encapsulates desistence from reoffending, reincarceration, and technical violations (Barrenger et al. 2021). Researchers have almost exclusively used recidivism as a construct to represent the degree of reentry success of returning citizens (Vishner & Travis, 2003). One published literature review of 61 publications examining reentry for those diagnosed with mental illnesses found that recidivism accounted for 95% of legal reentry outcomes measured and 58% of total outcomes (Barrenger et al., 2021). According to this paradigm, reentry success has been framed negatively as the desistance from further crime rather than positively as the achievement of—or progress toward—any other measurable success construct (Fahmy & Mitchell, 2022). In the reentry literature, numerous criticisms of the hyperfocus on recidivism have emerged (Caudill & Trulson, 2023; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022; Zelechoski et al., 2024). A central criticism has been that the use of recidivism as an outcome construct to represent success creates a dichotomous paradigm in which returning citizens either succeed or fail—stay out or recidivate—failing to approach reentry success as a nuanced construct, which exists on a sophisticated continuum (Barrenger et al., 2021; S. W. Bowman & Travis, 2012; Caudill & Trulson, 2023; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022; Zelechoski et al., 2024). A less dichotomized definition of success creates more numerous and valuable opportunities to intervene in the reentry process using practices that move returning citizens along the continuum toward greater success. To best support successful reentry, we need to understand with more precision where exactly reentry success is breaking down, in order to provide more targeted support interventions. A solitary focus on recidivism diminishes the importance of other important factors that influence success (Petersilia, 2004; Visher & Travis, 2003) such as

prosocial relational, vocational, educational, or civic achievements. Further, to focus on recidivism does not take into consideration structural factors that influence reentry outcomes such as policies that impede those with criminal histories from accessing financial, vocational, or other needed resources as they reenter (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Susan Starr Sered's ethnographic work on female returning citizens highlights four primary problems with overfocusing on recidivism as an outcome variable, arguing that doing so may:

> (1) overstate the significance of distinctions between licit and illicit behavior—especially for women, (2) undervalue macro/structural and institutionalized barriers to stable housing and employment, (3) overly focus on individual choices and narratives in contexts where freedoms are constrained by structural and institutional policies and practices, (4) overlook the risks and erratic nature of daily and family life for women and other vulnerable, marginalized and poorly-resourced populations (2021).

Echoing other reviews (Kendall et al., 2018; Smith-Merry et al. 2019), Barrenger and colleagues (2021) note the need for both increased breadth and increased specificity of outcomes used to define and measure reentry success; rather than a vague, binary definition of success such as recidivism.

The second limitation that pervades extant reentry research is with *who* has defined reentry success. Namely, the problem has been that researchers themselves have been the ones to define reentry success. Doing so has left returning citizens' voices underrepresented in the literature and risks implementing reentry policy that misses key factors deemed important by returning citizens themselves. An advantage of qualitative research is its capacity to capture nuance, breadth, specificity, and sophistication in the language that participants use to define terms and experiences for themselves (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Braun & Clark, 2006; Patton, 2014). One hypothesized reason for the overuse of recidivism as a success-failure construct is that administrative data—collected by agencies within the justice system—has been more

available for analysis by researchers than other, potentially more sophisticated data (Barrenger et al., 2021). The collection of qualitative data offers an opportunity for researchers to understand constructs like reentry success with more nuance than may be afforded by administrative, quantitative data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Braun & Clark, 2006; Patton, 2014). A further problem with who has historically defined reentry success is a failure to address within-group variability. When returning citizens are treated monolithically, as a homogenous group, researchers risk missing nuanced distinctions in how success is defined by subgroups with identities that intersect with status as a returning citizen to shape definitions of success. Extant research on reentry success has not yet examined how returning citizens' definitions of reentry success may vary along lines such as racial or gender identity. In other words, more research is needed to begin to understand *who* defines success *how.* Rosenfeld and Grigg (2022) summarize the importance of listening to diverse voices to add nuance to the definition of success used in the field of reentry research, writing that: "Formerly incarcerated individuals and reentry practitioners should be directly involved as partners in each stage of the review, development, validation, and implementation of new measures of success among persons released from prison" (p. 8).

Recent research has begun to explore how and by whom success has been defined broadening how we think of key aspects and goals of reentry. Some studies have made progress toward using methods and constructs that better capture returning citizens' perspectives on success. One review found that behavioral health and quality of life outcomes have been used as alternative success constructs to recidivism (Barrenger et al., 2021). Fahmy and Mitchell (2022) propose a model of holistic health and well-being that comprises reentry success, including the following eight health domains: environmental, financial, spiritual, mental and emotional,

physical, social, occupational, and intellectual. Morani and colleagues (2011) asked returning citizens to identify their greatest reentry needs and found that respondents were most likely to report housing, transportation, clothing, food, employment, and vocational training. In their study, employment, housing, and substance use were used as outcome variables to represent success (Morani et al., 2011). Cobbina & Bender (2012) interviewed incarcerated women to understand how they defined reentry success in anticipation of release. They found that maintaining optimism, reconnecting with children, adhering to parole conditions were themes the participants generally construed with future success. S. W. Bowman and Travis (2012) applied verbal-behavioral theory to the question of how returning citizens describe their approach to reentry and found that physical and psychological well-being, relationships with others, occupational and educational achievement, and other prosocial engagements were constructs their participants used to define success. Without aiming to elicit participants' definitions of reentry success *per se*, O'Brien (2001) interviewed female returning citizens about the factors they believed correlated with reentry success. Thematic findings included community membership, confidence, connections with others, employment, income, and shelter (O'Brien, 2001). Two studies by Pettus-Davis and colleagues (2015; 2017) examined returning citizens' perceptions of successful reentry and found that interventions designed to enhance perceptions of social support play a key role in helping returning citizens achieve success. Without directly asking returning citizens how they define successful reentry, these studies have incorporated the voices of incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals and discovered emergent themes which have begun to add breadth and nuance to how we understand the meaning of reentry success. Nonetheless, emergent thematic definitions of success from studies designed to answer

other questions can be improved upon by asking returning citizens *directly* about their definitions of, and experiences with, reentry success.

There remains a dearth of research that directly asks returning citizens how they define and understand reentry success. In 2015 study, Hlavka and colleagues interviewed returning citizens labeled by caseworkers as having reentered successfully to explore what they considered defining elements of their success. The researchers found that three relational metanarratives captured the essence of participants' definitions of their success. Each narrative thematically invoked the quality of relationships with significant others, namely: reverence to a higher power, reunification with significant others, and role modeling for peers or at-risk others (Hlavka et al., 2015). Overcoming the shame of self-narratives burdened by their criminal histories, successful returning citizens were able to re-write self-narratives of redemption, meaning, purpose, and "making good" in their communities. Self-efficacy and help from others were key factors that returning citizens attributed to their success. Having their relational and emotional needs met was equally or more important than having material necessities (Hlavka et al., 2015)

Two other studies have taken a gendered approach to their examination of returning citizens' definitions of reentry success. In a qualitative study that focused on definitions of reentry success among female-identified returning citizens, Heidemann and colleagues (2016) found five thematic definitions of success: securing independent housing, helping family and others, living free from justice involvement, persevering, and living a "normal" life. In a qualitative study replicating the Heidemann and colleagues' study but with male-identified returning citizens, Anderson and colleagues (2022) identified such success themes such as achieving employment, ownership, or entrepreneurship; using past experiences to assist others; and achieving heteronormative masculine expectations.

Finally, a 2022 consensus study report funded by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and published by the Committee on Evaluating Success Among People Released from Prison reviewed studies that asked returning citizens directly about their reentry experiences (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). The committee sought to offer an alternative to recidivism-focused definitions of reentry success. Instead, they proposed an empirically supported approach to reentry that defines success in a more nuanced and useful way. The report found support for a two-factor model of reentry success that incorporate intrapersonal well-being and interpersonal/societal reintegration (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Achieving success as defined by intrapersonal well-being included measures of physical health, mental health, and substance use. Success as defined by interpersonal or societal reintegration included such domains as housing, employment, education, civic engagement, criminal desistance, relationships with family and significant others, and relationships with peers (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022).

The present study aims to further expand upon the findings of studies by Hlavka and colleagues (2015), Heidemann and colleagues (2016), and Anderson and colleagues (2022) by seeking other potential elements related to successful reentry and thereby furthering our understanding of what reentry success entails according to returning citizens. By listening to and amplifying the voices of those returning citizens who are in the process of reentering their communities, the study seeks to explore how returning citizens define reentry success and, further, to explore any subtle differences in how subpopulations of participants (e.g., gender, race/culture) define success. The two research questions addressed by this dissertation are:

(1) How do returning citizens themselves define reentry success?

(2) In returning citizens' definitions of success, what differences may exist along lines of gender or racial identity?

A more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the success as defined by returning citizens may lead to more effective facilitation of their movement toward that goal through the provision of resources, and the development of effective practices, interventions, and policies. This in turn may help a greater proportion of returning citizens reenter the society successfully and live more rewarding lives.

Chapter II: Methods

Context

Data for this project were drawn from the qualitative components of two mixed method studies conducted in 2018 and 2020. Both studies were conducted in collaboration with Sponsors, Inc., a community-based non-profit organization that provides reentry support resources and transitional housing to individuals recently released from prison in Lane County, Oregon. The 2018 Mentoring Study (also referred to as "The Life Study"), a randomized controlled trial (N=450) combined with qualitative interviews of a subset of the sample (n = 26), sought to measure the impact of being paired with a volunteer mentor during reentry (see Eddy et al., 2020). Participants in the Mentoring Study were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: the intervention condition (where upon release from prison, participants were assigned a trained, community-based, volunteer mentor by Sponsors, Inc.) and a control condition where participants had access to all other resources provided by Sponsors, Inc. (i.e., transitional housing, clothing, food, vocational support, substance use treatment, mental health services, legal support, other skills training programs) but were not assigned a formal mentor.

The 2020 Way Home Study was a natural experimental study (N=230) that again included qualitative interviews with a subset of the full sample (n = 29). This study sought to measure the impact of having permanent supportive housing provided while reentering. Permanent supportive housing encompasses affordable housing combined with supportive services that may include such elements as coordinated case management; medical healthcare, mental healthcare, and substance abuse treatment services; educational services; and vocational training and employment services (Fontaine, 2013). In general, supportive housing services are tailored by the provider and intended to vary depending on participants' need of services and risk

for residential instability (Fontaine, 2013). In the intervention condition of the Way Home Study, participants were provided with permanent supportive housing upon release by Sponsors, Inc. In the control condition of this study, participants received all other resources and supports offered by Sponsors, Inc., including temporary supportive housing, but were not provided with permanent supportive housing. Both studies were approved by the institutional review boards (IRB) of both the University of Oregon and the Oregon Research Institute.

Sample

As mentioned earlier, sampling for the qualitative supplement of each study was drawn from the participant pool of the larger studies. Purposive and random selection sampling were used to identify eligible participants from each larger study for the qualitative supplements (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Random sampling was used to minimize any potential biases in sampling while purposive sampling was conducted to ensure heterogeneity of the sample with regards to gender, intervention status, recidivism risk level, and race (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Eligibility for inclusion in both studies required having been out of prison for at least six months at the time of the interview. All participants completed an informed consent process prior to their interview.

For the Mentoring Study, a total of 26 participants made up the final sample; half of the sample were women and half were in the intervention condition. On average, participants were 40 years old and had been living in the community for 16 months. In the Way Home Study, eligible participants were required to be at “medium risk” to “very high risk” of unstable housing and they had to be eligible for public housing with respect to conviction status, income, and public safety risk. For the Way Home Study’s qualitative supplement, of the 29 participants who comprised the final sample, 13 were women and 16 were in the intervention condition. Fifteen

participants identified as white, while 14 identified as people of color. On average, participants had been in the community for 13 months. Participants in both studies received a $25 gift card upon completion of the interview.

The combined sample for this study thus consisted of 55 participants who had been out of prison, on average, for 14.4 months and included 29 male-identified participants, 26 female-identified participants; 37 white-identified participants, 18 Black-, Indigenous-, or People of Color-identified participants.

Data Collection

Based on a constructivist theoretical paradigm, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted in each study to elicit knowledge derived from personal narratives of participants' experiences (Merriam, 2009; Weiss, 1994). According to constructivism, multiple subjective realities are socially created by individuals in groups and must be interpreted in order to discover meaning or knowledge (Merriam & Tisdall, 2015). Constructivist research aims to describe and interpret participants' lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdall, 2015). Interviewers offered follow-up prompts to allow participants to elaborate and to elicit rich information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Patton, 2014).

The Mentoring Study interviews took place over three months in 2018. Two trained interviewers were present for the in-person interviews, which lasted approximately one hour each. One interviewer conducted the interview while the other took notes and operated the audio recorder. Senior qualitative researchers were available to debrief, problem-solve, and offer support throughout the period during which interviews took place. The interview questions covered aspects of reentry that participants found helpful or challenging, resources to which they

wished they had had access, how they defined reentry success, and—in the intervention group—about their experiences with mentoring. See Appendix B for complete list of interview questions.

The Way Home Study interviews took place between September 2020 and February 2021. Each interview was conducted by a member of the research team. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted on a Zoom Video Communications platform (Version 5.17.11). Both video and audio data were collected in most cases. When participants had limited internet access, audio-only recordings were collected. Interviews lasted between 30–60 minutes. Participants were asked to share their thoughts about challenges and facilitators of reentry, how they defined reentry success, their experiences finding housing, and—for participants in the intervention condition—about their experience with the permanent supportive housing program. Participants who identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) were asked additional questions about race or ethnicity-based discrimination they may have faced during reentry. BIPOC participants were interviewed by a BIPOC research team member and white participants were interviewed by a white research team member. This was done to increase participants' sense of affinity with interviewers in hopes of increasing emotional comfort and candor (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Senior qualitative researchers were available to debrief, problem-solve, and offer support throughout the period during which interviews took place. See Appendix C for complete list of interview questions.

Data Analysis

In both studies, audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and deidentified by a trained member of the research team for analysis (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative data analysis software was used for all qualitative data analyses (Dedoose Version 8.0.35). Interview transcripts were coded through a series of iterations (Anfara et al., 2002) for both *a*

priori and emergent themes (Anderson et al., 2022; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Coders employed a thematic analysis technique to identify patterns of emergent themes in the qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006).

For the Mentoring Study, in the first iteration of coding, the research team began with four *a priori* themes, according to the study's research questions and extant reentry research: *social support, parenting, basic needs, and defining success*. Two *post hoc* themes emerged during the first iteration of coding: *substance use and stigma/ostracism*. An *other* code was also utilized to capture miscellaneous patterns in the data. The first two iterations of coding returned 37 excerpts coded as *defining success*. See Table 1 for full code map used in iterations 1 and 2 of the Mentoring Study.

Table 1
Code Map: Mentoring Study

Iteration	Code
First Iteration	
A Priori Primary Themes	Social Support
	Parenting
	Basic Needs
Second Iteration	
Emergent *Post Hoc* Themes	Substance Use
	Ostracism/Stigma
	Defining Success
	Other

For the Way Home Study, in the first iteration of coding, the research team began with eleven *a priori* themes, based on the study's research questions and extant reentry research: *housing, social support, parenting, basic needs (other than housing), substance use, defining success, stigma/ostracism, education/programs, COVID-19, racial socialization,* and *advice for others*. Two emergent *post hoc* codes were added after the first iteration of coding and applied to

a second iteration: *noteworthy* and *other*. The first two iterations of coding returned 103 excerpts coded as *defining success.* For both studies, the first two rounds of coding were completed by two consecutive research team members (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). One researcher coded a given interview. The second researcher reviewed the first researcher's coding and brought any new or disputed codes with which the initial two coders could not agree to the larger research team, where coding decisions were made by consensus to increase interrater reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). See Table 2 for full code map used in iterations 1 and 2 of the Way Home Study.

Table 2
Code Map: Way Home Study

First Iteration *A Priori* Primary Themes	Housing Advice Basic Needs (other than housing) COVID-19 Stigma/Ostracism/Discrimination Parenting	Programs/Education Racial Socialization Social Support Substance Use Defining Success
Second Iteration Emergent *Post hoc* Themes	Noteworthy	Other

In the final phase of data analysis, we analyzed how participants define reentry success in the 140 excerpts previously coded as *defining success* in both studies. Final iterations of coding were conducted by this writer and a research assistant. Side-by-side paired coding was utilized to maximize interrater reliability (Sweeney, 2012). Recruitment of a research assistant who had not otherwise been involved in the project, held the advantage of introducing an outside perspective of someone unfamiliar with the data, in order to decrease biases that might arise from familiarity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To mitigate the power differential between the primary and secondary researcher participating in the final rounds of coding, a process was established to

invoke third party arbitration with no questions asked (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In ambiguous cases when the two coders were not able to come to a consensus on exactly how a given excerpt should be coded, the excerpt in question was referred to a senior qualitative methodologist for arbitration.

Using Rosenfeld & Grigg's aforementioned model of intrapersonal well-being and interpersonal or societal reintegration (2022), we coded for two *a priori* secondary themes: *well-being (intrapersonal)* and *reintegration (interpersonal/societal)*. Excerpts coded as *well-being* reflected participants' statements about intrapersonal markers of success. In accordance with extant literature, the *well-being* code included *a priori* tertiary codes including *physical health, mental health, substance use, gender and racial identity, independence, perseverance,* and *relationship with a higher power*. (Anderson et al., 2020; S. W. Bowman & Travis, 2012; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Griggs, 2022). Excerpts coded as *reintegration* reflected participants' statements about interpersonal markers of success. In accordance with extant literature, the reintegration code included *a priori* tertiary codes (and quaternary codes) including *social reintegration (family and significant others, peers)* and *societal systems reintegration (employment and finance, housing, education, civic engagement,* and *the justice system*; Anderson et al., 2020; S. W. Bowman & Travis, 2012; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Griggs, 2022). It is worth noting two clarifications about these *a priori* codes: first, *significant others* here refers not to romantic partners in the colloquial sense, but rather to significant social relationships which may or may not be romantic, including close friendships or other significant, platonic relationships; second, in this model, desistance from crime and avoidance of recidivism may be represented by the *social reintegration with the justice system* quaternary code but is represented as one component of a broader and more

nuanced success definition incorporating the other secondary, tertiary, and quaternary codes listed above. During the third iteration of coding, an *other* secondary code was used to capture emergent thematic domains of reentry success that did not fit with any *a priori* code.

Table 3
Code Map: Defining Success (Excerpt Incidence)

Third Iteration
Primary Theme: Defining Success *(140)*
A Priori **Secondary,** Tertiary, *Quaternary*, Quinary Themes

Well-being (intrapersonal) (70)
- Physical health (4)
- Mental health (32)
- Substance Use (13)
- Gender & Racial Identity (5)
- Independence (18)
- Perseverance (39)
- Higher power/Spirituality (2)

Reintegration (interpersonal) (63)
- Social (41)
  - *Family/SO's (25)*
  - *Peers (13)*
    - Helping (3)
    - Avoiding (3)
- Societal systems (52)
  - *Employment/finance (22)*
  - *Housing (24)*
  - *Education (5)*
  - *Civic engagement (18)*
    - Voting (0)
    - Community contribut. (9)
    - Driver's License (1)
  - *Justice system/desist. (22)*

Other

Subsequent iterations of coding were used to analyze the data for other thematic patterns initially coded as *other* during the third iteration. Codes were not applied with mutual exclusivity, so

some excerpts were coded with multiple overlapping *a priori* codes. See Table 3 for a complete list of *a priori* secondary, tertiary, and quaternary themes used in the third iteration of coding.

Upon completion of coding for *a priori* and emergent subthemes related to participants' definitions of reentry success, chi-square tests of independence were conducted (using Jamovi, version 9.0.107) to examine if there were any significant associations between participants' gender and race, and six major themes that emerged in the interviews. These themes included: *success*: *intrapersonal well-being, interpersonal reintegration, social (reintegration), systemic (reintegration), perseverance (well-being), and mental health (well-being)*. By comparing the responses of different demographic groups as such provides nuance in how reentry success might be defined differently among those reentering, further diversifying whose voices are contributing to definitions of reentry success.

A total of 12 chi-square tests of independence were run: six tests examining the associations of gender with the major themes and six examining the associations of race with the major themes. A significance level of $\alpha < 0.05$ was used. Marginal significance of $\alpha < 0.10$ was also explored as an indicator of potential trends.

Chapter III: Findings

This study sought answers to two primary research questions: First, how do returning citizens define reentry success? Second, in returning citizens' definitions of success, what differences may exist along lines of gender or racial identity? This chapter will report key findings from this study that emerged as answers to each of these questions.

Defining Success

This study produced answers to the first research question—how do returning citizens define reentry success? —which expanded upon returning citizens' reentry success definitions identified in previous research. These findings confirmed the *a priori* use of a two-dimensional thematic framework for a reentry success along axes of *well-being* and *reintegration* (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Of the 140 excerpts coded as *defining success,* 70 were coded as relating to *well-being* and 63 were coded as relating to *societal reintegration*.

