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IN MEMORIAM

DISTRICT ATTORNEY KENNETH P. THOMPSON

(1966-2016)

Kings County Re-Entry Task Force

Bi-Monthly Meeting of April 5, 2017 – Minutes (Revised)

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, April 5, 2017	
Meeting Time:	12:40 pm – 2:30 pm	
Meeting Location:	Office of the Kings County District Attorney 350 Jay Street, 19th Floor – Bob Kaye Room, Brooklyn, NY 11201	
Attendees:		
(From Attendance Sheet signatures)	OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR JESSE HAMILTON: J. Del Aguila, R. Rothblatt AMERICA WORKS OF NY: A. Smitherman BLACK VETERANS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: R. Cutting BRIDGING ACCESS TO CARE: D. Osman, H. Piere BROOKLYN DEFENDERS: S. Zaman BROOKLYN JOB CORPS: D. Sidibe BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY: B. Bentt-Peters BROOKLYN STUDIOS FOR DANCE: P. Fajans BRONX DEFENDERS: W. Caines THE BURNING HOUSE PROJECT, INC.: M. Blackman CENTER FOR APPELLATE LITIGATION: S. Karlin CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES: J. Bicknell, L. Norberto CENTERS HEALTHCARE: L. Cortella CHURCH OF GETHSEMANE / PROJECT CONNECT: D. Grimes CITIZENS AGAINST RECIDIVISM: Dr. M. DeVeaux CLOSE RIKERS CAMPAIGN: D. Ehlke COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY: J. Whiting CORNELL UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: J. Davis-Manigaulte	KINGS COUNTY RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE Renee T. Gregory, 1 st Assistant District Attorney Christopher Owens, Co-Chair Designate Director, The Re-Entry Bureau Dr. Vanda Seward, Coordinator Norma Fernandes, Case Manager Clifton Jefferson, Consultant - Thinking For A Change NYS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION (DOCCS) Lewis Squillacioti, Co-Chair Designate Audrey Thompson, Re-Entry Operations Manager NYS DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ComALERT Maria Abadia, Program Administrator Kelly Burns, Case Manager Office of Public Engagement Justine Tomon, Executive Assistant Project Re-Direct Tyrone Larkins

FAMILIES, FATHERS AND CHILDREN, INC:
E. Edelman, J. Palmaro

THE FAMILY CENTER: V. Presley

FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS: J. Martinez

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (BROOKLYN HEIGHTS):
J. Ehlke

THE FORTUNE SOCIETY: J. Dawson

FRINEDS OF ISLAND ACADEMY: E. Rosario

GIFTED COMMUNITY SERVICES: M. Steele

GREENHOPE SERVICES FOR WOMEN: J. Jones

HEALTHCARE CHOICES: P. Ammendola

D. HYLTON

JOHN JAY COLLEGE / PRISONER REENTRY INSTITUTE:
A. Yeboah-Kodie
E. LORD (Retired Warden, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility)

MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE OASIS BEACON: W. Boone

R. MENTOR

NEW DIRECTIONS ALCOHOL & SA TREATMENT PROGRAMS:
B. Abrahams

NYC HOUSING AUTHORITY: S. Figuereo

NYC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: D. Slaughter

NYS HOMES & COMMUNITY RENEWAL: B. Hewitt

NYS OASAS: S. Davis

ODYSSEY HOUSE: M. McDermott

THE OSBORNE ASSOCIATION: S. Rivas

PREP FOR PROSPERITY: N. Jenkins

PRISON FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES: Rev. J. Negron

PRISON WRITES: J. Hall

QUEENS COUNTY RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE: H. Lila

QUICKSILVER CONCEPTS: T. Mendelson

READY WILLING & ABLE / DOE FUND: T. Mathews

RIGHT HOUSING SOLUTIONS: R. Williams

SAMARITAN VILLAGE: D. Bembury, S. Hudgins

ST. PAUL COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH: Rev. L. Shannon

