

# PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S "IF" PROJECT

## *Final Report*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reports results from a one-year process evaluation of the Seattle Police Department's IF Project conducted September 2012 - June 2013. The IF project is a crime reduction and crime prevention program coordinated by the Seattle Police Department Community Outreach Unit that includes programmatic components that bridge law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, truancy programs, schools, and community agencies.

The core component of the IF Project is a prison-based writing workshop in which inmates are posed the question:

*"If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?"*

Additional programmatic components involve a monthly prison-based informational topic presentation and writing workshops in schools, courts, and juvenile justice facilities, and a recent expansion of the program to reentry assistance. The youth writing workshops involve Detective Bogucki and formerly incarcerated IF Project staff members who share their experiences and pose the IF question to youth followed by Q&A, breakout sessions, and resource referrals to help the youth with specific issues they are facing addressed in their written response to the question for the purpose of crime prevention.

The IF project has received national media attention and it has been replicated in juvenile and adult correctional facilities and schools around the country. A comprehensive evaluation of the IF Project has not been conducted. A process evaluation of the truancy component of the IF Project was previously conducted by University of Washington researchers in 2012 (Walker, Trupin, & Guthrie, 2012); however, the study only examined the truancy portion of the IF Project involving 75 youth over a 6-month period.

The one-year process evaluation was designed for the purpose of developing a comprehensive evaluation plan including developing an IF Project "tool-kit" describing the program structure, components and content, and conducting a pilot evaluation to pretest tools and methods to determine the appropriate research design and methodology for a future comprehensive evaluation. The evaluation involved developing and compiling program materials, administering pilot pre/post surveys, conducting observations analysis and conducting focus groups with incarcerated individuals in the Washington State Department of Corrections, juveniles incarcerated in King, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties, and youth attending schools in the Seattle Public School District. Evaluation measures were developed to investigate the extent to which the IF Project is achieving its intended goals -- to identify the needs of program participants, promote prosocial behavior, and prevent crime. On an applied level, the IF Project process evaluation offers empirical evidence that can be utilized by the Seattle Police Department Community Outreach Unit, IF Project staff, and other stakeholders to

inform future development and implementation of IF Project components and replications of the IF Project in other regions.

The process evaluation also includes a content analysis of the essays written in the workshops conducted for youth and adult incarcerated populations collected since the program began in 2010. Analysis of the IF Project essays extends and contributes to scholarship on general theories of crime (Agnew, 2005; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Tittle, 1993), trajectories of offending (e.g., Farrington, 2003; Laub & Sampson, 2006; Moffitt, 1993; Walters, 1990), and factors and individual-environment interactions influencing criminal behavior patterns (Helfgott, 2008; Horney, 2006; Robinson & Beaver, 2009; Thornberry, 1987) by identifying structural and social factors which condition individuals' varied life paths and opportunities for desistance from crime. The content analysis of the IF Project essays was included in the analysis as a measure of both IF Project process and outcome. While essay-writing is a major component of the program and a mechanism by which the IF Project participants are challenged to examine the path that led them to crime, essay writing and themes addressed can also be seen as a measure of success. For example, some IF Project participants are Lifers who may never be released. For these individuals, the act of writing down their thoughts and feelings regarding the factors that contributed to their path can be seen as a step toward healing and "mature coping" (Johnson, 2001, p. 83) that has potential benefits in terms of creating opportunities for constructive and pro-social adaptation to the prison environment.

## Research Design

The goal of the process evaluation was to develop a comprehensive portrait of the IF Project. A mixed-method approach was utilized to examine participant program satisfaction and experience, nature and dynamics of workshops and monthly meetings, and content of IF Project essays. Writing workshops were evaluated using pre/post pilot surveys, participant observation, and focus groups; monthly meetings were evaluated using post-surveys; and IF Project essays were analyzed using a grounded theory framework. The study was approved by the Seattle University Institutional Review Board and the Washington State Department of Corrections Review and Research Committee.

Participants were adults incarcerated at the Washington Corrections Center for Women, the Washington State Reformatory and youth participating in juvenile detention and juvenile court/truancy workshops. The inmates included in this study are those who volunteered to participate in the IF Project while in prison. The juveniles and youth participating in the study are voluntary participants in the workshops in facilities that have invited the IF Project to conduct a youth workshop. Approximately 68 adult prisoners (from the men's and women's prisons) participating in the quarterly IF writing workshops, 218 youth participating in IF writing workshops held in juvenile facilities and schools over the study period, and 74 inmates from the women's prison participating in the monthly informational topic presentations were included in the study.

Essays were selected for analysis from approximately 1,000 IF Project essays including the 700 previously collected and 320 completed by the participants who completed the workshop during the study period. Names listed on essays were redacted prior to being given to researchers. A total of 331 essays (160 youth and 171 adult) were included in the analysis generated from writing workshops conducted during 2010-2013 in Washington correctional and juvenile detention facilities.

Procedure involved administering pre/post surveys at all writing workshops and post-surveys after the monthly prison information sessions conducted during the study period, and observations and focus groups conducted at one of each type of writing workshop (women's prison, men's prison, juvenile detention facility, and juvenile court/truancy). Essay analysis included those collected since 2010 from correctional facility workshops written in response to the central IF question:

*"If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?"* In the juvenile workshops, the IF Project question was revised to: *"If there was something someone could say or do to change the path you are on, what would it be?"*<sup>1</sup>

The essays were analyzed using an interpretivist/social constructivist grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) to identify themes that emerged in narratives presenting life course trajectories (Draucker & Martsof, 2010; Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013; Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2008), including gendered pathways (Chesney-Lind, 1989; Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; Daly, 1992), toward crime and incarceration.

## Summary of Findings

Results show that:

- 99% (n=68) of adult IF Project participants indicated they wanted to be present at the IF Writing Workshops.
- 30% (6 of 20 items measuring prosocial attitudes and behaviors) showed a significant difference pre/post participation in the adult IF Project Workshop with IF participants indicating stronger agreement with survey items associated with hope for the future (e.g., belief in ability to complete high school or college, get a job, and deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner, and personal responsibility to make the world a better place).

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the essays collected to-date were responses to other questions/writing prompts posed to IF Project participants during the writing workshops or those included in community setting workshops. Only essays that met the study criteria (those that were written in response to the central adult or youth IF question during a workshop in correctional settings) were included.

- On measures rating satisfaction with the adult IF Project workshops, participants rated 56% (9 of 16 satisfaction items) above 4.5, 81% (13 of 16 satisfaction items) above 4, and 100% (16 of 16 satisfaction items) above 3.5 on a 5 point scale showing high satisfaction with the adult writing workshop.
- 97% of adult participants said they would like to participate in more monthly information session meetings, 74% indicated they found the meeting helpful with most beneficial aspects self-discovery and group participation/interaction.
- 53% (n=218) of youth IF Project participants indicated that they wanted to be present at the IF Project Writing Workshops.
- 75% (15 of 20 items measuring prosocial attitudes and behaviors) showed a significant difference pre/post participation in the youth IF Project Workshop with IF participants indicating stronger agreement with survey items associated with hope for the future (e.g., belief in ability to complete high school or college, get a job, and deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner, and personal responsibility to make the world a better place, responsibility for making life changes (e.g., “I have a responsibility to make the world a better place, “I’m not just thinking about changing my life, I’m doing something about it), and concern for others (e.g., “I really care about how my actions might affect others).
- On measures rating satisfaction with the youth IF Project workshops, participants rated 6% (1 of 16 satisfaction items) above 4.5, 50% (8 of 16 satisfaction items) above 4, and 81% (14 of 16 satisfaction items) above 3.5 on a 5 point scale showing high satisfaction with the adult writing workshop.
- Participant Observation results suggest that the nature of the discussion was centered around different themes across the different populations with men discussing diverse challenges, women discussing abuse and instability, and youth discussing abuse, instability, and peer influence. Workshops were characterized by short time to intense personal disclosure, safe space to self-reflect, and opportunities for support and connection to resources.
- Focus group results show high satisfaction with the workshop experience with both juveniles and adults indicating that their perspectives shifted knowing that the program was facilitated by law enforcement and that the workshop instilled hope. Adults wanted to know more about how their stories impacted youth and youth appreciated adults who listened and cared. Participants who completed the workshop a second time found they could build on their self-work from previous workshops.
- Analysis of the IF Project essays revealed several themes in both the youth and adult essays. Themes introduced in the youth essays were elaborated and contextualized in more

detailed adult essay responses. Respondents detail the ways in which others can/could have help/ed them, how they can/could have help/ed themselves, and how the former can facilitate the latter.

- Life trajectories toward incarceration are characterized by intergenerational patterns of offending and criminal justice system involvement; sexual, physical, and emotional abuse; and drug and alcohol use and addiction. These circumstances are often experienced at a young age, leaving respondents to experience adult problems and take on adult responsibilities early in their lives. Uniquely gendered pathways are evident such that respondents in men’s prisons reveal the role of the culture of the street and lack of a male figure in their lives and respondents in women’s prisons reveal intersections between histories of abuse that lead to substance use as self-medication and the significance of their role as mothers.
- *Others Helping Me* through:
  - *Discipline and direction*: Presenting consequences of actions, positive role models, and lack of negative influences. Positive role models include those who demonstrate, rather than just tell of positive life choices and actions.
  - *Quality of Interpersonal Relationships*: Getting love, support, positive attention and security from people they trust. Demonstrating this through quality time spent and talking, listening, and understanding through relatability due to past similar experiences.
  - *Hope and Self-Validation*: Need for a strengthened sense of self-worth in general and to mitigate desires for belonging. For youth, this includes instilling a sense of hope that she or he is capable of moving toward a positive life.
- *Me Helping Myself* by:
  - Characterizing past decisions as choice; taking responsibility for these and future decisions.
  - Asking for and accepting help when provided.
- *Others Helping Me Help Myself* through:
  - Positive relationships and influence that can provide the foundation respondents need to develop tools to strengthen their own self-efficacy; and support, which can facilitate confidence in moving forward toward positive change.

## Conclusion

Results of the IF Project process evaluation will assist in the development of a “toolkit” for program replication and provide a programmatic framework and descriptive results on participant satisfaction and attitude change. The essay analysis findings provide insight into key factors associated with life trajectories toward crime and incarceration, the ways in which

participants attribute their circumstances to their own personal choices, and a measure of program outcome as a constructive form of self-reflection, healing, and adaptation. Results suggest that IF Project participants are largely satisfied with the experience, gain self-insight through the workshops and responding to the IF Project essay questions, and appreciate the guest speakers, topics and exercises included in the workshops and monthly information sessions. Interestingly, while the juveniles expressed less desire to be involved in the IF Project workshops, the results of the pre/post surveys suggest that there was greater change in attitude for youth than adults.

