

Effective Strategies for Engaging Families in Strength-based Reentry Approaches



Second Chances and Safer Communities

May 22, 2012

Overview

1. What are effective strategies for enhancing and quality and quantity of family and client engagement?
2. How are programs improving pro-social support?
3. How does a focus on family and other social support providers enhance program outcomes?

Defining family broadly

Allow individuals to define their families.

- Traditional family members
- Extended family members
- Elected family members



Impact of incarceration and reentry on families

Prior to incarceration, individuals contribute to their families

Income

Parenting partner

Emotional support

Healthcare for elderly

During reentry, families manage other challenges

Relationship challenges

Strain on financial resources

Shifts in roles and responsibilities

Interactions with parole

Shifting to a family-focused lens

<p>Individual Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on incarcerated person or person under community supervision
<p>Family-Focused Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforce connections within social networks• Reminder that families have expertise in supporting each other

Strength-based approach

Recognizing that all people are motivated.

Operating with the belief that everyone possesses talent, abilities, capacities, and past successes.

Drawing on strengths to motivate behavior change.

Focus on strengths

Traditional Focus

- > What we cannot do
- > What we do not have
- > Where we fail
- > Problems

Strength Focus

- > What we can do
- > What we have
- > Where we succeed
- > Possibilities

Speakers

- Erik Vecere, *Vice President, National Programming*, National Fatherhood Initiative
- Liv Jenssen, *Manager, Transition Services Unit*, Department of Community Justice, Multnomah County, Oregon
- Kelli Finley, *One Family Program Manager*, Community Works
- Margaret diZerega, *Family Justice Program Director*, Vera Institute of Justice

Family Justice Program

The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent nonprofit that combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

Vera's Family Justice Program provides extensive training and strategic support to government and community partners to help them effectively draw on the resources of families and communities. These systemic interventions are designed to benefit people at greatest risk of cycling in and out of the justice system.

How can drawing on families and other sources of support improve reentry outcomes?

Impact of family and other social support on reentry outcomes

Family contact during incarceration can result in improved behavior in prison. (Holt, 1972)

Formerly incarcerated individuals who live with a family member are less likely to abscond. (Nelson, Deess, & Allen, 1999)

Family support identified by formerly incarcerated as “most important factor” in successful reentry. (Visher, et al, 2004)

Visitation by family members (defined broadly) can both reduce and delay recidivism, as visitation mobilizes the incarcerated individual’s social ties in supporting him or her upon reentry. (Bales and Mears, 2008)