SUS-SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED: J. Caraballo

VERTEX OUTPATIENT PROGRAM: P. Henderson

ITEM #	ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND ACTION ITEMS
1	Call to Order	The meeting was called to order by Mr. Christopher R. Owens, KCRTF Co-Chair designate, at 12:40 pm.
2	Opening Remarks	Mr. Owens welcomed the attendees and announced the District Attorney's upcoming community events, including BEGIN AGAIN (opportunity for individuals to clear outstanding warrants) on April 14 and April 15. Mr. Owens asked Ms. Audrey Thompson (DOCCS) to introduce the new Co-Chair designate from NYS DOCCS, Bureau Chief Lewis Squillaciotti (Bureau 4 in Brooklyn as of 4/17.) Mr. Squillaciotti has been with DOCCS for many years. He has worked in different Regions and with other County Re-entry Task Forces. Mr. Owens thanked Ms. Thompson for her leadership in filling in as KCRTF Co-Chair designate for retired Regional Director Smith.
3	Presentation of Meeting Minutes	Tabled.
4	Introductions	Those in attendance introduced themselves, their organizations (if applicable), and their interest in the KCRTF. Participants spoke in greater detail regarding the work of their organizations, success stories, and any concerns.

		<p><i>Special note: NYCHA announced that they have passed 100 individuals enrolled in the Family Reunification Program which assists individuals returning from incarceration with re-locating into NYCHA apartments with family members. The DA's office announced that five individuals whose applications were taken by the DA's office are now on their permanent leases.</i></p> <p>Mr. Owens introduced the Coordinator, Dr. Vanda Seward.</p>
5	Coordinator's Report	<p>Dr. Seward acknowledged with gratitude those who sent well wishes while she was out.</p> <p>Dr. Seward reminded the attendees that language matters: "we don't have ex-offenders, ex-cons, or inmates." Both providers and clients need to understand that language is changing.</p> <p>Regarding service numbers, the 1st contract quarter was submitted to NYS DCJS. The Coordinator stated that the trends are good even though the winter months may have included some challenges.</p> <p>For the two cognitive behavioral interventions (<i>Thinking For A Change</i> and <i>Ready Set Work!</i>), steps are being taken to increase the level of enrollment through an increase in the number of cycles for the programs. The KCRTF has two staff members trained in <i>RSW!</i> and one in <i>T4C</i>.</p> <p>Case conferencing is undergoing improvements to maximize the number of clients being identified and recruited "pre-release." Since there is no "one size fits all", efforts are always underway to optimize the fit between the client and services. Pre-release "consent" is a challenge, given that the referral is to the same District Attorney's office that may have put the individual on the inside.</p> <p>"Round-table discussions" with providers will start taking place to educate the KCRTF regarding services, credentials and best practices. An internal list is under development. How can "you" best service the clients who have needs "right now"? Staff will conduct some site visits as well.</p> <p>Also, there will be a specific round-table session targeting nursing homes and assisted living facilities, given the documented needs and the low level of client knowledge or parole knowledge regarding these facilities and situations.</p> <p>Letters and/or emails will go out to service providers regarding these sessions. Expectation is that providers will "sell themselves" since the KCRTF has to sell their services to clients.</p> <p>Mentorship training will also commence in the future., as mentors are needed.</p>
6	Reports / Concerns	Tabled.
7	Guest Presentations <i>(Please note that the excerpts presented here were transcribed from an audio recording and may contain errors. Please bring any issues to our attention.)</i>	<p>MY BROTHER'S – AND MY SISTER'S -- KEEPER</p> <p>ELAINE LORD is a former Warden of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.</p> <p>Lord stated that she agrees that there are no good prisons and that there is an expanding prison industry with too many people incarcerated. Coming to prison is the punishment. What happens while there is usually not helpful for the individuals. She also stated that language is indeed important,</p> <p>Lord stated that the military experience of many individuals involved with prison administration and security leads to closed minds and unnecessary cruelty due to the desire for "control." The use of power and authority needs to be thoroughly examined.</p> <p>Better programs are needed to minimize incarceration – diversion – for young people and improve the experiences. She referenced personal experiences with younger people – particularly young, pregnant women -- on Rikers Island that perpetuate humiliation, bad experiences, and less than optimum outcomes for all concerned.</p> <p>Lord recalled furloughs for women preparing to give birth that helped the women and did not result in escapes. Today, the emphasis on security is overwhelming and stifling for all involved.</p> <p>Lord pointed out that you don't often get to hear from a 30-year Warden and someone who was</p>

incarcerated in their facility.

