Ann Adalist-Estrin:

One right?

Speaker 2:

Yep. Actually, we're getting ready to get started right now. So welcome everyone. We're going to get started. And I'm going to introduce Valerie, who will kick us off.

Valerie Carpico:

Hello everyone. And welcome to the webinar for second chance month strengthening supports for families of people who are incarcerated. We thank you all for being here today. Next slide. Just so you know, for today, the meeting will be recorded. Today, I just wanted to take a few moments too and say thank you to a funder of Second Chance Act, BJA who helps individuals, communities, and agencies across the country recognize the importance of reentry, and their role in building second chances. Please feel free, too, to track news and updates on social media, hashtag reentry matters. Hashtag second chance month, hashtag second chance month 2022. So everything you're doing this month in your communities around second chance month, feel free to give a shout out on social media.

Valerie Carpico:

The council of state government's justice center is a national non-profit nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government with policy, and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities. Another funder, and partner in our project for second chance is the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, better known as OJJDP, and they provide national leadership coordination and resources to prevent and respond to youth delinquency, and victimization. The office helps states, localities, and tribes develop effective and equitable juvenile justice that creates safer communities and empower youth to lead productive lives. The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated will be our presenter today. It is the oldest, and largest organization in the US focused on children, and families of the incarcerated and programs that serve them. So they share accurate, and relevant information. They guide and develop family strengthening policy and practice. They provide training, preparing, and inspiring work for those in the field and include families in defining the issues and designing solutions.

Valerie Carpico:

Today, for our presentation, the agenda we will have welcome and introductions we'll have an overview on what do we know from the research on caregivers, how to engage families across a continuum of need, understand it, and acknowledge experiences and concerns. We'll talk about what they need. We'll develop resources and supports, how to partner with community organizations. We'll also have time for questions, and then our closing. First, I would like to introduce our presenter for today is Ann Adalist-Estrin, and she will kick off here shortly, and she'll be our main presenter for all the content today. I am Valerie Carpico, and I'm a senior policy

analyst with the council of state governments justice center, in the corrections and reentry division. Without further ado, I'm going to go ahead, and turn our presentation over to Ann. So she can inter introduce herself a little bit more. Tell us a little bit about her organization and then move into our presentation for today. Thank you, Ann.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Thanks Val. [inaudible 00:04:13] And welcome everyone. It's really exciting to be part of reentry week in 2022. So the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated, as Val said, our main goal is to provide information ,and training, and technical assistance to programs, state governments, federal government, anyone that's working with families impacted by the criminal legal system. And I have been doing this for 42 years. I'm a child, and family therapist by original training. And I bring a lot of that to the work that I do. And first and foremost, the fourth part of our mission, which is to involve families in defining the problem in designing solutions is really a big part of today's webinar. Because over the years we've done a tremendous amount of focus groups and sort of town hall meetings, almost any project that comes up, the first thing I say is let's bring together a group of families, caregivers, formerly incarcerated parents, and children who, or adults who were children impacted by the criminal legal system. And it's those information gathering sessions that have informed most of our work. So I'm going to get us started.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

What do we know from the research on caregivers? This is really an easy one, not a lot. Overall of these years, we have very, very, and I mean, very little research [inaudible 00:05:44] ...on the caregivers of children, of children whose parents are incarcerated or involved in the criminal legal system. The last really big or helpful research project was from 2012, Nancy Rodriguez and Jillian Turanovic, et al, and this has sort of been maintained for us with all of our focus groups, and information gathering. Financial hardship is always at the top of the list, as is sort of shame and stigma that sort of it gets in the way. Sort of the idea that shame, and stigma will keep people from sort of revealing their circumstances, and also will keep people from asking for help. There's elevated levels of emotional stress are always reported [inaudible 00:06:37] and interestingly, a lot of caregivers report [inaudible 00:06:42] the additional strains that are imposed on interpersonal relationships, their friendships, their romantic relationships, their relationships with people at work.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Increased difficulty in monitoring and supervising children, and then importantly, in most of the work that we've done, it supports the 2012 study from Arizona, that this was true for many different types of caregivers, mothers, grandparents. And I think what's really important to remember here is that 92% of children with incarcerated parents, 93, maybe, are children with incarcerated fathers, and close to 80% of those kids live with their mothers. And one of the things we know informally is that many of those kids are under the radar. They're not known to public systems. They're not sort of kids that we think of as kids in child welfare, kids on the juvenile justice

track, they're living with their moms, and the moms may or may not have relationships with the incarcerated fathers, and the kids may or may not be talking about the impact of incarceration on them. Another interesting, oh, this was supposed to have a reveal and I guess it's not.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