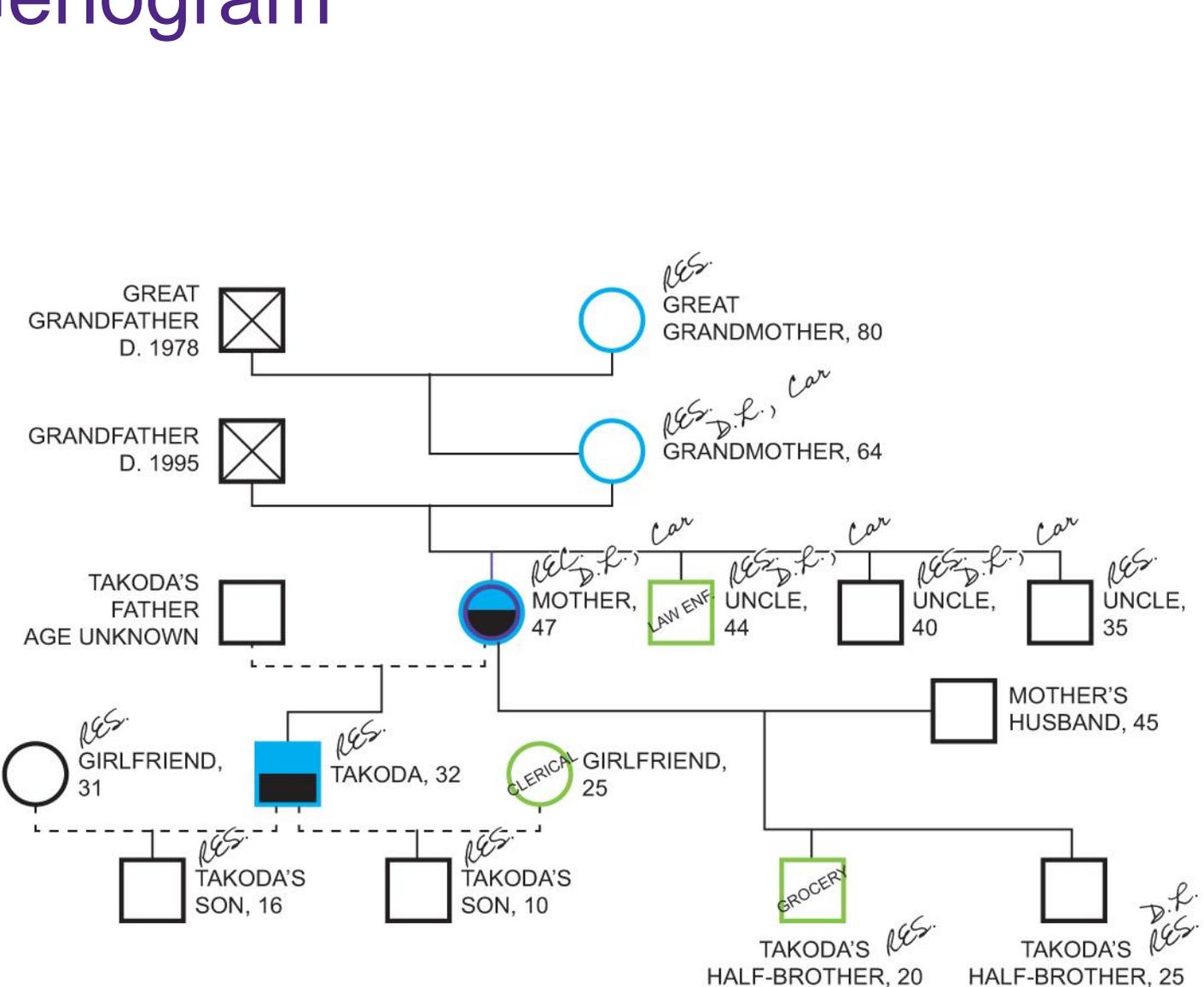
Children of Incarcerated Parents

Most people who are incarcerated are parents

- Children of incarcerated parents may experience serious emotional issues (Bocknek, Sanderson, et al., 2009; Gabel and Johnston, 1995)
- They are at greater risk for:
 - Educational failure
 - Future delinquent and criminal behavior and justice involvement (Cho, 2009; Gabel and Johnston, 1995)
- Ability to adjust dependent on:
 - Consistency and closeness of caregiver arrangement
 - Maintaining contact with incarcerated parent (Parke and Stewart, 2001)

