Fatherhood & Reentry: Engaging Families in the Reentry Process

June 9, 2016

Presented by
The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center

- National non-profit, non-partisan membership association of state government officials
- Engages members of all three branches of state government
- Justice Center provides practical, non-partisan advice informed by the best available evidence

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<th>Corrections</th>
<th>Courts</th>
<th>Justice Reinvestment</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Reentry</td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Youth</td>
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the NATIONAL REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER
A project of the CSG Justice Center
The National Reentry Resource Center

www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org

- The NRRC is a project of the CSG Justice Center and is supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.
- NRRC staff have worked with nearly 600 SCA grantees, including 40 state corrections agencies.
- The NRRC provides individualized, intensive, and targeted technical assistance training and distance learning to support SCA grantees.
Please register for the monthly NRRC newsletter:

csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe
Presenters

- **Ronin A. Davis,**
  Grantee Technical Assistance Manager
  The Council of State Governments
  Justice Center

- **Erik Vecere,**
  Vice President of Program Support
  National Fatherhood Initiative

- **Ron and Catherine Tijerina,**
  Co-Executive Directors
  The RIDGE Project
Fatherhood and Reentry Webinar Series

Key Areas of Focus

- Pre-release and reentry family engagement
- Post-release engagement and retention of fathers
  - Tentatively scheduled for July 14
- Program sustainability
  - Tentatively scheduled for August 18

Engaging Families in Reentry and Demonstrating Improved Outcomes for Family Members of Returning Fathers.

Available at csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/webinars
Why engage families?

- Families affected by incarceration face many challenges, which have been associated with negative outcomes for children.

- Parental incarceration is recognized as an “adverse childhood experience” (ACE) and can significantly increase the likelihood of long-time negative outcomes for children.

- Research suggests that more visits while incarcerated can reduce recidivism
National Fatherhood Initiative®

Transforming organization and communities by equipping them to intentionally and proactively engage fathers in their children’s lives.

NFI’s vision is for every child to grow up with an involved, responsible, and committed father.
Engaging Families in the Reentry Process

The RIDGE Project

Founded by Ron & Catherine Tijerina in 2000, The RIDGE Project is a Christian, non-profit organization dedicated to empowering generational responsibility in individuals and improving the lives of families throughout the state of Ohio.

The RIDGE Project believes that strong families produce strong children, who will pass on that legacy of strength to future generations.
Overview

- The importance of engaging the families of incarcerated fathers
- Challenges connecting with family members of incarcerated fathers
- Implementing a family-focused approach
  - Increasing facilities’ involvement around family engagement
  - Incarcerated father & family assessment
  - Incarcerated father case planning
  - Family visitation
  - Measuring success

www.fatherhood.org
Studies indicate*:

- Families are the major provider of housing for incarcerated fathers upon release
- Aside from employment, families are the most common source of financial support for incarcerated fathers upon release
- Many incarcerated fathers use family members, relatives, or friends in order to secure a job following release
- Incarcerated fathers rely heavily on family members for their transportation needs

* (2010) US Department of Justice, *Engaging Offenders’ Families in Reentry*
Studies indicate*:

- Family members take over responsibilities for child rearing in the absence of the incarcerated father
- Family members provide emotional support during the transition
- Surveys of incarcerated fathers cite family support as important to keeping them from recidivating

* (2010) US Department of Justice, Engaging Offenders’ Families in Reentry
Engaging Families of Incarcerated Fathers

- The Indiana DOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit Type</th>
<th>Number Released</th>
<th>Number of Recidivists</th>
<th>Recidivism Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Visits</td>
<td>8,044</td>
<td>3,302</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Visit</td>
<td>9,443</td>
<td>3,334</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1,841</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>5,896</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>7,437</td>
<td>2,564</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>17,487</td>
<td>6,636</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
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The D.C. based Center for Law and Social Policy has noted:

“The desire of parents to reunite with their children is often the key motivation for helping them turn their lives around.”
Challenges Connecting with Family Members

- Travel distance
- Security requirements
- Location of visits within the facility
- Personal searches
- Waiting times
- Restricted visiting hours
- Expense of phone calls
How the RIDGE Project addresses some of these challenges

- RIDGE acts as the conduit between families and institutions
- RIDGE supports families efforts to come together in meaningful ways
- RIDGE’s family programming department organizes and facilitates events that encourage father/child interaction and bonding
- RIDGE delivers TYRO programming which activates and strengthens an individual’s call to fatherhood
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- Element #1 – Increasing facilities’ involvement around family engagement
  - Connect your fatherhood program to their priorities
  - Share studies of your curriculum that show impact
  - Show how fatherhood programs create trust between facility staff and incarcerated fathers
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- How the RIDGE Project increases facilities’ involvement around family engagement
  - RIDGE staff members build relationships with institution staff members in a way that fosters cooperation and collaboration
  - The TYRO curriculum is evidence-based and has been thoroughly evaluated to show positive impact upon fathers commitment to their families
  - Because of this, TYRO participants have been shown to be more committed to good behavior

A TYRO is a novice, an apprentice, someone learning something new, a warrior or founding father. Although he continues to learn new skills and gain experience a TYRO is a man who is willing to war – to fight – for his family.
Element #2 – Incarcerated father & family assessment

- Gather more comprehensive information about their families
- Domains should include family, pro-social supports, extent of parental supports, and strengths
- Use open-ended questions

Implementing a Family-Focused Approach
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- How the RIDGE Project assesses the families of incarcerated fathers
  - RIDGE uses pre/post tests as well as participant surveys to gather client feedback
  - RIDGE’s TYRO Tracker system compiles and tracks all data
  - TYRO365 is a comprehensive digital, client-engagement tool that collects and analyzes data and provides client-tailored content, all in real time
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- **Element #3 – Case planning**
  - Ensure the fathers’ risk level guides the level and type of supervision and programming
  - Consider family strengths
  - Be aware of referral options inside and outside of the facility

[Image of a happy family]
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- How the RIDGE Project maximizes case planning
  - RIDGE facilitators utilize all information gathered via the previously mentioned methods to tailor a specific path for each client based on their needs
  - Families are evaluated based on strengths and weaknesses
  - RIDGE works collaboratively with entities both inside and outside each facility
Element #4 – Family Visitation

- Build visitation into fathers’ regular routine
- Build family engagement into hiring procedures
- Offer visitation hours outside regular working hours
- Encourage dads to visit with their children as frequently as possible
- Create a welcoming environment
- Inform family members of policies and events
- Have a hotline for families
- Have case managers present
- Provide incentives
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- **How the RIDGE Project encourages family visitation**
  - Family visitation is a key component to RIDGE’s family strengthening mission
  - “Time with Dad,” “Family Day,” and “Father/Daughter Dance” events reward responsible fathers and encourage regular visitation
  - All events are relaxed, fun times that give families an environment that allows for growth and bonding
  - Family programming staff communicate with family members regarding all aspects of each event
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

- Element #5 – Measuring Success
  - Disciplinary infractions
  - Recidivism
  - Quantitative data
  - Qualitative data
Implementing a Family-Focused Approach

How the RIDGE Project measures success

- RIDGE has achieved the following notable outcomes:
  - TYROs are 46.2% less likely to have an infraction than non-TYROs (Belmont Correctional Institution, 2014)
  - 36% reduced recidivism rate for new crimes (Saint Wall Street, 2013)
  - 97% of TYRO Dads participants reported a strong to very strong commitment to fatherhood (post-test)
  - 98.9% of TYRO Dads participants and 97.5% of Couples Communication participants improved in at least one responsible parenting or healthy marriage category (pre/post survey)
Time for Questions
Contact Information

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