But another interesting piece of research from 2016 the multi-site family study on incarceration, parenting and partnering from our federal government looked at the differences in perceived needs between incarcerated fathers, and the caregiver mothers. And I really think this is interesting, but the answers are revealed here, so we'll pretend that they're not. The differences in perceived needs of the child, so if you think about, if it wasn't showing here on the slide, the practical needs of school, and friends, and finances versus the emotional needs of dealing with being upset, and angry. Was it the mothers that were more concerned about the practical things, or the fathers? And so most people say that it was the fathers that were interested mostly in the practical things and the mothers who were worried about the emotional stress. And the answer was the mothers were more concerned about practical needs, especially finances, and friends, and school. And the fathers were more concerned about the emotional, especially angry and upset feelings of the kids.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And then the support request during incarceration, who requested counseling versus visits. And this one's pretty predictable. That's mother's mostly wanted assistance with emotional support, counseling, how to get it, how to manage and navigate this horrible system of mental healthcare in our country, where they have to wait. They can't get in, they can't get there, and the fathers wanted contact. They primarily wanted more visits. Another interesting question in this study was the frustration with unkept promises of services, and systems versus the sort of lack of support from people, and families. The fathers were more frustrated with the unkept promises of the systems and the moms, the support of family members. [inaudible 00:10:07] And for everyone, reentry was the hardest stage, both caregivers and the incarcerated parent. And I wanted us to look at this for a minute, first of all, to think about what you would answer, and if your answers would fit with what we know. But secondly, because this is the beginning of sort of thinking about in this webinar, the variations in perspective.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So here we have variations in perspective between the incarcerated parent and the caregiver, often it's not the same. So we need to think about not only those variations, but also that these families come to us across a continuum of need. They're not all families in the deepest pocket of risk factors and need, and of course they're not all just fine. There's a whole continuum of needs. So we need to think about engaging them, who? Who are we engaging? We're engaging all of these types of caregivers, the recruiting, and choosing caregivers, but we're recruiting them as advisors, and subject matter experts from the beginning. If we only think about recruiting them to engage them in systems, and services that we've decided they

need, there's going to be a big gap. So we start with thinking, recruiting, and choosing caregivers as subject matter experts. And that means we're including them in program design as well as case planning.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So we often see people say, "Okay, that makes sense. We'll engage them in case planning", although the program has already been built, or developed, or designed, or at least a proposal has been written for funding without including the family members. So when do you include them, engage them? Right in the beginning. From the beginning of the design, all the way through implementation, and then where do you engage them? So my favorite story about this is a program many years ago in Virginia, community program, collaborating with local correctional facilities, jails, getting funding, looking for providing services to caregivers. And we'll talk about this a little bit more as I go through, but what were they going to provide? Support groups, and parenting classes. And they kept building them, and they kept not coming. And they kept building them and not coming. And they finally said, "All right, we'll go into the community. We'll send some people in." They trained some people who were peer mentors who were already caregivers, who had been through incarceration, and reentry. And they did focus groups and town hall meeting type things in communities of faith primarily.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And what the caregivers were asking for was respite care. They were asking, one mom said, "I want a bus to the outlet mall." It was a joke. She was like, "What do I need? I need a day off. I need to go to the outlet mall. And I need somebody to give me coupons." Well, the people who were running this meeting said, okay, they collaborated with some communities and faith churches that had buses. They gave them the bus to the outlet mall. They gathered some support for coupons. And then on the way, because it was an hour away, each way, they popped in a video on children with incarcerated parents, some key things to remember when talking to kids about incarceration and they loved it, the caregivers loved it. The community organizations thought they were doing a good job, and the caregivers wanted to get together again because the thing that impressed them the most, yes, it was the respite, and the outlet mall, but it was also being with other caregivers, and having a chance during that day to talk about what was going on. And then how?

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

How do you do it? And there are lots of people now that are beginning, just beginning. This is just beginning. To think about guidelines for effective meetings. When you're involving people with lived experience being... There's lots of good resources about group process, leader led versus group led that matters. If the leader is going to lead, then the caregivers are not going to necessarily feel as open. But if you start a meeting by saying, "We're going to start with what you want or what you think", that's different then let me start as the sort of group leader. Also brainstorming is really different than showing a list of things that we think we want to do. Brainstorm is totally open. No idea is a bad idea. Grouping families by

themselves is pretty common. And we suggest including family members, along with the professionals, quote, unquote, have the child welfare, the corrections, the educators, the people with lived experience all together in an advisory group. But some of the things we're learning now about some difficulties, and barriers that we don't even have the research yet, we're just beginning to get this information.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Are people that are saying family members that are saying things like, "You engage us, and now often because it's remote, these sessions are recorded, we don't know what you do with these recordings." You engage us, and then one caregiver said very recently, "I was invited to speak at a fundraiser for a community and corrections event. And I understood later they gave me a $50 gift card, which I was very appreciative of. And I understood later that they raised over a million and a half dollars at this fundraiser. And I went home, and cried, because the $50 gift card was great, but I still didn't really have enough money to buy groceries, and they raised all that money. I get it that it's going to programs."

