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The Role of Quality Assurance in Evaluating Community Alternatives to Incarceration

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Community-based alternatives to incarceration represent an important facet of the criminal justice system. Research suggests that these programs can effectively reduce recidivism, as well as reduce costs relative to incarceration (Ryon, Early, & Kosloski, 2017). Alternatives in the Community (AIC) is a community-based program that provides services for individuals awaiting trial, as well as those who are on probation or parole. This model is akin to the Day Reporting Model that offers programs and services that help reduce risk factors among offender populations. Among the services implemented by the AIC are substance abuse interventions, job training, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), basic needs assistance, and specialized services for women and young adults. The goals of AIC are to provide a community-based alternative to incarceration, while addressing criminogenic risks and needs to reduce recidivism. Community Solutions, Inc. (CSI),

located in Bloomfield, CT, is one of several providers of the AIC service in Connecticut, operating in five locations throughout the state.

A particular area of interest among community-based correctional providers is whether the programs and services they offer are "evidence-based." Evidence based practice is an industry standard of excellence that outlines strict standards related to the research performed on the model, the performance of the model with the intended client population, and the fidelity with which the model is implemented across program sites. This paper examines the Quality Assurance (QA) model developed and implemented by The Learning Institute at CSI, which combines a series of service components to ensure that interventions are being implemented with fidelity and that case managers who facilitate the interventions are adhering to the practices most aligned with good outcomes.

The QA model is facilitated by highly trained, highly skilled Quality Assurance Coaches who evaluate case manager performance against the standards set by the program model, review findings with the case manager, and use MI and strengths-based approaches to develop each case manager's skills and confidence to ensure model fidelity. This paper reviews the impact of QA on the client outcomes at five of the CSI-operated AICs. Of primary interest is whether the CSI QA model is linked to client-level outcomes, such as program completion and recidivism. To address this question, we consider two primary outcomes for this analysis. First, we examine whether the probability of completing the AIC program is affected by a case manager's QA proficiency or their tenure at the AIC. Second, we examine whether 3-year re-arrest rates are affected by these variables as well.

Below, we briefly discuss the importance of community-based alternatives to incarceration, as well as the role that quality assurance plays in this process. We then outline the QA process at CSI and apply this to our analysis. Finally, we discuss the implications of this research as they apply to community-based correctional programs.

Quality Assurance

For correctional interventions, while the "principles of effective intervention" are clear, identifying the necessary characteristics and conditions for any given program to "work" (i.e., being effective at reducing recidivism) still is a central challenge (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2005). This leads to a discussion of quality assurance - the procedures used to monitor an organization's work output - since regular audits conducted by staff and stakeholders are associated with improved program outcomes in general (Wandersman, 2014). For community corrections, research indicates initial training supplemented by monthly, continuing coaching sessions may improve fidelity to implementing evidence-based research into practice (Labrecque & Smith, 2017). More recent research likewise suggests that probation officers hold favorable attitudes towards staff training, and such training programs may be effective at increasing use

of trained skills (Viglione et al., 2020, Viglione & Labrecque, 2020).

The Learning Institute at CSI developed a QA model that outlines a comprehensive process involving review and analysis of facilitator performance, skill-enhancing feedback sessions, and evaluation of staff/client interactions and staff facilitation of evidence-based group interventions. QA Coaches provide performance feedback in a strength-based manner, utilizing and modeling the principles of motivational interviewing throughout the process. Staff record client and group sessions, and subsequently send recordings to the coaches to review and evaluate, according to fidelity instruments and evidence-based performance indicators. Staff QA feedback sessions occur once per month and include a review of the most critical aspects of each reviewed session, coach ratings of staff skills, skill-enhancing activities, and goal setting. Coaching feedback sessions seek to enhance gains from one session to another and encourage growth for each staff participant to reach and sustain high levels of proficiency for each intervention. Coaches are regularly subject to inter-rater reliability activities, which ensure consistency and accuracy in their ratings of case managers.

Data

For the quantitative analyses performed, we obtained client-level data from 2014 through 2015, reflecting 2,229 unique AIC clients and 52 AIC case managers. These data represent individuals who were primarily under court supervision as part of adult probation (51%), bail (26%), or a family criminal case (23%). The median number of days these clients were supervised by an AIC case manager was 90 days. We also obtained 3-year arrest histories for all clients from the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (JBCSSD). These records listed the date of any arrest subsequent to discharge from an AIC program.