The intrapersonal *well-being* dimension of success was given nuance by seven *a priori* tertiary themes: *physical health, mental health, substance use, gender and racial identity, independence, perseverance, and higher power/spirituality*. Of the *a priori* tertiary well-being codes, two were especially prevalent and nuanced and will be reported in greater detail below: 39 excerpts were coded as *perseverance* and 32 were coded as *mental health*. See Table 4 for a list of the study's key findings.

The *reintegration* dimension of reentry success was nuanced by two *a priori* tertiary themes: *social reintegration* and *systemic reintegration*. Social reintegration refers to successfully resuming and participating in non-professional, interpersonal relationships (e.g., with friends and family). Of the 63 *reintegration* excerpts, 41 related to *social reintegration* while 52 related to *societal reintegration*. The most prevalent sub-theme of *social reintegration*

(*n* = 25) focused on nurturing healthy *relationships with family and significant others* as a key part of their definitions of success. Findings related to this theme—including the qualities that participants reported make such relationships indicators of success—will be expanded upon below. Systemic reintegration refers to successfully interacting with systemic resources, institutions, and supports during the reentry process. The most prevalent sub-themes of *systemic reintegration* related to *housing* (*n* = 24), *finance or employment* (*n* = 22), *criminal desistance or justice involvement* (*n* = 22), and *civic engagement* (*n* = 18), of which 9 were notably coded with the quinary theme *community contribution.*

Table 4
Key Thematic Findings

Research Question	Dimension	Theme
Defining Success		
	Well-being	
		Perseverance
		Mental Health
	Societal Reintegration	
		Family and significant others
		Community contribution
Identity-based differences		
	Gender	
		Female-identified
		Male-identified
	Race	
		Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)
		White/non-BIPOC

The study added nuance to extant definitions of reentry success with key findings related to the following two *a priori well-being* themes: *perseverance* and *mental health*; and the following two *a priori reintegration* themes: *social reintegration with family and significant others* and *societal systems reintegration via civic engagement*, with particular emphasis on *community contribution* (Anderson et al., 2022; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015;

Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). In this section, I will report on the ways participants' definitions of success in each of these four key areas emerged in this study to add sophistication to our understanding of how returning citizens define reentry success. The section will conclude with a review (1) *a priori* themes found by previous reentry success researchers and confirmed by the present study, (2) *a priori* themes found by previous reentry success researchers that were notably absent in the present study, and (3) emergent *post hoc* themes that were present in this study's data. See Appendix D for all raw data excerpts coded as related to success.

Well-Being: Perseverance

Perseverance was the most frequently discussed *a priori* themes for which participants in this study added substantive nuance to extant definitions of reentry success. Participants repeatedly emphasized the temporal component of reentry success. That is, they defined reentry success as something achieved on a temporal continuum, thus defining reentry success by perseverance itself. To call one's reentry successful, they claimed, one must approach the task as a continuous, unending process of reintegrating into prosocial society day after day. As such, findings from this study suggest that reentry success can be better promoted by defining it as a fundamentally continuous process. Just as it can be inadequate to define reentry success in terms of a binary construct that may be either achieved or not achieved based on a single criterion (e.g., whether one does or does not recidivate), the participants in this study describe the inadequacy of treating reentry success as an event occurring—or not occurring—at a single point in time. The perseverance construct came to encompass participants' definitions of success which emphasized the importance of three major themes equated with success: (1) treating success as existing on a temporal continuum, (2) responding to adversity inherent to the task, and (3) moving effectively forward into the future.

As participants offered definitions of reentry success which included an emphasis on perseverance, the first way that such perseverance was further elucidated was as a quality by which to effectively achieve reentry success on a temporal continuum. That is: success is achieved over time. Achievement of success, according to participants in this study, thus requires returning citizens to make prosocial choices repeatedly. Exemplifying this, a participant explained, *"[Success is] being able to, like, do what I have to do, like, I mean, because that's the only thing success is by—keep, keep doing what you're doing instead of falling back" (WH095, F).* Throughout the interviews, short excerpts such as these invoke the ongoing nature of reentry success. Phrases like "continue to do the right things", "keep trying", "doing the next right thing", "making better choices", and "keep doing what you're doing" portray success as continual. In prior studies using recidivism as a success metric, success has remained undefined: a returning citizen has either failed by recidivating or not achieved success yet. These participants add nuance to previous success definitions by depicting a positive definition of success without offering the achievement of any one thing as a simple definition—rather, for them, success is "achieved", paradoxically, by continually moving toward success, not by "reaching" it.

As a second aspect of the nature of reentry perseverance, participants in this study described waiting as an intrinsic component of reentry; they emphasized the importance of demonstrating patience. As one female participant explained,

> *And so, like patience is a huge thing you know, because— because of my criminal life, specifically my manufacturing [narcotics] charge, it makes it almost impossible to rent somewhere… like, you know, it took me a long time to get a job. It wasn't like right away; they won't even hire me at Taco Bell or anything like that. Because I hadn't worked in so long…* (WH020, F).

Another added that self-talk was a strategy she used to develop her "stubborn" patience:

> *I mean, I, I honestly, I feel like I got the, the most of my support just by being determined and stubborn and talking to myself, you know? Mentally, not out loud or anything. But yeah, just whenever you know, whenever a struggle came through, just, you know, communicating with myself, saying, "but it's gonna take time to get back into the swing of things* (WH139, F).

According to our participants, to achieve reentry success, one must be prepared to persevere. More specifically, one must demonstrate patience and make prosocial choices repeatedly over as one is reentering the community.

Just as participants described waiting as an inherent aspect of reentry, participants repeatedly emphasized that adversity is an inherent element of reentry. According to participants in this study, if returning citizens are to persevere, they need to effectively respond to inevitable adversity. Participants described the pressure they felt—at times—to give up, while emphasizing the importance of persevering: "*You know, you don't give up, and if you fall down, you get back up, and you try again and [that] makes you successful, you know?*" (MS183, F). Similarly, a male participant added, *"[Success is] not getting stuck in one spot. Moving forward. You know, we're all gonna hit or probably hit a wall, we're all gonna have our issues, but as long as you don't give up and you complete your goal"* (WH072, M). Statements such as these suggest that to succeed, returning citizens would benefit from anticipating those "walls" or "falls" and being equipped to persevere despite them.

At other times, participants described the challenges associated with reentry more bluntly, emphasizing endurance or resilience as a key aspect of perseverance necessary for reentry success. One participant described the way that experiencing and enduring challenges *is* paradoxically a part of their definition of success: "*Failure. Failing something is a challenge because you don't prepare yourself. How do you prepare yourself for failure? This whole time you prepare yourself for success"* (WH072, M). Using a war metaphor and the stigma with

which he felt he was treated by "authorities" during reentry, another participant described the relationship between endurance and success this way: *"I just look at me and try to be good, constructive, positive, do a good mindset every day, work through the battles in my life, and a lot of external, a lot of external stuff still hits me"* (WH087, M). These excerpts exemplify ways that participants described the importance of expecting, accepting, and overcoming broadly defined challenges that seem inevitably to be a part of the reentry process.

Other participants described particular challenges that must be faced and overcome during reentry, including the challenging ways that one's past influences their reentry experience and creates opportunities to persevere as a component of achieving success. The adverse influence of past experiences on reentry included the importance of counter-proving stereotypes or labels with which one is treated during reentry. One participant described this importance this way: "*And then with my appeal, I had to show them that, you know, I wanted to be successful. And I wanted to do good, that I didn't want to be another statistic"* (WH152, M). Another described the resentment fostered by being treated according to a negative stigma of justice involvement:

> *It's like, the authorities say, well, this, your record doesn't matter if you've amended it 100 million times, is we're gonna look at you as if you were the criminal from 20 years ago. They don't change that. So, I have resentment there. But I don't take what they say as God's word. I take God as God and they are not God, but they play God* (WH087 M).

Some participants described the adversity associated with reentering into a modernized society different than the society they left when they were incarcerated: *"First thing that I had to really do was come to terms with the technology and things have moved forward"* (WH113, M). Similarly, some participants described the success as persevering through difficulty of adjusting to the differences in deinstitutionalized life outside of prison after having grown accustomed to life inside. For example, one participant explained:

> *Since I've been out of prison, the two biggest challenges is, um, well, I had no idea how to live any kind of like normal life. Like I didn't know how to cook for myself at all. Like I remember the first time I cracked an egg. I like I had been, you know, in prison. You know I'm not allowed to have a [indecipherable] and before that I just ate food from 7-Eleven [a convenience store]. And so, like learning like normal behaviors, like take a shower every day, brush your teeth every day…floss them every day. And that's something like I've never done my whole life, you know…to like, learn how to live again* (WH020, F).

Embedded in participants' descriptions of the relationship between enduring difficulty and persevering as part of success were the importance of work ethic and a belief in self. One participant stated that they defined success:

> *And then I want to do more than that I set high standards for myself, I used to work really hard in the mills. And, and I didn't feel good unless I was giving it my all. And so, then I went to college for four and a half years or so that I graduated. I gave it my all* (WH087, M).

Exemplifying the importance of believing in oneself in order to persevere through adversity, a participant stated, "*I feel like it's important to be there for yourself. You know to not have to necessarily rely on other people to give them— to get a pat on the back"* (WH139, F). Taken together, each of these descriptions of challenges faced during reentry illustrated participants' emphasis on the importance of demonstrating perseverance through adversity as a key component of achieving reentry success.

A final temporal component of the perseverance construct to which participants repeatedly referred was a future-oriented perspective. To achieve the quality of perseverance which many participants equated with reentry success, emphasis was placed on how one approaches the future as they navigate reentry. To persevere, participants described the importance of orienting oneself effectively toward the future. According to the participants, such a future-directed perseverance orientation is characterized by effective goal setting and

modulation, readiness and desire for change, maintaining a sense of purpose or meaning, and engaging in continual personal growth.

Many participants described perseverance as the attainment of goals. As one participant shared, *"I would say meeting all the goals that I've been uh putting for myself. And, uh, just keep, keep adding more goals and, and, uh, trying to reach them"* (WH127 M). Another emphasized the perseverance that it takes to achieve such goals, describing that, in one sense, simply being awake and alive equates to success, while in another, success is gained by the achievement of goals: *"I think just getting up in the morning is success to me, but then I have goals, so, um, success to me would be reaching my goals"* (MS276, M). More thoroughly, a participant shared:

> *I don't know, I think that I've been, I feel like I'm successful, compared to what I have been. Where I'm at now, is um, I'm content with what's going on, I have goals, that I'm um, achieving and setting other goals and moving forward with my life, I'm not moving backwards in any aspect. Um, so I feel like I mean, as deep of a hole that I have dug, I'm on top of all that, you know? I'm coming out, I'm coming back, I'm not sliding backwards.* (MS089, M).

Some participants, such as those above, defined success by goal achievement without specifying which goals would equate to success if achieved. Others offered clarification, such as this participant who listed examples of his goals:

> *Success, I think, is, uh, having goals, completing those goals, having a solid foundation as to where you live and what you're doing and, uh, just knowing and completing, you know, what you value out of life, whether it be a loved one in a relationship or money, you know? Which I don't view- obviously stability, some type of stability is a- is a point of success, you know, that's a- so that's how I view it (MS250, M).*

Maintaining a continuous motivation to change from problematic patterns of behavior is second aspect of participants' descriptions of how perseverance includes moving resiliently into the future. One participant described hypothetically successful returning citizens in the third person to illustrate this idea: *"They really want to change, you know? Get out and change their life, you*

know? They got they got to be motivated and put one foot in front of the other and do the right things to be successful" (WH099, M). Describing the types of changes that returning citizens must be motivated to make, one participant shared, *"…You have to change everything. You can't hang out with the people that you hung out with before. You can't go the same places that you went to before. Everything has to change"* (WH020, F). Another participant emphasized that it helps for returning citizens to be authentic in their desire to change and to seek support from others when necessary:

> *But a lot of times, you say you're ready to change, and you want to do something different, and you're tired of living that life. And the only reason you're talking about it is because you're locked up. And as soon as you get out, you go back and do the same things that got you locked up, you really have to be true to yourself, you have to know that you're ready. And if you're not ready, you have to get help. You have to talk to people.* (WH061, M).

Another aspect of moving forward toward future success, according to participants, is the importance of maintaining a sense of purpose and meaning. As one participant put it, "*I'm like working on a lot of different projects. And I'm building a lot of different things to help, you know, reinforce my success"* (WH113, M). Another participant cited a specific person who helped her to remain occupied, which supported her success: *"…my case manager filled up my whole time schedule to where I didn't have free time"* (WH173, F). Other participants emphasized the importance of maintaining meaningful commitments and demands on their time to help them feel successful. One shared this example:

> *…Give me a project to work on, spend my time doing things, fighting deal with cabin fever as bad. And I picked things like a deck of cards or set of dice for playing 10,000 [a game] and I'll sit and play 10,000 with myself you know just playing myself as each player would, on making choices on what to keep what to throw and getting hobbies, you know, is a big deal and cooking, I'm enjoying cooking* (WH009, M).

Another participant used a stair metaphor to emphasize this aspect of reentry success:

> *How do I define success? You know, what we define success is by you know, having that the job that you always wanted, and you know, you're consistent at workin' and, and you're doing good, and you're getting things done, and you know, and you're um gaining experience and new things in life and you're steady going up. You know what I mean?...It's like going like going, going up a flight of stairs* (WH061, M).

A final aspect of the future-oriented component of perseverance that participants described was non-specific personal growth or improvement, with which they equated reentry success. The "steady going up" element of the quote above is an example of this. Taken together, goal-accomplishment, motivation to change, a desire for success, a sense of purpose and meaning, and nonspecific growth make up this final, future-oriented component of the perseverance that so many participants equated with reentry success.

To be successful, according to participants in this study, includes achieving a quality of well-being. Most prevalent among constructs contributing to such well-being was perseverance. Consisting of the way returning citizens respond to both the temporal and adverse aspects of reentry, perseverance was discussed as a pivotal quality contributing to participants' definitions of reentry success. Unsurprisingly, there was some overlap between this construct and other prevalent well-being constructs which contribute to reentry success, such mental health and independence.

Well-Being: Mental Health

Maintenance of mental health is the second construct within the well-being dimension that participants equated with successful reentry. Summarizing this theme more broadly, one participant put it succinctly: *"If my mental health is not intact then I'm not successful at all"* (WH152, M). Findings related to the synonymous nature of reentering successfully and remaining mentally healthy fell into three categories: achieving emotional health, achieving cognitive health, and achieving behavioral health.

Many participants equated achieving reentry success with maintaining certain affective states or emotions. Some spoke broadly about how managing emotions signifies having achieved reentry success; others named the achievement of experiences of particular emotions such as happiness, contentment, hope, or peace as their definition of having reentered successfully. Frequently, participants described their definition of reentry success as including the maintenance of emotional health or management of emotions, broadly. One participant described the importance of learning about triggers of strong emotional responses and prosocial ways of coping as ingredients for maintaining a healthy emotional equilibrium during reentry: *"[Returning citizens] definitely need to learn how to handle tough situations. Like, they need to learn different—what their triggers are and how to cope with them"* (WH069, F). When emotional health is hard to maintain, it may delay other progress, as described by this participant: *"Things could have been a lot better for me. I could have had, not had so much, such an emotional, um, break in the beginning, and—which delayed me from getting— progressing in my success"* (WH043, F).

Other participants named or described the attainment specific emotional states as signifying or equating to reentry success. One simple and clear response to a question about how a participant defines reentry success was *"by happiness, contentment"* (WH075, F). Echoing this, another participant elaborated on some of the ingredients he believed contribute to success as attainment of positive emotions: *"[to be successful,] just be happy, really…you just got to have food in your stomach. And, uh, you know, people that love you and, I mean, a job, and money—hopefully—coming in"* (WH188, M). Another participant added other components of contentment: "*I define success.... of a, you being in a place where you feel comfortable and content, and … happy with where you are"* (WH123, M). Another participant described the dual,

intrapersonal and interdependent natures of contentment as elements of her definition of reentry success: *"Being content, it's not about money or cars or houses, or anything like that. It's about being within myself and being content and knowing that I'm doing ok, cause then everyone around me is doing ok"* (MS115, F). Yet happiness was not the only positive emotion by which participants defined reentry success.

Beyond happiness and contentment, some participants described maintenance of feelings of hope or optimism as definitions of reentry success. As one participant put it, *"I mean, success—in anything—you have to have a positive attitude, you know?"* (MS276, M). Another emphasized the overlap between hope and perseverance:

> *Success would be to try, to just be motivated and stay positive with everything that you do. Every time you wake up is a new day. Just 'cause yesterday might not've worked out, tomorrow's a different day and sooner or later, it all will work out* (MS238, M).

Another participant exemplified gratitude while including it in his definition of success:

> *I've had break after break since I've been out. I mean, nothing but good fortune's happened to me. So yeah, so yeah, I feel very fortunate, which is kind of amazing. When you change your attitude of what all can happen, you know?* (WH230, M).

Peace is a final affective state described by some participants as representing the achievement of reentry success. For example, one participant described the importance of acceptance in order to attain equanimity and serenity as a returning citizen:

> *Um, I mean I don't have everything in the world and I'm not exactly where I want to be, but I'm okay with where I'm at. And I'm still moving forward. So, I feel like I am successful. That is my definition of successful* (MS089, M).

Taken together, happiness, contentment, hope, peace, and nonspecific emotional stability or health represent affective states described by many participants as equating to the achievement of reentry success. Emotional health, then, represents one dimension of mental health by which

many returning citizens defined reentry success. Others described successful mental health as a function of healthy cognition.

For some participants, to achieve success is to attain and maintain mental health by thinking successfully. Participants' descriptions of mentally healthy thoughts with which they equated reentry success fell into three categories: expectation management, readiness for change, and maintenance of focus.

The first category of cognition by which participants reported defining reentry success is the management of expectations for reentry and mental preparation for the realities of reentry. For example, many returning citizens return to a world that has advanced technologically since they last lived in the community. To prepare for that reality, one participant described the importance of mentally relaxing and remaining patient in adjusting to a new way of thinking and living with modernized technology. He shared that when he got out, he realized that "…*things have moved forward. And I just had to relax. And kind of like sift through and learn my way"* (WH113, M). Another participant described the greatest challenges they faced during reentry by emphasizing the importance of having honest expectations for both elements of failure and elements of success: "*I say you got to, you got to set yourself up for prepare yourself for failure and success. That way you're not hitting. A bottom that you can't see"* (WH072, M).
By managing expectations accordingly, the participant implies that one, in fact, achieves success. Intersecting with the perseverance theme, another participant described the patience required during reentry to illustrate the importance of managing expectations:

> *I'm trying to buy a house, but I have— for the loan, I have to be employed for two years. So, the thing is that your life progress is super slow. You know, like, it doesn't—like, you don't come out and it's, like—I thought I would be like doing all kinds of—I didn't think I'd buy a house ever* (WH020, F).

Another participant echoed the cognitive choice that one must make to prepare for a different life outside of prison, upon reentry. She defines success, in part, as:

> *Just being able to get out and grow, to become the adult you were supposed to be. Like, that's what it was for me was making that choice that I didn't want to be the kid I went to jail as* (MS240, F).

Another participant used an example of the importance of cognitively delaying gratification to describe the importance of thinking differently than one did before going into prison. For him, to achieve success: "*[The] biggest thing is to not go back into old thinking…you know, most people that went to prison were chasing immediate gratification for things. One way or another. So, staying away from that sort of thing"* (WH028, M). For these returning citizens, to reenter successfully is to think successfully. They suggest that to do so involves genuinely, cognitively desiring a different lived experience than one had before going to prison.

The third and final category of cognitive health with which participants equated reentry success was the maintenance of focus. Repeatedly, participants emphasized that stimuli were present during reentry which distracted them from the objectives that would ensure their success. For these participants, maintaining a focus despite becoming distracted by antisocial activities was a critical element of reentry success. As one participant summarized:

> *I've always heard the term, you know, that old habits die hard, but nothing has put that to the test more than this last year of being out, um, more than anything. So, um, just, um, pretty much [success is] staying on track and keeping my focus* (MS275, F).

The same participant later connected focus to readiness to change, citing examples of the type of goal-directed behavior that requires such remarkable, sustained focus:

> *[Success is,] I would say, keeping my focus and making sure that my priorities are set intact with, um [breath], changes from who I used to be, to who I want to be, and who I am now. Um, and definitely staying clean and sober and not going back into old ways and old habits* (MS275, F).

Another participant emphasized that focus is a cognitive way of remaining present and maintaining a sense of prosocial purpose, such as by engaging in meaningful work:

> *You know, I'm just, I guess just staying focused where I'm at right now. I mean, I'm, I don't know how to describe what that is, except that I'm like working on a lot of different projects…So, just, I guess, just staying focused on, uh, in that regard* (WH113, M).

Finally, one participant emphasized the collaborative nature of effectively remaining focused, describing the role that another person played in supporting her efforts: *"…My case manager… [made it so that] I wasn't able to wander. And so, she kept me very focused"* (WH173, F). Whether remaining cognitively focused, managing expectations, or mentally shifting to a thought-pattern aligned with readiness for change, participants in this study repeatedly described the cognitive dimension of reentry success. Coupled with the emotional dimension, maintenance of cognitive health was described as a second mental-health related indicator that one has achieved some degree of reentry success.