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So we're starting to see that families impacted who aren't being engaged, are feeling exploited, and it's important for us to consider are we paying them? And if we're not paying them, we better not be paying anybody else. So, if we're paying, if we're not paying any of the other presenters, let's say on a panel, then I guess that's okay. But if other people are paid, and the personally impacted on advisory groups are not, then they hear that as exploitation. So, more, and more, we're going to have some good research about guidelines for effective meetings. It's just beginning. Understanding the experiences and concerns of the caregivers, and family members is an extension of what I was just saying. We're starting to hear these concerns. They have feelings. They need to be acknowledged. At the top of the list is often anger at the incarcerated parent, but there's also mistrust of the systems. Everybody wants to go for the anger at the incarcerated parent, because it's really common. We know that.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Moms, maybe haven't talked with this incarcerated father in many years. Grandmom has had it with taking care of her daughter's kids, but there's also mistrust of the correctional system, and the staff, and then there's other systems. So if the system that's sort of, let's say, asking the questions or trying to engage is schools. There's tons of mistrust with schools, child welfare, law enforcement, families impacted by the criminal legal system more and more are telling us we don't really trust the system. And then why? Partly because of bias racism, we have to call it what it is, but there's also the fear of unfounded allegations of child maltreatment. And that's underneath the surface a lot. And that's really important that we acknowledge that out loud in the discussions as part of engaging families. And then we have to pick some tools for hearing these perspectives. Most everybody on this webinar, I'm sure, 500 of us, know about active listening. When I was being trained, it was called reflective listening.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

There's advocacy materials, and advocacy websites, and groups that people can join that are very helpful. But none of them, except for some of the advocacy groups that are designed specifically for families impacted by incarceration. For instance, we got us now, which is an advocacy group for young people who have been impacted, but mostly none of these tools have been designed for this population. So everyone is trying to adapt active listening, and reflective listening, and advocacy materials, and data collection tools. So, I wish I could say we have good resources for you that are designed for this population. We don't. We are, Val and I have been talking with people who have been designing some specific tools. We have a meeting coming up with people who have designed an attachment scale specifically for children with incarcerated parents. There are people who are looking at other kinds of tools for data collection, and slowly but surely will be able to share that information.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

But before any of this can happen, we have to promote the staff self-awareness for the people that are asking the questions, doing the outreach, using the tools, and highlight the various perspectives that staff people are going to have. Because everyone wants to say, look, everybody's doing this in the best interest of the child. Well, I do a lot of webinars and lately I've been asked to do a lot on what's in the best interest of the child, because everybody has a different point of view about that. Whether it's the caregiver, the incarcerated parent or the program providers. So, understanding what that means to who's speaking is really important. So, case in point, just to get away from reading for a minute, take a look at this picture, and think about what you see. Not asking you to answer because too many people, but I'll tell you most people say they see a dad, or a proud dad, and a determined child. Okay. Actually, you don't see that. What you see is a man who's smiling, and a child holding on with a set look on her face to a jungle gym.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And then you interpret that's a dad and you interpret that he's proud and you interpret that she's determined. I've had people in webinars say pushy dad, more than a few. And so you know that's coming from a personal perspective from a father perhaps, or a caregiver who was pushy. And that's what people see. This happens to be my family. So, I can tell you it's not a pushy dad, and that this is a determined child, but unless you know, then it's really going to be difficult. So I want you to know that when you see things, what you see is often different than what you interpret. And when you're talking about engaging families, you have to always be asking, what was I thinking when I saw that? What was I thinking when I said that? What about my own experiences colored the way I reacted to that situation? Because perspectives really matter. And the obstacles are, I said this earlier, shame and stigma, inconvenience when we're not offering convenient things.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Skepticism. Families say, when you call us in to involve us early on, you just want us to rubber stamp what you've already decided you're going to do, and that's really not

helpful. We don't feel heard, the families say, choosing people who support one view, I get this all the time. Well, can you help us find some caregivers, some family members to be part of a program that will guide the design of our program? And I'll say, I can put you in touch with local organizations that might help. And then invariably, someone will say, "Yeah, but we want someone who's going to be cooperative with our goals." Now I get it that we don't want big fights in advisory meetings. And we don't want people coming in with really different points of view, but choosing people who support one view is not really considering the continuum of need that I was mentioning. Another thing that caregivers and family members say is that people are research driven. They want things that are evidence based. Of course we do, because the funders want it. And I get that.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

The research, though, often makes the family members furious because it says things that feel untrue to them over and over again. Whenever anybody says anything about an intergenerational pattern of incarceration, most caregivers and families say, I want to understand where that's coming from. Because if there's an intergenerational pattern in the research, do we know what percentage of that is racism? Do we know what percentage of that is about over-policed communities or under sourced communities? Because without talking about a causal pattern, all people hear, or read is the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and these are kids that are following their parents' footsteps. And I do hear that all the time. And so the caregivers, as soon as they see research in your proposal, that looks a little bit like that. As soon as they hear it in a meeting, they're not coming back. And so this is about engaging caregivers as advisors in the beginning so that you can engage them later in the work that you want to do.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Difficulty, including the voices of young children. No one pays enough attention to the fact that even with the newest BJS numbers, the ages of the kids, 50% of them are still under the age of eight or nine. So we've got all of these preschool, infant, toddler, preschool-aged children, and their voices have to be represented by caregivers. They can't be representing themselves and that's really difficult. And the needs of families with very young children may be very, very different. And then finally, there's competing agendas. Whenever you bring together caregivers, formally incarcerated parents, adults who had experienced incarceration as children to help develop and design your program, especially for reentry, they are not going to agree. And caregivers are going to say something that the young people say, "Oh, my God, my mom or grandma used to say that, and it would really upset me." And so being prepared to, again, deal with different perspectives, perspectives matter, using a good facilitator is helpful, and then having the expectation that it won't necessarily be smooth.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

