



Trauma and Reentry

Understanding Custodial Trauma
and its Impact on Housing Clients

Introduction

Homebase's mission is to build community capacity to end homelessness and reduce poverty, and to foster thriving, inclusive communities.

The Criminal Legal System Initiative seeks to improve outcomes for those impacted by the criminal legal system, decrease system-involvement through housing solutions, improve public safety outcomes, and reduce strain on public resources.

Objectives for Today

- Increase basic understanding of the criminal legal system and community supervision;
- Better understand the unique experience and trauma inherent in experience of incarceration and reentry;
- Explore how trauma manifests for clients in reentry;
- Learn about strategies to better serve this population.

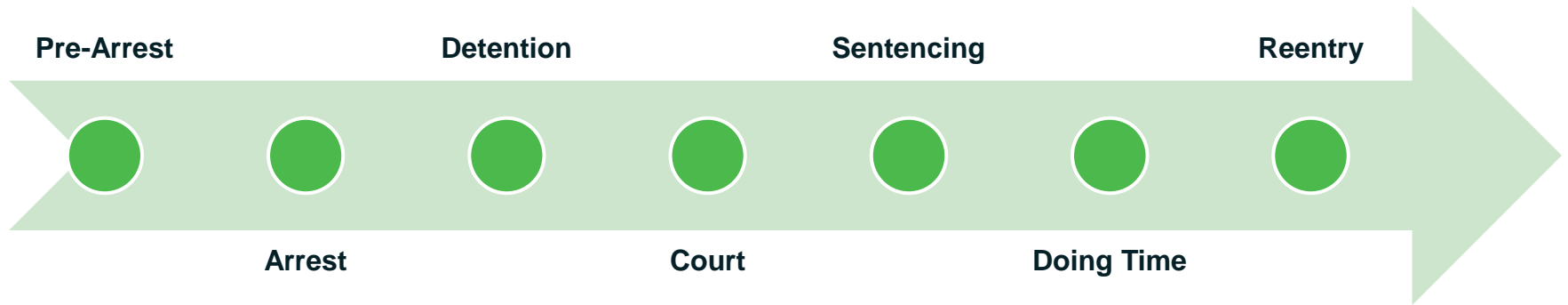
Agenda

- Criminal Legal System Overview
- Trauma in Incarceration and Reentry
- Practical Strategies & Application
- Questions and Discussion



Criminal Legal System Overview

Criminal Legal System Basics



Frequently Used Terms

Custody:

To have custody of someone, a body such as a locality, the state, ICE, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) **must physically hold that person in one of its facilities.**

Frequently Used Terms

Jail:

A secure lock-up facility *within a **city or county*** where people are kept who are **accused** of a crime, **charged** with a crime, **waiting** for trial, or **serving** a short sentence.

Prison:

A **state or federal** confinement facility for people **convicted** of crimes, especially *felonies*.

Frequently Used Terms

Probation:

A criminal sentence ***served in the community*** in place of – or following – a *jail* sentence.

Parole:

A ***condition of release*** for a person *coming back to the community* after release from *prison*.

Typically, people on both **probation and parole** must **adhere to a set of rules** (known as “conditions”) during their community supervision period.

Frequently Used Terms

Reentry:

The process of a person transitioning from an incarcerated setting, back to the broader community.

Who is incarcerated?



70% of people in women's **prisons** are **mothers**.
85% of incarcerated women may be shackled during childbirth.



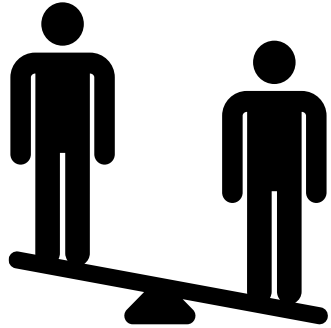
Children who suffer from **lead poisoning** are **6x** more likely to become **juvenile system-involved**.



1 in 10 young adults experience homelessness per year.
Nearly half of young adults who experience homelessness have also been incarcerated.