DONNA HYLTON was at Bedford Hills while Lord was warden. She was incarcerated for nearly 30 years.

Hylton pointed out that many services being offered are not particularly targeting women, and this needs to evolve so that ALL services are being discussed equally.

“We don’t have enough housing for formerly incarcerated women.” There are unique issues that need to be addressed – there is a “separate AND equal” approach needed to the housing issue. Women with children have an even more compelling set of issues, but all women – including those with long terms – have challenges that should be addressed as an equal priority to those faced by men. Women are now the fastest growing cohort of the prison population.

Support is needed on an ongoing basis because the transition can be overwhelming and the little things matter. “I went in with toaster ovens; I came out and now they talk to you! Who’s Siri?!” “We need to really think about women. What can we do that is not being done for women?”

Exposure to computers on the inside was extremely limited and did not prepare individuals for the realities of today’s societies. “There is not a nice prison anywhere; there is not a nice jail anywhere.”

“How can YOUR program help with shutting down Rikers?” “How can YOUR program keep people from getting to Rikers?” People are on Rikers often because there is nothing more local. What can we do to change the reality for all of these people; this is a collective challenge.

LORD: What brings men and women to prison are often not the same. Women arrive with higher rates of mental illness and mental health needs, and higher rates of victimization by abusers – usually double that acknowledged by men.

A great challenge is sexual abuse by prison staff members – verbal and physical. Lord found herself coaching individuals as to how to save evidence to help themselves. The legacy of abuse comes in to the prison and stays and then leaves back to the outside when the person leaves. “We can’t negate what those experiences mean. You can’t divorce yourself from that past.”

Those types of histories contribute to greater drug abuse – a desire to numb the pain. Women have lots of child abuse histories followed by abuse as adults. The person has been “broken down” – they don’t need a prison to break them down more. They need to feel worthwhile. The only people who should be in jail are those who are really, really dangerous.

We can’t reduce the population of our prisons if we don’t look at the causes. And we have to look at what is left for women versus men when they are released. Women end up with “less” due to loss of family members and networks, whereas men usually have someone to come home to.

Dr. Seward acknowledged the unique nature of Ms. Lord’s history of service and her relationship to former charges such as Donna.

DR. MIKHA’IL DEVEAUX (See attached presentation document)

I brought a Powerpoint in order to contain myself.

Listening to Ms. Hylton and Ms. Lord was an emotional experience.

How we talk about each other demonstrates how we think about each other; if we “other” each other, then the perceptions are not constructive. Dropping negative labels is very important. I tell men coming home: “That’s not YOU!”

Was incarcerated for 25 years and under community supervision for 7 years. Benefitted from a progressive Superintendent – someone who maintained their sense of humanity.