But I promise that when you bring these different perspectives together, you end up with a design, that's going to be more compatible with the needs of families. One

more thing about the perspectives are a few quotes. Families say things like, "Well, what are the motives for engaging families?" Think about that. Is it because you really believe that they're the experts or because it's politically correct because I just said so on a webinar? Or do you believe that solutions do come from mutual engagement? And I know that most people on this webinar do believe that solutions come from mutual engagement, and that it is important, not just politically correct, and that they are experts. Also, there are people who don't really believe that, but they know that that's what's supposed to happen. One caregiver said over and over families of the incarcerated are included as the warmup act, the anecdote, the sad story instead of as the expert. And then there's correctional staff, please let's not forget them, they are the backbone of what we're doing in corrections.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Families and community program providers come in here without any knowledge of a correctional system. And we feel very disrespected by them. And that is a quote from a correctional officer, but man, have I heard that a thousand times. So Val and I, and we've all done a lot of work this last couple of years on working on including training for correctional facilities as well as community programs on how community program providers, and corrections can engage. And that's a part of engaging the families. Okay, so what do the families need? How are we going to find out? There are tools, Survey Monkey, Family Impact Survey, Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths, and Family Advocacy and Support Tool. Those are tools that you can use for needs assessments, again, remembering they're not designed for this population, engage the caregivers in tweaking those surveys. So if you have an advisory group of caregivers, they can help you tweak some of those to meet the needs specifically. One of the tools that we look at sometimes is assessing the relationships between children and their caregiver, and children, and children and their incarcerated parent.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And it says things like, can you expect your parent to drop everything, to talk to you? Well, not if they're locked up. So we need to be sure that the questions that are being asked are relevant. And collaborate with the caregivers to find creative approaches that address the heart of their ask, like what are they asking? But within the parameter of policy, and this is the thing that people always bring up, what if we can't give them what they need? Okay. Of course you have to be able to say, that's not doable within this system. And keep in mind that this...

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Slowly, these assessment models are being developed for this population. And we will be able to, I think, within the next year or two, I think, show some assessment tools that are designed for this population, but let's stop for a minute, and see what you are doing. And so we're going to show the first poll asking you what you do in terms of needs assessment. Do you use a needs assessment with caregivers and families? [inaudible 00:29:41] What type of tool is it? And who is the tool designed

for? How is it delivered? Is it given to the families to fill out interviews, or other? Okay?

Valerie Carpico:

We'll give them a few minutes, Ann, to about another, probably 30 seconds to answer that. I just wanted to interject as well. Great information. I know that, for those that may have hopped on late, a lot of this surrounding caregivers and families, I know we've been mentioning a lot about caregivers, but really in any successful reentry program, we need to look at families as a whole. And those caregivers really hold a lot of power, if you will, whether, the visits happen with a child, or sometimes even if people have a place to stay. So, really, they're a really important piece of what we do. And we need to make sure that they're on our mind, especially through that planning and implementation phase of projects, and reentry. And I always say coalitions, it's always good to have people with lived experience planning for grants lived experience. They know it better than we do, so we definitely need to involve them. We'll go ahead, and we could probably give the results for that poll here. It'll just be a moment to get that up.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

One of the things that we're finding out about data collection and needs assessment is part of data collection is it's important to understand how to communicate to everyone. Why you're doing it. And asking to give versus asking to get matters. So, if you are asking these questions because you have resources, you have to let them know that. If you're asking these questions to gather information for your study, or for your grant proposal, that's really different. And that feels to people, caregivers, and incarcerated parents, people getting ready to get out, people who are getting out, it feels like you're tracking them. It feels like you are asking them to give you something. And sometimes that makes it harder for them to engage in the needs assessment.

Valerie Carpico:

We have the results up, Ann, for it. So, and I know looking at the chat as people have been chiming in, we have people from all areas in the field as well, but the poll results are up. So do you use a needs assessment? 59 folks said yes. 46 said no. What type of tool is it? Most people, 44 said, it's an informal tool. 24 used a formal tool. And who was the tool designed? Impacted families 24. That's great. Other populations, 14 and adapted for your population 27. And then how was it delivered? 44, which is your highest number is done during interviews.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And so that's really important because who asks the questions? Is it on intake in the correctional facility? Is it part of a reentry program while you're still in? Is it part of a reentry community program when you're out, or getting out? Who asks those questions matters. There's some evidence that in any kind of needs assessment, training people to deliver the needs assessment to ask the questions is important. People who have had that experience, or people who look... There's some marketing

research that's really interesting that people take bad news and answer questions honestly the best from people who look like them and seem like them in age, gender, race. That doesn't mean we're not going to be honest or take bad news from other people.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

But I do think that when people are sort of joining with us and engaged with us and we think that they know what we're doing and they get us, it's easier to be honest. And why we're concerned about that is because people are reluctant to answer questions about their kids. So, asking what you need is asking sometimes, and actually pretty often it's asking to reveal your weaknesses. It's asking to reveal what isn't working sometimes in your house. So, Val, was there anything coming up in the chat with people that have examples, or ideas?