Homelessness and Justice-System Contact are **Equity Issues**

Formerly incarcerated community members are **nearly ten times more likely to experience homelessness** than the general population.



BIPOC and LGBTQI+ individuals are **disproportionately represented** in both homelessness and criminal justice systems.

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Black Adults Make Up 13% of the U.S. Population

but 33% of the U.S. prison population,

and 43% of adults experiencing homelessness in our country.

36% of U.S. women and 29% of men have experienced domestic violence

but **68%** of men and **60%** of women in the U.S. **prison** population have experienced physical or sexual abuse.

LGBT individuals make up an estimated 4.5% of the population

but LGBT people are **3x as likely to be incarcerated** as non-LGBT persons,

and one study indicated that LGBT young adults experienced prior-year **homelessness or housing instability** at a rate **over double** that of non-LGBT individuals.



Trauma in Incarceration & Reentry

Trauma Basics

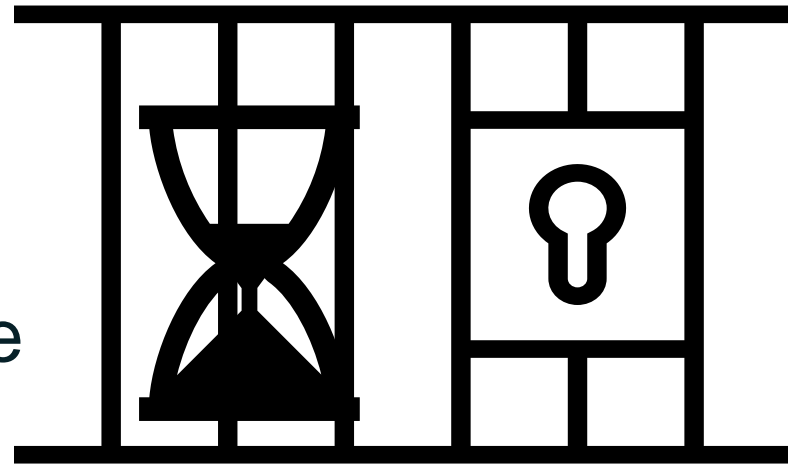
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Behavioral and chronic physical conditions
- Individualized responses & support system
- Fight, flight, freeze, or fawn
- Cyclical relationship with experience of homelessness
- Impacts effective engagement with services

“Step Inside the Circle”



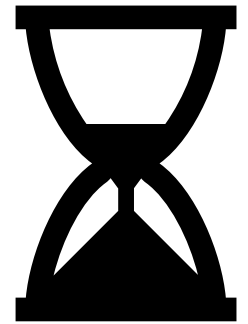
Custodial Trauma: **Unique Stressors**

- Witnessing and experiencing violence
- Extended exposure to threats to safety
- Family friction, loss, and reunification
- “Lost time” in custody
- Loss of autonomy
- Fears around repeating cycle
- Physical impacts: food, poor healthcare, and solitary confinement



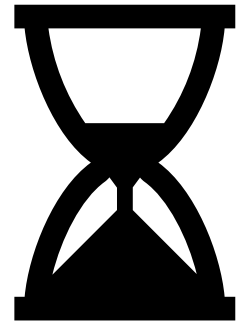
Reentry Trauma

- 47% of formerly incarcerated people in a study had at least 1 traumatic event in 8 months following release
- Events included directly experiencing or witnessing violence or death, learning of the serious injury or death of a loved one, and suffering a life-threatening illness or injury



Reentry Trauma

- 1 in 5 lost a loved one to homicide, nearly 25% were violently assaulted, 31% witnessed a serious injury or death, and 31% were diagnosed with a life-threatening illness or sustained a serious injury
- Study participants also lost critical resources including employment, income, transportation, housing, medical insurance, social support from family and friends, and community engagement.