A key component of the positive participant feedback in the IF Project is the IF Project staff who include law enforcement, former prisoners, and other professionals who work together to run the workshops. This program structure creates an atmosphere of surprise (that a law enforcement officer would care about their situation) and trust (seeing law enforcement, mental health professionals, and current and former incarcerated adults work together toward the common goal to affect change for youth and adults facing issues of incarceration).



**PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT’S “IF” PROJECT  
FINAL REPORT**

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# PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S IF PROJECT

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Project History

The IF Project started with a question that was posed by Seattle Police Officer Kim Bogucki to inmates at the Washington State Corrections Center for Women in 2008:

***If there was something someone could have said or done that would have changed the path that led you here, what would it have been?***

The question was initially posed by Detective Bogucki informally to the group of WCCW inmates and inspired discussion. On Detective Bogucki's next visit to WCCW, she was surprised to find the question had inspired an inmate named Renata Abramson to share this question with her fellow prisoners. Abramson asked fellow WCCW inmates to take time and to consider the question and write down what they felt. The question sparked interest and a set of essay responses to the IF question that encouraged them to examine what could have changed their own lives and a desire to impart this information to help others.

This initial reaction to Detective Bogucki's prison visit and her informal posing of the IF question launched the development of the IF Project. The IF Project was developed as program to capture the interest the inmates displayed in taking responsibility to examine the factors that led them to crime and imprisonment and to partner with law enforcement to work to break the cycle of crime and imprisonment. The IF Project became a unique partnership between law enforcement and inmates at Washington Department of Corrections facilities that engages participants in introspective writing and presentations during their incarceration and after their release and re-entry to search for answers as to how to break the chain of events leading to crime. The IF Project was co-founded by documentary film director Kathlyn Horan who helped to make the IF Project come to life with documentary footage of the IF Project workshops. The IF Project gained widespread attention on a national level through media exposure. The IF Project now offers youth programs, community outreach, and a reentry mentorship program.

#### Background and Literature Review

The IF Project is a unique program that offers assistance to incarcerated youth and adults and to community groups such as schools and community centers. There is a gap in the research regarding programs similar to IF that span and incorporate juvenile justice, corrections and law enforcement. The "IF" Project is unique in that it facilitates workshops in many different institutions, uses different approaches in posing the "IF" question, and involves former incarcerated adults as staff who co-facilitate youth workshops in detention facilities and schools. The unique elements of the IF Project are evident when considering how it differs from previous and existing programs for incarcerated juveniles and adults. The following sections

highlight key programming for juveniles and adults as well as provide an overview of the effectiveness of these programs.

The existing research in juvenile justice indicates the “Scared Straight” programs or the “get tough” approaches, first developed in the 1970s, have been found to be mostly unsuccessful in preventing criminal behavior (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Jaffe & Baker, 1999; Trulson et al., 2001; Carroll et al., 2010). The lack of program success has been found not only in the United States but in international contexts as well (Lundman, 1993; Lipsey, 1992; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Finckenauer, 2000; Sherman et al., 1997). Bazemore (2004) evaluated the effectiveness of a law enforcement led truancy prevention program in which truant youth were processed into jail and were subject to the same rules as inmates.

The most effective programs are rather those that have characteristics of the IF Project and include multiple-agencies and use a preventative and therapeutic approach (Hayward et al., 2011; Osofsky & Osofsky, 2001; Sutphen et al., 2010). Osofsky and Osofsky (2011) evaluated three different prevention and interventions programs that showed promising results. The Violence Intervention Program, Cops for Kids and Safe Start all involve collaborations with the police, schools, juvenile court and parents. More research is needed in the area of juvenile justice programs in order to understand the benefits and limitations of each model.

Adult corrections-based programs include and often combine education improvement, victim impact panels, substance abuse treatment, and cognitive therapy (Gaboury et al., 2008; Lichtenberger & Ogle, 2006; Reyes, 2009). Thus, enhancing the education levels of offenders is critical and education has also been recognized to have an impact on recidivism rates within the criminal justice literature. While criminal justice literature contains an abundance of research regarding the different programs and evaluation models, there is very little research regarding the thoughts and opinions of inmates. Sampson and Laub (1993) have made significant contributions to understanding criminal behavior from the life-course perspective using qualitative methods to supplement existing quantitative data. The authors contend that a qualitative content analysis allows the respondents’ perceptions about past events to be considered when studying turning points and life trajectories (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

### ***Juvenile Programming***

There are several programming models that are in operation to assist juveniles at risk for committing crime or who are already engaged in crime. Some of the earliest kinds of programs that first began in the 1960s to assist juveniles in their transitions to adulthood were called positive development programs. These early programs typically focused on targeting one type of program behavior such as reducing drug use or delinquent behavior. However, these programs evolved over the decades whereby now these programs focus on a wide range of juvenile problems and also incorporate social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive developmental strategies into the programming models (Catalano et al., 2004).

Such programs also recognize the importance of social (e.g., peers) and environmental (e.g., poverty) factors, that impact juvenile development. For example, these programs seek to promote a wide range of objectives from bonding to building emotional competence, to

developing spirituality (Catalano et al., 2004). Given the broad spectrum of goals these positive development programs are aiming to achieve, it has resulted in not one “type” of program but rather a proliferation of many different programs across the United States. For example, programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Growing Healthy, Know Your Body, Children of Divorce, Life Skills Training, the Seattle Social Development Project, and Success for All aim to assist at-risk juveniles using different modalities. First developed in 1981, the Seattle Social Development Project, for instance, is a school-based intervention that uses a:

...risk-reduction and skill-development strategy to improve outcomes for participating children and youths. The program was guided theoretically by the social development model, which hypothesizes that youths who are provided with opportunities for greater involvement with their schools and families, who develop the competency or skills they need for fuller participation with their schools and families, and for whom skillful participation is constantly reinforced, ultimately develop strong bonds with their families and schools....

It combined teacher, child, and parent components with the goal of enhancing children’s bonding with their families and schools. Teachers were trained in proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative learning, while the students themselves were provided with direct instruction in interpersonal problem-solving skills and refusal skills to avoid problem behaviors. Parents were offered courses in child behavior management skills, academic support skills, and skills to reduce their children’s risk of drug use. (Promising Practices Network, 2013, p. 1).

Overall, these programs, despite their different program modalities, have been deemed by numerous researchers to be successful at meeting program objectives ranging from reductions in drug use, improving self-control, and improving interpersonal skills (Catalano et al., 2004).

A second type of programming that was first offered to juveniles in the 1970s and proliferated in the 1990s are Scared Straight Programs which attempt to deter offending. These are some of the most common programs offered to at-risk youth in the United States. These programs have juveniles tour prisons, meet with prisoners, and learn what life may be like if they begin to or continue to engage in crime. The programs may differ in name as well as how they operate across the nation. For instance, another related program called Wisetalk, operated by the United Community Action Network and run exclusively in Oregon, similarly relies on the premise of deterrence. Wisetalk locks up at-risk youth for one hour or more with 4-5 parolees to scare the youth from wanting to engage in crime.

Such deterrence-based programs are not unique to the United States. For instance, these programs are called a “day in prison” in Australia, “day visits” in the United Kingdom, and the “Ullersmo Project” in Norway. When reviewing the empirical studies that examined the effectiveness of these programs, all have been found to be unsuccessful—regardless of whether the program operated in the United States or elsewhere (Lundman, 1993; Lipsey 1992;

Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Finckenaue, 2000; Sherman et al. 1997). In fact, in a review of Scared Straight and similar programs in the United States, Petrosino et al. (2000) found that the programs, actually increased crime participation for those who participated. Further, the researchers concluded that such interventions were “more harmful to juveniles than doing nothing” (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2003, p. 41).

A third type of programming for juveniles is truancy interventions. Such interventions take place in schools, in communities, or a combination of the two (Dembo & Gullledge, 2009). In school-based interventions, fostering better student and teacher relationships and interactions along with reaching out to families is common. Community-based interventions pull together many community agencies that assist both the juvenile and his/her parent through access to counseling and support groups. Other truancy interventions may be court-based or law enforcement-based (Dembo & Gullledge, 2009). The interventions that are court-based require the juveniles and the parents to appear in court. After their appearance, the judge has to both agree that the juvenile will begin attending school and perhaps participate in classes. Law enforcement-based truancy programs are operated by law enforcement agencies whereby the juvenile truant is brought to the police station, processed by police officers, assessed by social service personnel, and then counseled by a social worker over a one-day period (Dembo & Gullledge, 2009). Overall, truancy programs have not been found to be successful, although lack of methodological rigor in previous evaluations makes it difficult to determine effectiveness.

### **Adult Programming**

A multitude of research has been published on the effectiveness of rehabilitative programs, specifically those that target criminogenic needs and risk factors, in reducing recidivism (see Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Andrews et al., 1990; Gendreau & Ross, 1979, Van Voorhis, Braswell, & Lester, 1997). Cognitive behavioral therapy, for example, has been identified as one effective treatment at reducing recidivism for offenders -- including sex offenders (see Antonowicz & Ross, 1994; Bahr, Masters, & Taylor, 2012; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Moster, Winuk, & Jeglic, 2008). Addiction treatment is another needed program for adult offenders. Therapeutic communities for the treatment of adult drug addicts are also beneficial for men and women (Petersilia, 2003). This treatment modality is one of the more widely used treatment styles for helping drug offenders both within and outside of prison (Zhang, Roberts, & McCollister, 2011). Numerous researchers have found support for therapeutic programming to assist drug offenders even for offenders who suffer from co-occurring problems such as multiple forms of mental illness (Inciardi, Martin, & Butzin, 2004; McKendrick et al., 2006; Van Stelle & Moberg, 2004). In particular, those therapeutic community programs that assist offenders both within prison and in the community upon release have been linked to lower rates of drug relapse and criminal recidivism (McCollister et al., 2003).

Employment training has been incorporated in adult correctional programming with the goal of providing offenders with the goal of providing marketable job skills to assist them in obtaining legal employment when they reintegrate back into their communities. Previous

research that examines the impact of various types of vocational educational programs on successfully reducing recidivism has been somewhat mixed (Bloom et al., 1994; Van Steele, Lidbury, & Moberg, 1995). That is, some researchers have found recidivism rates to actually increase for offenders participating in vocational education programs (see Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Van Steele, Lidbury, & Moberg, 1995).

A recent publication in Washington State has identified that 75 percent of all incarcerated offenders within the state are high school dropouts (“PAO Recognizes,” 2012). Thus, enhancing the education levels of offenders is critical, and education has also been recognized to have an impact on recidivism rates within the criminal justice literature. As an example, in a comparison of 60 male and female prisoners who had earned their associate or baccalaureate degrees while incarcerated to those who did not participate in such an educational program in North Carolina, Stevens and Ward (1997) found that those offenders who earned an advanced degree had lower recidivism rates. Further, the researchers found that those offenders who had earned degrees also reported higher incomes. At minimum, the continued implementation of basic high school education within prison and as part of other community corrections programs has been deemed to be extremely important to offender adjustment and success upon release.