Valerie Carpico:

Actually, they had ideas. So, yeah, Rachel said, "Where can we see some models of these?" Her entry program just launched in March, and looking for some models of some needs assessments.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Okay. So the people who are using needs assessments, it may be helpful to connect people with each other. And we can sort of think about that as we go along. All right, the next poll, I'm going to do this again, is looking at the perspectives on caregiver, and family needs. And so this one came from a couple of different informal studies that we did. So, the first question is what do caregivers say their top two needs are in caring for children with incarcerated, or reentering parents? The top two. Financial assistance, and a navigation system for housing and counseling? Parenting classes, and navigation system for housing, and counseling?

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Financial assistance and resources for responding to the children's questions, and needs? Or parenting classes, and respite, and childcare assistance? So, which of those were the top two that caregivers said? And then the second part of the question is what do service providers say are the top two needs of caregivers? And it's the same set of answers, financial assistance, and navigation, parenting classes, and navigation, financial assistance, and resources for engaging and responding to the kids, parenting classes, and respite childcare assistance. So, once again, this is one answer for each of the questions. [inaudible 00:37:18]

Valerie Carpico:

Give everyone about 30 more seconds. There was a little bit more to read there.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

I just want to say while you're doing it, that none of these families are... It's not a monolithic group of people, so everybody's going to have a different perspective on

what they need, and it will depend on where they live, and what resources are available, and how long the person has been incarcerated and where they're being paroled to, or what the reentry parameters are for families. It's going to be different if someone's reentering, and going home to a family, but he has other children with other families. That's an issue for families. It's going to be different if he's going to a halfway house, it's going to be different if she is going home to an apartment, and not going home to her mother because of difficulties she had with her mother, and her children. So there's all kinds of variations on how specifically reentry will affect the needs of caregivers.

Valerie Carpico:

Looks like we have the results, Ann, from our poll. So the top answer for what do caregivers say they need, financial assistance and navigation system for services such as housing and counseling was top. And then second coming in with 38 was financial assistance and resources for responding to the children's questions, and needs about the incarcerated parents, and the criminal legal system. And then for what do service providers need coming in with 45 are what do service providers say they need, excuse me, parenting classes, and navigation system for services, such as housing, and counseling. And then again, coming in with 38, very close, financial assistance and navigating systems services such as housing, and counseling.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So the answer far, and a way is that the caregivers say that it's financial assistance, and help responding to the kids. It's their questions. It's the needs about should they visit, should they not visit? Should we let them talk to them? Should we not? Should we tell them the truth? Should we not tell them the truth? Way, way, way over all of the others in almost all of the groups that we meet with. And way, way, way over the top the service providers say it's parenting classes and navigation systems. So, it's not that they don't need parenting classes and navigation systems, it's just that's not what they say they need. And when almost every time I have to say that an organization comes to us with asking for help writing a proposal, or consulting to programs for caregivers, services for caregivers, they are talking about a parenting class.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And almost always, when we bring together the caregivers, they say they don't really need or want a parenting class. So it is a conundrum for people who are writing for grants who are funding, it's something that we have to really work hard on all of us to figure out how to give families what they need in order to engage them. And then the second part of that problem is when parenting classes are provided, there are only very few parenting programs that are designed for this population, very, very few that are designed for reentry, and reentry needs are very different than the needs from inside. We are actually piloting a reentry program, parenting program, and it's interesting how different the responses are for the reentering parents than when we did an earlier version inside a correctional facility. So, we just have to take

more time to adapt, and design purposeful models for this population in order to engage, and strengthen families.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So how do we develop practical, and relevant resources, and supports, and hear some advice, and quotes from families? Be sure that services are based on the actual needs of the caregivers rather than assumptions about needs or misinterpretations of the needs assessments. So I'm going to go through this, and then I'm going to ask you to put in the chat, something that you might do differently. Now, just hearing this information over this last few minutes, if you already are doing a needs assessment, is there something you will tweak in it or are you satisfied? And maybe there's nothing you're going to do differently because you really feel like your needs assessment is relevant. And the resources that you're providing are based on the needs of your families. So, how do you do that? You have to clarify your goals of providing resources. Not all caregivers need parenting classes, [inaudible 00:42:57] and if they have parenting classes, if you're going to appeal to them, there's things that maybe people didn't even think about like the parent who's reentering needs to figure out how to balance the extreme demands of reentry.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

The parole demands, classes, addiction issues, jobs, housing, and the kids. Think about what I said earlier, if these kids, half of them are under nine, anybody in the 500 of you out there that have children under nine, know how demanding they are, and then they haven't been with this parent. So if these parents are coming home, the demands of the children are overwhelming and they have to keep saying, "I can't, I have to go to work. I can't come to your game because I can't miss my job. I can't take him to school, Joe, because if I'm late for work again, I'm going to get fired." [inaudible 00:43:59] And no one wants to get fired, but when you're on parole, it has more impact. So balancing the double dilemma, dual dilemma of reentry needs, and specifically children at specific ages is really challenging. And that needs to be woven through a parenting class for it to be relevant and think about all the caregiver needs that I talked about earlier. So, you're walking into an issue where the person caring for your children disrupted all of their personal relationships.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