A third and final dimension of mental health that participants equated with reentry success was reflected in behavior. In many ways, successful reentry is chiefly a behavioral endeavor. Successful reentry behavior can be understood to reflect the mental health internal to each returning citizen. Participants articulated this dimension of mental health repeatedly, describing their definitions of successful reentry as inextricably linked to mentally healthy behavior. Three dimensions of healthy behavior emerged in this study: caring for oneself, living authentically, and living virtuously.

Care for oneself is a first dimension of behavior that participants reported as congruent with their definitions of reentry success. One participant highlighted the relationship between caring for self and caring for others as behaviors congruent with mental health and, thus, reentry success:

> *[Success includes] doing the right next thing for myself, you know? And healthy choices, meaning taking care of myself and just making sure that I'm considerate and mindful of the words that I speak so that they're not cutting somebody else* (MS222, F).

Similarly, another participant described the overlap between caring for self and caring for others, or being willing to do so and demonstrating acceptance, even when the offer for help may be declined:

> *Just be good to yourself, be good to your neighbor…therefore I am better to help others around me and myself. And so, to me, that's a good present. It has something to give, I can care about people, I can help if they wanted to. Don't? Fine, okay* (WH087, M).

Another participant described success as engaging in affirmation of oneself verbally as a method for caring for oneself: *"whenever a struggle came through, just, you know, communicating with myself saying…to not give up"* (WH139, F). These examples demonstrate ways that many participants emphasized the importance of self-care behaviors as a reflection of the quality of mental health with which they equated reentry success.

Other participants defined success in reentry as behaving authentically such as using language related to acting congruently, living true to oneself, and demonstrating honesty with oneself. For example, one participant stated,

> *[Returning citizens] have to really be honest with theyself…that's what I did. I have to be, I have to be ready, I had to talk to myself. And it's not something you just do overnight. This is every day this is still continuously. I'm talking to myself to make sure I'm staying on the right path and doing everything I'm supposed to do* (WH061, M).

Another participant described the discovery of an authentic expression of self through acts of service to others:

> *I can care about people…I always wanted to be more and now I can be more, but I don't have to be somebody else. I don't have to be somebody; I can be me. I'm a good—I'm a good man* (WH087, M).

Put simply, a third participant expressed the value he placed on living authentically this way, *"when I see success, I see it as comfortability and whatever you're comfortable within yourself*

and whatever, you know, completing goals and tasks and things like that, that's how I view success" (MS250, M). These descriptions of living within oneself, being there for oneself, being true to oneself, and being authentically oneself reflect definitions of reentry success that place value in mental health as reflected by genuine, self-expressive behavior.

A final way that participants described reentry success being represented by mental health as reflected in behavioral health is by the enactment of virtuous behavior. Participants described achievement of reentry success as symbolized by moral, virtuous behavior. One participant summarized the success represented by caring for others during reentry:

> *Success as being [pauses]…just to be a good, good person. It's in some of that the religious, 'loves our neighbor,' you know? Or just be good to yourself, be good to your neighbor* (WH087, M).

Another participant equated success with living responsibly, with purpose, and modeling virtue for others: *"…you're, ah, doing the things you need to, you know, feel, you know, responsible and important in life, like, you know, being a good role model"* (WH123, M). Meanwhile, one participant named humility as a virtuous behavior representative of successful reentry, stating, *"just humbling, just humbling yourself over it is, is what, what keep what was a big key for me"* (WH093, F). Another participant described peaceful behavior toward his support network as a virtue representing reentry success:

> *And so, when I started doing better, they started responding differently to me, they—because I've always responded violently before. So, this time, I'm responding peacefully and listening to people and taking criticism. I take it and so I listened to it. And I put it to myself. And so ever since then, um me and my PO [parole officer] had a great relationship. I'm actually almost off parole. I'm off next month, so, um, yeah, I've been doing really good* (WH152, M).

Finally, overlapping with the perseverance theme described above, some participants described patient behavior as an important aspect of success. For example, one participant defined successful reentry as connected to: *"being able to wait, learning patience, letting things unfold*

as they should unfold" (WH028, M). If returning citizens are to attain mental health, participants in this study described virtuous behavior as both conducive to and resultant from such health.

Ultimately, whether demonstrated emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally, or by a combination of the three, achievement of mental health was a key element of participants' definitions of reentry success revealed in this study. Reentry success, according to participants in this study, must include intrapersonal well-being as a key definitional dimension. Participants in this study included in their definitions of reentry success many other themes of well-being, such as independence and avoidance of problematic substance use. However, successful achievement of well-being as indicated by perseverance and mental health were the two themes that emerged in this study which added the most nuance and novelty to the definitions of success in those dimensions of well-being found by previous research and thus are highlighted here.

Social Reintegration: Family and Significant Others

The second dimension of reentry success suggested by previous research and confirmed in this study is of interpersonal reintegration. This construct links success to effectively relating to people and systems external to oneself. As indicated in prior research (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022), individuals returning to the community after prison repeatedly defined success as effectively reintegrating with both social support networks (social reintegration) and societal systems (systemic reintegration). While in some studies, participants spoke of success as establishing and maintaining prosocial relationships with other returning citizens ("peers"; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022), participants in this study were more likely to define success by the quality of their social reintegration with close others such as family members and significant others (e.g., romantic partners, friends, other non-family loved ones). Reentry success as defined by social reintegration with family or significant others is included as a key finding because of

the frequency and nuance with which it was referenced by participants in this study. Family members most frequently mentioned by the participants included children, romantic partners, parents, and siblings. For example, one participant summarized the importance of family, broadly, *"Um I feel like success to me would be, uh, like, where you feel comfortable in, like, your job and your family, in your home life. Like when everything's maybe not perfect but comfortable"* (MS154, F). Specific themes of successful social reintegration included maintaining contact with family members; caring for family members; setting an example for family members; utilizing support offered by family members; earning family members' trust, respect, or pride; and maintaining prosocial relationships with non-family significant others. Each will be elaborated upon below.

For some participants, simply re-establishing contact with family members or maintaining positive relationships with family members was equated to success. For some, permission to reconnect with family members was not guaranteed but offered as a condition of prosocial behavior. For returning citizens such as these, earning such permission was an indicator of success. For example, one participant described the interaction between substance use, employment, finances, and housing as factors influencing her ability to earn the right to communicate with her children: *"[Success includes] remaining clean and sober, having stable, a stable job, having a stable house. Um, and being in being in, uh, consistent contact with my children"* (WH142, F). One other participant stated, *"[I define success] by having a career that I enjoy and having—getting my other children back into my care"* (WH173, F), while another added, *"[Success is] working my career, going to work every day and getting my kids back into my life"* (WH139, F). In other cases, being in prison allowed for reconciliation with family members with whom maintaining healthy relationships during reentry represented successful

social reintegration. Exemplifying this, one of the participants shared, *"When I was in prison, this last time, I had a long-lost daughter that found me in prison, and we've become close"* (WH230, M). Even among other indicators of success, social reintegration with family is often treated with special importance, as exemplified by one participant's use of "especially":

> *I guess, success would be to finally- to get into the community, um, have a job that I like, um, be able to support myself, um, for me especially it was getting connected with my family again, um, and then, I guess, just, you know, eventually getting off of paper [i.e., becoming formally and completely emancipated from justice-system involvement]* (MS019, F).

For some participants, then, simply reestablishing relationships with family members signifies that one is reentering successfully. For others, dynamic characteristics of those relationships with family members were described with greater specificity. For instance, many participants described a dynamic in which they can take care of or support family members, with particular emphasis on dependent children. Put simply, *"[success is] being able to support myself and live comfortably and take care of my family"* (WH099, M). One participant used a specific example of being able to give emotional support to grieving family members, among others, as a measure of her reentry success, stating, *"the other success: showing up in a positive way in my family. My dad just passed away last week…Showing up in a good way in my relationship with my boyfriend"* (WH020, F). Another participant pointed to the importance of providing financial support, stating, *"[success includes] being able to provide for like me and my son"* (WH069, F). Similarly, a participant stressed the importance of reintegrating into the workforce to being able to reintegrate into family life in the way he wanted: *"For me it's being able to have a stable job, stable income, to take care of my wife and my kids, first and foremost"* (MS075, M). Finally, another participant connected intrapersonal well-being by avoiding problematic substance use to the way that she defined success by her capacity to support her family, stating, *"[success*

includes] being able to support them, have a good job to be able to, you know, feed them, clothe them, um, being sober the whole time" (MS282, F). For some participants, one specific way of supporting family members involved setting a positive example for loved ones. For example, one participant stated, *"Success to me…would be…being a role model to my kids and, you know, being somebody that's productive in society instead of, you know, uh, negative, you know?"* (MS148, M). Echoing this sentiment, another participant shared, *"[success means] teaching my kids to, um, be good people, and productive people in society"* (MS282, F).

While offering support to family members—whether that be financial, emotional, or role modeling—was part of some participants' definitions of successful social reintegration, effectively utilizing the support offered by family members was emphasized as a characteristic of success by others. Participants repeatedly described ways that they received social support from family and close others during reentry. For many, making effective use of such support was deemed important for reentry success. For some, the support is pragmatic. One participant put it this way, *"My family just welcomed me back and kind of, like, made sure I had everything that I needed to stay successful, like, you know, clothes and shoes and stuff to get-- ways to get to job interviews"* (WH173, F). For others, the support was more emotionally validating. When asked what his father did that was helpful during reentry, one participant described, *"Listen, listen to me. And, of course, we do things together now. And he's always been a good influence on me. But it wasn't until I, you know, started acting right, that he really wanted anything to do with me"* (WH230, M). Here, the participant concludes with a description of how fickle and conditional the support from family may seem. For others, their efforts at successfully reentering felt buoyed by family members' emotional support especially when unwavering belief was conveyed. As one participant put it when asked what her family did to support her, *"They never gave up on me"*

(WH075, F). Whether offered steadfastly or conditionally, whether practical or emotional, participants emphasized consistently that successful reintegration with social support networks includes effectively making use of the help they offer.

Conditional support from family members was an experience described by many participants in this study. Like the father of the participant quoted above, many returning citizens' family members were hesitant to reconnect or reintegrate socially with them upon release. In such situations, participants described how they were successfully able to reintegrate into their social support networks. For others this meant reentering without depending on family members for support but rather demonstrating independence and self-sufficiency. Exemplifying this, one participant stated, *"[Success includes] having my own thing, not having to ask people for, like, like my family for, like, help, like, being able to do it on my own and having my family proud of me"* (WH069, F). For many participants, earning trust was a challenge. As one participant put it, describing family members' treatment of him during reentry:

> *They didn't let me take the easy way out. They didn't, they didn't just hand stuff to me. Like, my, my brother has always been a protector of me. So, he's always wanted to give me stuff and make sure that he's provided for me. But this last time, I had to prove to him that um I wanted this* (WH152, M).

For returning citizens such as these, the impact of antisocial behavior on their families was detrimental and they were motivated to improve the quality of their relationships with family members by making prosocial choices during reentry. One participant described this dynamic this way:

> *Success to me is— because, I've been out for a year now, um, I think I have made, um, good choices. I wanna say, just, because prior to, um, being incarcerated I wasn't making the healthiest choices. Not for myself, not for my family and they suffered more of the consequences than I did* (MS222, F).

Many participants in the study described the way success equates to reintegrating into positive relationships with family members. Loved ones' expressions of pride, respect, and trust were often cited as encouraging evidence that returning citizens were successfully reintegrating socially with the people with whom they were close.

Finally, participants described the importance of reintegrating into prosocial relationships with non-family significant others, too. While these relationships were discussed less than family relationships, many participants described the important roles that friends played in their successful interpersonal reintegration. In this study, these relationships were limited to non-professional friendships (participants' comments about the importance of relationships with professionals with whom they interacted during reentry were categorized within the *civic engagement a priori* theme). One participant included in her definition of success *"having good interpersonal relationships"* (WH020, F). Elaborating, another participant described the security and comfort afforded by such friendships as indicators of success: *"I define success by being comfortable, like, you know, secure and also surrounded by loved ones"* (WH230, M). More comprehensively, one participant listed good friends among other requisites for reentry success:

> *Success to me meant getting back to what I was at when I was at a good point in life before. So, a nice home to live in, a good job, a decent car, good family and friends, good job, working and progressing towards a better way of life"* (MS167, M).

Taken together, the quality of relationships family members and significant other sources of social support represents a key element of the reentry process. In offering definitions of success, participants in this study described the nuanced dynamics of those relationships that highlight the interpersonal dimension of reentry success.

Systemic Reintegration: Civic Engagement, Particularly Community Contribution

The study's fourth and final key definitional finding related to reentry success included returning citizens' engagement with civic society and especially contributing to their communities. When defining success in terms of interpersonal reintegration with systems, many participants invoked their identity as citizens, measuring their success by the way that they connected with civic systems and institutions. For example, effectively using resources from community organizations was a form of civic engagement with which many participants equated success. The maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships with community partners, non-profit organizations, and the professionals who staff them was repeatedly invoked as an indicator of success in reentry. As one participant summarized,

> *I worked really closely with a few of the people that worked at Sponsors [a local reentry organization], because I've known them forever. You know, I utilized every resource that I had, you know, I was—you know Terry with Homes for Good [a local non-profit housing organization]? I utilized all the resources I could there. You know, I work with Lisa, my [housing] Navigator pretty regularly. Some of the case managers I worked with really closely. Some of the staff members there, who I'm still friends with, who are no longer there, who still support me, you know. I created myself a pretty solid foundation for support* (WH113, M).

Another added a description of the many layers of civic engagement that contributed to his newfound reentry success,

> *Well for one thing - it's the best that I have ever done. I've been in and out of prison a lot in my life. Um, this last time Sponsors [a local reentry organization] has helped me out a great deal as far as getting me on my way. And I mean I was able to get in that programing, I was able to get into The Oaks—the apartments—so I was able to get my, um, Section 8 [housing voucher]. Uh, I have made leaps and bounds. I am currently working almost – it's full time but, um, I'm waiting to get a full-time position as a hire-ee through a temp service. Um, I've been doing really well. I've relapsed, I've been off the wagon, but I'm back on it again. Uh, so it's good to know that I have support. Just being where I am has been helpful from when I did relapse. To have my P.O. [parole officer] there and, you know, to get from hearing from different people that are from Sponsors, but 'you know that it's okay – we're here for you.' And that's pretty awesome* (MS077, M).

One participant described the importance of having a formally assigned mentor from Sponsors, Inc., the reentry-support non-profit organization with whom we partnered to recruit participants for this study. As the participant described, this institutional representative provided a bridge to other prosocial activities, made especially important given the absence of prosocial support for the participant:

> *I had a mentor, too, that I used, through Sponsors. That was really helpful…we were doing lots of stuff together. And I was really excited about doing—we, we had a good time. So, I'd say those two: my family and my sponsor [sic], er, my mentor…We'd go to, went to ballets, classical music. We went to— let's see, what else did we do? We went to downtown, like, when they're playing music downtown. We went to, let's see, plays. We went to the wildlife, like, the bird sanctuary thing that they have around here. Hiking, we did all kinds of stuff. The list just goes on and on. We do everything about every week or two. Until COVID hit…Well, I had to get rid of all my friends because they were all bad news. And so, I didn't really have any friends. So, Roger, my mentor, was my new friend* (WH230, M).

Comments like these confirmed findings from other research defining reentry success by effective use of civic institutions and systems (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). One participant, for example, equated reentry success, in part, with earning his driver's license.

However, one aspect of civic engagement found in this study stands out from other previous research as especially novel: the defining of reentry success by community contribution. That is to say: participants repeatedly reported that their definitions of success included some component of contributing positively to society or giving back to their community. Put succinctly, one participant shared this definition of success: *"Success is becoming a contributing member of your community"* (MS153, F). Another participant described the intersection between living authentically as oneself, for oneself, and for others which for him included human services work as a way to give back to the community prosocially: "*Success as being [pauses] is living up to my potential as a human being in, in the community…And, and a lot of that was human service to psychology, sociology, to work in the counseling field"* (WH087,

M). Contrasting the way that he participated in society prior to being incarcerated, and connecting community contribution to the example he hopes to set for his children, one participant stated,

> *I participated in, you know, negative behavior, you know, and stuff that ultimately ended up breaking the law and doing, you know, jail and prison time and, um, not, um being actively [inaudible] and if I was actively— it wasn't actively in a positive way, in like, my family or my kids', you know, life, so, you know, it's— succ-, so success to me, it's success, right? Would be just, you know, um, doing what you should be doing anyways* (MS148, M)

Similarly, one participant defined success by finding ways to contribute to the greater good:

> *If you add to [the] good of things, to [the] greater good and sort of contributing to, a, the negativity in your community, that would be on any scale. As long as you're part of the good instead of the bad, you're—you're successful* (MS153, F).

Other participants cited specific communities to which they wanted to offer a positive contribution, including others recovering from histories problematic substance use. As one participant shared, success includes *"being of service to the recovery community"* (WH020, F). Another participant elaborated on the way that such contributions to the recovery community as a metric of success can be drawn from one's own vulnerability and membership in that community:

> *I would say, I mean, my number one priority is staying clean and sober. And right now, I'm working towards, um, getting my career started. Um, I actually have an interview on Friday to do, um, an internship at Serenity Lane to become a certified drug and alcohol counselor. And so, um, you know, success for me in the future is, um, completing that certification, um, and just, um, you know, staying clean* (WH139, F).

One participant described the community contribution afforded to him at a job he liked while acknowledging that there may be a tradeoff in income when one makes a commitment to community contribution. He went on to describe a goal—the achievement of which is part of his definition of reentry success—that included positive community involvement by becoming a gardener and working in local community gardens:

> *It's a great job…we likewise, uh, help the community with what we do. Um, but it's low paid and also, it's not so easy to, uh, have the living you want or even the residence that you might wanna have, but it is consistent. It's an income I can rely on, and this is very important for planning stages of life, when you have, whatever, that income in place, you can make the plans according to that. So, um, and things are falling into place. Um, becoming a master gardener was also a goal. Technically, I don't have that title, I have the horticulture equivalent (which, the only difference is that is two less classes that is the 22 total and I don't have to volunteer 66 hours a year) but I put that time into the gardens at work, so I still get—I achieve that goal* (MS097, M).

Finally, one participant described a desire to employ or provide opportunities for others as a measure of his reentry success. As he put it,

> *I would like to start some businesses to put people to work…While I was in prison, I wrote up pages, pages of different jobs I knew how to do, to start and put people to work and just come in as a CEO and over-- oversee my managers that run the crews* (WH009, M).

Whether providing job opportunities for others, working in community gardens, working in human services, or providing substance use recovery support, many participants included in their definitions of reentry success a way of engaging civically that transcends abstaining from new criminal activity; instead, they expressed a definition of success that included positively impacting the community through active engagement and prosocial contribution.

Confirmed and Absent **A Priori** ***Themes of Reentry Success***

The two-dimensional *well-being* and *reintegration* model of successful reentry was adapted from findings in previous studies with similar designs (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Similarly, the *a priori* subthemes for which the data were analyzed (that fell into the two broad themes of *well-being* and *reintegration*) were drawn from similar previous research (Anderson et al., 2022; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Participants in this study invoked many of the *a priori* themes while offering their definitions of reentry success. In many cases, the present study confirms findings from previous studies, suggesting the importance of these *a priori* dimensions of reentry success, but without adding substantive

novelty to findings from previous studies. Thus, they are not reported in greater detail here. For example, in the *well-being* dimension of success, participants invoked the importance of such aspects of reentry as feeling a sense of independence, avoiding problematic substance use, developing a spiritual identity or relationship with a higher power, developing positive racial and gender identities, and maintaining physical health. While present, the latter three themes were each mentioned less than five times, respectively, throughout the interviews. Further, in those mentions the qualitative definitions of success align with—but add no new nuance to—previous findings which include those focused on intrapersonal well-being dimensions of reentry success. In the *reintegration* dimension of success, participants in this study confirmed extant research which includes in the definition of reentry success: (1) the maintenance of prosocial social relationships—such as with other formerly incarcerated peers—and (2) effective integration within societal systems—such as securing housing, employment, adequate financial resources, and education—while also desisting from criminal behavior and involvement in the criminal justice system (Anderson et al., 2022; Heidemann et al., 2016; Hlavka et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). This final element of the definition—suggesting that reentry success can be equated to avoiding recidivism—was present in this study but represented only one part of participants' holistic definitions of reentry success.

One previous study found that returning citizens' definitions of reentry success may include civic participation by exercising the right to vote (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). No participants in this study included voting as a part of their definition of reentry success. Other forms of civic engagement were invoked repeatedly as definitions of success by participants in this study and were described as a key finding in greater detail, above.