Restorative justice programming is yet another form of programming for adult offenders. Restorative justice, an alternative way of “doing justice,” centers around recognizing crime as harm and repairing the damage caused by that harm through non-adversarial processes that acknowledge the needs, interests, and responsibilities of offenders, victims, community members, and governmental agencies. A growing body of empirical research has emerged over the past thirty years, and in recent years restorative justice has achieved the status of an “evidence-based” practice that offers promising findings (Bazemore & Maruna, 2009). Variations of victim-offender mediation, victim-offender reconciliation programs, and victim-offender conferencing have emerged that extend the concept of encounter and mediation to meetings between surrogate victims and incarcerated offenders in institutional corrections contexts.

For example, a program developed by Howard Zehr in Graterford prison in Pennsylvania in the early 1990s involved encounters between lifers and family members of homicide victims interested in engaging in dialogue and asking questions of offenders. The program provided a forum for victims who could not meet with the offenders in their particular cases to ask questions of surrogate offenders. The purpose of the program was to foster healing for victims and develop an understanding of the impact of the crime by the offender. Other programs involve bringing together unrelated victims, offenders, and citizens in prison settings to read educational material on restorative justice and engage in “storytelling” and seminar-style discussions about the impact of crime, offender accountability, the needs of participants, and concrete ways to engage in the restorative process (Helfgott et al., 2000; Helfgott, Lovell, & Lawrence, 2002). Restorative justice is increasingly being applied to correctional settings involving adult violent offenders.

Overall, the evaluation research conducted on juvenile and adult programs has often utilized recidivism rates as a measure of program success. The laser focus on obtaining such



rates has resulted in researchers *not* exploring qualitative methods to examine alternative, yet also meaningful, understandings of program success. That is, the stories, thoughts, opinions, and experiences of those in the program are rarely, if ever, captured. This is unfortunate as the narrative of program participants is a source of rich information not only about the experience of clients in the program but also about the personal life journey that led the client to the program in the first place.

### ***Criminology and Crime Desistance***

The criminal career approach put forth by Blumstein et al. (1986) posits that all dimensions of offending should be examined such as onset, desistance, deceleration, and escalation. This approach implores researchers to examine multiple facets of offending across the life course in order to obtain a better understanding of offender behavior. While the criminal career approach does not require the examination of offending behavior through the use of only narrative research, it has certainly provided the foundation for the use of narratives to explore these dimensions. Several criminological theories have emerged that examine distinct offending dimensions, such as onset and desistance, using narratives.

One dimension of criminal offending, onset, has been explored by many criminological theories including feminist theories. Feminist theories offer a framework for the importance of examining offending behavior utilizing qualitative research. Through interviews with female offenders, one of the more prominent feminist perspectives on offending, referred to as gendered pathways, has emerged. This perspective contends that the pathways to offending for females are distinctly different from male pathways into offending (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 2004; Daly, 1992). For instance, results from qualitative research have indicated that prior sexual abuse and physical abuse are catalysts for the onset of offending patterns as well as the persistence of offending patterns for females (Belknap, 2007; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Gunnison & McCartan, 2005).

Another criminological perspective that has emerged, which examines the desistance dimension of offending, is age-graded theory of crime proposed by Sampson and Laub in 1993. Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory argues two points: 1) childhood antisocial behaviors are linked to a host of adult problems, and 2) changes, or turning points, in adult social bonds can change offending trajectories. These changing bonds can increase an individual's chances of persisting or desisting from crime. That is, if individuals are able to develop quality and prosocial bonds and build social capital, they are more likely to transition out of prior criminal offending patterns.

Sampson and Laub (1992, 1993) have made significant contributions to understanding criminal behavior from the life-course perspective using qualitative methods to supplement existing quantitative data. The authors contend that a qualitative content analysis allows the respondents' perceptions about past events to be considered when studying turning points and life trajectories. Sampson and Laub (1993), utilizing the Gluecks (1950) data of 500 male delinquents and 500 male non-delinquents, determined that life events such as military service can be a catalyst for offender change away from crime. One person reported, "In the Navy I

was thrown in with guys from all over the country; some of them were well educated and had good backgrounds. I began to see that my thinking was way out of line and that I was probably wrong. I began to do things their way and things have gone well ever since” (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 222). For this person, desistance from crime was facilitated by involvement in the military, which exposed him to other individuals that were unlike him and removed him from an environment that likely had many criminogenic influences.

### ***Narrative Research***

Numerous researchers have examined the narrative accounts of offending and victimization and, in many cases, researchers have utilized the grounded theory approach (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010; Geiger, 2006; Giordano, Cernkovich, & Holland, 2006; Oleson, 2004; Rice, Dirks, & Exline, 2009; Sampson & Laub, 1993). For example, Draucker and Martsolf (2010) used holistic-content, holistic-form, and cross-case analysis to evaluate life history narratives of male and female adult survivors of sexual violence. In their study, the authors identified meaningful subgroups among a diverse sample of individuals exposed to sexual violence. The life course typology created by Draucker and Martsolf (2010) in this study demonstrates how individuals who have a similar experience of sexual violence could develop very different life course trajectories depending on their individual perception of their life events. Other researchers have performed narrative examinations of persistent thieves, violent men, and the struggles of ex-offenders reintegrating back into their communities that have culminated into books (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013; Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2008; Shover, 1996).

In 2006, Geiger conducted a study of adult female offenders in Israel using personal narratives. Geiger (2006) interviewed the female offenders separately utilizing an interview guide and a semi-structured format. The analyses revealed common themes of resistance and varying strategies utilized by the women to struggle against the control and abuse they had endured throughout their life course. The author concluded that the narratives of the offenders in her study demonstrate how “female offenders’ engagement in crime, drugs, and prostitution often represent the last expression of resistance against severe socioeconomic deprivation, physical, sexual abuse, and other forms of perceived injustice in the hands of criminal justice experts” (Geiger, 2006, p. 592).

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the IF Project process evaluation is to contribute to the literature by providing descriptive information about an innovative crime prevention program that spans and incorporates law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, and schools; provide the IF Project staff with a “tool kit” describing the program for replication purposes; provide initial pilot methodology and data to evaluate the effectiveness of the IF Project in order to determine the most appropriate measures to evaluate if and how the program is achieving its intended goals; and to examine the themes articulated in the IF Project essays in order to provide insight into the life trajectories of incarcerated individuals.



The process evaluation employs a mixed methods approach including the use of qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation includes pre- and post- surveys administered to IF Project adult and youth workshop participants held at the Washington State Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), the Washington State Reformatory (WSR), and juvenile detention facilities and schools, post-surveys of participants in the monthly IF Project information sessions held at the WCCW, and content analysis of “IF” Project essays. Process evaluation provides documentation and analysis of early development and implementation of a program assessing the degree to which strategies were implemented as planned and preliminary data on whether or not expected outcome was produced (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1997).

Mixed methods designs are commonly used in criminal justice research as a means to combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches in program evaluations and the use of such research designs has proliferated in the field over the past several decades (Bachman & Schutt, 2011; Feilzer, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For example, Abrams, Shannon, and Sangalang (2008) utilized a mixed method research design to examine a six-week transitional living program for 83 male and female incarcerated youth offenders. In this study, the researchers examined recidivism data for the youth post-release, the role of child protective services involvement and its link to recidivism, and interviewed youth and various staff members.

Other mixed method program evaluations have explored interventions for sexual assault survivors, victim service programs, alternative sanctioning for drug offenders, the impact of college education provided to incarcerated women, and protective order processes for domestic violence victims in urban and rural communities (Campbell, Patterson, Bybee, 2011; Gainey, Steen, & Engen, 2005; Logan, Shannon, & Walker, 2005; Torre & Fine, 2005; Yun, Swindell, & Kercher, 2009). Such evaluations have collected and examined data that crossed several facets of the criminal justice system (i.e., police, courts, and corrections) and the results gleaned have been extremely useful in providing a comprehensive summary and overview of the program (e.g., strengths, weaknesses, success). In sum, a mixed method approach to program evaluation is utilized “to conduct rigorous multi-dimension research” (Brent & Kraska, 2010, p. 412). This approach is particularly suited for a process evaluation of a program like the IF Project that incorporates multiple entities and includes a range of different interventions and outcome goals that are not measurable through quantitative methods alone.

The findings from this process evaluation and essay analysis provide documentation and analysis of the development and implementation of the IF Project, preliminary pilot findings regarding the degree to which the IF Project achieves its intended goals of intervention, self-reflection, and self-efficacy - and findings regarding perceptions of adult and youth writing workshop participants regarding factors they believe are associated with crime persistence and desistance.

# PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S IF PROJECT

## CHAPTER 2

### Research Design

#### Project Goals

The IF Project is a crime desistance and prevention program designed to help people in prison change their lives, succeed upon release to the community, and give back by helping to alter the path of youth to prevent future crime. The program targets a predominantly poor and marginalized adult and youth incarcerated population and youth community population with a central focus on reconciliation of relationships, reparation of harm, and service to others.

The primary purpose of the IF Project process evaluation is to answer questions surrounding the implementation and delivery of services through the IF Project such as those centered on who is eligible for such services, what the services actually are, and how they impact those who receive them. A full comprehensive evaluation of the IF Project focused on outcome-based or traditional measures of program effectiveness (such as recidivism reduction) requires the initial step of conducting a process evaluation to provide a comprehensive portrait of the program and its components.

This main goal of the process evaluation was to develop a comprehensive portrait of the program with a focus on the following program elements and research questions:

1. Outline and analysis of the IF Project's main goals – *What are the main goals of the IF Project?*
2. Outline of the process and delivery of services of the IF Project Workshops and Information sessions – *What occurs in the adult prison-based workshops and youth workshops and the adult prison-based monthly information sessions held at WCCW? (i.e., What are the structure, components, and content of the IF Project; What would an IF Project "Tool-Kit" look like for the purpose of future replication and evaluation?)*
3. Descriptive analysis of the IF Project components -- *What is the immediate initial general impact of the IF Project adult and youth Workshops and monthly WCCW information sessions on participants?*

In addition to these standard process evaluation elements, this study incorporated analysis of IF Project Essays as an additional component of the research design. The goals of the inclusion of the IF Project Essay analysis were to:

4. Identify the nature of the IF Project essay content – *How do participants respond to the IF Question?*
5. Identify factors that IF Project participants attribute as pathways to crime persistence and desistance – *What do IF Project participants identify as the "someone" or "something" that could have been said or done to change the path that led them here (to delinquency, crime, and/or, incarceration)?*

To answer these questions, the evaluation incorporated a mixed-methods research design including the following methods:

- Pre/Post self-report surveys of IF participants in prison and community essay-writing workshops
- Post self-report surveys of monthly prison informational topic meetings
- Observation of prison essay-writing workshops
- Content analysis of IF Project essays
- Focus Groups with IF Project participants

## **Method**

### ***Process Evaluation***

To answer the three process questions and two essay analysis questions, information was compiled by working with the Seattle Police Department IF coordinator to gather program materials and history for the purposes of developing a “tool-kit,” administration of self-report pre/post surveys to IF project youth and adult workshop participants, administration of self-report post-surveys to adults who participated in the monthly WCCW information sessions, observations and focus groups with workshop participants, and content analysis of a sample of IF Project Workshop essays.