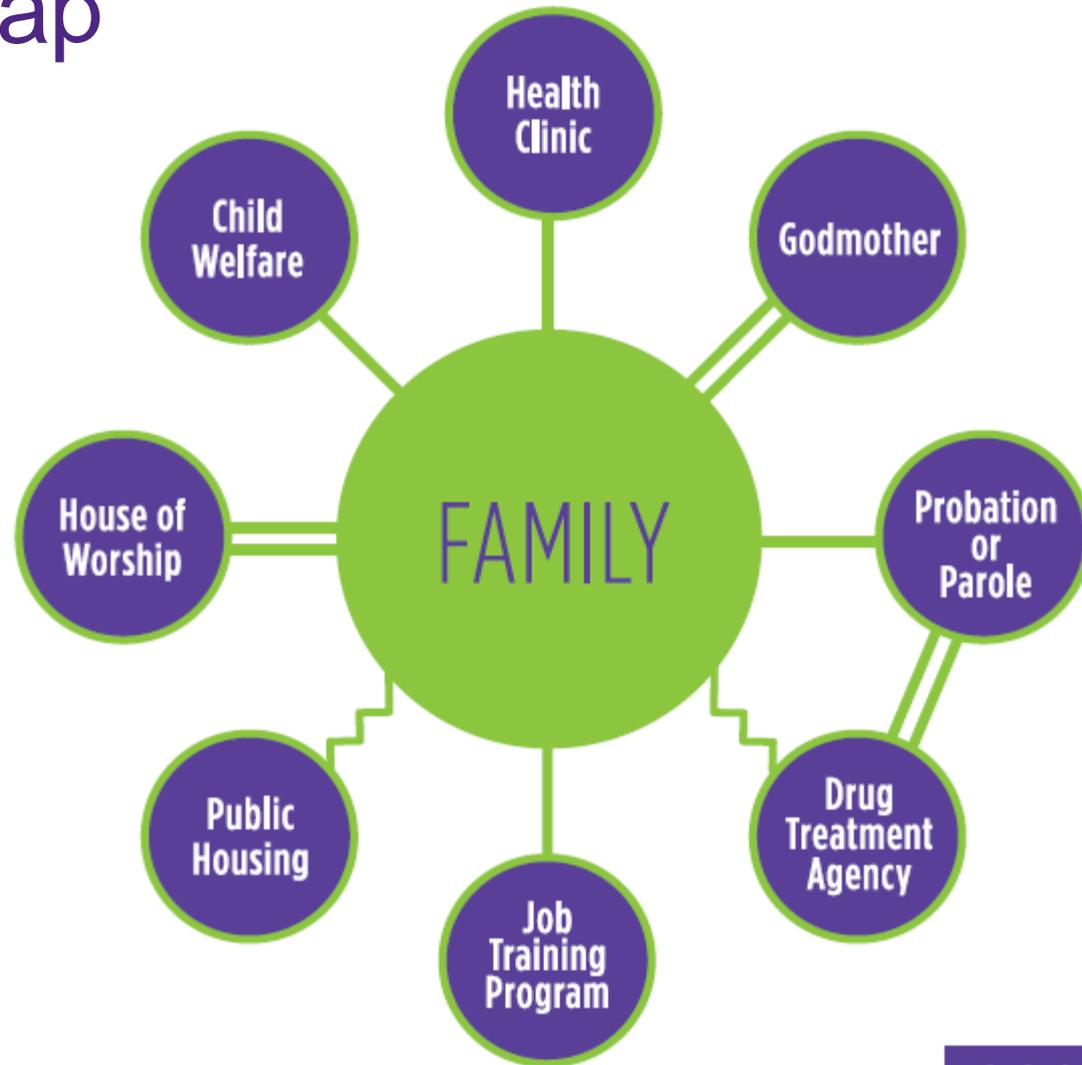
What are some tools to help implement a family-focused approach?

Genogram



- MALE
- FEMALE
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT
- ⊖ MENTAL ILLNESS
- ⊗ DECEASED
- ┌ MARRIED
- └ SEPARATED
- ≡ DIVORCED
- ⚡ FAMILY VIOLENCE
- EMPLOYED
- RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
- RES. LIVES ON RESERVATION
- RES. IN RECOVERY
- D.L. DRIVER'S LICENSE

The Ecomap



Relational Inquiry Tool

- Designed for correctional case managers
- Complement to risk and needs assessments
- RIT goals
 - to provide staff with a user-friendly method of recognizing and reinforcing positive connections to family and social networks during and after incarceration
 - to build rapport between the professional using the tool and the incarcerated individual
- Men's prison (NM), women's prison (OK), jail settings (MD and WI), juvenile version (OH)

What are strategies for tapping the strengths within families?

You may already recognize the role of family

Do your intake, assessment, and case-management tools:

- Capture information on the strengths of family and other natural connections?
- Define family broadly?
- Obtain information on ways families are connected to community resources?
- Capture information on positive social networks and existing family connections?

You may already recognize the role of family

Do materials incorporate a family perspective?

Do you use motivational interviewing?

Do managers mirror strengths when working
with staff?

Does staff development address the role of
families?

Supporting family connections during and after incarceration

Assessment

- Family Impact Statements as part of pre-sentence investigations by probation in San Francisco
- Relational Inquiry Tool

Visitation policies

- New Mexico's Family and Friends Handbook

Discharge/Reentry Planning

- Including families by phone or in-person in reentry planning meetings (may precede parole board hearings)

Supporting family connections during and after incarceration

Email, letter-writing and phone calls

- Ohio providing laptops with webcams so juvenile parole officers can facilitate televisits
- Kiosks on housing units for video visits and email

Staff development

- Train on tools for bringing family into case management or parole supervision while respecting staff/prisoner boundaries
- American Probation and Parole Association

Continuity of information from prison to community

Resources you can use

Why Ask About Family? – A Guide for Corrections

- May be useful in discussions with security-oriented staff
- Checklist of questions for use in staff meetings

Setting an Agenda for Family-Focused Justice Reform

- Broader focus that may inform discussions with non-criminal justice partners (i.e., education, child support)

www.vera.org/centers/family-justice-program

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