Practical Strategies & Application

Practical Strategies

Establish

- Establish desired housing type

Tailor

- Tailor check-ins to need; could be daily

Draft

- Jointly draft reentry stabilization plan

Assist

- Assist in overall goal setting

Assess

- Assess the role and level of support of family

Support

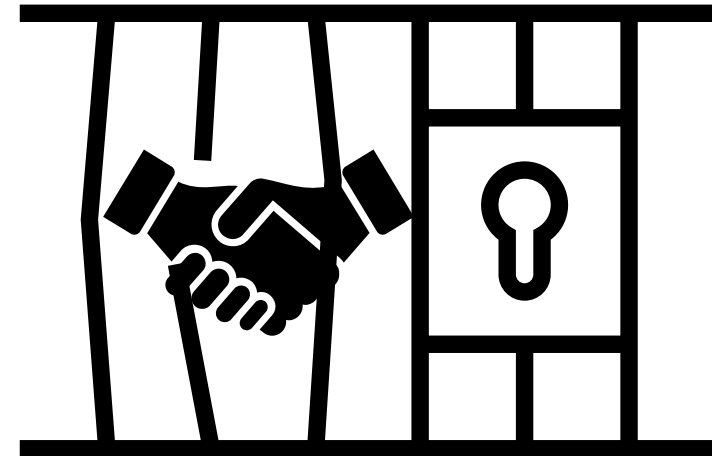
- Support developing a personal narrative that doesn't traumatize for job search, loans, housing

(Don't) Assume

- Don't assume actions or responses are due to custodial trauma

Custodial Trauma: What Can You Do?

- Check in early and often
- Be sensitive to and aware of
 - family issues
 - physical safety issues
- Check your own assumptions and biases



Practical Application: *Hypo #1*

Mike was released two months ago and had been staying on his brother's couch. The apartment was a one-bedroom, and Mike's brother often had friends over, hanging out in the living room. Recently, Mike started shelter-hopping. You, his case manager, found a shared living situation (roommates) where you can cover rent for six months. Mike refuses to accept the subsidy.

What's going on here? What's your next step?

Practical Application: *Hypo #2*

Despite the odds, Wayne got sober during incarceration and wants to stay that way. You have found him a spot that will be 100% covered by subsidies at a sober living facility. The facility has a daily 7pm curfew, permits visitors only twice a week, doesn't have locks on the bedrooms, and has surveillance cameras in all the halls and common rooms. Most local facilities are the same. Wayne doesn't want to take the spot.

What do you discuss with Wayne as his options?

Practical Application: *Hypo* #3

The local Public Housing Authority has not only enacted low-barrier policies for people with criminal records, but established a homeless preference, enabling Julie to be called up from the waitlist. Julie receives her housing choice voucher and is excited to get her own place but is extremely concerned about rejection from private landlords when they learn about her prior incarceration.

Is it possible to assist Julie to overcome this barrier and tell her story without re-traumatization? How?

Practical Application: *Hypo #4*

Jeff is a new case manager in your office, and as a seasoned provider, you are tasked with mentoring him. Sitting in on an intake, you observe that the interview is going well until Jeff learns that the potential client was convicted of armed robbery and served a 7-year sentence. Jeff looks visibly taken aback and asks the client if he's sorry about "what he did" because, "you probably won't get housing unless you show remorse."

What feedback do you provide to Jeff? Why? How?

Practical Application: *Hypo #5*

You meet Bobby while doing in-reach at the local jail. She admits to stealing her then-teenage son's cash, earned from mowing lawns, to pay for drugs. Her son Billy, now 23, forgives her but she still feels shame. She also stole from her parents, friends, and other relatives prior to her incarceration, and now feels that she has nowhere to go. You cannot find any housing for her other than emergency shelter when she's released Friday.

Do you suggest Bobby talk with Billy about housing? Why or why not?

Q&A and Discussion

- What questions do you have for me?
- What questions do you have for each other?
- For any providers that have had experience working with this population, what successes, challenges, and strategies have you experienced working with formerly incarcerated people?
- What partnerships and/or resources have you found to be especially helpful when working with someone who is a survivor of custodial trauma?

Thank you!

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