A preliminary compilation of materials and research design was developed in collaboration with undergraduate and graduate students and Criminal Justice faculty during Winter quarter 2012. An internship position was created that involved an undergraduate criminal justice student intern who worked with Detective Bogucki to prepare and catalog materials. A graduate student team in CRJS 512 Qualitative Methods was assigned the task of proposing qualitative research design ideas as a service-learning project and worked with the undergraduate intern to prepare for the study. Proposals were submitted to the Seattle University Institutional Review Board and the Washington State Department of Corrections Research Review Committee. Seattle University Institutional Review Board approval and Washington State Department of Corrections Research Review approval were granted prior to the inception of the study.

### **Participants**

Study participants were IF Project workshop and information session participants who consented to the study in adult correctional facilities, juvenile detention facilities, and King County Prosecuting Attorney truancy program locations that granted permission for the research study to be conducted from September 2012 – July 2013. The format of the workshops differed in terms of time frame for different populations and contexts including a four-hour juvenile workshop, a shorter two-three hour juvenile workshop, and a six-eight hour adult workshop. Workshops included in the study period were:

## Youth Workshops

- Skagit County Juvenile Detention Facility-Mount Vernon, Washington
- Denny Juvenile Detention-Everett, Washington
- Clark County Juvenile Center-Vancouver, Washington
- King County Prosecuting Attorney Truancy workshops-Seattle, Washington

## Adult Workshops

- Washington State Reformatory writing workshop
- Washington Corrections Center for Women writing workshop

For the essay analysis, individual essays were the focus of analysis. Thus, each case represents an essay, rather than a person. Essays included in the analysis were generated from writing workshops conducted during 2010-2013 in Washington correctional facilities. These do not include the essays generated during the first wave of workshops and subsequent essay writing completed and then collected by workshop participants (which was a central component of the start of the IF project). Essays were not included in the analysis if: the material was not understandable, either as a result of unclear presentation of writing or content; the essay was typed (and thus not completed during the workshop session), or if the documents provided did not include a clear response to the “IF” question posed. The latter could have occurred because in adult workshops many other writing exercises were conducted and those may have been included in the documents provided to the researchers but were missing the key essay presenting a response to the specific essay prompt used in these analyses. It is possible that the same person completed more than one essay when participating in different workshops.

## Instruments

Pre/post surveys were constructed for the youth and adult workshops utilizing questions from assessment instruments previously used in IF Project workshops and the truancy evaluation conducted in 2012 (Walker et.al., 2012) to assess IF Project participants’ experience in the workshops, whether or not they wanted to be at the workshop, views about family relationships, their neighborhood and background, hopes and goals for the future, and beliefs about their own ability to make behavioral and life changes. Post-surveys were constructed to measure the experience of the IF Project information sessions. Youth and adult survey background questions varied with respect to the tense of some of the questions – e.g., adults were asked if they had a positive role model while growing up while the youth were asked if they have a positive role model. The youth survey was comprised of 42 questions including Yes/No, open-ended, and Likert-Scale questions on both the pre- and post-surveys. The adult survey was comprised of 56 Yes/No, open-ended, and Likert-Scale questions on the pre-survey and 42 on the post-survey.

The workshop surveys for both youth and adults included three sections of Likert-scale questions asking IF Participants the degree to which they agree with statements regarding: 1) Hope and belief in ability to achieve goals such as “I will graduate from high school,” “I will finish college,” “I will get a job I really want;” 2) Pro-sociality and accountability such as “It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then,” “I don’t owe the world anything,” “I really care about how my actions might affect others,” “If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else’s;” and 3) Self-efficacy such as “I really want to make changes in my life,” “I have already started to make some changes in my life,” and “I’m not just thinking about changing my life, I’m doing something about it.”

Post-surveys for the monthly IF Project informational sessions held at WCCW were constructed to assess IF Project participants’ satisfaction with the monthly sessions and to solicit feedback on suggestions for improvement and future topics of participant interest. The survey was comprised of five questions including a combination of Yes/No and open-ended questions such as “Did you find this meeting helpful?,” “What was the most beneficial aspect of this meeting?” and “What are some topics you would like to discuss in future meetings?” (See Appendix A-C for survey instruments).

### Procedure and Analysis

Data were collected from September 2012 – July 2013. During the data collection period IF Project participants completed pre/post surveys in writing workshops and a post-survey following the informational topic monthly meetings. IF Project staff explained to participants that the evaluation was being conducted by Seattle University researchers to provide information about the program components, passed out consent forms, and told participants that they were free not to complete the surveys. Pre/post surveys were identified by number not name. The pre/post surveys were administered at the beginning and end of the workshop sessions and at the end of the monthly informational topic sessions. The surveys took approximately five minutes to complete.

Survey data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics software by student research assistants. Descriptive analyses were conducted on the nominal variables. T-tests were conducted on Likert-scale items included on both the pre/post surveys.

Focus groups were conducted immediately after workshops by the principal investigator, a co-investigator, or the student research assistant with those willing to participate. Four focus groups were conducted – two with incarcerated adult participants (one in the men’s prison and one in the women’s prison) and two with youth workshop participants in detention facilities. Focus group participants completed a separate consent form indicating their consent to participate in the focus group. Focus group questions were:

1. *What did you get out of participating in the “IF” Project workshop?*
2. *What was the experience like for you?*
3. *How has this program directly impacted you?*
4. *How satisfied were you with the overall experience?*
5. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

## ***IF Project Essay Analysis***

The purpose of the essay analysis was to identify key themes evident in juvenile and adult responses to IF project questions in order to reveal insight into the individual process generated through the essays and to identify stated precursors or influences to participant pathways toward crime and incarceration. The content analysis of the IF Project essays was included in the analysis as an indicator of both IF Project process and outcome. Essay-writing is a major component of the IF Project and a mechanism by which the IF Project participants are challenged to examine the path that led them to crime. Thus, the act of essay writing and themes addressed can also be seen as an indicator of success -- with the act of writing thoughts and feelings about the factors that contributed to their path a step toward healing with potential benefits in terms of creating opportunities for constructive and pro-social adaptation to the prison environment.

The IF Project essays have been collected since the inception of the program in 2008. Program participants were informed that the essays may be used in media and web publications of the program and a segment of the authors of the essays signed a consent form for the essays to be used for media purposes. There was no promise of privacy or limited use and participants were instructed that the essays would potentially be made public in news media outlets and other public contexts. Some of the essays have names, others have no identifiers. While essays with names or other identifiers were permitted to be used in media and web publications based on the consent given for that purpose, all names included on essays were redacted prior to being given to researchers.

For this project, essays written by those confined in correctional facilities were analyzed. This excludes the essays written by those participating in community-based IF project programs such as truancy workshops. After the essays were completed, program staff removed individual identifiers and scanned the essays for distribution to the research team. These were sorted according to date and type of workshop and uploaded into Atlas.ti qualitative data management software as primary documents for analysis. Adult essays are also categorized according to type of prison (men's or women's).

Essays included in the analysis were those that present a response to the specific IF question – *“If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?”* (and the juvenile variation) from juvenile and adult workshops. Following Charmaz's (2006) constructivist approach to grounded theory, content analyses of the documents followed an inductive approach -- developing analytic codes from the data rather than from pre-determined hypotheses in order to determine themes in the participants' life-course trajectories.

Analyses began with initial coding in the form of line-by-line coding which requires the researcher to “stay close to the data” in order to select *quotations* that identify categories and processes (Charmaz, 2006). First, four members of the research team individually open-coded a subset of ten adult essays and twenty youth essays and met to discuss the broad themes that emerged. With these broad categories in mind, an individual coder continued the coding process starting first with line-by-line coding to allow for more nuanced subcategories to

emerge, given the rich detail of each essay, and then through focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) in which the most significant codes revealed in the initial coding phase are used to categorize the remaining data. This required sticking close to the data, allowing themes across the essays to emerge, and continuously comparing data by checking segments within each code for convergence and recoding as necessary. Finally, individual codes became subcategories of larger code “families” as part of the theoretical coding process (Charmaz, 2006 citing Glaser, 1978). Memo writing facilitated analysis of the data and attendant codes throughout the project.



# PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S "IF" PROJECT

## CHAPTER 3

### Results

The IF Project Workshop pre/post survey was completed by a total of 286 IF Project participants including 68 adult inmates (45 female inmates from the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), 22 male inmates from the Washington State Reformatory (WSR), and 218 youth from Northwest juvenile detention facilities and truancy programs). Observations and focus groups with workshop participants were conducted at one of each of the facilities (men's prison, women's prison, juvenile detention facilities). Monthly information session post-surveys were completed by 74 inmates who participated in the monthly WCCW IF Project informational meetings. The IF Project Essay analysis included analysis of 331 essays (160 youth and 171 adult) generated from writing workshops conducted during 2010-2013 in Washington correctional and juvenile detention facilities.

Because the adult and youth workshops differed in terms of workshop format (e.g., youth workshops were co-facilitated by formerly incarcerated adult IF Project staff), youth and adult survey responses are analyzed and presented separately. Survey data were analyzed using SPSS. Basic descriptives (frequencies, means, standard deviations) were conducted on all survey items. T-tests were conducted for Likert-Scale questions that were included on pre- and post-surveys. Observation and focus group findings were used to generate information to develop the IF Project "tool-kit" and to provide feedback from IF participants to IF Project staff for future program development. Results from the participant observation and focus groups are summarized.

#### Process Analysis Findings

##### *IF Project Component and Development of a Program "Tool-Kit"*

Review of program materials, interviews with IF Project staff, and observation of workshops provided the basis for development of a program overview or "Tool-Kit" describing IF Project purpose, goals, and staff roles. The "Tool-Kit" is presented in Appendix B.