	<p>If it was ME, MY son, MY daughter, MY mother ... how would I want them to be treated?</p> <p>We can begin to redefine “success” in a sensible context – as researched by me through interviews with men, in particular. “If you can’t advocate for yourself, then how can you advocate for someone else?”</p> <p>The environment perpetuates a state of adolescence; it infantilizes men.</p> <p>Unprecedented growth of the prison population since the 1970s as a result of sentencing policies that reflected the way in which crime and “criminals” were perceived. But no one thought about what would happen when people come home?</p> <p>Closing Rikers is an issue: If we don’t engage in a retraining or retooling of the people who work in Rikers, then we will have the same problems spread out over all the boroughs.</p> <p>We are “failing” due to the high recidivism rates and high level of people who don’t get services (20%). The majority are returning to incarceration within a few years. What if 85% of people who leave prison did NOT go back? That would say that something is working, but that is not what is happening now.</p> <p>We need to abandon the “old” ways of thinking. Sometimes we have to “unlearn” what has been learned to progress – or simply let go in order to grow.</p> <p>The notion of “success” used by many is “primitive”. Success is more than just staying out of prison. In reality, there is more. There is no real accounting for the sociological circumstances and there is little real input and understanding of people who have had the actual experiences. Even here today -- how many people who are part of your Board or Advisory Board are people who have spent some time in prison? To develop evidence-based practices, one way to proceed is to consult the consumer who is receiving the services being offered. Those with the real experiences must be included in more than the research – they have to be part of “the conversation.” To fail to include them sends the message to you and to them that their voices are not important!</p> <p>Research focus was on Black men due to demographics and personal familiarity. Most are poor men of color from certain NYC communities; 49% of the NYS population comes from NYC. The post-1970s period suggests “hyper-incarceration” rather than “mass incarceration” – or certain populations being targeted rather than all individuals having an equal likelihood of being incarcerated. Race, class and place rule. Therefore, people return to the same communities.</p> <p>NYS is not alone in this regard. Class/race/place rules nationwide with regard to incarceration. Historically in the U.S., dominant groups have “othered”, “demonized” and “criminalized” those individuals not from the dominant group. It is honest to say that white supremacy has created, perpetuated and molded the criminal justice system.</p> <p>The root problem is socio-economic inequality. The intersection of vertical and horizontal oppression with internalized oppression creates a destructive reality that is not experienced by all Americans equally. Issues must be discussed in context – not in a vacuum. Thus, “YOU” are not the problem; the problem is outside of “YOU” but “YOU” have to rethink yourself and your situation. WE have to start “pathologizing” people as opposed to recognizing the comprehensive nature and compelling power of pathological situations – “You’re not sick; the situation is sick.”</p> <p>The legacy of racial/ethnic/labor exploitation is essential to a real understanding of these incarceration outcomes – or we are just wasting time. For George Jackson and Malcolm X, for example, learning about the contexts of their incarceration changed their perception of what needed to be done. This is the intersection of history and biography (C. Wright Mills reference).</p> <p>Success after prison must include an understanding of the pre-prison experience, the in-prison experience and the post-prison experience that has been endured by a client. Service providers must have an understanding of their client’s experiences with the dominant group and dominant culture – particularly those more likely to be incarcerated than others (due to race/place/class).</p> <p>A deeper understanding of the pre-prison experience and the in-prison experience of each client is needed by social service providers. The humiliation endured by incarcerated individuals is extreme and</p>
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		<p>well-documented. Studies have shown the corrupting nature of the power wielded by prison authority. A better understanding is needed.</p> <p>“I don’t know what success is unless you tell me.” We need to value those voices or the policies will always be incomplete. Success is not low recidivism; it reflects being “undetected.” Material, social and psychological elements of success exist – and, for the individual, all three are experiencing ongoing development as the new “freedom” experiences accumulate – being seen as a “human being” and not “thing.” (Language matters if it constantly reminds me of my unacceptable situation.)</p> <p>Success is possible, but there must be greater understanding.</p>
7	New Business / Events	<p>Mr. Owens reminded attendees to take material and submit information for distribution.</p> <p>Dr. Seward urged attendees to attend re-entry events whenever they take place because it is important to be really connected to the issues and the emerging movement. Find a way to “be the face in the place”, even if for a little while. She also stated that actually experiencing a “prison” is very helpful to optimizing the human service experience, and it is hoped that there will be a trip to Sing Sing before the Fall.</p>
8	Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING IS ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017

2017 KCRTF meetings are proposed for 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm on these first Wednesdays

Jun 7, Aug 2, Oct 4, Dec 6.

Please mark your calendars. Locations may vary.

Corrections to these Minutes should be emailed to OwensC1@BrooklynDA.org

Information pertaining to events should also be emailed



AFTER PRISON, SUCCESS IS ...