We considered two primary outcomes for our analysis: (1) successful completion of an AIC program and (2) 3-year re-arrest rates. To accomplish this, we used logistic regression to model the probability of a client successfully completing an AIC program or being re-arrested after three years as a function of both client-level and case manager-level variables. The client-level variables included the client's sex, race, age, and employment status at intake (for Model 1) and at discharge (for Model 2). For the case manager variables, we included their QA assessment score rank, their tenure (in years) at CSI, and the total number of clients managed. Including these variables helps us to more precisely estimate the effect of the QA process net of other factors related to client outcome. For example, case managers with higher QA scores often have longer tenures at the AIC. Finally, we adjusted for site-level differences by including a variable indicating which of the five AIC sites the clients attended: Bridgeport, Danbury, New London, Norwich, or Torrington. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for these variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean/ Prop.
Outcome Variables	
Completed AIC	0.75
3-Year Arrest	0.53
Client Variables	
Gender	
Male	0.80
Female	0.20
Race	
White	0.45
Black	0.31
Hispanic	0.21
Other	0.03
Age	32.74
Employment	
Employed	0.53
Unemployed	0.33
SSI\Retired	0.04
Unknown	0.10
Case Manager Variables	
QA Assessment	
Not Assessed	0.64
8 to 12	0.04
13 to 17	0.08
18 or More	0.24
Tenure (Years)	2.64
Caseload	191.70
AIC Site	
Bridgeport	0.47
Danbury	0.13
New London	0.14
Norwich	0.17
Torrington	0.10
N = 2229	

The primary independent variable of interest, QA assessment score, was defined as the average of one or more assessment scores for each case manager between 2014 and 2015. While the assessment scores potentially range from 0 to 20, in practice they are scored on a more discrete scale (for example, the lowest observed score was 8). Therefore, we categorized case managers into four groups based on their average assessment score: not assessed, 8 to 12, 13 to 17, and 18 or higher.

We chose to include case managers who had not yet been assessed by QA as a way to both increase statistical power and provide a comparison group against which the other categories might be assessed. The 'not assessed' group also provides a population of case managers who might reflect early hires and other individuals whose work had not yet been measured against CSIs QA benchmarks.

Below, Table 2 shows a cross-tabulation of QA assessment scores by mean tenure in years and mean caseload, highlighting some of the similarities and differences among case managers. In general, case managers with the longest tenure were also those with higher QA assessment scores and medium-sized caseloads. Case managers who were not assessed had the second longest average tenure and the highest caseloads. Finally, case managers with the lowest QA assessment scores also had the shortest average tenure and smallest average caseloads.

Table 2. QA Assessment, Tenure, and Caseload

QA Assessment Score	Tenure (Years)	Caseload
8 to 12	2.84	73
13 to 17	3.54	170
18 or more	6.80	125
Not assessed	4.87	211

Analysis and Results

Table 3 shows the results of our two logistic regression models using heteroskedasticity-robust (Huber-White) standard errors (Zeileis, 2004). The table displays the unstandardized betas, standard errors, and odds-ratios. For Model 1, few of the included variables indicated a statistically significant effect on program completion – apart from the client's age and employment status at intake (i.e., older individuals were more likely to complete the program, while unemployed individuals were less likely to complete). Among the case manager variables, there was no discernible effect of case manager QA assessment, tenure, or caseload on a client's program completion. This could be related to a number of factors which are not within the control of the case manager, but rather related to court proceedings, client moves, or other variables. However, in Model 2, a larger number of variables were significantly associated with 3-year rearrest. Indeed, a client's sex, age, race, and employment status were associated with variation in the likelihood of 3-year arrest. In general, these findings are largely consistent with a broad body of literature indicating that males, younger individuals, minorities, and those without employment prospects are at a higher risk for arrest (Mears et al., 2008). More importantly, among the case manager variables, QA assessment score of the case manager emerged as a statistically significant predictor of client rearrest. Here, relative to case managers with no QA assessment, those with assessments of 18 or higher had clients with odds of 3-year rearrest about 14% lower (b = -0.156, p < .05). Both case manager tenure and caseload size had small and insignificant effects on re-arrest rates.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Program Completion (Model 1) and 3-Year Arrest (Model 2)