Emergent, Post Hoc *Themes of Reentry Success*

The two-dimensional *well-being* and *reintegration* model for defining reentry success and its related sub-themes proved comprehensive, encompassing nearly all that participants discussed as they offered definitions of reentry success. Themes that emerged and seemed not to fit neatly into those *a priori* themes established in extant research were constructs deemed too vague to be of much use because they could have applied to many of the other subthemes if described with greater specificity. Two notable, emergent constructs that fit this description were repeated mentions of achievement of vague *stability* or *comfort* as definitions of success. A third was that success was equated to fortune or luck. These constructs may have been allusions to luck, stability, or comfort in the realms of finance, emotional health, relationships, or otherwise. They may have referred to elements of intrapersonal well-being or may have referred to interpersonal reintegration. Thus, we offer them as constructs used by numerous participants to define success but without enough specificity to add concretely to extant definitions of successful reentry.

Definitional Differences According to Gender and Race

The second research question posed by this study is whether returning citizens' definitions of reentry success differ systematically according to gender or racial identity. Extant research has begun to explore gendered differences in definitions of reentry success. To our knowledge, though, no previous study has directly compared such definitions between men and women with both genders represented in the sample. This study is amongst the first to explore potential gendered difference in reentry success definitions. Likewise, this is the first study to examine racial differences in definitions of reentry success. This section will report key findings related to both gendered and racial differences in how returning citizens define reentry success. For full test results of gendered and racial differences in success definitions, please see Table 5.

Gendered Differences in Definitions of Reentry Success

Chi-square tests of independence were performed to determine the relationship between gender and mention of the six most prevalent success themes (well-being, reintegration, social (reintegration), systemic (reintegration), perseverance (well-being), and mental health (well-being). These tests revealed no statistically significant association between gender and whether these themes were mentioned. However, while not statistically significant, interestingly, the relationship between gender and the mention of social integration was trending towards significance $\chi^2(1, N=55) = 3.17$, $p = .08$. The association was moderately strong $\varphi = .24$ (Rea & Parker, 1999) with female-identified participants more likely than men to mention social reintegration as part of their definition of success.

Table 5
Gendered and Racial Differences in Success Definitions (N=55)

Code	Identity Group	χ^2 Value	df	*p*	φ
Well-being					
	Race	8.28	1	.004**	.39
	Gender	0.53	1	.47	.10
Reintegration					
	Race	3.06	1	.08*	.23
	Gender	0.11	1	.74	.05
Perseverance					
	Race	1.55	1	.21	.17
	Gender	0.02	1	.90	.02
Mental Health					
	Race	2.65	1	.10*	.22
	Gender	0.20	1	.66	.06
Social Reintegration					
	Race	0.74	1	.39	.12
	Gender	3.17	1	.08*	.24
Systemic Reintegration					
	Race	3.63	1	.06*	.26
	Gender	0.09	1	.77	.04

**Trending towards significance, p<0.10; ** Statistically significant, p<0.05*

The proportions of female returning citizens who mentioned the other five most prevalent secondary and tertiary success themes were not significantly different from the proportions of male returning citizens who mentioned those themes. Other ways of measuring gendered differences in definition of reentry success will be expanded upon below.

Racial Differences in Definitions of Reentry Success

Chi-square tests of independence were also performed to determine the relationship between race and mention of the six most prevalent success themes (well-being, reintegration, social (reintegration), systemic (reintegration), perseverance (well-being), and mental health (well-being)). These tests revealed one statistically significant association between race and tendency to mention the theme of intrapersonal well-being, $\chi^2(1, N=55) = 8.28$, $p=.004$. The association was moderately strong $\varphi=.39$ (Rea & Parker, 1999) with BIPOC participants more likely than white participants to mention well-being as part of their definition of reentry success. No other statistically significant differences were found between the proportions of BIPOC and white participants who defined success by any of the other five most prevalent themes. However, the relationships between race and three other themes (i.e., reintegration, systemic reintegration, mental health) were found to be trending towards significance, albeit not statistically significant. White participants were more likely than BIPOC participants to mention both reintegration (a secondary theme), $\chi^2(1, N=55) = 3.06$, $p=.08$ and systemic reintegration, in particular (a tertiary theme), $\chi^2(1, N=55) = 3.63$, $p=.06$. The effect size for both associations was moderately strong (Rea & Parker, 1999): $\varphi=.23$ for reintegration and $\varphi=.26$ for systemic reintegration. BIPOC participants in this sample were more likely than white participants to mention mental health as a tertiary well-being theme by which they defined reentry success, $\chi^2(1, N=55) = 2.65$, $p=.10$. The

association was moderately strong (Rea & Parker, 1999), φ=.22. For full chi-square results and contingency tables, please see Appendix E.

Chapter IV: Discussion

This study drew upon qualitative data from two mixed-methods studies exploring experiences of post-carceral reentry. Specifically, the study sought to (1) expand and add nuance to our understanding of how returning citizens themselves define reentry success and (2) compare and contrast those definitions of reentry success according to racial and gender identity. The study adds to a growing body of extant research seeking to understand (1) key components that lead to successful reentry from multiple perspectives, (2) how we measure success, (3) how society might better support successful reentry both short and long term, and (4) how identities intersect with the reentry experience to shape how success is defined and how society might better support these individuals.

In our exploration of returning citizens' definitions of reentry success, our findings confirmed elements discussed in other research: we found support for a two-dimensional success model, defining success both intrapersonally ("well-being") and interpersonally ("reintegration" that included both social and systemic reintegration). Well-being is an intrapersonal construct, referring to a holistic quality of internal life to be pursued during reentry (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). Reintegration is an interpersonal construct, referring to dimensions of success that occur in relationships with the external world, both social and systemic (Rosenfeld & Grigg, 2022). As we analyzed the data, we found that the definitions of success represented by participants in this study nearly all fit neatly into at least one of those two dimensions.

Using *a priori* themes within those two dimensions for how reentry success is defined by returning citizens—as generated by previous researchers—we found especially strong evidence in support of the importance of perseverance and mental health (in the well-being dimension), social relationships with family and non-family significant others (in the social reintegration

dimension), and achieving secure and adequate housing, employment, finances, freedom from the justice system, and civic engagement (in the systemic reintegration dimension). Findings related to the importance of mental health, perseverance, and social reintegration with family and significant others were more nuanced than had been found in previous studies on this topic. For instance, perseverance had dimensions of the temporal continuum on which reentry occurs and the adversity inevitable in the process; mental health included numerous emotional, cognitive, and behavioral sub-themes including contentment, expectation management, and self-care; social reintegration with family and significant others included receiving support from family and friends, reestablishing key social relationships, setting a positive example for others, and nurturing romantic partnerships, among others. While many of our findings confirmed those from other studies, the nuances within these four particular constructs further clarify how we might support returning citizens.

Findings in this study were especially novel with regards to how returning citizens include community contribution in their definitions of civic engagement as a dimension of reintegration success. We heard from numerous participants that to achieve success during reentry the endeavor must include positive participation in community life. This construct included a number of dimensions, illustrating a more nuanced picture of what such contribution to community life might look like. These dimensions included, for example, employing others, beautifying the community via skills acquired while incarcerated (e.g., gardening), and supporting sub-communities (e.g., the recovery community). In keeping with a theme running throughout these findings, participants reported an interaction between the interpersonal reintegration dimension of reentry success (e.g., via community contribution) and the intrapersonal dimension of well-being as reentry success. That is to say: contributing positively

to the community was described as an integral way *to* cultivate well-being. And, inversely, in order to be able to contribute constructively to the community or other people, participants reported the necessity of investing in one's own well-being.

This is one of a small handful of existing studies to explore the gendered dimensions of reentry success definitions, and the first—as far as we found—to include both male- and female-identified participants in the same sample, and thus directly compare and contrast their respective definitions of reentry success. While there were no significant differences in the responses of themes between female and male identifying participants, there was one difference that should be noted for its trend towards statistical significance. Our study found that female-identified returning citizens may be more likely than male-identified returning citizens to define success by social reintegration. This may suggest that female-identified returning citizens are more relationally-oriented such that returning successfully can be achieved most demonstrably by effectively reconnecting with, and maintaining prosocial relationship with, the important people in their lives on the "outside" (e.g., family members, children, romantic partners, friends). Accordingly, practitioners and policy makers might do well to target reentry support and resources for female-identified returning citizens which emphasizes their social reintegration with loved ones, especially early in the reentry process. Notably, participants in this study all identified by binary definitions of gender, as either male or female. These results leave unclear how gender diverse returning citizens might define reentry success. Further research could helpfully explore how gender-queer returning citizens define reentry success.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to compare definitions of reentry success by racial identity group, contrasting the success definitions of returning citizens who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) from those who identify as white or of

European descent. Interestingly, there were several significant and interesting trends found between responses by returning citizens of different racial backgrounds. First, our findings suggested that BIPOC returning citizens may be more likely than white participants to define success by intrapersonal well-being. These results suggest that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color may define reentry success more intrapersonally, centering their well-being—especially their mental health—as indicators that they are achieving reentry success. It is unclear exactly why this racialized difference in the importance of intrapersonal well-being for reentry success may exist. Perhaps BIPOC participants anticipate more systemic racism to interfere with their reintegration with social systems and thus define success by a construct, in intrapersonal well-being, over which they feel they maintain a greater locus of control.

Second, were three differences that, while not statistically significant, were trending towards significance and will need to be explored more fully by other studies for confirmation. First, our findings indicated that BIPOC returning citizens may be more likely than white returning citizens to define success by mental health. Similar to explanations for the emphasis on well-being among BIPOC participants articulated above, this may be attributed to the relative control BIPOC participants feel they can exert over their mental health, when compared with interpersonal and systemic reintegration, for which structural racism may interfere with BIPOC returning citizens' capacity for success, thereby demotivating them to define success by those constructs.

Next white returning citizens may be more likely than BIPOC returning citizens to define success by reintegration, and especially systemic reintegration. White returning citizens may be more likely to define reentry success by their ability to smoothly reintegrate interpersonally, with particular emphasis on navigating societal systems in order to reestablish systemic connections,

such as with employment and housing. The causes of this difference are unclear. It may be that white returning citizens feel more comfortable defining their success by their reintegration with people and systems because they feel less likely to encounter interpersonal or structural racism to interfere with their successful reentry.

Although the sample size for doing such quantitative analyses was small, they offer a glimpse of different ways diverse racial groups may conceptualize success. These findings suggest that services and resources directed toward supporting successful reentry might be appropriately tailored for returning citizens based upon their racial identity. If, for example, as these data suggest, BIPOC returning citizens are more likely than white returning citizens to define reentry success according to mental health, perhaps reentry supports can be adjusted to prioritize the mental health of BIPOC returning citizens, relative to other aspects of success (e.g., reintegration). More research is needed to explore and understand the reasons for the differences found by this study, particularly examining in greater depth those relationships that were trending towards significance.

Further Implications for Research and Practice

The present study adds to the growing body of research seeking to understand, measure, evaluate, and improve the reentry experience for all involved. As researchers continue to investigate, identify components of, and measure successful reentry, this study contributes to a small body of research broadening and improving the definitions of success used in research and practice. The findings of this study offer future researchers a more nuanced, comprehensive, and returning-citizen-centered definition of the many elements indicative of reentry success. Namely, future researchers may be able to measure and evaluate reentry success not only by whether returning citizens recidivate or not, but more thoroughly and with more gradations by including

such constructs as: intrapersonal well-being (particularly demonstration of perseverance and maintenance of mental health, good physical health, avoidance of problematic substance use, healthy relationship with cultural identity, spiritual well-being, and independence); interpersonal reintegration (particularly social reintegration with family and significant others); and systemic reintegration via attainment of housing, employment, financial stability, emancipation from the justice system, and civic engagement. By aiming for a more holistic, sophisticated, and returning-citizen-centered definition of reentry success, the field can design and evaluate practices and interventions in a more meaningful, nuanced, and thorough way by considering multiple components that are likely to be critical for successful reentry. Returning citizens, then, may at any given point during reentry be aware of a number of dimensions of reentry in which they have achieved some degree of success, even while there are others in which they are encountering greater adversity. Even a returning citizen who recidivates, could, ideally return to prison with an understanding of what they had done well during reentry and what they still need to work on so as to desist from crime and reintegrate successfully into a community in the future. In this sense, drawing parallels to colloquial wisdom in the recovery community, even "relapse" can be rightly considered a single point on a longer path to successful recovery, rather than equated to failure.

Future research needs not only to examine and encourage a broader set of reentry success outcomes but also unpack the vaguely defined constructs such as stability, comfort, and security articulated by many participants in this study. Greater specificity about which domains feel most important in which to achieve stability, comfort, or stability, could be helpful. The findings of the present study also point to the need of future researchers to explore differences in the reentry experience based on racial and gender identity. Individuals from diverse backgrounds may not

only define success differently but also have face distinct experiences and challenges in the reentry process (e.g., norms, biases, discrimination, oppression). Much more work is needed to understand and explore helpful responses to support individuals from all backgrounds both within broad categories (e.g., white/non-white, male/female) but also within subgroups of these categories (e.g., specific racial/cultural groups, gender expansive).

In addition to implications for research, the current study's findings have important implications for practitioners. The study highlights important areas of reentry to assess, discuss, and address for returning citizens. Based upon findings from this study, service providers in the field of reentry support might benefit from targeting their interventions more holistically to support the broad and varied aspects of success indicated in this study. Rather than focusing only on supporting systemic reintegration, for example, service providers might target intrapersonal well-being by providing interventions aimed at improving mental health, physical health, spiritual well-being, and cultural identity. Further, these findings suggest that in order to support returning citizens' success, service providers need to foster a sense of independence and perseverance, supporting returning citizens' efforts to successfully reenter both over the short and long term. Given these findings, service providers might promote and enhance returning citizens' opportunities to contribute prosocially to the community, rather than simply survive. Service providers might also find ways to individualize reentry supports, tailoring their services and resources based on what individuals deem important to successful reentry rather than treating the population as homogenous in their needs and wants. Ultimately, by aiming for a more comprehensive, sophisticated, and returning-citizen-centered definition of reentry success, practitioners in the field may better design and evaluate practices and interventions in a more

meaningful, nuanced, and thorough way by considering multiple components that are likely to be critical for successful reentry.

The findings of the present study also suggest ways service providers might target gender- and race-specific areas that individuals deem important based on their racial or gender identity. Practitioners might facilitate affinity spaces in which returning citizens can meet with and support other returning citizens whose identities—and perhaps views of success—more closely align with each other. As described above, female-identified returning citizens may especially benefit from support reintegrating with their social communities; meanwhile, BIPOC returning citizens may especially benefit from interventions targeting their mental health and intrapersonal well-being, while white returning citizens may be more likely to feel successful if they receive support that allows them to effectively reintegrate with societal systems.

The present study also has important implications for policymakers. Ultimately, the policy landscape could be reshaped to reduce or eliminate some of the barriers to success that returning citizens face during reentry. The legal system could be better designed so that it views, promotes, and incentivizes comprehensive success including the well-being and reintegration dimensions outlined by this study. This might include structural changes to how incarceration occurs, such that imprisonment is more rehabilitative and less punitive. Preparation for reentry could be required by law as a part of every inmate's imprisonment. This might also involve creating policies for parole that assess reentry success in more sophisticated ways, beyond simply avoiding antisocial behavior. For instance, rather than the parole system existing to surveil and punish violations, the system might be redesigned as a proactive promoter of broad and holistic well-being and reintegration throughout an enduring reentry interval. Policy makers might also consider the role of race and gender in reentry success and create policies that address

some of the unique challenges faced by individuals in marginalized groups as a way to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration of these populations into the community. For example, given that BIPOC participants in this study were significantly more likely to define success by well-being, policies at the level of reentry support organizations could provide particular support to their BIPOC clients in order to promote and enhance their intrapersonal well-being during reentry, while also supporting their ability to successfully reintegrate with social and systemic support networks. Policymakers might also examine domains of systemic reintegration such as housing and housing. By assessing the barriers to securing those needs during reentry, policies could be implemented to reduce those barriers and augment the facility with which returning citizens access such services. For example, legislators could sponsor laws requiring landlords to reduce barriers to renting to returning citizens or laws promoting and incentivizing the hiring of returning citizens with tax relief or other compensation. Such policy-level changes could reduce the structural impediments to reentry success by reshaping the policy landscape in those domains that are most crucial to systemically reintegrating with success.

Limitations

While the study offers some new and helpful insights, there are some limitations that should be noted. First, the sample was drawn from a sub-population of returning citizens who were affiliated with Sponsors, Inc., a local reentry support non-profit within the Pacific Northwest. Thus, the generalizability of the findings to others within the US may be limited. Second, due to their affiliation with Sponsors, Inc. and their willingness to participate in the two initial studies, participants may skew towards being more motivated or better resourced for success than the broader population of returning citizens. Third, the racial and gender identity were dichotomized for this study in ways that fail to reflect the wide array of race and gender

identities and corresponding diversity of reentry experience. For instance, the study fails to meaningfully capture the experiences of trans or gender-expansive returning citizens or to differentiate between Black, Indigenous, or other historically marginalized racial subgroups encompassed by the term "people of color". It also fails to explore within-group variability in experience represented within the European-descended white racial group (how white-identified returning citizens who strongly identify with their Irish heritage might differ from white-identified returning citizens who have Scandinavian heritage but no strong affiliation with that cultural identity, for example). Future research needs to explore racial and gendered definitions of, and experiences with, reentry success with more nuance and specificity than does the present study.

Methodologically, there were also some limitations. First, the data collection was adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in some interviews being conducted using a Zoom video platform. In a few cases, poor-quality internet connections led to the use of Zoom-audio-only. This may have hampered rich data collection, as interviews conducted via video or audio may lack some clarity of communication or candor that are facilitated by collecting qualitative data in person. Secondly, in the final phase of data analysis, side-by-side paired coding was employed by this author and an undergraduate research assistant. While efforts were made to minimize power differential within the coding dyad, interrater reliability might have been higher with two coders of more equivalent power. Finally, there was some overlap and ambiguity in how *a priori* codes were applied. For example, the lines between mental health, substance use, and physical health were at times blurry. When unclear, all applicable codes were used for a given excerpt. Other times, it seemed ambiguous whether a participant was offering a definition of success, or describing an aspect of reentry related to

success, without offering their explicit definition of reentry success. For example, a participant may have described how important staying sober was to being successful, wherein success could be interpreted as defined as avoiding further crime, maintaining stable employment, maintaining contact with children, or so forth. In the hypothetical example above and similar cases, we would have coded as definitions of success "desistence", "employment", and "family/significant others" but not substance use unless it was more explicitly stated that staying sober was part of how the participant defined success. Despite these limitations, the study offers some critical information for both practitioners and researchers alike.

Conclusion

When a returning citizen is released from prison, the season of their life spent incarcerated ends; the season of their life spent transitioning back into free society is just beginning. This transition represents a monumentally complex task, referred to, broadly, as post-carceral reentry. Undoubtedly, engaging in behavior that keeps a given returning citizen free is an aspect of that task. Returning citizens' reentry includes desisting from criminal behavior and avoiding recidivism. While avoiding recidivating is perhaps an ultimate goal for reentry, there are other aspects that are critical precursors for successful reentry into the community. Only considering if individuals recidivate or not, limits our understanding of what is increasing the possibility of this outcome and, most importantly, where we might intervene to increase the likelihood of successful reentry. This study sought to explore whether a more expansive and detailed definition of reentry success could be proposed. In contrast to much of the previous research on reentry success, the study sought to expand upon a recidivism-based definition of success by seeking to understand how returning citizens themselves define success. Unsurprisingly, their answers often included that part of successful reentry entails staying free.

Also predictably, their answers pointed toward a definition that far transcends avoidance of recidivism. From their perspective, successful reentry also included intrapersonal well-being, especially via perseverance and maintenance of mental health; they described successful reentry as also effectively reintegrating socially with family members, significant others, and other returning peers. They pointed to the importance of systemic reintegration via attainment of housing, employment, financial stability, education, and civic engagement, notably including offering prosocial contributions to their communities. Overall, the participants painted a more comprehensive picture of what reentry success looks that leads to staying out of prison.

For returning citizens who identify racially as Female, Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, the task of reentry is made especially challenging by a hierarchical society into which they reenter, in which those identities have historically held—and continue to hold—less power than their white, European descended, and male peers. For these subpopulations of returning citizens, it is especially important to intervene to support their pursuit of successful reentry. An important step toward being able to do so is to better understand how gender and racial identity intersect with and influence reentry success, especially in terms of extra challenges they may face upon reentry. This study sought to elucidate critical aspects of reentry for those historically marginalized groups that may be more important than for the white and male majorities, respectively, such as mental health, intrapersonal well-being, and social reintegration. With this information, resources and interventions designed to support reentry success can be tailored so that they are more relevant for a wider variety of individuals.

The thousands of returning citizens who leave prison each day face a substantial "staircase". Reentry represents a complex and arduous task. At a minimum, we must support returning citizens in their endeavor to live prosocially, reentering without committing further

crimes that cause them to recidivate. Yet, to define the success or failure of reentry to simply whether or not one recidivates does a disservice to those reentering and to the society into which they reenter. We ought not paternalistically expect returning citizens to simply live without committing crime and equate such desistance to success. Instead, we all benefit by defining reentry success as an achievement that happens gradually, collectively, by degrees, and along dimensions which includes desistance but far-transcends simply living crime-free.