One caregiver once said, "The man I was dating, broke up with me." This was a grandparent caregiver. "I lost my job because I had to keep taking time off to be with the kids. I had a new job. No man. And now my daughter comes home and she wants to parent the kids, and we were constantly knocking heads and at odds." Those are real issues that need to be purposefully woven into parenting classes. Be mindful of how logistically challenging all of these programs are. And the visits that are designed now, I am so excited that this administration is actually funding some infrastructure changes in facilities to build playgrounds, and child friendly visiting programs to really help people do visits that will help them with reentry. But if people can't get there, then they can't participate. These are real quotes from people. You can't visit if you can't get there. So when people were asked about the

child friendly visiting programs that are popping up everywhere, they love them, but they can't get there.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

They're not on public transportation routes. There's no buses that used to take people to programs like in New York, or in California, we have some buses that go on mother's day, and father's day, or perhaps a few other holidays. So an advocacy issue is trying to find transportation to get families to programs in order to participate. There's been a couple of wonderful child friendly programs developed as part of reentry preparation. They're great, but need, it is needed. It's necessary. The requirements for being part of it are, has to be a blood relative child, has to be brought by a parent or guardian. The parent or guardian cannot have a prior felony conviction. And the program was only offered on weekday afternoons. Then they wondered why when they wrote the grant proposal, they said they were going to serve 500 families. And they had served nine in one year, because all of those things were kind of limiting who could bring the kids. And then on the inside side, it was only for mothers, and it was only for mothers in a specific drug, and alcohol treatment program on the inside.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So all the moms who were not in drug and alcohol treatment programs were not eligible. So, the eligibility, the logistics and the transportation can challenge the programs on the inside that are helping to prepare people for reentry. Make protocols as easy and transparent as possible. What do modest shoes mean? So the protocols for getting inside, and as well as protocols for some of the reentry programs are sometimes not as easy for families to understand. And so when they're coming to visit to be part of a rep reentry preparation program, please help them understand about clothing. Lots of places used to have, and I understand Val said that she knew of some places that now are beginning, again, to provide clothing, alternative clothing, alternative shoes, some people say I'm not wearing somebody else's bra, but if you have to have a wireless bra to go through the metal detector, sometimes you have to, and they say they're all washed, and carefully prepared. So making protocols easy, but also transparent, understandable, which leads to dedicated spaces on websites for caregiver resources, both for reentry preparation programs, [inaudible 00:48:41] and for any reentry program in the community.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So there is one program there's a couple really, they're great. The website's beautiful. And in there is a wonderful handout on helping children prepare for reentry. It's not popping up when you go on the homepage, you have to search for it in the search engine. So, if someone who's not tech savvy or doesn't know that goes on there, and you have to search for it, they're not going to see it. They're not going to find it. And then families say often, "Well, he never sent me that stuff." Or the facility program will say, "Hey, we give it all to our residents and they're supposed to send it to the caregivers, but they don't." So finding a way to have that information available for caregivers, they're resources. Parenting class duplicates, so if somebody

is doing something in a parenting class, if there can be duplications of what they're talking about in parenting class, that can go home to caregivers, that's a way of engaging the families by just sending them information that the person on the inside is looking at or studying.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And then finally ensure that resources are family friendly. Oh, I said that it took us that long to find it on the website. And actually looking at websites as a way of engaging caregivers is a no cost, or very low cost way that programs, and facilities can engage caregivers. Have somebody monthly to throw up a good article or a piece of information about reentry in children, or a quote, or a tip, something that gets caregivers and family members engaged in looking at your website, not just for one of the hours, or is there a lockdown this weekend, or [inaudible 00:50:40] are they getting tablets like they promised, but for something that might be fun. A game that could be played between them and their loved ones or the children and the loved ones. So lastly, partnering with organizations and in the community that can help you do this. And partnerships should be purposeful and [inaudible 00:51:05] accurately reflect the goals of the program. So, when I said earlier about the concerns about systems, and child protective service involvement, that's unfounded, [inaudible 00:51:19] this is the problem.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

If you go into providing programs where you want to engage families, and caregivers, and you're unstated, that's why I said stated versus unstated goals. Your stated goals is to provide support, and resources for families. But if the unstated part of that is these are families with high risk, high need, at risk for child abuse, neglect, family dysfunction. If that's the unstated thought that your program has, and it's more intervention focused than support, or both, some of what happens in the language you use, and the design tells them that this is a Child Protective Services type thing. Even the parenting program. Strengthening families is a Child Protective Services, originally child welfare training program, parenting program. [inaudible 00:52:20] And so families know that, and they will sometimes say, "Well, we're pretty strong. Do we need to be strengthened? We need other things, but I'm not sure strength is what we need." And so clarify what the goals are. Examine the reason for your partnerships, referrals versus services, or both, if you want referrals then, and you're partnering with Child Protective Services for referrals, that's who you're going to get.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