Variable	Program Completion				3-Year Arrest			
	B		SE	exp(b)	b		SE	exp(b)
Intercept	0.847	*	0.379	2.332	0.826	**	0.296	2.284
Male	0.022		0.142	1.022	0.334	**	0.118	1.397
Age	0.030	***	0.006	1.030	-0.039	***	0.004	0.961
Race								
Black	-0.028		0.148	0.973	0.307	**	0.118	1.360
Hispanic	-0.013		0.168	0.987	-0.181		0.128	0.835
Other	0.622		0.378	1.863	-0.648	**	0.242	0.523
Employment Status								
Unemployed	-1.329	***	0.135	0.265	0.503	***	0.103	1.653
SSI\Retired	-0.979	**	0.321	0.376	0.430		0.243	1.538
Unknown	-		-	-	0.694	***	0.164	2.001
QA Assessment								
8 to 12	-0.317		0.352	0.728	-0.291		0.289	0.748
13 to 17	-0.120		0.210	0.887	0.237		0.177	1.267
18+	0.011		0.160	1.011	-0.156	*	0.140	0.856
Case Manager Tenure	0.002		0.024	1.002	-0.026		0.022	0.974
Case Manager Caseload	0.001		0.001	1.001	0.000		0.001	1.000
AIC Site								
Danbury	0.225		0.289	1.252	0.415		0.231	1.515
New London	0.331		0.233	1.392	0.393	*	0.190	1.481
Norwich	0.484	*	0.210	1.623	0.140		0.162	1.151
Torrington	0.207		0.289	1.231	0.054		0.239	1.056

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p <.05

Discussion

The results from this study highlight important considerations for community-based correctional programs, because the proficiency of the case manager, as measured by the QA assessment and related process, is directly related to reducing recidivism. This finding, that higher Quality Assurance scores have a measurable impact on client-level outcomes, highlights the importance of QA on the effectiveness of case managers. While we did not find significant differences in the probability of clients successfully completing an AIC program, we did find that 3-year re-arrest rates were significantly lower among clients who worked with the highest QA scoring case managers (here, those receiving assessment scores of 18 or higher by the QA Coach). Ensuring that case managers meet minimum quality guidelines, are consistently supported to maintain fidelity to the model they implement, and that the program commits to ensuring access to QA for case managers, can directly affect clients' later success net of other important determinants (such as age, sex, race, and employment status).

Our findings also have implications for personnel management. Here, we observed that case managers with longer tenure and higher QA scores had medium-sized caseloads that were larger than less experienced and lower rated case managers. This finding may provide an avenue for re-assessing case manager workloads. For instance, the "best" and most experienced case managers likely should work with higher risk clients while maintaining lower caseloads. In contrast, lower skilled and less experienced individuals should handle lower risk clients but potentially could manage higher caseloads (DeMichele & Payne, 2007; Cullen et al., 2017). Further evaluation of caseload size may lead to stronger recommendations regarding the best practice with regard to right-sizing caseloads according to client risk level and case manager competency.

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Thank you for your patience as ACJS navigates the difficult process of cancelling a second annual meeting and planning for a virtual alternative. At this time, we can report that the Executive Board has approved a scaled-down virtual alternative to the in-person meeting. It will take place over two days, **April 13 and 14, 2021.**

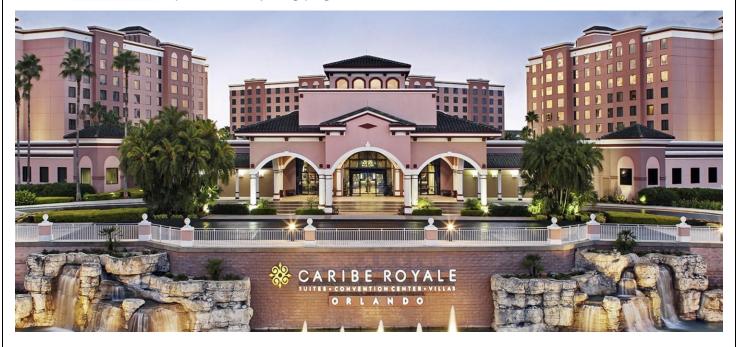**Please see** https://www.acjs.org/page/2021AMcancelnotice **for further information**

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Embracing the Liquid Syllabus in Criminology and Criminal Justice: How It Can Benefit Our Classes and Institution

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The recent pandemic forced many classes to go remote and prompted faculty and universities to examine our online-teaching skills and means of student engagement. After the initial and abrupt transition to remote learning in March, universities and faculty had more time to plan for the fall of 2020 to enhance the ways in which we connect to students. Even if a university was not going fully remote during the fall, the possibility was always there that students could be shifted to remote learning, depending on the virus. A recent survey, before the pandemic, found that more than two-thirds of college students prefer face-to-face learning (Gierdowski, 2019), and as faculty we knew we had a new challenge ahead of us. We wanted to ensure that students had an engaging, positive experience during the pandemic. Faculty were aware that students were rating their online experiences and felt a different type of pressure to retain students during these unprecedented times (Top Hat Staff, 2020). Further, universities were tasked with attempting to recruit and retain current students for enrollment purposes coming into the fall of 2020. One answer to these competing imperatives lies in strengthening three key connections in remote and online learning: student to instructor, student to student, and student to content.