As indicated in this study, such transcendence might be achieved by a definition of reentry success which includes an achievement of a sense of well-being as well as reintegration with social communities and societal systems. Society's expectation for returning citizens, then, may become how they might prosocially contribute to their own well-being, the well-being of their families and communities, and the integrity and justice of the systems within which they are embedded. Moreover, perhaps all would be better served by a paradigm in which it is not the returning citizen themself who achieves "success" or "failure" but when we as a society can be said to "succeed" when returning citizens flourish and "fail" when they suffer. Most importantly, as we move toward research, policy, and practice that support a more comprehensive and sophisticated definition of reentry success, we must continue to listen to the voices of returning citizens themselves, empowering them to inform society's definition of reentry success from their unique, lived positions within the process. It is in that way that we can acknowledge and respond to what is most meaningful to them as they strive to reintegrate with their communities.

APPENDIX A

Additional Reentry Success Literature Review

Aspect of Reentry	Construct/Correlate to Success	Additional References
Biological	Nutrition	Porter, 2014; Testa, 2019
	Shelter	Anderson et al., 2018; Cnaan et al., 2013; Favors, 2018; Harding et al., 2013; LeBel, 2017; Lutze et al., 2014; McKernan, 2017; Metraux & Culhane, 2004; Reece & Link, 2023; Roman, 2004; Roman & Travis, 2006; Steiner et al., 2015; Walter et al., 2021
	Medical health, hygiene, access to healthcare & pharmaceutical treatment systems	Barnert et al., 2022b; Evenesen et al, 2021; Hammet et al., 2001; Khatri et al., 2022; Link et al., 2019; Moran, 2012; Paiente-Pelagio, 2008; Patel et al., 2022; Pekala-Wojciechowska et al., 2021; Semenza & Link, 2019; Timmer et al., 2022; Woods et al., 2013
	Substance use	Bahr et al., 2010; Binswanger et al., 2012; Chavira & Jason, 2017; Doherty et al., 2014; Larsen et al., 2022; Link & Hamilton, 2017; Lyons & Lurigio, 2010; Mowen et al., 2019a; Phillips, 2010; Ray et al., 2021; Silver & D'Amoto, 2021; Sung & Richter, 2006; Van Olphen et al., 2006
Affective	Trauma	Anta & Men, 2018; Bloom & Bradshaw, 2022; Cook & Haynes, 2021; Doherty et al., 2014; Kukucka et al., 2022;
	Stress, anxiety, fear	Binswanger et al., 2011; Brown, 2011; Phillips & Lindsey, 2011; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2010; Western et al., 2015

	Shame, guilt, stigma	Botchkovar & Tittle, 2005; Chui & Cheng, 2013; Moore et al., 2016; Murphy & Harris, 2007; Uggen et al., 2004; Van Olphen et al., 2009; Winnick & Bodkin, 2008
	Depression, sadness, anger, hostility	Ekland-Olson et al., 1983; Hochstetler et al., 2010; Rosenberg et al., 2021; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2010; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2014
	Joy, optimism, hope, and resilience	Doherty et al., 2014; Guse & Hudson, 2014; McKay et al., 2018; Phillips & Lindsay, 2011
Social	Social support broadly	Chouhy et al., 2020; Cochran, 2014; Cook & Haynes, 2021; Denney et al., 2014; Griffiths et al., 2007; Hattery & Smith, 2010; Hickert et al., 2019; Hotchstetler et al., 2010; Johnson Listwan et al., 2010; Keogh, 2014; Kiczkowski, 2011; Nolet et al., 2022; Pettus-Davis et al., 2017; Pettus Davis et al., 2015; Pleggenkuhle et al., 2016; Sentse et al., 2022; Volker et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2014; Weill, 2016
	Ecological context	Fox, 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Mears et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2014
	Family Support	Bahr et al., 2010; Cobbina, 2010; Comfort et al., 2018; Doherty et al., 2014; Fahmy & Wallace, 2019; Harding et al., 2016
	Institutional support	Bares & Mowen, 2020; Berg & Huebner, 2011; Cobbina, 2010; Doherty et al., 2014; Stansfield et al., 2017; Stansfield & Mowen, 2019
	Peer relationships	Bahr et al., 2010; Heidemann et al., 2016; LeBel et al.,

		2015; Mowen & Boman, 2019; Sells et al., 2020

APPENDIX B

The Mentoring Study Interview Guide

Thank you again for agreeing to talk with us today. My name is _____ and this is _____. We are working with [agency name] on the [study]. We are currently interviewing several participants in the study to better understand what it is like to reenter the community after prison

Over the next hour, we will be asking questions about your experience at [agency], how your life has been since being released, and what has helped you over the past 6 months.

Before getting started, we want to ask your permission to follow some strategies that encourage a good discussion and help me understand your views:

Recording: We will be recording the discussion so that we can type up the conversation and review it later on.

Note Taking: We will also be taking notes to help us keep track of our discussion.

Our notes will not include your name or phone number. By doing these things, we will be recording your responses anonymously -- unconnected to identifying information about you. If any question we ask is too personal or makes you feel uncomfortable, please let us know so we can skip it and go on to the next question. We also want to remind you that you may stop the interview at any point.

There is some information that if you do tell us, we are obligated to talk with the appropriate authorities. This is if you talk about harming or having harmed yourself or others, whether adults or children. We will not be asking your questions that normally solicit this type of information, but nevertheless, we want to caution you about sharing this particular information with me.

My colleagues and I will be talking to a number of participants over the next several weeks. When we are done, we will compile all the responses into one report that is intended to help improve reentry programs. Your name will not be mentioned in that report.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Helpful example prompts for interviewer:

- *"Tell me more about _____"*
- *"Help me understand_____"*
- *"You mentioned _____ before, but just now you mentioned _____. Can you explain that*

some more?"

- *"Can you give me some examples of _____?"*
- *"Remember what you were saying about _____? Can you tell me more about that?"*
- *"Would you mind elaborating on that?"*
- *"How does that compare to what happened last year?*
- Non-verbal cues (nodding) or "uh-huh"

Reentry

The Mentorship Program: [Study] Individual Interview Questions: May 2018

In this domain, the interviewer will ask participants questions about their experience reentering a community after incarceration and how they view success in re-entry- what needs to be focused on and who to connect with to succeed.

1. What do incarcerated individuals need to know and be able to do to be successful once they re-enter their communities?
2. What have been the 1 or 2 biggest challenges you have faced over the past six months? *(find out what they have done to deal with/overcome each challenge)*
3. When you returned to the community, who were the most important people to help you to succeed (not the names of specific people, but the roles that those people play, like "myself", or "my case manager" or "the mother of my children")?
4. What did these people do that was helpful? Can you give me an example of a challenge that this person helped you work through?
5. What other types of people could have been helpful for you? Why?
6. What else has been helpful as you've reentered? Why?
7. What else could have been helpful? Why?
8. *parents* *Ask this last question to just those who are parents to children 18 years or younger.* In your role as a parent, what was helpful to you as you reentered? What else could have been helpful?

Mentor Program Impacts

In this domain of the conversation, the interviewer will those participants who had a mentor to describe their experience participating in the Mentorship Program.

9. Overall, what do you think of the Mentorship program?
10. How would you describe your relationship with your mentor?
11. In what ways was the program helpful? What is good about this program that should be continued in the future?
12. In what ways do you feel that the Mentorship program fell short? What needs to be improved about this program so that it is more helpful to participants? What pieces are missing from this program?

13. When you think about yourself and the idea of you succeeding -- of you doing well in the coming years -- how do you define success?

14. How many people do you plan to stay in touch and do things with after the Mentorship Program ends?

1. If they mention at least one person ask “Who are they and what do you hope to do with them?
2. If they mention no one ask, “Why is that?”

15. What do you think is the most important thing about the Mentorship Program?

Closing Summary Comments

Lastly, the interviewer will ask some closing questions to all participants.

16. Is there anything else we haven’t discussed that you think is important to know about reentry? Or the mentoring program? (*only ask those who had a mentor the last sub-question)*

Thank you so much for all your time today and for sharing your experience. I greatly appreciate it.

APPENDIX C

The Way Home Study Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you again for agreeing to talk with me today.

Over the next hour, we will be asking questions about your experience with housing, how your life has been since being released, and what has helped you over the past year.

Before I ask you any questions today, I wanted to remind you of the following.

- You can choose to answer any question you want.
- You can choose to skip any question you do not want to answer.
- There will be no penalty to you for not answering a question.

Further, I want to ask your permission to follow some strategies that encourage a good discussion and help me better understand your views.

Recording: We will be recording the discussion so that we can type up the conversation and review it later on. After we type up the recording, we will destroy the recording

Note Taking: We will also be taking notes to help us keep track of our discussion.

The typed-up recording and my notes will not include personal information like your name or your phone number. By doing these things, we will be recording your responses anonymously -- unconnected to identifying information about you.

Is it ok with you if I record our conversation? __Yes __No

If is ok with you if I take notes? __Yes __No

[*Note: If "no" to either, then do not proceed with the interview. Thank participant for their interest and let them know when the research team will be calling again for their next quarterly interview.*]

[*Note: If "yes" to both, proceed*.]

Great.

Once we get going, if any question I ask is too personal or makes you feel uncomfortable, please let me know so we can skip it and go on to the next question. I can stop the interview at any point -- it is up to you at each point if you want to continue.

There is some information that if you do tell us, we are obligated to talk with the appropriate authorities. This is if you talk about harming or having harmed yourself or others, whether adults or children. We will not be asking you questions that normally solicit this type of information, but nevertheless, we want to caution you about sharing this particular information with me.

My colleagues and I will be talking to a number of participants over the next several weeks. When we are done, we will compile all the responses into a series of reports that are intended to help improve reentry programs. Your name will not be mentioned in that report.

Do you have any questions before we get started? [*Note: Answer all questions as appropriate or refer questions to Dr. Mark Eddy*.]

Demographic Question

What race/ethnicity do you identify as?

If minority – we are interested in broad answers to the questions, but we are also interested in how a person's race and ethnicity may relate to their experience reentering after prison, including housing and other impacts. I will ask you questions about your experience, and if comfortable, I want you to think of how your race and ethnicity may have impacted your responses. We would like for you to provide this information because it will better help us understand how the program affects all different people.

A. Reentry Questions

1. When you think about yourself and the idea of you succeeding -- of you doing well in the coming years -- how do you define success? Definition impacted by race/ethnicity?

2. What do incarcerated individuals, need to know and to be able to do to be successful once they leave prison and re-enter their communities? Any different advice for people of color?

3. What have been the two biggest challenges you have faced, over the past six months? How have you dealt with these challenges? Do you feel like these challenges will go away or do you think they will remain? What needs to change for these challenges to go away? Has race/ethnicity played a role?

4. When you returned to the community, who were the most important people to help you to succeed (i.e., not the names of specific people, but the roles that those people play, like "myself", or "my case manager" or "the mother of my children")?

5. What did these people do that was helpful for you? Can you give me an example of a challenge that this person helped you work through?

6. What other types of people could have been helpful for you? Why?

7. What else could have been helpful for you as you have reentered? Why?

8. [*Note: For parents of minor children only*] In your specific role as a parent, what was helpful to you as you reentered? What else could have been helpful?

B. Housing Questions

1. What is your current housing situation? Do you have your own place? Do you live with friends, with family, in some other situation?

2. How did you get that type of housing?

3. Are there any services connected to your current housing situation? If so, what are they? Do you like them?

4. How stable is your current housing situation? Please explain.

5. Since your release from prison, what has been most helpful for you in terms of finding and getting housing? Why? Might this differ being a person of color?

6. Since your release from prison, what do you feel wasn't helpful with housing? Why? Any discrimination?

C. Housing Program Impact Questions [*Note: Ask of all participants, whether in the Permanent Supportive Housing Program or not*.]

1. Are you currently in, or were you a part of, a program that is directly connected to your housing? If so, what is that program called? What happens in that program?

2. Overall, what do you think of the housing program?

3. In what ways has/was the program been helpful? What is good about this program that should be continued in the future? Supported diverse needs?

4. In what ways do you feel that the housing program is falling/fell short? What needs to be improved about this program so that it is more helpful to participants? What pieces are missing from this program? Any issues tied to being a person of color?

5. What do you think is the most important thing to know about the housing program?

D. Pandemic Questions

1. Has the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic affected your housing situation? How? Any differences being a person of color?

2. Has the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic affected your employment situation? How? Any differences being a person of color?

3. Has the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic affected any other areas of your life? How? Any differences being a person of color?

E. Closing Questions

1. Is there anything else we haven't discussed that you think is important to know about housing and people who recently were released from prison? Anything else about minority status impacts?

2. What advice do you have for people getting out of prison in terms of finding and keeping housing? Separate advice for those who are also a person of color?

3. What advice do you have for people getting out of prison in terms of finding and keeping a job? Separate advice for those who are also a person of color?

Thank you for participating in this interview and sharing your thoughts and experiences. We greatly appreciate your time.

I wanted to let you know that Sponsors has a new hotline to help you get connected to resources in the local community now, given how much things have changed with the pandemic. Would you like the phone number? I can text it to you if you like.

We hope to talk to you again soon. Your next quarterly interview will happen in approximately [Number of Weeks].

APPENDIX D

All Excerpts of Raw Data Coded as "Success" (n=138)

Title: 2018.10.30.LS 238 M Jean.Transcript

P: I would make, I guess, success would be to try, to just be motivated and stay positive with everything that you do, every time you wake up is a new day. Just 'cause yesterday might not've worked out, tomorrow's a different day and sooner or later it all will work out.

Title: 2018.12.18 LS 240 F - Jo.docx

P: Um, just being able to get out and grow, to become the adult you were supposed to be, like that's what it was for me was making that choice that I didn't want to be the kid I went to jail as.

Title: 2018.10.12. LS 115 F-Jean

P: Um, being content, it's not about money or cars or houses., or anything like that. It's about being within myself and being content and knowing that I'm doing ok, cause then everyone around me is doing ok. For the most part you know. I'm a mom of 2, so

Title: 2018.10.12. LS 115 F-Jean

tell me where the program fell short and what the program could do to maybe have been more supportive or what the mentor could have done that would have been more helpful to you.

P: Um, the first thing that comes to my mind, is availability, but that's not really fair for her, because she had a baby, and like her, she had 2 daughters, you know and she was a teacher, and so that's not very fair to her. Um, but I think that if you are going to commit to somebody coming out of prison, um, availability would be big and understanding that their circumstances are probably a bottom that you would never think of. And it would be hard to relate to. So, um, and then your other question would be probably um, I don't know, I don't if I would say that the mentor program fell short for me, I think that I didn't push it. I'm sure if I would have called Tree and said this isn't working out, can I get a new mentor? I don't know if they would assign, I can't remember the details, yea the details of that. But, um, I feel like I could have probably spoken up and reached out more. I was going through a lot, so, I don't know.

R: Did anybody check in at any point to say how are things going?

P: Yea, Tree did once or twice and then she did as well and I think just like a month or two ago, she had sent me a text message and asked me how I was doing. And, I think about her, you know, I do, um, and I whatever. Probably said I'm fine, thanks for asking, I hope your good, or something cordial.

R: If you could have the ideal mentor, what would that person be like, and how would they help you, like the super mentor

P: The super mentor [laughing] ok so, someone that can talk about quote, weird stuff with me, like philosophy or um, someone who just can talk. I don't talk to adults very often, so any adult interactions is like da da da. Um, somebody with some energy, um, but also understanding cause I'm, this left side of my body is metal, so I have a hard time with stuff. Um, but still like to do things, um, maybe somebody that pushes me more to do fun things instead of just engulfing myself in work and stuff. Somebody who has life experience, wisdom, I crave wisdom. I need somebody to like mentor me, you know.

R: Yea, we all crave wisdom.

P: Um, somebody that was willing, well I know that the kids situation you're not supposed to have your kids around, I think. Sometimes I think they'll give you like a pass or an okay at some point, but I'm not sure I remember there was something. So, that would have been nice, to maybe after a lot amount of hours you could spend time with your kids with your mentor. I mean not all the time you know, but um, that would have been really helpful

Title: 2018.12.7 LS 275 F - Lindsey & Jean.docx

P1: Um, I would say, keeping my focus and making sure that my priorities are set intact with, um [breath], changes from who I used to be, to who I want to be, and who I am now. Um, and defiantly staying clean and sober and not going back into old ways and old habits.

Title: 2018.12.7 LS 275 F - Lindsey & Jean.docx

P: Um [breath], I've always heard the term you know, that old habits die hard, but nothing has put that to the test more than this last year of being out um, more than anything. So um, just, um pretty much staying on track and keeping my focus.

Title: 2018.12.7 LS 275 F - Lindsey & Jean.docx

P: And doing things that will better my future.

Title: 2018.10.12 LS 128 M - Miriam

P: Staying out of prison.

Title: 2018.10.12 LS 128 M - Miriam

P: Getting my classes done.

Title: 2018.10.26 LS 276 M.docx

P: I think just getting up in the morning is success to me, but then I have goals, so, um, success to me would be reaching my goals. Um, but I-, I mean, success, in anything, you have to have a

positive attitude, you know? So, success is-, comes in many different shapes and forms and visions.

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 129 F-Jean.Transcript

P: Uh, having a stable, uh, job. Being able to, uh, pay my bills without being late. I'm not trying to be rich at any point, but to be comfortable.

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 129 F-Jean.Transcript

P: Uh, happy and healthy relationships.

Title: 2018.11.1.LS 19 F-Jordan.Transcript

P: Um, I guess, success would be to finally- to get into the community, um, have a job that I like, um, be able to support myself, um, for me especially it was getting connected with my family again, um, and then, I guess, just, you know, eventually getting off of paper. I mean, really, you know, that's the goal is to be independent and not have to have supervision and have, um, you're just independent and able to, to not recividit, or relapse, or whatever. So that's what it- the big thing for me is just staying off of drugs cause that's how I get in trouble.

Title: 2018.11.09 LS 278 M - Lindsey.docx

P: Um I think success for myself is meeting all of the requirements of my needs, not my wants. Um getting a place over my head, being able to stand on my own two feet financially, and um support with other being in recovery, and kind of support system and building that and so that's been really important. Um that would be what success to me would be.

Title: 2018.10_LS_189_M_-_Jordan

R1: Um, but- so, you did mention, you know you have a car. You just brought a mobile home. Um, so thinking about what you've achieved, um, and this idea of kinda of being successful. How would you define that? Um..

P: That's me.

R1: [Momentary pause at [00:12:50]] You're a success.

P: I am a success.

R1: That's awesome.

P: I've been a success all my life. The only time I was a bad man was twenty-five years ago.

Title: 2018.10.30. LS 77 M - Jordan

P: well for one thing - its the best that I have ever done I've been in and out of prison a lot in my life um this last time sponsors has helped me out a great deal as far as getting me on my way. And I mean I was able to get in that programing I was able to get into the oaks the apartments so I was able to get my um section 8 uh, I have made leaps and bounds. I am currently working almost - its full time but um I'm waiting to get a full time position as a hire-ee through a temp service. Um I've been doing really well. I've relapsed I've been swaying? But I'm back on it again uh so its good to know that I have support. Just being where I am has been helpful from when I did relapse - to have my P.O. there and you know to get from hearing from different people that are from sponsors but you know that its okay - were here for you. And that's pretty awesome

Title: 2018.10.22 LS 97 M - Jordan

P: So also it's somewhat achieved the worldly person in though which I'm trying to overcome I do want more. I maintained my employed while I was away so I was working two days home got back on the schedule um its a great job great education we likewise uh help the community with what we do um but it's low paid and also it's not so easy to uh have the living you want or even the residence that you might wanna have but it is consistent. It's an income I can rely on and this is very important for planning stages of life when you have whatever that income in place you can make the plans according to that so um and things are falling into place. Um becoming a master gardener was also a goal. Technically I don't have that title I have the horticulture equivalent which the only difference is that is two less classes that is the 22 total and I don't have to volunteer 66 hours a year but I put that time into the gardens at work so I still get, I achieve that goal. And uh I get to apply it through my employment.

Title: 2018.10.18 LS 183 F Transcription_

P: Um, I've had, okay like um [pause] I think that there is like succeeding in all area, you know, there is not just one thing that's been successful. There's um, You know, it's as long as you keep trying you are successful. You know, you don't give up, and if you fall down, you get back up, and you try again and makes you successful, you know. So um [pause] I don't I don't have like a one particular thing.

Title: 2018.10.18 LS 183 F Transcription_

P: Um, I don't have one particular thing that um [pause] I have succeeded at. I've had you know like um major surgeries with a large amount of pain medication, and um, not gone out of control with it, you know what I mean? It's been monitor really well and um [pause] I haven't abused it or anything so that was succeeding there for me being a heroin addict for 38 years and being put on opioid and detoxing off them properly and taking the mass prescribed, you know?