But if you're partnering for services that they're going to come in, and help you provide services, then other programs that are not looking at necessarily high risk families, but looking at the impact of the criminal legal system families would be more helpful and not as alienating. But some programs are looking specifically at dually involved families. And that is terrific because there are dually involved families, but keep in mind only about 10 to 12% of all the children of incarcerated, and reentering parents are in the child welfare system. So we've got to think about all the rest of them also. Include an array of services and avoid only looking to

interventions for at risk families. So, people have had great success with offering a session for caregivers on how to help their college bound students filling out FASFA forms or financial assistance forms, or looking at child tax credit forms, and having a little session on things that are not necessarily that would be helpful to any family. And consider universal outreach to families in the community through everyday places.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So, yes, you need partners who are going to refer like schools, or Child Protective Services. But if you really want to reach out to all the families impacted by the criminal legal system foreword.us did a study five years ago, four years ago, that said one out of two people in America, that's half of us, have had a close friend or family member incarcerated for at least 24 hours in their lifetime. So that means that looking at people who are incarcerated, and then reentering is everywhere. So looking at hair salons, supermarkets, pediatric practices, and laundromats to put out information, we have a reentry parenting class. We have a reentry support program for caregivers. Looking at those universal outreach will be really important, and really critical. A lot of information with a lot of, we don't yet know. So what are some of the questions and answers?

Valerie Carpico:

Yeah. If you guys have any questions, feel free to drop them in the Q&A, and I will do my best to get to all of them. I think, [inaudible 00:55:29] while they're thinking of some questions, and made a good point on websites, there are a lot of folks that have resources for families to find out other information on websites, but also extremely valuable, too, for families even to make referrals to certain programs within jails, or prisons, to work with each other as a family. We recently held a, or I had a lib panel presentation, and there was a young lady on there who was a child of an incarcerated parent. And she really said that, the biggest gap is she would come to these visits with her mother, and she would just be put in this room to visit. And they basically talked, and acted like everything was normal. And then when she got out, she was expected to do so much stuff, her mother was, and she really wished that they would've had better time to connect with each other.

Valerie Carpico:

That her mom would've had more help with that return home, and not just be sent with, here are all the things you have to do, or you go back again. It was interesting hearing it from a child's perspective as well, but I think there's a lot... We can always do better. We can always do better, especially involving families. Let me see what we got here. I hope I don't miss any. I'm going to do my very best. What can the schools do to identify these students? This is a big one. I would like to be able to support, but I have no idea which students are affected. I'll let you take this one, Ann.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Yeah, it's a great question, because of course it is the question that people always ask. My answer is it comes from a place where, again, what families say, they don't

want us to use the word, or term identify. They'll say, if you build it well, we will come. And if we come, and it's good for us, we'll tell other people. So one of the things we do is a lot of work with schools, and we ask them to design themselves, and build themselves as incarceration friendly, or supportive environments and doing that by adding books about incarceration, to their libraries, posters that say is incarceration an issue for your family, we have resources doing training for teachers, doing training for staff, looking at policies, and practices within the district, looking at curriculum areas that could be expanded to include incarceration. All of those things are things that schools can do to be supportive without knowing whether you have those kids or not.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And including incarceration as an issue in other things that you do. Like if counselors are running support groups for kids, I like purposeful groups, but in schools, I think it's important that if you're doing like a grief group, or just a general counseling group for kids with concerns after post COVID. If you think about including the fact that some kids have incarcerated parents, as part of the words you say in your discussion in the group, then it starts to say, okay, this is something we could talk about. And then finally, a lot of people are asking, should we include it in the intake forms in schools?

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

The jury is still out about that because the research is still pretty clear that having that information probably causes some bias in terms of staff and teachers. But we want schools to be able to know how to provide the resources. So our best answer is design services assuming that you have children with incarcerated parents that are general and generic, and then you can announce that you would like to develop an advisory group of caregivers, and family members, and adult children, and formally incarcerated parents, and bring them in. And when you do that, they can help you decide some of the more nitty gritty questions about learning where the families are and who they are.

Valerie Carpico:

And there are states, and counties that are incorporating... There are mothers and fathers who are in prison that are participating in parent teacher conferences and IEP meetings, and they're doing it. It's happening. Which is great because it really has them still being as much as they can in active role in parenting and as well takes a little bit out of that caregiver too, right? That, that parent is a part of this. So there's very much a way that folks, even when they're incarcerated can still be a part of their child's life. [inaudible 01:00:42].

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And just to piggyback on that Val for reentry focused programs, helping people to reenter means helping them from the beginning of the time they entered. Well, let's assume we did some of that, but now they're getting ready to actually get out. This idea of parental identity, the idea that I feel like a parent, I felt like a parent

somewhat when I was in, and I'm going to feel like a parent when I get out. And there's kind of no better way to feel like a parent than to be part of your child's school, and advocating to have report cards sent to that parent, as well as, as Val said, people are doing IEP meetings, and there's programs where people read the same book. The child reads the same book in school, the parent reads the same book inside, or in halfway houses as the child is, and then they can talk about it in phone calls, and letters.