**Mika'il DeVeaux, Ph.D., M.Phil.,
M.A., M.P.S., CAMSF**

Thank you for inviting me to share some general ideas from my research about what success is following incarceration.

Outline

- **Background**
- **The context of analysis for redefining success**
 - Pre-prison experiences
 - In-prison experiences
 - Post-prison experiences
- **Components of success and their themes**

The Background

- **Community Reintegration: An Emerging Social Problem**
 - A time of unprecedented growth
 - Historical context
 - Recidivism: A primitive notion of success
- **The Era of Mass (Hyper) Incarceration**

This is obviously an important topic following a time of unprecedented growth in the number of people sent to prison, beginning around the 1970s. As a consequence of that growth, a large population of people who had been incarcerated during that time are now returning to the community such that community reintegration is “the” social problem of the day, given that 95% of the people that go to prison return.

To fully understand the complexity of the issue that we face, we need to be honest in our analysis and include a more informed overview of the background to the problem and of the historical context out of which it has emerged. With respect to our current record of success, national data suggest that 3 in 10 formerly incarcerated people recidivate within six months of their release, increasing to 2 out of 3 within three years after release, and 3 of 4 within five years.

In terms of the background to the problem and of the historical context in which it has emerged, I will not detail all the particulars here, but I will share a few observations.

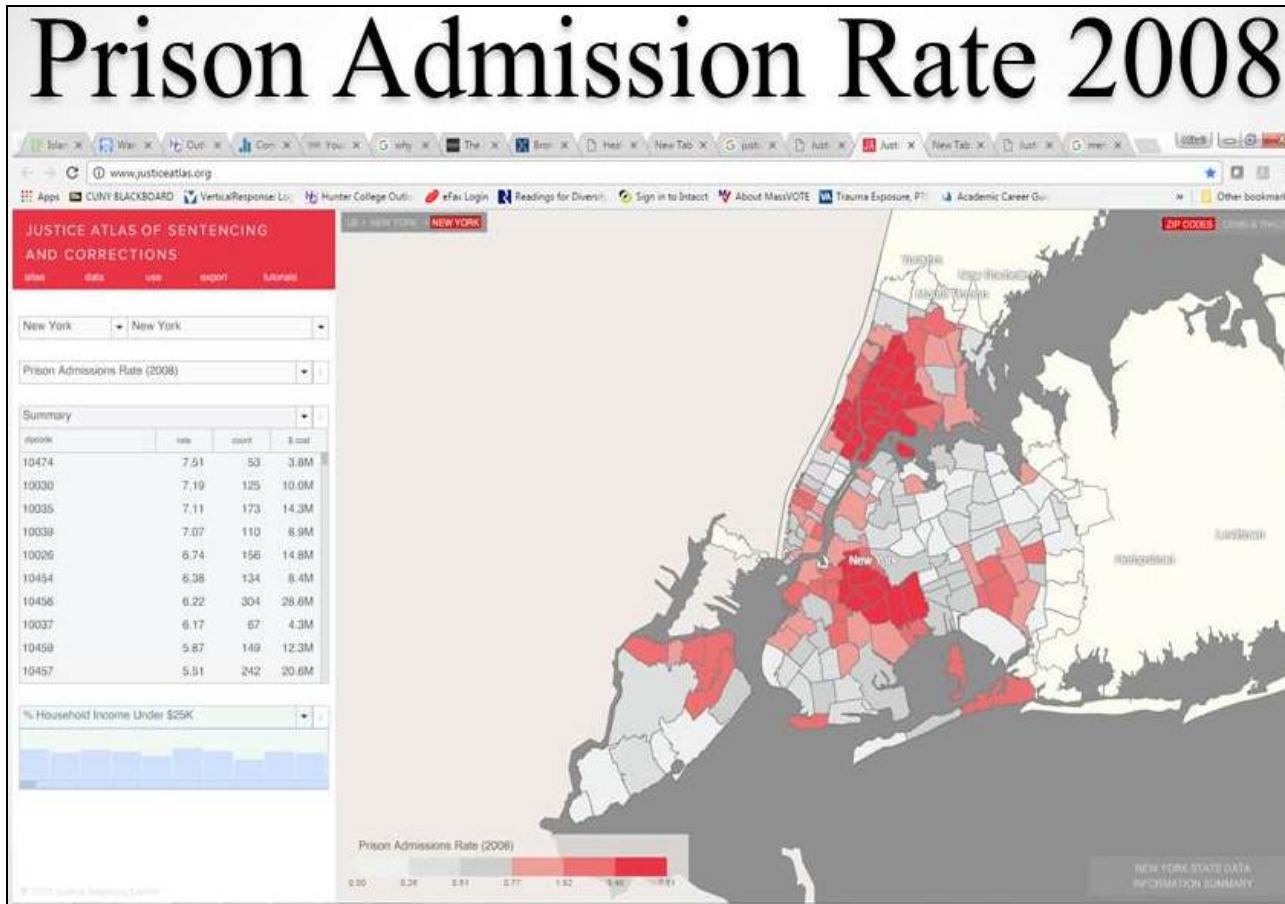
At the outset we must abandon old ways of thinking. The reason for this is because the notions of “success” researchers use are primitive. Most use “recidivism” as the principal outcome variable