Title: 2018.10.18.LS 250 M- Jean.Transcript

: Well obviously that's uh, it changes between everybody, you know it's a matter of opinion, so, success, I think, is, uh, having goals, completing those goals, having a solid foundation as to where you live and what you're doing and, uh, just knowing and completing, you know, what you value out of life, whether it be a loved one in a relationship or money, you know? Which I don't view- obviously stability, some type of stability is a- is a point of success, you know, that's a- so that's how I view it but that's a big circle, you know, and it could change no matter who you ask, and so, but to me alone, I feel some stability, um, some financial comfort, where you're not feeling, um, I would say a slave to the man or the government's funding or, you know, maybe not feeling like you hafta go to this, maybe, crappy job that you hate because you hafta, you know, live and pay for a house or whatever, so, when I see success, I see it as comfortability and whatever you're comfortable with in yourself and whatever, you know, completing goals and tasks and things like that, that's how I view success, yeah.

Title: 2018.10.19.LS 148 M-Miriam.Transcript.docx

P: Just not, um, so, like, my whole, um, teenage years and up, and, you know, all the way up to being an adult of, you know, and all the way up to my forties, I participated in, you know, negative behavior, you know, and stuff that ultimately ended up breaking the law and doing, you know, jail and prison time and, um, not, um being actively [inaudible] and if I was actively it wasn't actively in a positive way, in like, my family or my kids', you know, life, so, you know, it's succ-, so success to me, it's success, right? Would be just, you know, um, doing what you should be doing anyways and don't, and um, being a role model to my kids and, you know, being somebody that's productive in society instead of, you know, uh, negative, you know? [Inaudible].

Title: 2018.11.30 LS 153 F - Jean .Transcript

P: [sigh] Success is becoming a contributing member of your community.

Title: 2018.11.30 LS 153 F - Jean .Transcript

P: If you add to good of things to greater good and sort of contributing to a the negativity in your community, that would be on any scale as long as your part of the good instead of the bad your your successful.

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 282 F-Jean.Transcript

Um, I'd say my idea of success is to be able to, um, set a good example for my kids, 'cause my kids are everything. I have a nine-year-old and a seven-year-old. Um, and I have a husband. Um, being able to support them, have a good job to be able to, you know, feed them, clothe them, um, being sober the whole time. Um, I think, I mean, as simple as that is, is like, the idea of success for me, um, that's pretty much- pretty much it, just, you know, teaching my kids to, um, be good people, and productive people in society, and so.

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 282 F-Jean.Transcript

Um, I'd say my idea of success is to be able to, um, set a good example for my kids, 'cause my kids are everything. I have a nine-year-old and a seven-year-old. Um, and I have a husband.

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 282 F-Jean.Transcript

being able to support them, have a good job to be able to, you know, feed them, clothe them, um, being sober the whole time

Title: 2018.10.12.LS 282 F-Jean.Transcript

um, that's pretty much- pretty much it, just, you know, teaching my kids to, um, be good people, and productive people in society, and so.

Title: 2018.11.19 LS 221 F-Miriam

P: Just doing the next right thing and making better choices than you did before.

Title: 2018.11.30. LS 154 F - Miriam Transcript

P: Um I feel like success to me would be uh like where you feel comfortable in like your job and your family, in your home life. Like when everything's maybe not perfect but comfortable. Does that make any sense?

Title: 2018.11.20. LS 222 F-Lindsey & Jordan

P: Um success to me is because I've been out for a year now um I think I have made um good choices I wanna say just because prior to um being incarcerated I wasn't making the healthiest choices. Not for myself, not for my family and they suffered more of the consequences than I did.

Title: 2018.11.20. LS 222 F-Lindsey & Jordan

P: Um success to me is being able to hold a job, paying my own bills and doing the right next thing for myself you know and healthy choices meaning taking care of myself and just making sure that I'm considerate and mindful of the words that I speak so that they're not cutting somebody else so.

Title: 2018.10.16 LS 167 F-Jo.Transcript

But success to me meant getting back to what I was at when I was at a good point in life before, so, a nice home to live in, a good job, a decent car, good family and friends, good job, working and progressing towards a better way of life.

Title: 2018.10.16 LS 167 F-Jo.Transcript

But success to me meant getting back to what I was at when I was at a good point in life before, so, a nice home to live in, a good job, a decent car, good family and friends, good job, working and progressing towards a better way of life.

Title: 2018.10.16 LS 167 F-Jo.Transcript

But success to me meant getting back to what I was at when I was at a good point in life before, so, a nice home to live in, a good job, a decent car, good family and friends, good job, working and progressing towards a better way of life.

Title: 2018.11.09 LS 044 M - Lindsey Transcription

P: Um I'm not sure exactly what I'm doing in the next six months or one year from now, but I'm looking forward to get my parole off, to end my parole. Um and then now I won't be living at a sponsors house, I'll be living somewhere else so I don't know if that will happen at that point uh sponsors said they'll take care of that for me. Go process the next transition somewhere else because at this point I don't know. My Social Security, my disability, taking no income and uh it's hard to save money and the food stamps are only helping a little bit. I don't know the point or what one would do after I'm off parole.

Title: 2018.11.09 LS 75 M - Lindsey.docx

P: For me its being able to have a stable job, stable income to take care of my wife and my kids, first and foremost.

Title: 2018.10.26.LS 89 M -Jean

P: Um, I don't know, I think that I've been, I feel like I'm successful, compared to what I have been. Where I'm at now, is um, I'm content with what's going on, I have goals, that I'm um, achieving and setting other goals and moving forward with my life, I'm not moving backwards in any aspect. Um, so I feel like I mean, as deep of a hole that I have dug, I'm on top of all that, you know I'm coming out, I'm coming back, I'm not sliding backwards. Um, I mean I don't have everything in the world and I'm not exactly where I want to be, but I'm okay with where I'm at. And, I'm still moving forward. So, I feel like I am successful. That is my definition of successful.

Title: 2020.09.24_WHS_WH087_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Success as being [pauses] is living up to my potential as a human being in, in the community. And then I set my own standards. Most of those standards are from my upbringing from living in society. And a lot about right and wrong, crime, uh just to be a good good person, it's in some of that the religious loves our neighbor, you know, or just be good to yourself, be good to your neighbor. And then I want to do more than that I set high standards for myself, I used to work really hard in the mills. And and I didn't feel good unless I was giving it my all. And so then I went to college for four and a half years or so that I graduated. I gave it my all. And, and a lot of that was human service to psychology, sociology, to work in the counseling field. And therefore I am better to help others around me and myself. And so, to me, that's a good present. It has something to give, I can care about people I can help if they wanted to don't fine, okay. You know, so I have more, I always wanted to be more and now I can be more, but I don't have to be somebody else. I don't have to be somebody I can be me. I'm a good. I'm a good man. So that's, that's,

Title: 2020.09.24_WHS_WH087_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

I'm wondering then if you think your definition could have been impacted by your race or ethnicity? Could any of it had to do with being native and white? If anything, anything like that?

Interviewee 07:21
No, not really. I look at that too. And because I'm a mutt, right, all you got German and Irish and Dutch and and Cherokee. And yeah, there's, I look at the Irish, a lot of attracted Irish colors, Irish things. So there's a dominance there. And then the Cherokee, y'all the Trail of Tears and things they went through there, there is a lot there, but I love the Cherokee people. And I don't know many of them very well, by I love them as a neighbor, put it that way. But that has not affected me, I just look at me and try to be good, constructive, positive, do a good mindset every day, work through the battles in my life, and a lot of external, a lot of external stuff still hits me. It's like, the authorities say, well, this, your record doesn't matter if you've amended it 100 million times, is we're gonna look at you as if you were the criminal from 20 years ago. They don't change that. So I have resentment there. But I don't take what they say as God's word. I take God as God and they are not God, but they play God.

Title: 2020.10.09_WHS_WH0127_M_POC_otter.ai.docx

How do you define success?

01:10
Uh I would say meeting all the goals that I've been uh putting [put, putting] for myself. And uh just keep, keep adding more goals and, and uh trying to reach them.

Title: 2020.10.09_WHS_WH0127_M_POC_otter.ai.docx

Do you think your definition of success could have been impacted by your ethnicity? Do you think there's anything different growing up being Hispanic?

01:39

Uh I would say while I was I was raised in California, so say then no... But when I moved to Oregon, it was a little more different.

01:44
Mhm. Ok.

01:48
Uh more, uh what would you say? Like, a shock.

01:54
Mmm.

01:54
But uh, uhh yeah, I just I, oh I just kept moving forward.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

Um, I would say I mean my number one priority is staying clean and sober. And, right now I'm working towards um. Getting my career started. Um, I actually have an interview on Friday to do, um, an internship at Serenity Lane to become a certified drug and alcohol counselor. And so, um, you know, success for me in the future is. Um, completing that certification um? And just. Um? You know, staying clean and. Um, working my career going to work everyday and getting my kids back into my life. I'm working on that too. And hopefully owning a home one day.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

What would you say that incarcerated individuals need to know in order to be able to be successful once they leave prison and reenter their communities?
Participant
Um? I would say, um, just using the tools that you have available to you, um?To be able to, you know, stay.To stay on track. Um, it's really important to get a job to find a place to live um and to just stay away from.
Uh, the people and the places and the things that, um, that took you out to begin with. You know?Starting over isn't always easy, but um.If you set your mind to it, um success is an option.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

Who are the people around you that to help you succeed?
Participant
You know that's a really hard question, um? I mean, there was a couple of people that were in the Sponsors program itself, that I went to meetings with um so it was nice to have like they were people that I was in treatment with and in prison with. And so it was nice to have that continued relationship outside of.Um?Outside of prison, um, and you know, we, since we had already shared experiences together, it was nice to be able to go to meetings and and have that common commonality between us.

I wouldn't necessarily say it was a whole lot of support though. I mean, I, I honestly I feel like I got them the most of my support just by being determined and stubborn and.Talking to myself, You know, mentally, not out loud or anything. But yeah, just whenever you know, whenever a struggle came through, just, you know, communicating with myself saying. But it's gonna take time to.Get back into the swing of things and not to give up.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

I feel like it's important to be there for yourself. You know to not have to necessarily rely on other people to give them to get a Pat on the back.You have to. You have to just tell yourself that you're doing what you can, and then you're doing the right things and that if you continue to do the right things the right things will happen.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

Can you tell me about how you were able to get that apartment or what that process was like?
Participant
Um I.Actually had a hard time getting an apartment. Um, I. I was able to get Section 8 through sponsors, um.And. I received that before I even left sponsors um.And so let's see so August.Like it was like August. Well Yeah August 26th of last year. Um was my last day at sponsors. Um, I moved into an Oxford House from there because I had no other option.
Um?And, the Oxford House. Although it had nice.Parts of it. It was a horrible experience for me because people there were just too many people in that house an I had to share a bedroom with people that had children and people that were just kind of rude and would like.Turn the light on first thing in the morning knowing that you're sleeping and um.Just things that I wouldn't have done if I had roommates.
I mean 'cause I had, I worked a different shift. Um, I work night shift. So like when I would come home and they would be sleeping. I wouldn't turn the light on, you know, Yeah, but I don't feel like everybody has the same manners that I do either.So I you know, I ended up having to live there for.Six months I believe, um, I finally had enough. I called my parole officer. I asked her if it was OK if I moved in with a friend until I found my place. Um, I had been applying for apartments an I kept getting denied because of my criminal background or because, um, I had an eviction.From umFive years ago, almost six years ago. Now, um, but I still owed the property management $2000 from that eviction, and so that played a role in it, um, some of it they were saying was because of my credit, or because I wasn't at my job long enough. And it was like.
I don't know, kind of disheartening, 'cause a lot of other people I knew were able to find a place to live right away. And that was a struggle for me. Um, I started applying for places as soon as I moved into the Oxford House and wasn't planning on staying there long. And I got kind of upset that I had to stay there six months because I couldn't find a place to live. Um, finally?Literally, the day that I was, I said I'm I can't live here anymore. Um, so I went to go move out of the Oxford House and stay with my friend Emily until I found a place to live. And then I got a call from the apartment that I'm in now.And the apartment manager was like, hey, you know I have your application on my desk, why don't you come look at this apartment? and it wasn't something that I mean this apartment that I'm in is super super tiny? Um, there's barely room for a a bed and a little table.But I I felt like I had no other choice but to accept this apartment because my section 8, um, you know, they only let you look for an apartment for so long. I had

already received an extension I didn't know that they would, you know, let me continue looking for an apartment, so I accepted it.Um?
But it's not. I mean it's an apartment, and I'm thankful for that. But um.I would have liked something with just a.Little bit more room.And now that my boyfriend lives here, it's definitely way too small for us.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

were you a part of a Sponsors program, it sounds like from what you've said that you were. Were you housed at Sponsors originally, upon release?
Participant
Oh, yes.
Interviewer
Um, and do you remember the name of that program?
Participant
Um, Sponsors for Women
Interviewer
Okay. Um and could you describe, uh, what that program entails in terms of the support or the housing that it offers?
Participant [hand transcribed due to muffled audio and auto-transcription errors]
Um, I don't feel like there was a whole lot of support other than maybe from a couple of the women that worked, um, I can't even remember what they were called, but, um, I mean, the main people that were supposed to be support, like the director and my counselor that I was supposed to be meeting with once a week, were not the ones who were supportive. It was the people who worked, like, the night shift. They didn't do any of the paperwork or anything, they were just there for somebody to be there while the other ones weren't. So they were the people who were supportive. Uh, it, I mean, the whole experience, I guess. So I moved in as soon as I got released, um, the program was for three months, uh the living conditions weren't bad, um, and then we had to do drug tests twice a week, which was fine. Um, 'cause I didn't have any—I didn't use at all. Or had no desire to use either. Um, so, I mean there were like a few, um, we had to ask permission to go, you know to be able to stay out over night. I never had a problem with any of that. I was always given permission. In the few times that I did stay out over night, uh, and—sorry, I was just gonna say it was kinda in a crappy area of town. There were a lot of drug [inaudible] and stuff right there, you know, [inaudible] overload, but it was nice for me to have some [inaudible] downtown…
Interviewer
I see.How many women lived there and and were you in an individual unit? Was it? Were you in an apartment or?
Participant
So I don't know exactly how many women live there.Let's see the. So there are three different buildings.The one in the front, the main house. Um, I think it housed.
Yeah.I think there was 10 people at a time that lived in that house.Um and then there was a house in the middle of the two buildings. Um, the two other buildings that was like the women's and children's house.Um, I don't think it was. I don't think it was ever full when I lived there. I think that there was like 5 women that lived there with their children.And then in the.

Back building, which is where I lived. There was a 16 people.That lived in there.Um, there was two sides of it, um, and then there was like a living room in the middle.So on the side that I lived in, I lived on the 2nd floor. There's two I they weren't. They weren't necessarily apartments, they were bedrooms. Um, all of em are double occupancy. There isn't single bedrooms except for in the mothers house.And then there was like a kitchen.
Well each so each bedroom had its own bathroom and then there was a kitchen that was for everybody on that level. So there's four people per kitchen.
Interviewer
Got it. Got it and so overall how would you describe your experience with with that program, that residence?
Participant
I mean, it was helpful to have a place to live, you know, a place to go right out of the.Um prison you know to have that transitional housing, um?Like I said, I wish that I would have been able to get be given like an extra month to be able to try to find a place to live because I thought at that time I thought that I I would be able to find an apartment right away, um, but they kind of forced me out so I had to go live at the Oxford House, right?Which you know ended up not being as terrible as I thought it was gonna be, but still like.In that moment I remember feeling dread like Oh my gosh, what am I gonna do? You know, an.
It wasn't a good feeling getting right out of prison and then having you know these struggles with finding a job and then being pushed out on your own. Like you know, without being ready for it.So it was just kind of terrifying at the moment.Um?But I mean overall I had a decent experience there. Like I said, it was nice to have a place to go to, 'cause I didn't have a place.My mom had moved up to Portland. My sister lives in Texas. She's lived there for years and my dad doesn't talk to me. Um, so I had nowhere to go.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

What or what are the parts of that that program that housing situation that you think should be continued in the future or built upon?
Participant
Well, I think all of it. I mean it's a good program, um.An I think all of it should remain the same. I think the only part that maybe should be built on is that, um.Maybe they could.Somehow I don't even know how at this point, but like.Have additional um housing so that people do. You know, people can get a little bit extra time if their situation calls for it. You know, I'm not talking about people that aren't trying or people that are going out there and relapse thing. And you know doing the wrong things. But the people that are that are showing actual effort.
Into making their lives better and doing everything they can. I mean, I was applying for 30 jobs a day like that's how desperate I was to find a job, um?An an I just don't feel like they they gave me a a fair shot given my circumstances and.And so I mean, I feel like that could be reconsidered, you know?Sure, um for people that are actually putting the effort in, you know, not being lazy, not screwing around, doing everything they're supposed to be doing. I never got in trouble there. I never did anything wrong.An it just
It was just it was hard, right? There at the end, yeah.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

For someone who is going to be moving into that, that program, that situation, what would you say is the most important thing for them to know about it?
Participant
Um?I mean, I think the most important thing would be just to.Get a job right away. You know, save as much as you can, because when you're out, you're out.Uh.
It's, you know, it's hard if you don't have the money saved.Or, uh, a place to go, you know, to try to figure all that out? I mean, at one point, like I thought I was gonna have to go move into the homeless shelter.And so just having that money set aside really helped with being able to get into the Oxford House.So yeah, I would just. I would suggest getting a job right away and like doing everything you can to get that job right away and save as much as possible while you're there.'cause they they ask you to save 50% of your income. But I I suggest saving more than that.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

s Covid 19 affected your employment situation? If so, how?
Participant
It did, um, I was laid off um from my job, um.In March, I believe that was in March. Um, I was laid off. Um, at first I was kind of worried with like how am I going to be able to pay my rent and how am I going to? But because of the Covid thing everybody was on the on the same page of like if you can't pay your rent, it's fine, we're not gonna evict you kind of thing and.So and so, that leaves a little bit of stress, and then I was able to pay my rent. Anyways, I've never not paid my rent and so I was. I ended up being fine. I ended up getting on unemployment.An at first you know it took awhile to.I didn't get it until a little after mid April. I think it was somewhere around the 20th or.
You know somewhere towards the end of April I ended up getting unemployment. Um, and because they had the extra $600 a week. Um, it was extremely helpful. I mean, I feel like this whole COVID-19 thing and the and the assistance that they gave for it, um, was.For lack of a better word, a blessing for me because I was able to get that eviction paid off so that if I move in the future, I don't have to worry about that holding me back anymore. I was able to fix my credit so I don't have to worry about that. You know, I I made the right decisions financially with that help that I received To be able to make a better situation for myself, um, and I'm proud of myself for being responsible in that way, 'cause I could have blown the money on whatever, you know, stupid, Yeah, but I, but I decided to do the right thing and and to make it to where I won't have those same struggles looking for another place to live once I'm done here.

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH139_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

has Covid affected any other areas of your life? Notably.
Participant
Um, no other than. Just like I said with financial, it helped me financially. Um, it.I mean it couldn't have come at a better time in my life.When I really needed needed at the most, an um.Like I said, I was able to make smart decisions with it. Uh, with the help that I received during that time, and so, um, I'm. I'm honestly really thankful that this little thing happened.Because it it put me in the right direction. An helped me more than I could have ever done alone, just working.

Title: 2020.10.26_WHS_WH244_F_POC_AJ_otter.docx

I define success in as not returning to drugs, or use returning to any kind of, um, I guess, ah, things that got me put in prison, you know, fast, or any kind of, you know, criminal criminal activity.

Title: 2020.10.26_WHS_WH244_F_POC_AJ_otter.docx

I think that they need to know that changing the way they think and because of the responsibilities for their actions in the past.

Title: 2020.10.26_WHS_WH244_F_POC_AJ_otter.docx

I think really Sponsors, having having, ah, the counseling that I needed and having, ah, different things that I can, you know, do. They set up different stuff, like the support meetings, and we went into counseling, and I think really, meeting with them, they held us accountable--the accountability that they held us to.

Title: 2021.1.21_WHS_WH057_W_NPOC_CC.docx

Um staying sober. Um I don't know working and having a home and just being all around just a good like person.

Title: 2021.1.21_WHS_WH057_W_NPOC_CC.docx

Have a good, uh, what's it called a good, uh, I can't think of the word right now. Um, good, just good people around them, like surround themselves with, you know, people who are in recovery. You know, just good people. I mean, not saying that people are bad, that just the company you keep, you know.

Title: 2021.1.21_WHS_WH057_W_NPOC_CC.docx

Oh, my dad, my baby daddy. And the people at Sponsors.

Title: 2021.1.21_WHS_WH057_W_NPOC_CC.docx

I re-entried pretty good. I just have supportive people. So I would say what could have been more is uh...[sighs]...I don't really know how they could--like you know--cuz I had pretty good when I came out, you know, so...I would, I would say probably just, um. Hm...finding a house. Finding somewhere to live. You know, I didn't get that. Like they pretty much just said, "here's your voucher now go out in the world." But whatever.

Title: 2020.10.10_WHS_WH061_M_POC_otter.ai.docx

How do I define success? You know, what we define success is by you know, having that the job that you always wanted, and you know, you're consistent at workin and, and you're doing good, and you're getting things done, and you know, and you're um gaining experience and new things in life and you're steady going up. You know what I mean?