##### *IF Project Workshop Pre/Post Survey Results*

Background and demographic data for adult survey participants are provided in Table 1 and for youth survey participants in Table 2. The 68 adult participants were 66.2% (n=45) female and 32.4% (n=22) male. The 218 youth participants were 31.2% (n=68) female and 61.5% male (n=134). Most were Caucasian (52.9%/n=36 adults and 43.6%/n=95 youth). See Tables 1 and 2 for complete background descriptive data. One key item of focus in the background information was the question: *Do you want to be here today?* Results show that of the 99% (n=67) of the adult participants and 53% (n=115) of the youth indicated that they





wanted to be at the IF workshop. This is expected given that the program is voluntary for adult participants but is required in most but not all of the youth facilities. However, the finding is of interest in interpreting the pre/post survey results.

<b>Table 1. Adult Survey Descriptives (N = 68)</b>		
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>Mean (Sd)</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	45 (66.2)	
Male	22 (32.4)	
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>		
Caucasian	36 (52.9)	
African-American	10 (14.7)	
Latino/Latina or Hispanic	7 (10.3)	
Asian/Pacific Islander	1 (1.5)	
Native-American/Alaskan Native	2 (2.9)	
Other	9 (13.2)	
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
In a Relationship	29 (43.3)	
Single	26 (38.8)	
Other	12 (17.9)	
<b>Living Situation</b>		
Homeless	6 (2.7)	
Living in Home with Family**	178 (81.6)	
Incarcerated	30 (13.7)	
<b>Employment Status*</b>		
Employed Part Time	11 (16.4)	
Employed Full Time	17 (25.4)	
<b>Want to be Present at Workshop?</b>		
Yes	67 (98.5)	
<b>Current Personal/Emotional Problem?</b>		
Ask for help? (Yes)	40 (58.8)	
Resources Available? (Yes)	60 (88.2)	
Positive Role Model? (Yes)	61 (89.7)	
<b>Highest Grade Completed</b>		
8th Grade or Less	3 (4.5)	
No High School Diploma	4 (6.0)	
High School	1 (1.5)	
GED	20 (29.9)	

Technical School	1 (1.5)	
Some College	25 (37.3)	
College Diploma	8 (11.9)	
Graduate/Professional School	1 (1.5)	
Other	4 (6.0)	
<b>Illegal Drug Use</b>		
Yes	53 (79.1)	
Average Age of First Use		13 (3.07)
<b>Previously Incarcerated</b>		
Average Number of Previous Incarcerations		18.52 (9.18)
Average Age of First Arrest		34.85 (9.77)
<b>Average Age</b>		
<b>Current Sentence (Months) by Crime Category***</b>		
Violent	28	161.13 (314.442)
Property	12	52.29 (21.571)
Drugs	6	71.83 (56.428)
Other	5	65.40 (35.204)
Murder/Attempt	14	775.79 (707.06)
Total	64	257.82 (469.577)
<p><b>Notes:</b> *Non-mutually exclusive categories/multiple response categories. **Living in home includes with two parents, one parent, foster family, other family member, or other categories. Not all cells equal 100% due to a small number of missing values, rounding, and exclusion. ***1. "Violent" category includes arson; 2. If multiple categories were reported, violent offenses were primary, followed by drug-related offenses, then property-related offenses. 3. "Other" category includes exploitation of a minor, violation of no contact order, VUFA Firearms, and two missing values.</p>		

<b>Table 2. Youth Survey Descriptives (N = 218)</b>		
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>Mean (Sd)</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	68 (31.2)	
Male	134 (61.5)	
Unknown	16 (7.3)	
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>		
Caucasian	95 (43.6)	
African-American	29 (13.3)	
Latino/Latina or Hispanic	35 (16.1)	

Asian/Pacific Islander	3 (1.4)	
Native-American/Alaskan Native	16 (7.3)	
Other	27 (12.4)	
<b>Juvenile Court Involvement</b>		
Yes	141 (64.4)	
<b>Living Situation</b>		
Homeless	6 (2.7)	
Living in Home with Family**	178 (81.6)	
Incarcerated	30 (13.7)	
<b>Want to be Present at Workshop?</b>		
YES	115 (52.8)	
<b>Employment Status*</b>		
Employed	8 (3.7)	
Student	139 (63.8)	
Not employed but looking	69 (31.5)	
<b>Want to be Present at Workshop?</b>		
YES	115 (52.8)	
<b>Current Personal/Emotional Problem?</b>		
Ask for help? (Yes)	96 (44)	
Resources Available? (Yes)	170 (78)	
Positive Role Model? (Yes)	159 (72.9)	
<b>Currently Attending School</b>		
Yes	144 (70.2)	
<b>Average Education</b>		
Attending		9.49 (1.84)
Dropouts		8.78 (2.09)
<b>Average Age</b>		
		15.57 (1.45)
<b>Notes:</b> *Non-mutually exclusive categories/multiple response categories. **Living in home includes with two parents, one parent, foster family, other family member, or other categories. Not all cells equal 100% due to a small number of missing values, rounding, and exclusion.		

A set of 20 items was included on the adult workshop pre/post surveys to measure self-reported change in attitude regarding hope for the future in terms of completing short and long-term goals and self-efficacy in terms of confidence in one's own ability to engage in prosocial behaviors. Of the 20 items included in the pre/post surveys, participant self-report on 6 (30%) of the items significantly changed after completing the workshop with the strongest change in items measuring ability to avoid engaging in antisocial behaviors: "I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights" ( $t(60)=-3.87, p<.001$ ) and "I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger" ( $t(62)=-3.16, p<.001$ ). Other items that showed significant

change pre/post were “I will graduate from high school” ( $t(37)=-2.52, p<.05$ ), “I will finish college” ( $t=-2.73, p<.01$ ), and “I have a responsibility to make the world a better place” ( $t(63)=-2.26, p<.05$ ). Table 3 shows the pre/post means, t-values, and levels of significance for each of the 20 items with the 6 items that significantly differed pre/post highlighted in red.

A set of 16 satisfaction items was included in the adult workshop post-tests to measure the degree to which the participants were satisfied with the IF Project Workshop experience. Adult workshop participants rated 13 (81%) of the 16 items, 4 or above on a 5 point Likert-scale indicating that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with each of the statements such as “I would like to participate in future workshops” ( $M=4.8, SD=.47, n=66$ ), “The speakers were interesting” ( $M=4.58, SD=1.76, n=66$ ), “I am glad I participated in this workshop” ( $M=4.79, SD=.51, n=66$ ), and “I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today” ( $M=4.65, SD=.62, n=66$ ), “I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life” ( $M=4.67, SD=.59, n=66$ ) and “Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life” ( $M=4.53, SD=.85, n=66$ ), “I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop” ( $M=4.53, SD=.79, n=66$ ), and “Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective” ( $M=4.11, SD=1.86, n=66$ ). Of the 16 satisfaction items, the adults rated lowest in agreement: “I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before” ( $M=3.68, SD=2.05, n=66$ ), “I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop” ( $M=3.70, SD=2.95, n=66$ ), and “Participating in the workshop helped me to heal my past” ( $M=3.76, SD=1.91, n=66$ ). Table 4 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation for the 16 satisfaction items with those that were rated 4 and above highlighted in red.

**Table 3. Adult survey items pre-post analysis (N=68)**

Item	Pre		Post		(df) t
	M (SD)	% miss	M (SD)	% miss	
<b>I will graduate from high school (if not already)</b>	3.88 (1.67)	29.4	4.50 (1.40)	32.4	(37) -2.52*
<b>I will finish college</b>	4.02 (1.41)	5.9	4.43 (0.92)	10.3	(60) -2.73**
<b>I will get a job I really want</b>	4.21 (1.12)	2.9	4.24 (1.07)	8.8	(61) 0.30
<b>I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights</b>	3.95 (1.22)	2.9	4.50 (0.69)	8.8	(60) -3.87***
<b>If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them</b>	3.32 (1.27)	2.9	3.98 (1.05)	7.4	(61) -4.45***
<b>I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger</b>	4.01 (1.19)	1.5	4.38 (0.98)	5.9	(62) -3.16***
<b>If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them</b>	2.88	-	2.48	8.8	(61) 1.87



	(1.42)		(1.39)		
I can get along with most people	4.37 (0.75)	-	4.40 (0.68)	4.4	(64) -0.31
It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then	2.03 (1.40)	-	1.90 (1.32)	7.4	(62) 0.31
If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's	2.01 (1.37)	-	1.78 (1.30)	5.9	(63) 1.33
I don't owe the world anything	1.97 (1.36)	7.4	1.83 (1.34)	7.4	(58) 1.01
What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another	1.53 (1.13)	2.9	1.45 (1.08)	5.9	(61) 0.65
I really care about how my actions might affect others	4.27 (1.23)	1.5	4.63 (0.92)	7.4	(61) -1.86
I have a responsibility to make the world a better place	4.22 (1.14)	-	4.42 (0.99)	5.9	(63) -2.26*
I really want to make changes in my life	4.88 (0.49)	11.8	4.89 (.041)	7.4	(54) 0.00
Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem	3.44 (1.38)	13.2	3.13 (1.45)	10.3	(51) 1.29
If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse	3.63 (1.48)	13.2	3.73 (1.57)	.4	(53) -0.74
I have already started making some changes in my life	4.66 (0.73)	13.2	4.76 (0.50)	8.8	(52) -0.53
Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people	3.85 (1.31)	13.2	3.71 (1.43)	8.8	(53) 1.22
I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it	4.75 (0.57)	11.8	4.92 (0.27)	7.4	(54) -1.94
<b>Notes:</b> ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05. Coding for all scaled items: level of agreement with the item statements; 1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = some; 4 = pretty much; 5 = very much.					

**For adults, 30% (6 of 20) items showed significant difference pre/post**



**Table 4. Adult survey items pre-post analysis (N=66).**

Item	M (SD)	% miss
I would like to participate in future workshops	4.80 (.47)	2.9
I am glad I participated in this workshop	4.79 (.51)	2.9
I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life	4.67 (.59)	2.9
I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today	4.65 (.62)	2.9
The speakers were interesting	4.58 (1.76)	2.9
The workshop taught me something about myself	4.55 (.81)	2.9
The group discussion was useful	4.53 (.77)	2.9
Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life	4.53 (.85)	2.9
I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop	4.53 (.79)	2.9
I could relate to the speakers	4.35 (1.81)	2.9
I am more likely to ask for help after participating in the workshop	4.27 (.89)	2.9
The workshop was helpful	4.23 (.54)	2.9
Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective	4.11 (1.86)	2.9
Participating in the workshop helped me heal my past	3.76 (1.91)	2.9
I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop	3.70 (2.95)	2.9
I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before	3.68 (2.05)	2.9

**Notes:** Level of agreement with the item statements; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

**For adults, 81% (13 of 16 satisfaction items were rated above 4 on a 5 point scale)**

The same set of 20 items was included in the youth workshop pre/post surveys to measure self-reported change in attitude regarding hope for the future in terms of completing short and long-term goals and self-efficacy in terms of confidence in one’s own ability to engage in pro-social behaviors. Of the 20 items included in the youth pre/post surveys, participant self-report on 15 (75%) of the items significantly changed after completing the workshop with the strongest change in items measuring ability to avoid engaging in antisocial behaviors: “I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights” ( $t(191)=-2.93, p<.001$ ) and “I don’t need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger” ( $t(190)=-2.70, p<.001$ ). Other items that showed significant change pre/post were “I will finish college” ( $t(189)=-3.60, p<.001$ ), and “I have a responsibility to make the world a better place” ( $t(189)=-4.40, p<.001$ ). Table 5 shows the pre/post means, t-values, and levels of significance for each of the 20 items with the 15 items that significantly differed pre/post highlighted in red.