Valerie Carpico:

Thank you. And what did you say the percentage of kids with incarcerated parents who are not in the child welfare system is?

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So, what we know is about 10 to 12% are. So whatever the math is. 80 something, 90% are not in the child welfare system. And it could be different in different states, but the general rule of thumb and only about 3% of those kids are there because of abuse or neglect. And that's important. So we can't just assume that these are kids who are abused, and neglected kids. There are abused, and neglected kids whose parents are incarcerated, but it's a smaller percentage than the larger average.

Valerie Carpico:

And I was going to say, and we talk about it all the time, too. A lot of the trauma is, a lot of some perceptions are that the trauma is from the arrest of the parents and maybe the offense that was committed, but really a lot of the traumas, that separation from the parent is what these kids are dealing with, because they may not have even witnessed the crime. Or again, as Ann said earlier, dad's just on vacation or he's on a business trip or some of these kids don't even know the true story on where their parent is. How about, what is the percentage of reification of incarcerated individuals with their children, if any?

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Yeah, we don't have that data. I don't even think it has been tracked very much. Finding data is really tricky, everyone. Everyone always wants to know what the numbers are. You've got to remember that nobody counts heads. There is no system that counts these kids. No one, as a rule, are asking in corrections, "Do you have children?" How old they are. We're starting to see more and more and more of that data collection, but it's not generalized at all. We're not asking systems like schools, and healthcare to do that because of bias. Child welfare agencies, we're encouraging them to find out how many of the kids are impacted and they're beginning to, but many, most, I would say don't.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So how do we get the numbers? We get random sample studies, and a formula is used. So it's really not hardcore numbers. And so we haven't even begun to apply that to reentry. And in fact, it's only in the last three years that reentry discussions, and services, and I mean, maybe the last decade growing has included the kids, and

families in very substantive ways. And it's growing now even more than ever. So I think we're going to see it, but we don't have that answer right now.

Valerie Carpico:

We're going to wrap up here very shortly. I just want to look through a few more here. Rachel said, which I think is great. She has some input on the last question was regarding the schools. She said that she connected to the emergency management director in their county with written permission from the parents, and they filtered information on releases, court dates, et cetera, to the school resource officer. So, I mean, that's true. A lot of places do have school resource officers. So there's a great resource. If you're dealing with your local county jail, that's fantastic. And it is, it's leveraging those partnerships and relationships. Someone mentioned there are wonderful new children's books that talk about parental incarceration and compassion in thoughtful ways, and then put some examples in the chat. That's awesome.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

And the only one that I know of that is very focused on reentry is called Clarissa's Disappointment written by Megan Sullivan. And it is about a child whose father reenters, and some of the issues, and feelings that come up. And there are every day new books. There's also some really good new films that are out right now. There's one called A Part that was on HBO a while back on reentering moms in Ohio. There's one called Jacinta, J-A-C-I-N-T-A, and it takes place in Maine. And then there's one, a documentary called Time. Those are three new films about incarcerated, and reentering individuals that are helpful. And there's also a book from 2019. The study that I told you about that looked at the needs of the caregivers and the needs of the parents. The authors of that study wrote a book in 2019. And I sent that to you, Val. I don't know if you can put that in the chat. I just sent it to you today. It's called Holding On, and it is looking at the families of incarcerated, and reentering fathers. And so that's a helpful tool.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Milo Imagines the World is great. I'm looking at the children's books. There's so many good ones. [inaudible 01:07:22] We have on the NRCCFI website National Resource Center. We have a list of books for children books that can be read to children, and as well as a list of new research, and the Sesame street materials are excellent as well. And we also have some pamphlets on NRCCFI website that are helpful to caregivers on talking to children about incarceration. [inaudible 01:07:51]

Valerie Carpico:

Well, thank you Ann, very much. I think, just go ahead and move in to, I think, we have two more slides before we part ways this afternoon, or morning, depending on where you're at. So Ann, if you want to move to the next slide.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

So I always close with a closing thought, or a quote, and having just come out of March madness, [inaudible 01:08:17] thinking about John Wooden, basketball coaches quote, "Don't let things you can't do stop you from doing things you can." Sometimes I've been doing this a long time, and sometimes I get very overwhelmed by how much we still could be doing or how much we aren't doing, but you can never let that stop you. And for those of you in schools, sometimes it feels like you feel barriers, and those of you in programs and communities, and certainly in corrections, there feels like barriers, but don't let that stop you from doing things that you can do.

Valerie Carpico:

And lastly, today obviously would love to thank all of you for joining Ann, and myself for this webinar. I hope you found it beneficial, and learned some new things that you can take away. And yes, some encouragement, if anything else, keep fighting the good fight families are important and they need us and they need our help. So, please, if you haven't yet subscribe to the National Reentry Resource Center's website, feel free. There's still many more webinars, and learning communities that are coming out this month for second chance month. So please feel free to check out the website, register for more. And as you saw in the chat, the recording, and presentation will be released as well for your viewing. So please share way, and I hope everyone has a wonderful week and take care. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thank you so very much.

Ann Adalist-Estrin:

Thank you, everyone.