Interviewer 02:09
Yeah,

Interviewee 02:10
It's like going like going going up a flight of stairs.

Title: 2020.10.10_WHS_WH061_M_POC_otter.ai.docx

Okay, yeah. I'm wondering if you think your definition could have been impacted by being black? Do you think that?

Interviewee 02:25
Of course,

Title: 2020.10.10_WHS_WH061_M_POC_otter.ai.docx

You know, they have to, that they have to really be honest with theyself. Because I mean, when you're, when you're in an institution, and you're locked down, all you do is have time to think. That's all you have is time to think, and listen to other people's stories and reasons why they're in jail. But a lot of times, you say you're ready to change, and you want to do something different, and you're tired of living that life. And the only reason you're talking about it is because you're locked up. And as soon as you get out, you go back and do the same things that got you locked up, you really have to be true to yourself, you have to know that you're ready. And if you're not ready, you have to get help. You have to talk to people. I mean, really that's what I that's honestly, that's my own opinion, because that's what I did. I have to be, I have to be ready I had to talk to myself. And it's not something you just do overnight. This is every day this is still continuously. I'm talking to myself to make sure I'm staying on the right path and doing everything I'm supposed to do.

Title: 2020.09.25_WHS_WH092_F_POC_otter.ai.docx

I define success is like accomplishing all your goals. You know, living life, you know, by the rules, you know, and just yeah, being successful as in being not wealthy, but being you know, being able to take care of yourself and your family.

Interviewer 03:32
Yeah, and then I'm wondering if you are, if you think your definition could be impacted by your ethnicity. Do you think being Hispanic has maybe shaped your definition at all?

Interviewee 03:44
Um not shaped it, but I don't know how I'd put it, I guess you could say yeah,

Title: 2020.09.23_WHS_WH072_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

So when you think of yourself and the idea of succeeding, of you doing well, in the coming years? How do you define success?

Interviewee 02:31
Not getting stuck in one spot moving forward. You know, We're all gonna hit or probably hit a wall, we're all gonna have our issues, but as long as you don't give up and you complete your goal.

Title: 2020.09.23_WHS_WH072_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

And do you think your definition could have been impacted by being mixed race? Like, is there anything related to your experience?

Interviewee 02:53
Definitely. I think different races got different beliefs within themselves in their group, where are the outside, you know, and others. So it's, I think it's all based on your belief system.

Title: 2020.09.23_WHS_WH072_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

I'm wondering, what are the two biggest challenges you faced over the past six months? And how have you dealt with those challenges?

Interviewee 04:18
Failure. Failing something is a challenge because you don't prepare yourself. How do you prepare yourself for failure? This whole time you prepare yourself for success. So I say you got to, you got to set yourself up for prepare yourself for failure and success. That way you're not hitting. A bottom that you can't see.

Title: 2020.09.23_WHS_WH072_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

If it wasn't for, it wasn't for programs like sponsors and homes for good. I think the recidivism would be a lot higher.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH123_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai (1).docx

I define success.... of a, you being in a place where you feel comfortable and content, and you feel like you're, ah, doing the things you need to, you know, feel, you know, responsible and important in life, like, you know, being a good role model and all is like, you know, whatever you think is, you know, success, you know, and happy with where you are.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH123_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai (1).docx

Um, do you think your definition could have been impacted by your race by being sort of a person of color with, ah, that is multiracial? Do you think that could have impacted your definition at all?

Interviewee 01:50
Um yeah, I feel like it could have like, um, sometimes I feel like, um, littler people, mostly, like, let's say, Black can be influenced by like, things like music and stuff nowadays, and they can get the, ah, illusion that success is something different, you know, then then being happy and, and, you know, and ah, you know, what you're doing in your life, they can be, have, be influenced by the illusion that expensive, you know, having a lot of money or, you know, having a lot of girlfriends or something like that?

Title: 2021.02.04_WHS_WH028_M_NPOC-AH_otter.ai.docx

How would I define success? Success is maintaining the lifestyle that I built last few years and staying out of trouble.

Title: 2021.02.04_WHS_WH028_M_NPOC-AH_otter.ai.docx

What would you say that incarcerated individuals need to know or to be able to do in order to be successful as they leave prison and reenter the community?

Interviewee 03:04
Biggest thing is to not go back into old thinking and behavior patterns.

Interviewer 03:13
And I'm sure that varies for each person. But can you give some examples of what old thinking it's important to avoid? --old ways of thinking?

Interviewee 03:22
Ways of thinking, um, well? Yeah. Trying to find the right word here. Uh, you know, most people that went to prison, were chasing immediate gratification for things. One way or another. So staying away from that sort of thing, being able to wait, learning patience, letting things unfold as they should unfold.

Title: 2020.12.14_WHS_WH179_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

How do you define success?

Interviewee 01:30
Umm, accomplishing goals that I have set for myself.

Interviewer 01:38
Nice. That's a nice definition. And then do you think your definition could have been impacted by being native?

Interviewee 01:48
No, no, I think things like that with racism that's gone on in the past, and, and how Native Americans were treated in the past that, that, all that is changed. Okay.

Interviewer 02:03
That's, that's good to hear. Hopefully, for the better then?

Interviewee 02:08
Yeah,

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH069_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

define success?

Interviewee 00:28
Like having my own thing, not having to ask people for like, like my family for like, help like being able to do it on my own and having my family proud of me. and being able to provide for like me and my son.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH069_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

Definitely need to learn how to handle tough situations like they need to learn different, what their triggers are and how to cope with them and different techniques.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH069_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

then self doubt like it's hard but you know, I just look at where I came from, to where I am now. And you know, that helps.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH069_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

What would you say is the most important thing for somebody to know about that program if they were if they were entering sponsors?

Interviewee 21:01
Um, I would say just give it a chance a lot of the girls first go in don't want to be there and, you know, so then every rule or thing that we get right away, like they're just like, oh, that's just so stupid that's retarted and, you know, you just have to give it a chance because they're doing it for a reason. Because now that I'm like, on my own, a lot of stuff that I learned there, that they had me do. you know, I see where it fits into my life now, where, whereas when I first got there, it didn't it. So you'd have to really just, you know, give it a chance and try to learn some of it.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH069_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

do you have any advice for people as they get out of prison about finding jobs or keeping a job?

Interviewee 27:15
Oh, that was hard for me too.I--, just don't give up. You got to keep looking. A lot of people are gonna turn me down you know, because I have never worked a day in my life, except for the the Chad at the male sponsors in the resource room. He is amazing. I recommend going to Him and He will put your resume together like no other, using all of your skills and stuff that you were doing inside the prison as jobs and makes it look good gives you as many copies of it as you want. Put them in a folder. You know, you can go to the male sponsors and Get um, go into the closet and get nice work clothes. Like you know, you can get fancy if you know your resources and just actively be looking for a job too then you get turned down a lot, but something will come up. People are always going to need jobs.

Title: 2020.10.15_WHS_WH152_M_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

when you think about yourself and the idea of you succeeding, of you doing well, in the coming years? How do you define success?

Interviewee 00:16
Uh, for me, it's my mental health.

Interviewer 00:24
Hmm, yeah, I like that

Interviewee 00:25
that's my big thing. If my mental health is not intact then I'm not successful at all,

Title: 2020.10.15_WHS_WH152_M_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

when you return to the community, who were the most important people to help you succeed? So for example, not the names of specific people, but the roles they played? You could say, like, yourself, your case manager, anything like that.

Interviewee 03:11
For me, it was my brother and my parole officer.

Interviewer 03:14
Okay, nice. And what did they do that was helpful for you? Can you give me like an example of a challenge they helped you with?

Interviewee 03:21
Um, they didn't let me take the easy way out. They didn't, they didn't just hand stuff to me. Like, my, my brother has always been a protector of me. So he's always wanted to give me stuff and make sure that he's provided for me. But this last time, I had to prove to him that um I wanted this. And then with my appeal, I had to show them that, you know, I wanted to be successful. And I wanted to do good that I didn't want to be another statistic. And so when I started doing better, they started responding differently to me, they, because I've always responded violently before. So this time, I'm responding peacefully and listen to people and taking criticism. I take it

and so I listened to it. And I put it to myself. And so ever since then, um me and my PO had a great relationship. I'm actually almost off parole. I'm off next month, so um Yeah I've been doing really good.

Interviewer 04:13
That's really awesome. I'm glad to hear that. That you have such a great relationship with your PO. Um,

Interviewee 04:20
And he's a good guy. He really is.

Interviewer 04:21
Sorry, you broke up. What did you say? He's?

Interviewee 04:24
Oh, he's a he's a great guy.

Interviewer 04:26
Oh, that's awesome. Yeah, that's really great to hear. Uh, okay, can you think of, are there any other types of people that could have been helpful for you as you um return to the community?

Interviewee 04:38
Um, (pause) (sigh) my case manager at sponsors. Um, he was really helpful. Um, and then my boss that hired me he was, you know, he really helped me um learn some stuff and want to go back to school and he helped me do that. So yeah, I was really positive too. He really helped me.

Title: 2020.10.24_WHS_WH173_F_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai (1).docx

how do you define success?

Interviewee 01:04
By having a career that I enjoy and having, getting my other children back into my care.

Title: 2020.10.24_WHS_WH173_F_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai (1).docx

what would you say that incarcerated individuals need to know or be able to do to be successful as they leave prison and reenter the community?

Interviewee 01:28
Gosh. Have a good community of people.

Title: 2020.10.24_WHS_WH173_F_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai (1).docx

My family just welcomed me back and kind of like, made sure I had everything that I needed to stay successful, like, you know, clothes and shoes and stuff to get-- ways to get to job interviews,

whereas my case manager filled up my whole time schedule to where I didn't have free time. I wasn't able to wander. And so she kept me very focused.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

I define success by being comfortable, like, you know, secure and also surrounded by loved ones.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

Well, for one thing, they've got to want to. that's a big, that's a big part of it. If they don't want to then they won't. But they, they've also got to, you know, abide by the rules. That's another thing, you know. I mean, definitely quit committing crime. I think that's about it.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

I think the hardest thing has been, oh, not having a driver's license has been really hard. Because I haven't been able, like I have to walk and get my groceries and um, And that's been hard, because I can only bring back an armful at a time. But I'm about to get my license back after 15 years. So that's exciting.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

Well, of course, my family, my dad. And let's see, I had a mentor too, that I used through sponsors, that was really helpful. But after this COVID thing, he, I haven't heard much from him because he said he couldn't do it. He's like, 70 years old. And he just couldn't, he couldn't do it anymore. Because he didn't want to die.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

I had a mentor too, that I used through sponsors, that was really helpful. But after this COVID thing, he, I haven't heard much from him because he said he couldn't do it. He's like, 70 years old. And he just couldn't, he couldn't do it anymore. Because he didn't want to die.

Interviewer 07:47
Yeah, no kidding. Hard.

Interviewee 07:50
So I haven't talked to him in a while. But we were doing lots of stuff together. And I was really excited about doing-- we we had a good time. So I'd say those two, my family and my sponsor, er my mentor.

Interviewer 08:04
What, what is your, You said your dad?

Interviewee 08:08

Yeah, my dad,

Interviewer 08:09
and what has he done? That has been especially helpful?

Interviewee 08:14
Well, not really much and nothing except for Listen, listen to me. And, of course, we do things together now. And he's always been a good influence on me. But it wasn't until I you know, started acting right, that he really wanted anything to do with me.

Interviewer 08:34
And what kinds of things that you and your mentor do?

08:37
We'd go to, went to ballets, classical music. We went to let's see what else did we do. We went to downtown like when they're playing music downtown, we went to let's see, plays, we went to the wildlife, like the bird sanctuary thing that they have around here, hiking, we did all kinds of stuff. The list just goes on and on. We do everything about every week or two. Until COVID hit.

Interviewer 09:13
Yeah, that's thrown a wrench in things. Hasn't it?

Interviewee 09:15
Well, I had to get rid of all my friends because they were all bad news. And so I didn't really have any friends. So Roger, my mentor was my new friend.

Interviewer 09:27
That's great. And any other family members that that were particularly helpful?

Interviewee 09:36
My sister is good too. And, and that's about all I got really

Interviewer 09:41
And how does your sister help support you?

Interviewee 09:43
And my kids, of course. Yeah, they're they're very helpful too. And when I was in prison, this last time I had a long lost daughter that found me in prison, and we've become close.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

You know, everybody's been really good. Sponsors was great. My mentor was great. My POs were great. I can't think of anybody else. I mean, and I've had break after break since I've been out. I mean, nothing but good fortune's happened to me. So yeah, so yeah I feel very fortunate, which is kind of amazing. When you change your attitude of what all can happen, you know?

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

Was was your criminal record an issue at all in in signing a lease or in renting that place?

Interviewee 13:16
Not here because she was understanding and she. And she, she, like, knew people that were in prison, too, that were good people. And so she gave me She gave me a shot. And it's really worked out for both of us.

Title: 2020.10.23_WHS_WH230_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

In the process of finding housing? Um, no, I didn't than somebody doing it for me. It was, you know, you gotta hustle. And you got to talk to people and, uh, what they call that when you when you network, you know, you got a, you got a you got to get out there and pound the pavement and make things happen.

Interviewer 16:31
Yeah. Understood.

Interviewee 16:35
Yeah. I mean, sometimes you gotta sell yourself, or whatever it takes.

Title: 2020.10.12_WHS_WH169_F_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Um, so when you think about yourself in the idea of you succeeding, of you doing well in the coming years, how do you define success?

Interviewee 01:05
Uh, I really don't know. [laughs]

Interviewer 01:08
You don't think you have one.

Interviewee 01:11
No. I think like, for me, honestly, like with um, like, with the lifestyle that I used to live, like, for me, success is just any day like that I continue to stay clean and sober and just continuing to do the next right thing.

Title: 2020.10.12_WHS_WH169_F_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Um, do you think your definition could have been impacted by your race, like being biracial? Do you think it's just basically strictly the lifestyle?

Interviewee 01:39
Uh, just strictly the lifestyle.

Title: 2020.10.04_WHS_WH046_M_NPOC.docx

How do you define success?

Interviewer 01:28
R: Sorry, what was that?

Interviewee 01:30
P: Not going back to prison.

Title: 2020.09.30_WHS_WH093_F_POC_otter.ai.docx

Oh, how do I define success is just keep pushing towards your goals.

Interviewer 02:24
Okay

Interviewee 02:24
Never give up on that. And just never give up on the you know, just because you were in prison, just because you have a background just because of that it's not going to hold you back. You just have to take the necessary steps to move, move and completely keep going forward with it. And, and like I said, just never looking back on that.

Interviewer 02:44
Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewee 02:46
And just humbling, just humbling yourself over it is, is what, what keep what was a big key for me.

Title: 2020.09.30_WHS_WH093_F_POC_otter.ai.docx

I'm wondering if your definition if you think it could have been impacted by you being Native? Do you think that had played any role in your definition of success?

Interviewee 03:07
Um, no, not necessarily. Because everybody is all different kind of at this at this ticity? You know, so I don't think just because being Native American or white, or black doesn't mean anything about your success.

Title: 2020.09.30_WHS_WH093_F_POC_otter.ai.docx

what do incarcerated individuals need to know, to be able to do to be successful once they leave prison, reenter their communities?

Interviewee 03:34

staying focused.

Title: 2020.09.30_WHS_WH093_F_POC_otter.ai.docx

That's pretty much the gist of that. Just your felony record, like,

Title: 2020.11.11_WHS_WH113_M_NPOC-Aaron.docx

You know, I'm just, I guess just staying focused where I'm at right now. I mean, I'm, I don't know how to describe what that is, except that I'm like working on a lot of different projects. And I'm building a lot of different things to help, you know, reinforce my success. So, just, I guess, just staying focused on, uh, in that regard.

Interviewer 01:40
Great. What kinds of-- Can you give an example of the types of projects that you're working on?

Interviewee 01:45
So I'm currently right now working on a leopard gecko breeding project. also currently building bioactive terrariums. Yeah so. And I'm trying to build this into a small business slooooowly.

Title: 2020.11.11_WHS_WH113_M_NPOC-Aaron.docx

first thing that I had to really do was come to terms with the technology and things have moved forward. And I just had to relax. And kind of like sift through and learn my way.

Title: 2020.11.11_WHS_WH113_M_NPOC-Aaron.docx

who were the people who are most important to helping you be successful?

Interviewee 06:36
So I have to say, my wife, I got a lot of support from my mom. And just some of my peers just at sponsors, like I worked really closely with a few of the people that worked at sponsors, because I've known them forever. You know, I utilized every resource that I had, you know, I was, you know, Terry with homes for good, I utilized all the resources I could there. You know, I work with Lisa, my navigator, pretty regularly. Some of the case managers I worked with really closely. Some of the staff members there, who I'm still friends with who are no longer there who still support me, you know, I created myself a pretty solid foundation for support.

Title: 2020.11.11_WHS_WH043_F_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Interviewer 01:54
Alright, sounds good. Okay, so we'll go through the first set of questions. I have are reentry questions. So when you think about yourself, and the idea of you succeeding, of you doing well, in the coming years, how do you define success?

Interviewee 02:08

Um, grow, maintaining my housing, number one. Um, and [pause] to actually [inaudiable] my my head injury and, um, my disability. Um, um, and then given my history, just being able to maintain my housing is going to be success.

Title: 2020.11.11_WHS_WH043_F_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

um, what other types of people could have been helpful? um, the, um, the bad relationship? My um, could have been helpful, would have been helpful had the person that I've been um, gone to prison over, had been there when I got out and just been supportive of of my reentry. That could that could have been helpful could have my, my, my success level, could be could have come on, my level of success could have happened sooner, it could've be a lot better. Had it, um, things been the way he had said they were going to be. Um, or even even even had they not. It's just had he been there to be supportive. Things could have been a lot better for me. I could have had, not had so much, such an emotional um break in the beginning, and which delayed me from getting progressing in my success

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

the first success would be not going back to prison and the other success showing up in a positive way in my family, my dad just passed away last week. Um being employed being employed. And I've had the same job almost going on a year and a half now, which was the first time I've been employed in like nine years. And um also showing up in a good way in my relationship with my boyfriend, having good interpersonal relationships and being of service to the recovery community.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

what do incarcerated individuals need to know or need to be able to do to be successful as they leave prison and reenter their community.

Interviewee 01:36
Um, they need to have they need to have somewhere to go because I know other counties don't have places like sponsors. And so that's really helpful. And then any support they can find to get a job is really important. Like it took me almost three, let's see I got out in December and it took me until March 14 to get a job and I was required to be out of the house, that sponsor is looking for a job. I did like 80 job applications. And so that means that you can be self sufficient. And that's really important. And um just like, you got to. What what I know from my program is you have to change everything. You can't hang out with the people that you hung out with before. You can't go the same places that you went to before. Everything has to change. That's a little bit easier when it comes out of prison because everything's a lot different, you know?

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

Since I've been out of prison, the two biggest challenges is, um, well, I had no idea how to live any kind of like normal life, like I didn't know how to cook for myself at all. Like I remember the first time I cracked an egg. I like I had been, you know, in prison. You know I'm not allowed

to have a and before that I just ate food from 711. And so like learning like normal behaviors, like take a shower every day, brush your teeth every day, that's what took me so long to get on the zoom meeting is I had to put my dentures in. [laughs] And like, you know, like, I have six teeth left, and I gotta floss them every day. And that's something like I've never done my whole life, you know, but it's costing me all this money to keep these 6 teeth. to like, learn how to live again. And like, you know, that kind of thing. And then for me personally, things have panned out super good in my life since I got out of prison and I am trying to buy a house right now. And so like patience is a huge thing you know, because because of my criminal life specifically my manufacturing charge, it makes it almost impossible to rent somewhere. And so I'm trying to buy a house but I have for the loan I have to be employed For two years, so the thing is that your life progress is super slow. You know, like it doesn't like you don't come out and it's like, I thought I would be like doing all kinds of I didn't think I'd buy a house ever. But like, you know, it took me a long time to get a job. It wasn't like right away, they won't even hire me at Taco Bell or anything like that. because I hadn't worked in so long. So working in prison is really important.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

So working in prison is really important.

Interviewer 04:24
In prison?

Interviewee 04:25
Yeah, because a lot of places will use that. I work for a staffing agency. That's what I do. And we like to hire places, people from prison because they've had continuity of employment while they were incarcerated. And so a lot of people want it in like a job that is not-- . A job That's good and prison is laundry or orderly. But you want to do something that's like, if you can do any kind of outside work crew or anything like that, like or work in the call center. If you're in women's prison, like that'll help you. when you get out

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

what were some of the things that those people, that that community did that have been helpful for you?

Interviewee 09:34
They pr- they shown me that there were people that got clean in prison and made it, like long term sobriety because like, when I got out of prison, I thought there's a less than 1% chance I was going to get-- that I wouldn't, I wouldn't go back. That's like, I thought I thought for sure that was my destiny that I would be, I would spend the rest of my life in prison. and they show me like that I could change My life and I, like had a similar story to me, you know? And they showed me how to a new way to live. Like I didn't know that being honest, was something people did. I thought everybody just lied to get what they want. Like, I had no conception that people just didn't say whatever they needed to get what they wanted.