A set of 16 satisfaction items was also included on the youth workshop post-tests to measure the degree to which the participants were satisfied with the IF Project Workshop

experience. Youth workshop participants rated 8 (50%) of the 16 items, 4 or above on a 5 point Likert-scale indicating that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with each of the statements such as “The speakers were interesting” ( $M=4.52, SD=1.15, n=218$ ), “I am glad I participated in this workshop” ( $M=4.16, SD=1.35, n=66$ ), and “I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today” ( $M=4.13, SD=.869, n=218$ ), “I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life” ( $M=4.08, SD=.92, n=218$ ) and “Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life” ( $M=4.07, SD=1.30, n=218$ ). Unlike the adults, the youth were less in agreement with the items “I would like to participate in future workshops” ( $M=3.72, SD=1.73, n=218$ ), “I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop” ( $M=3.64, SD=1.86, n=218$ ), and “Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective” ( $M=3.77, SD=1.11, n=218$ ). Of the 16 satisfaction items, the youth rated lowest in agreement: “Participating in the workshop helped me to heal my past” ( $M=2.97, SD=1.50, n=218$ ), “I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before” ( $M=2.63, SD=2.54, n=218$ ), and “I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop” and ( $M=3.00, SD=1.86, n=218$ ). Table 6 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation for the 16 satisfaction items with those that were rated 4 and above highlighted in red.

**Table 5. Youth survey items pre-post analysis (N=218).**

Item	Pre		Post		(df) t
	M (SD)	% miss	M (SD)	% miss	
I will graduate from high school	3.73 (1.45)	6.4	3.80 (1.37)	6.0	(191) -0.98
I will finish college	3.25 (1.45)	7.8	3.49 (1.35)	6.4	(189) -3.60***
I will get a job I really want	3.68 (1.23)	6.0	4.01 (1.03)	5.0	(193) -4.21***
I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights	3.31 (1.28)	6.9	3.54 (1.23)	5.0	(191) -2.93***
If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them	2.62 (1.30)	7.8	3.02 (1.29)	7.3	(184) -4.82***
I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger	3.07 (1.22)	7.3	3.35 (1.26)	5.5	(190) -2.70***
If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them	3.70 (1.31)	6.9	3.52 (1.35)	6.0	(191) 1.57
I can get along with most people	3.94 (0.99)	6.0	3.98 (0.99)	6.4	(191) -0.52
It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then	2.59 (1.34)	6.9	2.54 (1.26)	7.3	(188) 0.00
If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's	3.25 (1.38)	7.3	3.03 (1.40)	8.3	(185) 2.62**
I don't owe the world anything	2.78 (1.45)	7.8	2.53 (1.33)	8.3	(184) 2.78**
What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another	2.22 (1.30)	6.4	2.22 (1.29)	7.8	(187) 0.05

I really care about how my actions might affect others	3.15 (1.21)	6.9	3.44 (1.22)	7.3	(187) -3.23***
I have a responsibility to make the world a better place	2.77 (1.35)	6.9	3.18 (1.31)	6.4	(189) -4.40***
I really want to make changes in my life	3.94 (1.21)	6.4	4.05 (1.10)	30.3	(138) -2.91***
Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem	2.93 (1.38)	6.9	3.07 (1.40)	30.3	(137) -2.96***
If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse	3.47 (1.46)	6.0	3.60 (1.27)	30.3	(139) -4.20***
I have already started making some changes in my life	3.42 (1.18)	7.3	3.61 (1.12)	29.8	(137) -2.57*
Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people	3.05 (1.34)	9.2	3.15 (1.29)	30.7	(133) -2.22*
I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it	3.42 (1.32)	6.4	3.63 (1.25)	29.8	(139) -3.66***

**Notes:** \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05. Coding for all scaled items: level of agreement with the item statements; 1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = some; 4 = pretty much; 5 = very much.

**For youth, 50% (8 of 16) satisfaction items were rated above 4 on a 5 point scale)**

**Table 6. Youth survey items pre-post analysis (N=218)**

<i>Item</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>% miss</i>
The speakers were interesting	4.52 (1.15)	.9
I am glad I participated in this workshop	4.16 (1.35)	.9
The workshop was helpful	4.13 (1.52)	.9
I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today	4.13 (.869)	.9
I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life	4.08 (.92)	.9
Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life	4.07 (1.30)	.9
I could relate to the speakers	4.04 (1.61)	.9
The group discussion was useful	4.00 (1.56)	.9
The workshop taught me something about myself	3.95 (3.9)	.9
Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective	3.77 (1.11)	.9
I would like to participate in future workshops	3.71 (1.73)	.9
I am more likely to ask for help after participating in the workshop	3.64 (1.86)	.9
I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop	3.56 (1.86)	.9
I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop	3.00 (1.86)	.9
I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before	2.63 (2.54)	.9



**For youth, 75% (15 of 20) items showed significant difference pre/post**

## Youth Survey Results - Exploratory Factor Analysis

The youth survey data analyses were conducted in order to address the effectiveness of the IF Project workshops in aiding individual formation of healthy behaviors/thoughts. The results assembled from this survey process are presented below, along with some brief considerations to be made in light of the findings. As described in the previous section, the IF Project pre- and post-surveys contain three distinct sets of questions under the section "General Questions." Each question set was crafted with the intent to measure a single underlying latent concept: 1) Hope regarding career/education/future (Q. 37-39); 2) Pro-social Thinking (Q. 41-50); and 3) Self Efficacy/Possibilities for Change; (Q. 51-56) An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to validate the survey instrument overall, and was carried out for each set of questions in order to identify how many components were present in the data and to identify any items that were not sufficiently correlated to the other items and the latent concept. After examining scree and component plots for the question sets that had more than one component, items that either did not sufficiently correlate or were not spatially grouped were removed. The following tables provide information on each set of questions after this psychometric process was completed.

### Set 1 – Family-Centered Youth-Survey Questions

An EFA was conducted on the five family-centered items with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for this analysis (.773). This outcome would be characterized as 'good' according to Field (2009). Additionally, all values for the individual scale items calculated for this question set were well above the acceptable limit of .5 (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity [ $\chi^2(10) = 319.95, p < .001$ ] indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for an EFA. After the initial EFA was conducted, one component had an eigenvalue over Kaiser's criterion of 1 (2.88) and explained 57.65% of the variance. Table 7 shows the factor loadings (only one component was extracted, as a consequence there was no rotated solution and thus there are no structure or pattern matrices to report). The clustering of these items on one component suggests that it represents the family items well for the collected sample.

Table 7. Youth Pre-Survey Family Centered Questions, GQ12-17 (N = 218)	
Survey Items	Factor Loadings
***How much do the following statements describe your family?	
I can tell my parents the way I feel about things.	0.780

Sometimes I am ashamed of my parents.*	0.672
My family has let me down.*	0.707
I like to do things with my family.	0.791
I enjoy talking with my family.	0.835
Eigenvalue	2.88
% of Variance	57.65
$\alpha$	0.814
Notes: KMO = .773; Bartlett's $\chi^2$ (10) = 319.95, $p < .001$ . *Reverse coded. Coding: 1= not at all, 2= a little, 3= some, 4= pretty much, 5= very much.	

## Set 2 – Neighborhood-Centered Youth-Survey Questions

An EFA was conducted on the four neighborhood-centered items with verimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for this analysis (.757). This outcome would be characterized as 'good' according to Field (2009). Additionally, all values for the individual scale items calculated for this question set were well above the acceptable limit of .5 (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity [ $\chi^2$  (6) = 309.09,  $p < .001$ ] indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for an EFA. After the initial EFA was conducted, one component had an eigenvalue over Kaiser's criterion of 1 (2.68) and explained 67.1% of the variance. Table 2 shows the factor loadings (only one component was extracted, as a consequence there was no rotated solution and thus there are no structure or pattern matrices to report). The clustering of these items on one component suggests that it represents the neighborhood items well for the collected sample.

Survey Items	Factor Loadings
***How much do each of the following statements describe your neighborhood?	
Crime and/or drug selling.	0.780
Fights.	0.672
Lots of empty or abandoned buildings.	0.707
Lots of graffiti.	0.791
Eigenvalue	2.68
% of Variance	67.1
$\alpha$	0.828
Notes: KMO = .757; Bartlett's $\chi^2$ (6) = 309.09, $p < .001$ .	



### Set 3 – Fighting-Centered Youth-Survey Questions

An EFA was conducted on the four fighting-centered items with verimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for this analysis (.792). This outcome would be characterized as ‘good’ according to Field (2009). Additionally, all values for the individual scale items calculated for this question set were well above the acceptable limit of .5 (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett’s test of sphericity [ $\chi^2 (6) = 261.31, p < .001$ ] indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for an EFA. After the initial EFA was conducted, one component had an eigenvalue over Kaiser’s criterion of 1 (2.57) and explained 64.3% of the variance. Table 9 shows the factor loadings (only one component was extracted, as a consequence there was no rotated solution and thus there are no structure or pattern matrices to report). The clustering of these items on one component suggests that it represents the fighting items well for the collected sample.

Table 9. Youth Pre-Survey Fighting-Centered Questions, GQ26-29 (N = 218)	
Survey Items	Factor Loadings
***How much do you agree with the following statements?	
I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights.	0.816
If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them.	0.820
I don’t need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger.	0.858
If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them.*	0.706
Eigenvalue	2.88
% of Variance	57.65
$\alpha$	0.811
Notes: KMO = .792; Bartlett's $\chi^2 (6) = 261.31, p < .001$ . *Reverse coded. Coding: 1= not at all, 2= a little, 3= some, 4= pretty much, 5= very much.	