What became evident early on in our remote teaching experience is that we have many tools at our disposal, given technological advancements in society. We are also at an advantage because so many students incorporate technology into nearly every aspect of their daily lives: communication, education, health, and productivity. Gierdowski (2019) found that many students see technology as a way to become more engaged with the material, their instructors, and their peers. Protopsaltis and Baum (2019) argued that technology has the potential to increase access to education, enhance learning experiences, and reduce the cost of providing high-quality post-secondary education. Gierdowski (2019) recognized there is a disconnect between what instructors see as incorporating technology into the classroom and student-centered practices, whereby students are asked to use the devices they already have as learning tools. Ninety-four percent of students in a recent survey said they want to use their cell phones in class for academic purposes. In fact, 75% of the students surveyed believe using personal devices in the classroom has improved their ability to learn and retain information (Kelly, 2017). How can we take advantage of this preference to build key connections with our students? This article will focus on forming an early online presence with

students to create an immediate student-to-instructor connection.

Darby (2020) emphasizes the importance of connecting early and often with students. In remote teaching, we may forget that students are real people and students may forget their instructors are real people as well. Pacansky-Brock, Smedshammer, and Vincent-Layton (2019) recommend we focus on humanizing online teaching, adopting a "pedagogical strategy that seeks to improve equity gaps by acknowledging the fact that learning environments are not neutral; rather, they often operate to reinforce a worldview that minoritizes some students" (p. 3). Humanizing a course recognizes the importance of the instructor-student relationship. Specifically, Pacansky-Brock, Smedshammer, and Vincent-Layton (2019) suggest "creating welcoming visuals and warm asynchronous communications to establish positive first impressions, trust between the instructor and students, and a culture of care in the online environment" (p. 3). We should begin our courses by treating students like the people they are, not like a number, in order to help them thrive in the online environment. Additionally, we can give students a glimpse into the content of the course and the instructor before the class even begins.

A lot of teaching is about relating to our students, and as a result of the pandemic we were forced to think of new, creative ways to accomplish this. Many of us were required to step outside of our comfort zone and change the way we approach teaching strategies, policies, and how we connect with students. Given our students' reliance on smartphones, how can we incorporate their devices in our attempt to humanize our courses, ourselves, and our students' learning? Well, we start with our syllabus, which is often the one document we spend hours and hours working on—but always wonder if students actually read. Instead of the standard, boilerplate PDF, we are calling for an "extreme syllabus makeover" known as a liquid syllabus.

A liquid syllabus is an accessible, public website that incorporates a brief, friendly welcome to the course. Students can learn about course materials and expectations in an engaging, student-centered approach. We were introduced to the term *liquid syllabus* by Michelle Pacansky-Brock (2014). Pacansky-Brock not only thinks about how to make our syllabi more exciting for students to view, but also suggests taking the time to humanize ourselves and our program. The students would be able to get to know a little about us before our actual class starts, learn how the class will be structured, and find out what materials will be used throughout the course. Even better, perhaps students could hear the thoughts of former students before deciding to enroll in a course? Just the possibility of any of these options is enough for most faculty to want to hear more. Pacansky-Brock suggests this is all possible by incorporating a liquid syllabus into our classes, department pages, and university catalogs. The

liquid syllabus not only aids in enhancing the classroom experience, but also comes at a time when social media and technologies continue to transform the learning trends and preferences of students (Pacansky-Brock, 2012).

Liquid syllabi can be created on any web editing platform. Rather than the formal, static and legalistic information contained in a syllabus, a liquid version can include an introductory video and images, as well as links to student services and related websites, and can be easily updated. Creating a liquid syllabus offers the opportunity to look at an existing syllabus from a different perspective. Instead of simply laying out course policies, the purpose of a liquid syllabus is to welcome students to the course and begin building a connection to the instructor and to the course content—before the course even starts. The formal syllabus still has its place—which may include being linked from the liquid syllabus—but a liquid syllabus offers us an opportunity to put a human face on a course and offer a friendly hand in greeting to our students.

We are calling for the field of criminology and criminal justice to embrace the liquid syllabus. Every year we spend weeks preparing our courses and often contemplate ways to revise and enhance our current courses, and the liquid syllabus gives us that opportunity. One of the things we think sets the liquid syllabus apart from the typical syllabus is how it offers an opportunity to rethink our tone. The liquid syllabus allows us to start from a position of welcoming our students and drawing them in, rather than laying out the rules and expectations of the course. The focus shifts from what we want from them to what they can expect from us. It allows us to create a student-centered approach that also humanizes our teaching and us as instructors. We encourage instructors to explore our example, CCJ 388: Race and Crime Liquid Syllabus (http://sanchezs2.populr.me/ccj-388-race-crime--justice), and think about how we can forge relationships with students before the course even starts, remotely or in person. Our field is unique because students often have misperceptions about our major from television and other media outlets. Providing a liquid syllabus to our students could allow us to dispel some of these myths prior to starting our course.