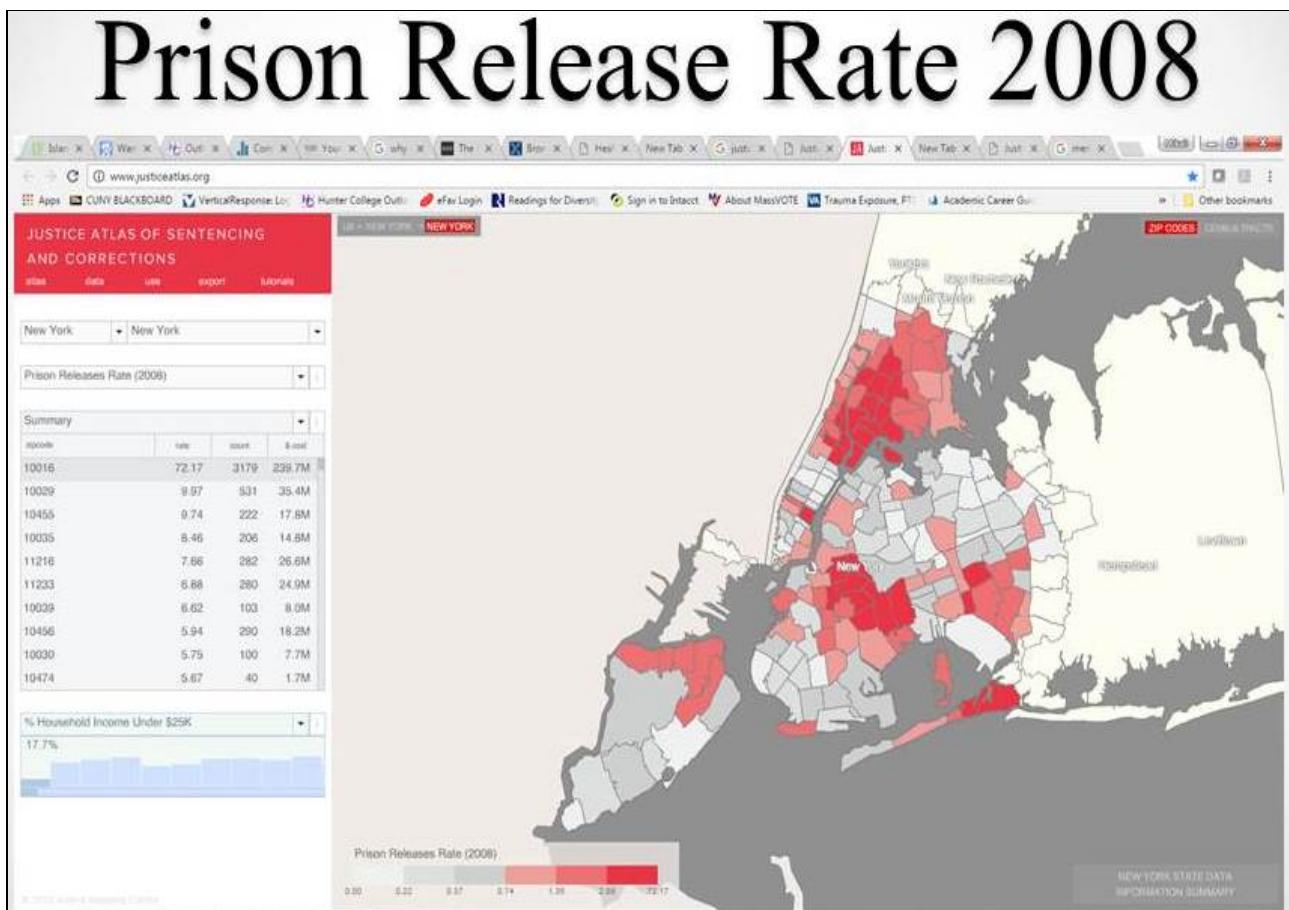


without considering constructs from the social sciences or, more importantly, what those reentering the community want for themselves. Usually, the views of those who have actually had the experiences service providers and policy makers seek to address are never incorporated in a direct way into the thinking and work of those providers and policy makers.

Considering those facts, my research focuses on success after prison as defined by formerly incarcerated Black men.

The reason for this focus is because the demographic characteristics of the incarcerated population suggest that a large proportion of those released from prison are poor men of color from a relatively small number of inner-city communities. Given those dynamics I have deferred to scholars who characterize the post-1970s era as one of "*hyper-incarceration*" rather than "*mass incarceration*" because *African Americans living in impoverished urban communities were acutely targeted while middle and upper class Americans of all other ethnic or racial groups were left intact.*





This phenomenon is not peculiar to New York State and New York City, the primary geographical location of my research. Instead, the Justice Mapping Center and other such organizations have documented patterns similar to those shown in these maps in other parts of the country.

I also note that in this country there has been an historical and cultural tendency of dominant groups to criminalize, demonize, and/or “other” those not in the dominant group.



Redefining Success

- **Considering**
 - **Pre-prison experiences**
 - **In-prison experiences**
 - **Post-prison experiences**

That said, success after prison must include an understanding of the pre-prison, in-prison and post-prison experiences of formerly incarcerated people.

Each of these times along the life course are relevant when plotting the next phase and remainder of the life.