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

what did you think of the of the short term housing program at sponsors

Interviewee 23:05
I didn't want to go into it at all, I didn't feel like because it's in a really bad neighborhood. Like that, like the Whit is just a bad place for me. And so like, I when I come in, like when I was in prison, I was like, I don't want to go there. And then it was fine. You know what I mean? And unfortunately, if you can make it like a week, there's a lot more relapsing at sponsors. But if you can make it a week without getting high, like then it was okay. But like at my Oxford house, there's not nearly as many relapses as there were when I was there, but I don't think that has to do with the structure of the organization. I think that has to do with people just getting down prison not knowing what to do. That's it. So I don't I don't have any complaints about how it was ran at all.

Interviewer 23:52
What what are some some parts of that program and the support that they offer that you think work well and should be continued?

Interviewee 24:00
Making people get a job. They like really shove that down my throat super hard. And like, you know, like, like, and they continue to do it you know, like over like out of the out of the house, I had to go look for a job I had to go to RC and go do all this stuff. We had to go. We had to go I don't know if it's that way anymore but we had to go the men's campus you could go apply for jobs over there. And over at my most favorite thing. My most favorite thing that they offer that I'm almost willing to pay out of pocket for is the neurofeedback. That was so amazing. That was the best thing.

Interviewer 24:41
Tell me about that. What do they give you? What do they do?

Interviewee 24:43
So you we would go in this room and they would put electrodes on my head and they put only three or four of them. And then you watch TV and it kind of like changes the volume in the screen. And so like you pick things you want to work on, like drug addiction have all kinds of things like nightmares. And for me, I used to bite my nails so bad to like blood every day. And that was one of the things I picked on there. And then they put like these electrical currents in your brain and I remember I loved it so much and it made me feel so happy and calm because when I first got to prison, I was real keyed up about everything. Like being out there's like a lot of action being on the bus and stuff. And, um, it made me feel so good that one time he forgot me in there. And I got to do it like an extra half hour and then afterwards I'd be praying Please let him forget me in here. And so I just I just that that thing was so good. And they I guess they do it like at some different doctors offices here. But it is the bomb. That's my favorite thing they offered. I didn't even know that was a thing either.

Did the pandemic affect any other areas of your life?

Interviewee 30:10
Yeah, like, like the pandemic really hurt the recovery community because they closed down all the meetings and so. I mean, at the beginning of the year, I was going to like probably like six meetings a week. And like meeting my sponsors still hasn't met me in person, we do it over either the zoom or video chat. And what I can tell you is that human can-- I learned in the program, like the opposite of addiction is connection. And they took away human connection from us. And I can tell you that my heroin addiction is way worse than COVID-19. So like, I've seen a ton of people go back out and like, I've done everything I can to get some meetings going I've successfully got two back into like an Elks Lodge so that way we can meet in person. Because people that are brand new, that are just fresh off the street like they like going to like a virtual chat room to try to get sober is like impossible, you know? So like, I picked up three sponsees during the COVID you know I sponsored four other women. My first ones made it nine months!

Interviewer 31:27
Great, congratulations to them and to you,

Interviewee 31:29
Yeah, that's by the grace of God, I didn't have anything to do with it. So

Title: 2020.09.12_WHS_WH020_F_NPOC-Aaron.docx

what advice do you have for someone getting out of prison about finding and keeping a job?

Interviewee 33:41
You got to show up every day 99% of any job is showing up. And if you're sick, you show up and puke on the floor and then make them send you home but you have to show up every day on time. It doesn't matter how good of an employee you are. You have to show up every day on time.

Title: 2020.10.19_WHS_WH095_F_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Um, I mean, just like, being able to, like, do what I have to do, like, I mean, because that's the only thing successes is by Keep, keep doing what you're doing instead of falling back. So

Title: 2020.10.19_WHS_WH095_F_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Um, I mean, a lot of people have a lot of different, um, perspectives on that. But mine is is like, because I figured, like a lot of people say, when you get out of prison, you basically have to be put around everything that causes you to either go back to that or whatever. And with me, I'd rather be around that situation than not be around it, because you have to face it to, in order to succeed. So that would be the only thing I'd say to everybody is, if you're not strong enough to handle it, then don't handle it. But if you're strong enough to then I would keep doing it.

Because in order to in order to keep yourself from not going back to that you have to you just have to keep going.

Interviewer 01:24
Yeah, yeah, that's really great advice. Yeah, I never thought of it that way.

Interviewee 01:29
Well, I mean, there's a lot of people like I was homeless before I went to prison. So, um, because of that issue, um, I know everybody that's homeless, so and they're still my friends and my family. So I have to associate with it. Because I'm not going to just like, Oh, hey, I'm clean and sober. So I'm going to dis all my friends who use it still. So that's how I put it that way.

Title: 2020.10.19_WHS_WH095_F_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Just keep doing what you have to do. I mean, that's honestly, because a lot of prison either failed to keep doing what they have to do when they go to prison on their trans leave, or they um just start going back out there on the streets and running and gunning. And that's the only thing I say is just if you're ready to stop, then stop. Don't keep, don't keep going.

Title: 2020.10.13_WHS_WH099_M_POC_otter.docx

How do you define success?

Interviewee 01:01
Um, being able to support myself and live comfortably and take care of my family?

Title: 2020.10.13_WHS_WH099_M_POC_otter.docx

Um, they really want to change, you know, get out and change their life, you know, they got they got to be motivated and put one foot in front of the other and do the right things to be successful.

Title: 2020.10.14_WHS_WH142_W_POC_otter.ai.docx

So when you think about yourself, and the idea of you succeeding, of you doing well, in the coming years, how do you define success?

Interviewee 02:03
Um remaining clean and sober, having stable, a stable job, having a stable house. Um and being in being in, uh consistent contact with my children.

Title: 2020.10.14_WHS_WH142_W_POC_otter.ai.docx

Um, I think that they need to know that just because they're a felon doesn't mean anything. Like they need to not let their past define them. You know, I think that's really important. Like a lot of people think, "Oh, I was just in prison, I'm not gonna be able to get a job." And it's like, I had a job within seven days of being out. And then I had a better job within seven days after that, so...

how do you define success?

Interviewee 01:21
Umm, how do I define success?

Interviewer 01:24
Mhmm

Interviewee 01:26
Just be happy, really, I mean you could be and you know well off, you know, not somebody that's, I don't know like umm, I'm not necessarily saying rich but you you like, you don't need that really, you just got to have food in your stomach. And uhh you know people that love you and I mean, a job and money, hopefully coming in.

what do you think incarcerated individuals need to know, and to be able to be successful once they re enter their communities in the prison?

Interviewee 02:02
What did I think they need to know?

Interviewer 02:03
Mhmm

Interviewee 02:07
Um, um, you know, honestly, honestly. It just it for me, it came down to just being like, lucky enough to have like, my boss. I mean, like, somebody give me a chance.

Interviewer 02:20
Okay. Yeah,

Interviewee 02:22
like, and then like to help, honestly. Like, not too often you get help, like, like this.

Interviewer 02:29
Yeah.

Interviewee 02:30
You know, I'm like, I got I'm getting more help in like, I don't do it.

who were the most important people to help you succeed, so I'm not looking for names of specific people, but the roles they played.

Interviewee 07:11
I know sponsors has helped me out a lot.

Interviewer 07:12
Mm hmm.

Interviewee 07:13
It's like and you guys, actually. So if it wasn't for you guys, and Sponsors, I don't...Terri, I'd say Terri helped me out. You know

Interviewer 07:25
Who is Terri?

Interviewee 07:26
she worksfor sponsors and uh Homes for Good

Interviewer 07:31
okay.

Interviewee 07:32
Yeah, she's a [inaudible at 7:33}. And she's awesome. She's helped me out set me up on this little trip.

Interviewer 07:42
Oh Nice.

Interviewee 07:44
Much appreciated

Interviewer 07:45
Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Okay, and so you said she helped you. So what do you think they did? That was helpful for you? Like, can you give me an example? So you said she helped set you up on a trip?

Interviewee 07:58
No, I mean, like, I like this little, like, you know, I'm working. I got a apart, apartment. I got, you know what I mean, like, I'm just like, I'm doing good. So that's like, I wouldn't, I don't feel like I would be doing so good. Like, the house, the place, and my son you know, or like you know

Title: 2020.09.01_WHS_WH188_M_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

basically I got really lucky and just, I feel like you know, basically, given a chance to be good.

Title: 2020.10.12_WHS_WH166_M_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

how would you define that success?

Interviewee 00:50
I would define it as staying focused and uh and stayin with my short term goals to reach my long term goals.

Title: 2020.10.12_WHS_WH166_M_NPOC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

if you have anything else you wanted to add -- advice for people who are getting out of prison in terms of finding and keeping housing.

Interviewee 17:45
The only advice I have to them is to get a job right away and set your short-term goals and, and meet your goals and, and stick with your long-term goal, because eventually, if you do right, it'll, it'll come to ya.

Interviewer 18:00
Yeah, oh, awesome. And then what advice do you have for people getting out of prison in terms of finding and keeping a job now?

Interviewee 18:10
Just there's jobs everywhere. It does, it doesn't matter what kind of job it is. Just, grab a job.

Interviewer 18:18
Yeah, awesome.

Interviewee 18:18
The more, the more spare time you have, the more apt you're gonna go back to where you were.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH060_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

how do you define success?

Interviewee 01:14
Uh, be productive, positive, and also um remain on a right path instead of going back to my old, uh troubled ways.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH060_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Yeah just what, do you think it impacted your definition of success being an Asian?

Interviewee 01:50
Well I don't know how to explain that part but um...

Interviewer 01:54
It's okay.

Interviewee 01:56
I will say it impacts my successes because um others are looking at me like a different you know different definitely and also um, and also you know allow me to give me a chance to prove myself, or, you know um, my experiences and stuff like that so it kind of gives me an edge to you know um, show people that because I'm Asian I can also do what they can do, and stuff like that. Yeah.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH060_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

I'm wondering do you have...

Interviewee 03:19
Yeah.

Interviewer 03:20
Any different advice for people of color who may need to know what to do to be successful?

Interviewee 03:27
Uh, definitely a, just you know, just maintain a positive attitude and a mindset to where you know that your color doesn't you know, shouldn't affect who you are and, and, and uh, you know ignore the negatives and just continue living, and uh, you know as a human being.

Interviewer 03:44
Oh, yeah.

Interviewee 03:45
And you know and just, yeah, avoid the negativity and uh if it's possible as much as possible and, maintain a steady, uh, positive, you know, mindset so...

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH060_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Okay, what else could have been helpful for you, as you re-entered? Is there anything else that you can think of?

Interviewee 13:31
Yeah, the courts allowed me to my license, the courts um uh, you know, just uh allowed me to, you know, not so many years ago, probation, just just, you know, stuff that's holding me down, and and and, you know, deviating me from my succeeding path, but, but I know I have to, I have to jump, I have to get through it. But um, yeah, those are those things are frustrating and hard to deal with sometimes, you know.. And and it just it doesn't make you look good, because you know, you're being watched or babysat and things like that, you know. So other people look at you differently that way too so. It's just, you know, just them maybe not sharing our background too much in public or anywhere else. And just give us to where, you know, allow us to get a

chance to be a new person. But as I was saying, like, you know, different charges are important, but yeah, like my situation like, if it's not harmless, or anything like that, it's it's only for self, self, uh inflicted then uh I believe they should just keep it concealed, you know, to where they, you know, to where that we do get to, a real good chance of, of a clear slate.

Title: 2020.11.08_WHS_WH060_M_POC_AJ_otter.ai.docx

Uh, just communication and programs, education, and also um, yeah and just, just the program itself is really productive and, and you know, and helpful so, if they if they continue that I, I guarantee success will be the highest rate of, of, uh re-entry for us, because that's just something we need you know, we need somebody that cares, that will fight for us, and that will show us look, this is the only you know this is this is the way to uh live in, in a productive life so...

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

Clearing my name you know because I went to prison on trumped up charges to cover up the murder attempt, they tried to kill me with rat poison. So I want to clear my name. And I would like to start some businesses to put people to work. And then while I was in prison, I wrote up pages, pages of different jobs I knew how to do the start and put people to work and just come in as a CEO and over-- oversee my managers that run the crews. So some are pretty big moneymakers. And it's logical. I already did lots of research and so I have big plans in the future. But like right now getting off parole is number one on that list. I have a wonderful P.O.

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

My first suggestion would be to get a bicycle for transportation. And look, because you could pick them up cheap for a day's labor. And that opens your world, you know, besides the bus, the buses only go so far in certain directions. And you might need to get a little farther to get to a job. And an alarm clock, preferably a radio alarm clock, so you get entertainment. And plus, if it goes off in the morning is easier to listen to then the "eh eh eh" on some clocks do, you know or ringing or wind up. So it set yourself up not to be depressed and to be a winner and to be able to get out there and do things. And it always keeps an open mind

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

But it's almost paid for and it's a sweet little tan truck, little Ford Ranger. Got mag wheels on it, stock tires and a brand new radios on it brand new all brand new battery. Other than that, that's my main transportation and I took 500 of the bucks and bought a Harley Davidson that had gone through a house fire to give me a project to work on spend my time doing things fighting deal with cabin fever as bad. And I picked things like a deck of cards or set of dice for playing 10,000 and I'll sit and play 10,000 with myself you know just playing myself as each player would, on making choices on what to keep what to throw and getting hobbies you know is a big deal and cooking I'm enjoying cooking,

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

I'm gaining lots of weight, I'm back up to 245 I got out of prison I was 225, so that will tell you how good I've been eating. And I'm just stocked up on things like chili and and tuna and creamy chicken casserole and cream with mushroom by the cases. So I'm got enough food last for winter but the main thing is in the middle of the night if I want something good I got a store in my house to get where I want instead of laying on a prison bunk and hungry in the middle night and all you have maybe a few Top Ramen and they have to last til the end of the month. I had cases and cases of Top Ramen. I bought a tiny refrigerator at a secondhand store for 40 bucks. I bought a small deep freezer for 45 that's sitting in my bathroom. And so I get things frozen like popsicles in the middle of the night, if I want a popsicle I can have a popsicle while I'm watching TV and bought popcorn, I got a big case of it in my closet up behind on top shelf so but everything in my house is like either tools or food and clothing. So I've got a wide variety of things I can do.

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

Interviewee 11:08
I ran into my old boss and he was glad to see me. I ran into my old landlord. Well, we didn't believe it. we knew her and we knew you and we don't believe it. they gave me a good written reference for a place to live. 17 years living there never a problem with anybody or anything and that I helped out around the community all the time. So it was a good reference.

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

What would you say has been the most helpful resource for you in terms of finding and keeping housing since he got out?

Interviewee 20:38
A higher power. I went to several churches here and, and got three churches working behind me to help with the homeless, got deliveries to their different camps and sleeping bags and winter coats. Packages of hand warmers which is a long list of stuff with giant garbage bags, [unintelligable] around balls, stuff that was inside, it was pretty cool. I was headed down to where they were at and I asked God to lead me to where I can help people and I get a car flagged me down and says "you would have nowhere the homeless live do ya?" And I says, "well you can follow me because that's where I'm headed." I looked at the sky and said "thanks God." It hadn't been like two minutes since I've made that prayer.

Title: 2020.10.16_WHS_WH009_M_NPOC-Aaron_otter.ai.docx

main thing that helped me the most in my life right now and between then and now is to look at all the opportunities for housing, low cost housing, places like that. Churches talk to pastors and deacons. And you know find jobs for the elderly that need stuff done like yard work whatever, until they get their first real job with a paycheck and regular regular hours. And that would help them financially and touch places base with churches [?] and Lane county mental health in Eugene. Chrysallis in Eugene on West Eleventh also. I had my first counselor there that I went back to after I'd taken a year and a half there before and they're good people in helping others and that's the kind of crowd I run with, is people are letting God work through them to help

others and that's where I feel Chyssalis and South Lane mental health do and at a troubling time challenging time in people's lives. When you get out of prison that's the kind of people you need around you, then you can start looking for two sponsors. So if you have problems no matter what they are, you have a buddy you can talk to.

Interviewer 34:46
Yeah.

Interviewee 34:50
Because if you got someone like Tony Meyers in your in your back pocket as a phone number. And another one [unintelligable] the head of the church, the head deacon that's what I did when I got to Cottage Grove, is go to four different churches, and meet the elders and get into their book studies and get to know them as people and, and make friends. You know, and that's the kind of life that say an addict is just getting out of prison. Just doesn't have a clue about. They should have programs in prison about this kind of shit. I'd love to go to prisons to give speeches.

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how do you define success?

Interviewee 00:20
by happiness, contentment.

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So, to be successful when someone is leaving prison and re entering their community, what would it be for people to know or be able to do?

Interviewee 00:55
Oh adequate has been that it is stable.

Interviewer 01:07
[Name]?

Interviewee 01:09
Yeah,

Interviewer 01:10
I'm sorry. I think I've missed the end of that. You said adequate housing,

Interviewee 01:14
adequate housing, so you're stable,

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Next question is a little bit more about that those positive peers when you return to the community who were the people in your life who helped you succeed?

Interviewee 02:21
Um, I have to say my mom and my best friend. Yeah, my kids.

Interviewer 02:34
Okay. What was it that those people did that was helpful for you?

Interviewee 02:39
They never gave up on me.

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What other types of people could have been helpful to have in your life during that time?

Interviewee 03:01
I don't know, people that have the tools to do all that. Like the mental health counselors, therapists, the treatment centers. They all have to be there too.

APPENDIX E

Chi-Square Full Results and Contingency Tables

Results

Gender x Reintegration

Contingency Tables

	Reintegration (Interpersonal/societal)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	9	20	29
1=female	7	19	26
Total	16	39	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.112	1	0.737
χ^2 continuity correction	0.00143	1	0.970
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.0452
Cramer's V	0.0452

Gender x Well-being

Contingency Tables

	Well-being (Intrapersonal)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	8	21	29
1=female	5	21	26
Total	13	42	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.530	1	0.467
χ^2 continuity correction	0.168	1	0.682
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.0982
Cramer's V	0.0982

Gender x Social Reintegration

Contingency Tables

	Social (Reintegration)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	17	12	29
1=female	9	17	26
Total	26	29	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	3.17	1	0.075
χ^2 continuity correction	2.28	1	0.131
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.240
Cramer's V	0.240

Gender x Societal Systems

Contingency Tables

	Societal Systems (Reintegration)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	10	19	29
1=female	8	18	26
Total	18	37	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.0859	1	0.769
χ^2 continuity correction	2.74e-5	1	0.996
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.0395
Cramer's V	0.0395

Gender x Mental Health

Contingency Tables

	Mental Health (Well-being)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	15	14	29
1=female	15	11	26
Total	30	25	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.197	1	0.657
χ^2 continuity correction	0.0298	1	0.863
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.0598
Cramer's V	0.0598

Gender x Perseverance

Contingency Tables

	Perseverance (well-being)		
Gender	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=male	15	14	29
1=female	13	13	26
Total	28	27	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.0163	1	0.898
χ^2 continuity correction	0.00	1	1.000
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.0172
Cramer's V	0.0172

Race x Reintegration

Contingency Tables

	Reintegration (Interpersonal/societal)		
Race	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=NPOC	8	29	37
1=POC	8	10	18
Total	16	39	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	3.06	1	0.080
χ^2 continuity correction	2.05	1	0.152
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.236
Cramer's V	0.236

Race x well-being

Contingency Tables

	Well-being (Intrapersonal)		
Race	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=NPOC	13	24	37
1=POC	0	18	18
Total	13	42	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	8.28	1	0.004
χ^2 continuity correction	6.45	1	0.011
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.388
Cramer's V	0.388

Race x Social reintegration

Contingency Tables

	Social (Reintegration)		
Race	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=NPOC	16	21	37
1=POC	10	8	18
Total	26	29	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	0.736	1	0.391
χ^2 continuity correction	0.325	1	0.568
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.116
Cramer's V	0.116

Race x Societal Systems

Contingency Tables

	Societal Systems (Reintegration)		
Race	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=NPOC	9	28	37
1=POC	9	9	18
Total	18	37	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	3.63	1	0.057
χ^2 continuity correction	2.55	1	0.110
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.257
Cramer's V	0.257

Race x Mental Health

Contingency Tables

	Mental Health (Well-being)		
Race	0=did not mention	1=mentioned	Total
0=NPOC	23	14	37
1=POC	7	11	18
Total	30	25	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	2.65	1	0.104
χ^2 continuity correction	1.79	1	0.181
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.219
Cramer's V	0.219

Race x Perseverance

Contingency Tables

	Perseverance (well-being)		
Race	**0=did not mention**	**1=mentioned**	**Total**
0=NPOC	21	16	37
1=POC	7	11	18
Total	28	27	55

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	1.55	1	0.214
χ^2 continuity correction	0.915	1	0.339
N	55		

Nominal

	Value
Phi-coefficient	0.168
Cramer's V	0.168

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