This sample, CCJ 231: Introduction to Criminology (http://sanchezs2.populr.me/ccj-231-criminology), includes a departmental video that tells students what our major is about and, perhaps more important, implies what it is not. While we could include a link to a video in our standard syllabus, featuring it in a liquid syllabus renders it instantly accessible. We encourage anyone contemplating a liquid syllabus to give it a try and embrace the opportunity to forge connections with students before the course even begins. By doing so, we can meet our students' expectations for incorporating technology in their learning experience while at the

same time increasing our own technological prowess and enhancing our professional toolkit.

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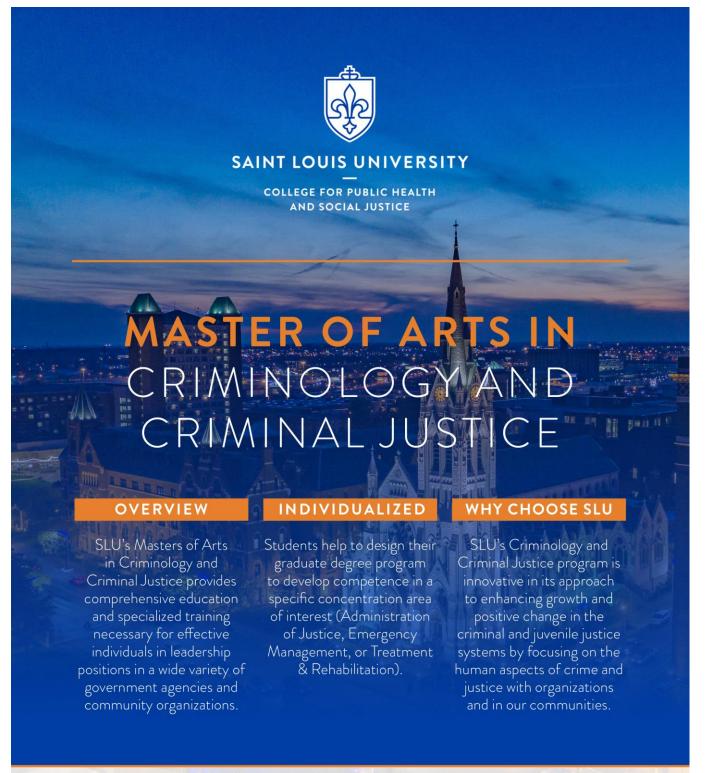
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Book Review: Ryan Lugalia-Hollon and Daniel Cooper, *The War on Neighborhoods: Policing, Prison, and Punishment in a Divided City*. Beacon Press, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-0807071861

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The War on Neighborhoods: Policing, Prison, and Punishment in a Divided City, by Dr. Ryan Lugalia-Hollon and Dr. Daniel Cooper, provides gripping insight into the disparities plaguing urban American cities, particularly the west side of Chicago. Using the style perhaps most recognized from Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (2010), the authors weave together residents' narratives, specifically members of Chicago's Austin neighborhood, with factual evidence of the experiences of these communities of color. Beginning with an exploration of Chicago's "Heroin Highway" (the Eisenhower Expressway, which runs across the city), the disparities can be seen as the authors move the reader from exit to exit, from wealthy suburbs to the bustling business district, to west-end neighborhoods that have been deprived, deindustrialized, and essentially discarded (p. 5). The over-incarceration of marginalized communities of color and the harsh realities of the inequalities across Chicago are introduced as themes that weave themselves throughout the rest of the book, highlighted as key factors in the many struggles facing these neighborhoods.

Following this introduction, the authors utilize the first half of the book to explore the elements that make up this war on neighborhoods, including addiction, violence, and systemic racism/police misconduct. Chapter 1 explores the origins of the war, starting with the "white flight" from Chicago's neighborhoods that began in the 1970s (p. 25). These communities were then harmed further through racial tensions, disparate policing, reduced funding, and federal initiatives (particularly the War on Drugs), which disproportionately incarcerated Black men. Severe economic downturn and the closure of factories across the city also are highlighted as contributing to engagement in drug-related crimes as the only remaining opportunity for income. Further divestment from public programs and education, along with concentrated punishment on "million dollar blocks" (blocks where state government spends millions to incarcerate residents, based on the length and costs of sentences they receive), converged to create the war on neighborhoods that has left minority communities broken and hurting (National Institute of Corrections, 2010; Lugalia-Hollon & Cooper, 2019, p. 35).