Service providers must have an understanding of the lived experiences shared by those more likely to be incarcerated than others, and the relationship they have had and experiences they have had with the dominant group and dominant culture. Part of that pre-prison experience includes the historical and cultural context we alluded to because those experiences are an integral part of the person.

Service providers must develop a deeper understanding of the in-prison experience. This, too, must be part of that analysis. It is well known, though not often admitted, that along with the decline of the rehabilitation model during the 1970s, rehabilitation programs, indeterminate sentencing strategies, and parole were seen as “coddling” people in prison rather than providing the punishment convicted persons deserved. I will not rehash here the body of literature characterizing the prison experiences as one of the most degrading experiences a person might endure. Needless to say, for a good number of people social adjustment and social integration are difficult upon release because of that experience.

I have proposed a new model for defining success based on my research that includes the voices of a number of Black men who have *not* gone back to prison.

At the outset, we must agree that *success is an ongoing process*. According to the men, success is a construct. It is more than not going back to prison or not recidivating -- the standard state definition of success. That definition just means that one has not been detected of any wrongdoing. One could be living in a subway and go undetected, but none of us would call that success.

When defining success the men detailed material, social, and psychological components of success. For them, “*fitting-in*” became possible after achieving material, social and psychological success. When combined, they suggested that *success was fitting in as if one had never gone to prison*. It meant having one’s sense of humanity restored in their own eyes and such that others saw them as human beings, plain and simple.