### Set 4 – Education/Work-Centered Youth-Survey Questions

An EFA was conducted on the three education/work-centered items with verimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for this analysis (.697). This outcome would be characterized as ‘mediocre’ according to Field (2009). Additionally, all values for the individual scale items calculated for this question set were well above the acceptable limit of .5 (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett’s test of sphericity [ $\chi^2 (3) = 175.72, p < .001$ ] indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for an EFA. After the initial EFA was conducted, one component had an eigenvalue over Kaiser’s criterion of 1 (2.11) and explained 70.27% of the

variance. Table 10 shows the factor loadings (only one component was extracted, as a consequence there was no rotated solution and thus there are no structure or pattern matrices to report). The clustering of these items on one component suggests that it represents the education/work items very well for the collected sample.

Table 10. Youth Pre-Survey Education/Work-Centered Questions, GQ23-25 (N= 218)	
Survey Items	Factor Loadings
***How much do the following statements describe your family?	
I will graduate from high school.	0.813
I will finish college.	0.864
I will get a job I really want.	0.837
Eigenvalue	2.11
% of Variance	70.27
$\alpha$	0.785
Notes: KMO = .697; Bartlett's $\chi^2$ (3) = 175.72, $p < .001$ . *Reverse coded. Coding: 1= not at all, 2= a little, 3= some, 4= pretty much, 5= very much.	

### ***The IF Project Monthly Informational Meeting Post Survey Results***

Results of the IF Project monthly informational session meeting post-surveys (N=74) held at WCCW showed that 97% of the participants indicated that they would like to participate in more monthly meetings. Most (74%) found the meetings helpful, indicating that the most beneficial aspect of the meeting was “self-discovery/getting to know self better,” and “group participation/interaction.” Participants offered suggestions for improving the meeting such as more breaks/less sitting and coffee. However, the feedback on the monthly meetings was overwhelmingly positive with comments such as “I loved this meeting,” “I thought it was wonderful,” and “Keep it up...” When asked what topics they would like to see in future meetings, participants suggested: Anger management, coping skills, healthy relationships and boundaries, reentry, and parenting.

### ***Observations and Focus Groups***

Observations and focus groups were conducted at each type of IF Project workshop facility (women’s prison, men’s prison, juvenile detention facility, and truancy workshop). Observation and focus group findings provide an overview of the program for development of the toolkit, differences between juvenile and adult workshops, and key themes.

Results from the observations show that the nature of discussion at the IF Project workshops centered upon different themes across each population:

- Youth: Abuse, instability, peer influence, and identification of commonalities with other youth and The IF Project ex-offender staff.

- Women: Abuse, instability, better understanding of self and others, thinking before acting, the need to share one's experiences with juveniles, goal-setting, taking back "unburied things" to work on, learning from those who have lived it, and the idea that knowledge is power.

Men: Diverse challenges including incarcerated parents, questioning of own choices in situations of stable upbringing, appreciation of the opportunity to engage in open communication with law enforcement, IF staff, and each other, and interest in seeing the impact of their stories on youth.

Observation of the workshops provides illustration of the nature of the experience. Workshops were characterized by short time to intense personal disclosure, safe space to self-reflect, opportunities for support, and connection to resources.

### Youth Workshops Observation

Observation of youth workshops shows the ways in which workshops facilitated personal disclosure and how The IF Project Staff worked with participants to identify their needs. For example, in the initial presentation by the IF Project staff in a youth workshop Detective Bogucki introduced herself by saying, *"You guys don't look good in orange"* and told the youth that she and the other staff were at the facility *"cop and convict"* to *"help you figure out what you need so you don't end up in my police car."* The youth workshops include games as icebreakers to get kids comfortably connected. For example, in one juvenile detention workshop observed, the game "Common Ground" was used. This involved the youth taking turns standing up asking others to stand who have had shared experiences. Examples of statements offered by youth with whom they would like to stand when it was their turn include, *"with anyone who thinks it's hard to change," "with anyone who had a really bad life," "with anyone who was raised by someone other than their parents," "with anyone who's been shot at."*

Observation of the youth workshops also revealed the degree of involvement and attention exhibited by the youth. For example, during presentation of the IF Project video shown at the beginning of all workshops (featuring Detective Bogucki in her uniform in a workshop in the women's prison), the youth watched intently, many with their heads rested on their clasped hands, and almost all of the kids sat up and looked to the back of the room at Detective Bogucki upon seeing her in uniform in the video. While watching the prisoners speak on the video, one girl teared up and another whispered *"damn"* when she saw the 2023 release date of a woman who told her story and a boy said, *"36 years...that's sad...that's just sad."*

Observation of the workshops also showed the connections made between the IF Project staff and the youth. For example, formerly incarcerated IF Project staff members told their stories followed by a Q&A regarding challenges they faced coming out of the system. Also, small group meetings between IF project mentors and a small number of youths provide youth an opportunity to discuss issues they face and their resulting needs. In one workshop, five of

the twelve youth in attendance said they had a family member in prison. In another workshop, a girl who mentioned that she would soon be transferred to the adult prison to serve her sentence said, *“When I’m around people who do better than me, I feel lonely”* and *“I just need someone to write me, that’s it.”* The youth are also asked to write a response to the IF question. One girl responded, *“If I would have lived a different lifestyle...”* and an IF staff member replied, *“I’m so sorry somebody treated you like that...that your mom said those things to you...you can call me...you are special...you are fine...We are going to get you what you need.”*

Indeed, workshop observations also show how these connections are set up to facilitate future assistance. For example, at the end of a workshop, youth asked about the IF Project Facebook page and staff gave youth the information and emails for future contact. In one workshop, detention staff interrupted the session to pull one girl out who had to be transferred to Idaho and the IF Project staff stopped what they were doing and gave the girl information about getting onto the IF Project Facebook page. Also, following the Q&A period, the small groups offered concrete assistance to the youth. For example, one of the IF Project staff who had served time in the women’s prison at WCCW offered to write the girl who said she just wanted someone to write to her in prison (mentioned above) and when a boy mentioned that his girlfriend was 8 months pregnant one of the IF Project staff (a local county sheriff’s deputy) offered to make contact with the boy’s girlfriend to see what she needs.

### **Adult Workshops Observation**

Observations of the women’s prison workshops show the unique nature of the women’s experiences and challenges and the workshop dynamics. Similar to the youth workshops, Detective Bogucki began the workshops telling the prisoners about the first time she visited prison when she realized that the people there look like *“people I’d hang out with... not like the orange suits on TV,”* the history of The IF Project, and the workshop facilitators – a creative writing teacher, a psychologist who is an expert in mindfulness training, and formerly incarcerated IF Project staff members. In one workshop, a formerly incarcerated IF Project staff member told her story of being raised by a single heroin-addicted father with whom she committed crime, getting pregnant at age 17, a boyfriend who went to prison and another who committed suicide in a police standoff. She told of the challenges and successes in getting her life and her kids back after spending years in prison. As she spoke, several of the women interrupted to ask questions such as, *“How did you get your kid back?”* and almost everyone in the room nodded in silence as she spoke about getting reunited with her 12 year-old son many years later. Another woman asked about how she got her parental rights back and the staff member said that she hadn’t officially gotten her parental rights restored and, *“just because it’s on paper and it seems impossible...it can happen.”*

The workshop observations also show the process by which the women are encouraged to open up through writing exercises. One observed workshop started off with a meditation exercise following the introductory segment asking women to reflect and share what they are feeling in the moment. The women offered, *“curious,” “anticipation,” “nervous,” “happy,” “tired,” “relaxed,” “anxious,” “interested,” “open,” “confused,” “hopeful,” “I don’t even know,”*



*“glad to be here,” “grateful,” and “content.”* This was followed by several additional writing exercises asking the women to write a “24-word bio” in which they are then asked to eliminate words until they are left with 3. The women shared, *“loyalty,” “healing,” “survivor,” “change,” “custody battle.”* In the next exercise the women were asked to respond to the question, “What do you miss?” to which the women reply, *“surfing,” “holding son,” “hugs,” “bathrooms with doors,” “real shoes,” “driving,”* and the *“feel of freedom.”*

The women were then asked to write an “unconditional love” comment to themselves – to the “little you.” When this question was posed some of the women became emotional and responded, *“I’m sorry your mom didn’t believe you,” “You’re better than your mistakes.”* One woman commented, *“I used to be in a state of toxic shame...I could not do anything until I forgave myself a little.”* The women were then asked to write about the house they grew up in or one house they can think of while growing up, and to then start drifting to imagine the house they can build in the future in order to construct a strong image of home and safety. The women write and offer to read descriptions of their past and future houses. One woman spoke of writing about her past house (a “U-Haul”) in a previous workshop and spent the time writing about her dream house – with freshly baked cookies, a garden, movie theatre, a room dedicated to loved ones who passed away, and a candy store (because she said she is a “fat kid on the inside”).

The staff then posed the central IF question – *“If there was something someone could have said or done that would change the path that led you here what would it have been?”* Several women cried as they wrote and one woman did not write and explained, *“I’m not writing because I really don’t know.”* The women shared their responses after a lunch break. Responses ranged from a focus on self (*“I could have changed my actions”*) to others (to *“tell me it’s going to be OK”*) and to stories of abuse where the women articulated that feelings of safety and security would have changed their path.

The workshop observation also showed how The IF Project staff left the women with hope for the future. In one workshop observed, one of the incarcerated participants said after certificates were awarded, *“This made my perceptions of cops different”* and Detective Bogucki said in her final comments to the women, *“Be kind to yourself every day.”*

Observation of The IF Project workshops at the men’s prison reveal distinct dynamics, issues, interactions, and dialogue characterized by diversity in the challenges faced by the men. In one workshop observed where there were 23 participants, the men watched the IF Project video intently and one said, *“That was a pretty amazing film.”* The men also wanted to know if there was a video on the youth workshops and indicated that it would be helpful to them to see the impact of the stories of the adult prisoners on the youth. The icebreaker used in the workshop observed asking the men to close their eyes, feel their bodies, and to think of and share a word that reflects how they are feeling. The men shared, *“better,” “change,” “healthy,” “relief,” “love,” “lucky,” “help,” “harmony,” “future,” “responsibility.”* They were then asked to write a list of 24 biographical words and to narrow to 3 and responded, *“father,” “hopeful,” “dreamer,” “relentless,” “kids,” “family,” “son,” “willing,” “changing,” “straightforward.”*

Like the workshop in the women’s prison, the men were presented with a series of writing prompts leading to the central IF question. The men are asked, “How do you get to

where you want to go, to bring to mind a situation that triggers you and ends up straying your path...and picture yourself responding in a way that would be better.” The men wrote and shared, *“I felt like a bottle...pressure...right here in my throat,” “I chose not to do this exercise because I’ve spent a lot of time figuring this out...I don’t like that feeling...”* One man asked, *“Say you have someone else in a situation who won’t let you walk away?”* The IF Project staff responded, *“One thing we always have is the ability to walk away...the more we learn to stay with uncomfortable feelings, the more they lessen and the less you react...”* The next prompt asked the men to draw a picture of the house they grew up in, to describe their then home, and the home they would now build. The men shared, Old house: *“Beautiful, loving; Torn apart”* and new house: *“Never to be on the outside looking in.”*