In Chapter 2, Lugalia-Hollon and Cooper delve further into how addiction and harsh penalties for drug offenses create a cycle of worsening conditions, mass incarceration, and further pain for those suffering from a substance use disorder. Despite federal policy seeming to have little effect

on drug use and sales across the nation, Austin, at the center of the city's heroin market, has been the focus of significant policing strategies. The chapter highlights that street corner deals and open-air drug markets that now plague cities like Chicago formed as a response to law enforcement strategies (such as property forfeiture laws) that forced dealing into outdoor venues. As this concentrated policing persists, addiction continues to be addressed with punishment rather than treatment and social supports. The authors posit that as long as illicit use is paired with unemployment in these struggling communities, the drug market will continue to exist. It becomes clear throughout the chapter that over-policing of addiction further exacerbates the disparities in these communities and contributes to drug-related violence as people fight for both their lives and livelihoods.

The following chapters explore the cycle of violence plaguing Chicago and the concentration of said violence in the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The authors first highlight the various types of violence that are commonplace in Austin. The domestic and sexual violence that women in high-incarceration communities experience leaves them forgotten and particularly vulnerable. This is primarily due to the general distrust of police and lack of protective social factors in these areas. In addition, the recent shifts in drug markets that resulted from law enforcement initiatives produced gaps in the hierarchical structure of the drug selling culture. These gaps then yielded a less-organized dynamic riddled with violence in the fight for power. The authors use this knowledge of the city's violence to explore the notion of restorative justice and the tangible ways in which it can affect individual trauma, community building, and attention given to the root causes of generational violence.

Chapter 4 begins with the story of Simon, who experienced injustice when police concealed their own error under false accusations against him, exemplifying the substantial divide between Austin residents and the officers who police them. Various policing initiatives, police culture, and instances of administrative injustice (such as Simon's) are highlighted to represent a far larger issue: systemic racism so pervasive throughout the system that it cannot be undone simply through individual actions of good officers. This discrimination is attributed to a lack of mental health care for officers, a long history of corruption in the CPD, and a general lack of accountability for officers who have contributed to the abuse of people of color. For instance, in the Austin neighborhood, only 20 out of the 1732 complaints filed against CPD between 2011 and 2015 resulted in any sort of disciplinary action (Citizens Police Data Project, 2018). These variables, according to Lugalia-Hollon and Cooper, ensure perpetual disorder and further enforce a lack of legitimacy and authority of law enforcement among community members. As the chapter

concludes, it is clear that the authors have provided a well-rounded review of the war on neighborhoods and offered insight into the social, economic, and political disadvantages inherent in being a resident of these communities.

The second half of the book focuses on the deeper root causes of these inequities, particularly the social and economic institutions that are missing in areas such as Austin. Chapter 5 explores the notion of the missing Black father and the effects of parenting on development and crime involvement. The common narratives and stereotypes that suggest character flaws are to blame for this widespread absence misses, as the authors state, the "forest for the trees" (p. 96). Rather, these beliefs are debunked throughout the chapter using data that exemplify the disproportionate toll that mass incarceration and forced removal through punishment has taken on disadvantaged communities. The distress that youth with missing parents experience, and the perpetual cycle of violence that results, are attributed as primary reasons that incarceration and disadvantage are intergenerationally pervasive.

Chapter 6 focuses on additional systems that affect youth in Chicago, reviewing the resources, or lack thereof, that are available to young people in Austin. This begins with a comparison of the costs of the 2013 closing of multiple schools in low-income, high-violence areas with the astronomical spending on incarceration that occurs in the same neighborhoods. This combination, the authors posit,

facilitates the well-known "school-to-prison pipeline" (Wald & Losen, 2003). In the absence of quality education, the authors also explore alternatives to juvenile detention and the stigmatization of youth as criminal, such as community-based programs and mentorship initiatives. Finally, they emphasize the value of reinvesting in diversion mechanisms, restoration, and creating socioeconomic opportunity to change the intergenerational fate of these neighborhoods.