**PRESENTATION BY DR. MIKA'IL DeVEAUX
TO THE KINGS COUNTY RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF KINGS COUNTY, NEW YORK
APRIL 5, 2017**

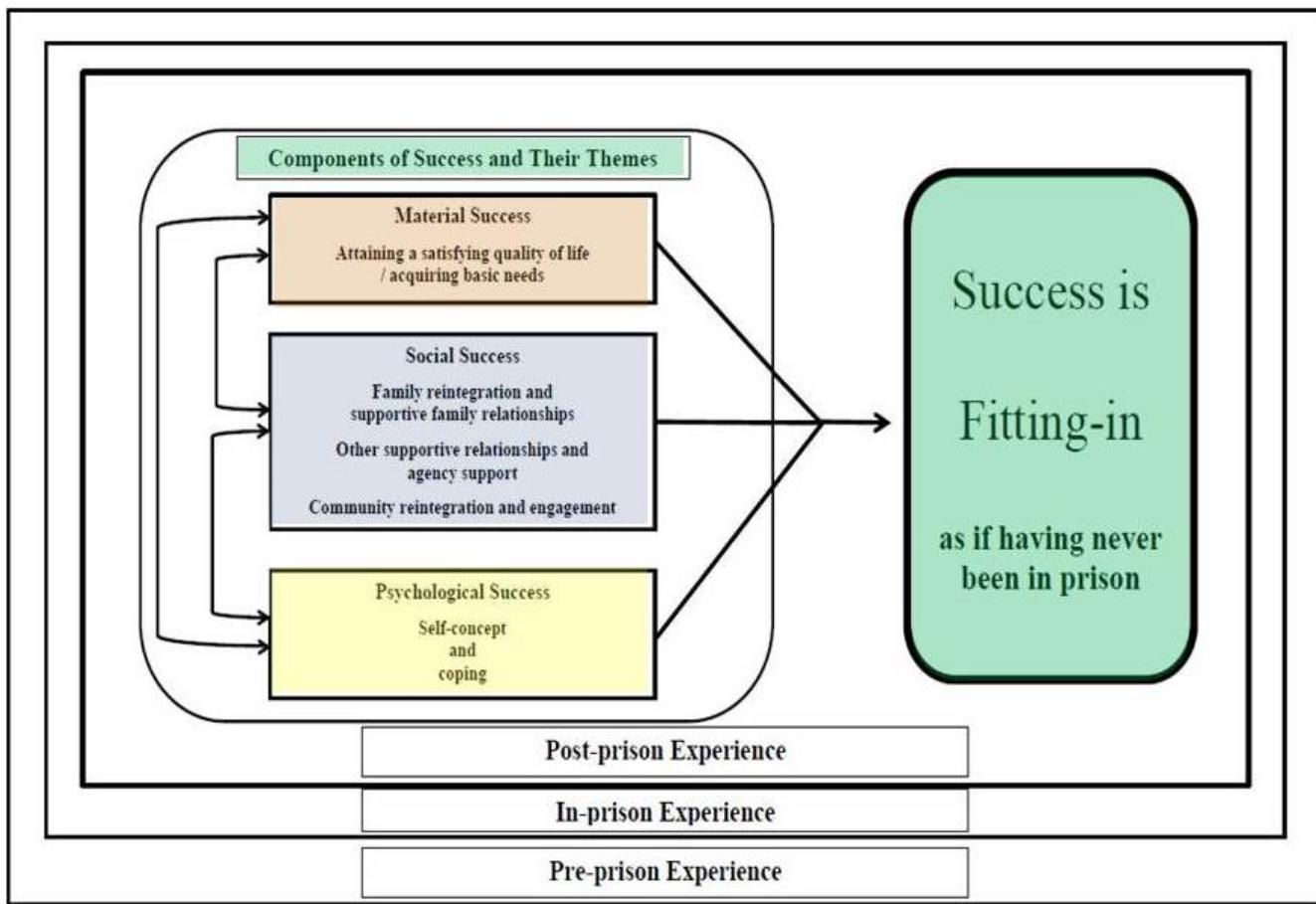


Figure 1

A conceptual framework of post-prison "success"