Next, the authors explore the economic implications of incarceration through the connection between Austin and the rural town of Pontiac. The Pontiac Correctional Facility employs individuals from a largely white, struggling town and imprisons a largely Black population funneled in from places like Austin. This allocation of funds to maintain rural jobs at the expense of urban lives is analyzed through the interconnectedness of punishment, economics, and consistently diminishing access to health and human services in the most impoverished communities. The authors suggest that, rather than using incarceration as a tool to marginally increase economic output in one community by harming another, the state should focus on improving social programs in both areas to make long-lasting economic opportunity for all. As a follow-up to these recommendations, the authors utilize the final chapter to highlight limitations of current and recent attempts at reform. They first denounce the role of government austerity, which

not only prevents actual progress but also worsens disadvantage and government legitimacy through the assumption that the private sector can wholly address community needs. While some surface-level reform has been made (e.g., Second Chance Act, Fair Sentencing Act), the authors pinpoint parole technical violations, risk assessments, prosecutorial discretion, and the assumption of punishment as an effective deterrent as contributors to flawed and unsuccessful attempts at improving offender outcomes. It can be understood that the austerity policies of criminal justice reform prohibit the reallocation of funds to communities in need and prevent public investment in reducing violence and improving social and public life.

The authors conclude the book by calling on readers to move from awareness to activism, utilizing the knowledge gained from this book (and others) to advocate for real and positive change. They also provide specific recommendations for transforming the justice system, such as promoting a new domestic Marshall Plan, using justice mapping, reinvesting funds from corrections to jobs and education, training community leaders to respond to conflict and improve their networks, and coordinating community-based efforts to keep youth out of the justice system. Lugalia-Hollon and Cooper best summarize the book's mission in their definitive sentence, stating: "The flow of investments into neighborhoods like Austin must be switched over from that which dooms the future to

that which makes it possible for future generations to thrive. Anything less is a betrayal." (p.185).

Given the robust nature of the book, the authors excel at providing the reader with intricate details about the state of the war on neighborhoods while weaving in the powerful narratives of the people these systems most affect. The utilization of historical data as well as current events provides legitimacy to the authors' arguments that punitive policies should be replaced with restorative, community-based techniques. While the recommendations provided throughout the book for improving community resources and reducing incarceration rates are well researched, and the authors recognize the struggle ahead, they may also be overly optimistic in their scope. Lugalia-Hollon and Cooper do not provide recommendations on how to create the political and cultural change that would lead to the adoption and funding of such suggested initiatives. However, the biggest limitation may be in the authors themselves, in their role as educated, white men who do not share the lived experiences of those about whom they write. The authors make thorough acknowledgement of this in the introduction, however, and attempt to utilize their writings to amplify the voices of those from communities who are so often unheard. Regardless of the potential limitations, books such as *The War on Neighborhoods: Policing, Prison, and Punishment in a Divided City* open the dialogue

on reform and addressing the root causes of disadvantage and incarceration, which is fundamental to moving forward in ways that create better communities and a better nation.

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In memoriam: Dr. James Melvin Ruiz

Dr. James "Jim" Ruiz, 75, a native of New Orleans and a resident of Abbeville, LA, passed away on Saturday, December 26, 2020. He served his country proudly in the US Coast Guard, then in 1967 joined the New Orleans Police Department. He served in the Patrol, Communications, and Mounted Divisions, as well as the Emergency Services Section and the National Crime Information Center. He retired at the rank of sergeant. After retiring, Dr. Jim furthered his education and earned his Ph.D. in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University. He previously earned an M.A. from University of Louisiana at Monroe, with a B.A. and A.A. from Minot State University.

Jim taught at several universities, including The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Westfield State University (MA), and Penn State University Harrisburg, from which he retired in 2016. Jim was extremely active in the academy, serving in various roles for many years. He served as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators (PACJE) in 2005–2006 and president of the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS) in 2008–2009. For many years he organized and ran the employment exchange at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) annual meeting, ushering new and transitioning professors into their dream jobs.

Having published several peer-reviewed articles, Dr. Ruiz also wrote a book titled *The Black Hood of the Ku Klux Klan.* He published and worked extensively in the area of police management of persons with mental illness. His survey of police departments across Pennsylvania regarding policies and procedures for management of persons with mental illness was published by The Pennsylvania State Data Center. Jim served on a committee selected by the Pennsylvania Municipal Police Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) to develop the current curriculum taught to police officers concerning management of persons with mental illness.

While in Pennsylvania, he and his beloved wife Lynn started a catering company called Cajuns in Exile, where they brought the best of Louisiana cuisine and Mardi Gras celebration to the northeast, to the delight of friends, neighbors, and colleagues for miles around. After retiring from Penn State Harrisburg, he earned emeritus status and moved back to Louisiana, working for the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Department. He was also a member of the Kaplan American Legion.

Jim is survived by his loving wife of 26 years, Roberta Lynn Foster Ruiz of Abbeville; four sons, Steven, Marc, Scott, and Kenneth; three brothers, Glenn, Johnny, and Steven; 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, James and Lois Airhart Ruiz. Jim was a big man, with a big personality and an even bigger heart. His laugh was contagious, and people often sought his sage advice mixed with Cajun charm. You will be missed Jim … rest well.
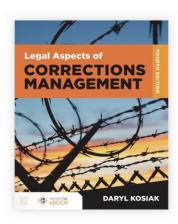
Advocating for Marriage and Family Therapists in Incarceration Settings

Eman Tadros,* Cydney Schleiden,** Lawrencia Jenkins,*** and Noemi Aguirre****

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) work in a variety of settings and contexts (agencies, clinics, universities, consultants, government, private practice, hospitals, schools, in-home, etc.). MFT is a clinical mental health profession centered on the well-being of individuals and families within the context of relationships. While other professions may have a more person-centered focus when providing services for individuals, families, groups, and communities, MFTs utilize an approach based on systems theory. Systems theory suggests that families act to maintain a homeostatic nature, or balance, in the family. Unlike therapists in other fields, MFTs are trained to address apparent changes in the family system that could contribute to personal discord. When an individual is incarcerated, a disruption in the typical pattern or "natural way of doing things" occurs.

As of 2017, more than 40,000 youth were incarcerated in residential facilities in the U.S. (OJJDP, 2019), with as many as 70% meeting the diagnostic criteria for mental health diagnoses (Swank & Gagnon, 2016). Research shows that although couple and family psychologists, counselors, and therapists are providing community-based services to juveniles and adults on probation and parole, they rarely work in incarceration facilities, despite the need for systemic treatment (Datchi et al., 2016; Fisher & Gilliam, 2012; Tadros & Finney, 2018; Tadros et al., 2019, 2020; Tadros & Ogden, 2020). Overall, MFTs aid in strengthening relationships, reducing family dysfunction, and facilitating a better transition back to society (McKay et al., 2018). Family therapy may increase the involvement and support of an individual's family and provide ways in which the family can be resilient in the face of adversity (Datchi & Sexton, 2013; Taylor, 2016).

Advocacy

When working with individuals, families, and communities that have been impacted negatively by society and systems of oppression, it is imperative for a therapist to understand clients in the context of their cultural identity, so they feel understood and valued (Tadros & Finney, 2018). This starts with understanding problems such as racism, poverty, and mass incarceration from a historical context, so that clinicians can consider multiple systems that impact the health and well-being of their clients.

Many of the engagement and collaboration strategies used by MFTs are similar to those used by virtually all psychotherapies (e.g., empathy, goal consensus, focusing on strengths, building alliance, obtaining feedback), but other strategies are derived from systemic conceptualizations and, consequently, are relatively unique to family

therapies (Tuerk et al., 2012). Although research has not identified which collaboration skills are most effective in engaging families, family therapy interventions are essential to improving rapport and collaborative relations with families that have traditionally presented substantive barriers to the delivery of mental health (Tuerk et al., 2012). Additionally, MFTs can advocate for larger roles in incarceration facilities and emphasize how those roles could aid in improving the criminal justice system. It is also recommended MFTs apply for positions even if the job announcement calls for a counselor, psychologist, or social worker. Chances are, as a MFT, an applicant is qualified, and the title MFT simply is not listed.

MFTs can advocate for improved relationships between the individual and their family, as well as the individual and the correctional staff. Interactions with correctional staff may significantly influence the mental health of individuals and families impacted by incarceration (Morgan et al., 2004). MFTs can utilize their voices and specialized training to educate correctional staff on how certain changes can make the environment flourish in a positive manner. To illustrate, while searching or patting down an individual, correctional officers could respectfully announce what they are doing beforehand. This can reduce anxiety and the risk of retraumatizing people who

have experienced physical or sexual trauma. In addition, MFTs could advocate for the incarcerated individual and their family to receive a clearer explanation of what incarceration will entail, including the family's option to engage with the individual while they are incarcerated. Facilities should provide information at the time of booking about what individuals might experience psychologically once they are incarcerated, which could reiterate the importance of engaging with MFTs who are placed within the facility.

It is important to address ways that MFTs can advocate for their clients and for change outside of correctional facilities. It is hoped that advocacy will create change in communities that are impacted by incarceration and systemic poverty and oppression (Schleiden et al., 2019). This requires therapists to conduct research, read relevant literature, and take initiative on being educated about these issues. While these conversations are vital in spreading awareness, it is also important to recognize these conversations should be conducted in a way that is healing instead of blaming and harmful. Finally, it is important for MFTs to engage in introspection regarding racial biases, and therapists should seek supervision and guidance about these critical issues to ensure they are being addressed.

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