The men were then asked to respond to the central IF question – *“If there was something someone could have said or done that would change the path that led you here what would it have been?”* Their responses included a wide range of “ifs.” One of the men spoke of growing up biracial and his struggle to fit in. *“If someone would have explained to me that I didn’t have to join gangs, do drugs to fit into the black community.”* Others shared: *“if I was not molested; if I was not handcuffed and taken away at 10 years-old; if my dad would have said, ‘come on boy, come with me’”; “if people would have let me know how great I was...if I would have been taught how to express emotion in a productive way...rather than beatings with an extension cord and ice cold baths.”* One man talked about having a mother in prison, wanting to connect with her. As he spoke he began to cry and said he had to leave the room. After he left, The IF Project staff asked, *“How many of you knew someone in prison before coming here?”* Of the 23 in attendance, all but two raised their hands. During the process of sharing their responses to the IF question, one man shared that he felt like an *“alien”* in the room because his history and experience did not begin to compare with the pain he was witnessing in the room, in particular the pain of those who had had parents in prison. IF project staff responded, *“We would like to address every path that ends up here.”*

At the end of the workshop when the men were again asked to reflect on and write one word to describe how they were feeling they shared, *“purging,” “releasing,” “tired,” “no word,” “sad,” “youngster; listening,” “honored,” “joy,” “overwhelmed,” “empathy,” “schooled,” “insightful,” “thinking,” “appreciation,” “restlessness,” “thankful,” “mentorship.”* The men were then asked to write and share letters of forgiveness written to people in their lives who they wanted to forgive them. The men shared, *“I wish I could go back...I dragged your mom into this robbery and it’s my fault she is in prison and you four are in different homes...everything’s gone...I’m going to be here for the next 8 years...my kids are gone.”* One man raised the issue of how futile it feels to forgive himself: *“I hear you, but it seems futile...If forgiveness doesn’t change anything, what’s the point? I’m numb to this now. The only thing I’m not numb to is how my daughter feels...It’s too late...It’s hard to convey that to a 14 year-old. It’s cool to say I forgive myself, but then when you get on the phone with her, what do you do?”* IF project staff respond to the man: *“If you can say, I hate what I did...You can actually say the things someone whose parents were in prison said they needed...What if someone said, This is not your path? You never know what little thing will flip them over...It’s hard not to feel helpless, I agree...”* The observed workshop ended with sharing letters from the women’s prison participants to the



men offering their feedback on a recent IF Project video that was made of including interviews with the men. The men responded that they appreciated the openness of the women and said “our stories are the same.”

## Focus Groups

Focus Group results reveal strong support for the IF Project by participants who volunteered to stay after the workshop to participate. Detailed responses to the focus group questions are presented in Table 11.

<b>Table 11 Focus Group Responses from Youth and Adult The IF Project Workshops</b>		
	<i>Focus Group Questions</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<b>YOUTH DETENTION FACILITIES</b>		
	<i>What did you get out of participating in The IF Project Workshop?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Learned a lot.”</li> <li>• “That you can ask for help.”</li> <li>• “There are people who care and want to make a difference.”</li> <li>• “Keep your head up.”</li> <li>• “Ask for help—you’re not the only one struggling.”</li> <li>• “It’s never too late.”</li> </ul>
	<i>What was the experience like for you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Shocking.”</li> <li>• “Stories.”</li> <li>• “Sad and surprised.”</li> <li>• “Anxious.”</li> <li>• “Hope.”</li> <li>• “Liked all of it—that may be just because I’m getting out of my cell.”</li>   <li>• “Inspiring.”</li> <li>• “Interesting.”</li> <li>• “Helpful.”</li> </ul>
	<i>How has this program directly impacted you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “[The IF Project formerly incarcerated staff member] wants me to call her and I will.”</li> <li>• “Saying, ‘I can do it ...I can be strong and positive and I can ask for help.’”</li> <li>• “Tips and advice – ask for help.”</li> <li>• “Learned about my blaming others for my actions.”</li> <li>• “Other people who care for you.”</li> <li>• “People who’ve been through this can change—I can change too.”</li> </ul>

	<i>How satisfied were you with the overall experience?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Thumbs up.”</li> <li>• “Less time – 2 hours is too much.”</li> <li>• “More group discussion.”</li> <li>• “More time as a group.”</li> <li>• “More time one-on-one.”</li> <li>• “I’m not patient.”</li> <li>• “Really satisfied—it was a lot of fun.”</li> <li>• “Yes—won’t be lonely because I now have people there for me that I got today.”</li> </ul>
	<i>Is there anything else you would like to share?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Pretty good.”</li> <li>• “Advice, stories, sad.”</li> <li>• “Project should keep going on.”</li> <li>• “Get male prison video.”</li> <li>• “I like cops now.”</li> </ul>
<b>YOUTH TRUANCY COURT</b>		
	<i>What did you get out of participating in The IF Project Workshop?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Know more people—bunch of new friends from different places.”</li> <li>• “Learn something new for the future.”</li> <li>• “Dead end, a time to stop and think about my life and future.”</li> <li>• “A couple wasted hours.”</li> <li>• “It was boring—too long sitting and</li> <li>• “Listening to stories.”</li> </ul>
	<i>What was the experience like for you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It was alright.”</li> <li>• “Not what I expected—thought it would be yelling but I actually listened.”</li> <li>• “Thought it would be like community service.”</li> <li>• “Good time—long but good.”</li> <li>• “Felt like you were getting lectured.”</li> <li>• “Hated that it was on a Saturday—should be on a Monday.”</li> </ul>
	<i>How has this program directly impacted you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stopped me from joining gangs.”</li> <li>• “Movie—my situation was portrayed exactly—made me think and made me tear up.”</li> <li>• “One of the felons is pretty cool.”</li> <li>• “Don’t say sorry if you don’t mean it.”</li> </ul>
	<i>How satisfied were you with the overall experience?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It was okay—still gonna to do what I’m gonna to do.”</li> <li>• “Pretty satisfied.”</li> <li>• “I learned stuff.”</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I wasn't satisfied at all."</i></li> <li>• <i>"I had to be pumped up with antipsychotics to be here and that is not enjoyable."</i></li> <li>• <i>"I liked the stories and I learned things."</i></li> </ul>
	<i>Is there anything else you would like to share?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I didn't like the game (ice breaker)—it was too personal and I felt uncomfortable sharing things that personal."</i></li> <li>• <i>"There shouldn't be so much 'confessing.'"</i></li> <li>• <i>"I liked the games—good way to meet and get to know people."</i></li> </ul>
<b>WOMEN'S PRISON</b>		
	<i>What did you get out of participating in The IF Project Workshop?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I've been with The IF Project for awhile. It is the first time in a workshop I was scared. The way they did the workshop...freed me...The way they slowly guided us into it...Going slow was more comfortable."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Each time can get deeper and deeper...coming for 2 years...With mental health you go in for an appointment and walk out and still hurt. Here you work through and it regrounds you...You don't just walk out raw and open...If you open up in mental health they will lock you up with no clothes on."</i></li> <li>• <i>"The core of the program is to help kids, to save a life...if someone had done that for me...It feels great to be a part of this...It opens doors."</i></li> </ul>
	<i>What was the experience like for you?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Emotional."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Series of different emotions."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Cleansing."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Healing."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Relief peeled back and can see self working on healing aspect and stronger foundation."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Sense that someone cares."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Breaking down prejudice against police."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Empathy toward community, and police...Before I didn't know..."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Unique group setting. Mental health groups are mandatory. This you want to go."</i></li> </ul>
	<i>How has this program directly impacted</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Gave me hope that I can help others."</i></li> </ul>

	you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I feel like I can make a difference."</li> <li>• "Now recognize when to stop and slow down."</li> <li>• "Progress."</li> </ul>
	How satisfied were you with the overall experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Bring coffee next time."</li> <li>• "Meditation stuff was a nice balance."</li> <li>• "Breaks during movement and fresh air would help improve."</li> <li>• "Great."</li> <li>• "Relieved."</li> <li>• "Better with smaller group of 15...before there was 50 and liked the U-shape."</li> </ul>
	Is there anything else you would like to share?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I would have liked to hear one of the kid's stories and how they are impacted."</li> <li>• "Would like more frequent workshops."</li> </ul>
<b>MEN'S PRISON</b>		
	What did you get out of participating in The IF Project Workshop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Help and hope for us."</li> <li>• "Watching a peer break down...was rough..."</li> <li>• "Almost started crying."</li> <li>• "Sense of direction to try to make a difference and an avenue to do so."</li> <li>• "Still hope for our youth."</li> <li>• "Gain knowledge through someone else's stories." "STOP'...I liked that...The concept of forgiveness."</li> <li>• "It was helpful to know that different stories help different people."</li> </ul>
	What was the experience like for you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Insightful."</li> <li>• "How your positive change can help someone else."</li> <li>• "Being able to hear people talk...gives courage."</li> <li>• "It felt more normal than what it is usually like in here...to have a police officer speak to us like that."</li> <li>• "Motivation to do better."</li> <li>• "If we work together, we can work together."</li> </ul>
	How has this program directly impacted you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Addiction has controlled my choices...caused me to think about choices and how they affect others."</li> <li>• "Hope...It's been awhile since I've felt hope, for myself and for other people...Hearing people worse off gives empathy."</li> <li>• "Helped me clear up issues put on paper and to confront them."</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Didn’t focus on incarceration and a mountain of negativity. Instead focus was on that fork/IF question/Path that helped to create a positive environment.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Gave me the possibility that what we were saying would be used to help others.”</i></li> </ul>
	<p><i>How satisfied were you with the overall experience?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Very...[Creative writing staff member]...loved her flow on words, so cool.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Great...I would like to hear everyone’s voice...If there was an exercise to get everyone to speak...”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It would be great to bring in parents of youth at risk...parents of kids, single moms, to help them out and give them insight.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“A lot of information/overwhelmed...A lot packed into a little time.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I got bored when groups dragged on.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Being one day...bam...was a lot...Might be good if gave time in between.”</i></li> </ul>
	<p><i>Is there anything else you would like to share?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Thank you.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“As a short-timer, I liked seeing guys with a significant amount of time trying to make a difference.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“As a second-time participant, I was more at ease and realized I didn’t have to put in that much effort.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I would like an exercise where everyone’s voice could be heard built into the program.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I didn’t speak because my home life wasn’t as bad and because I felt inappropriate after someone told of such a bad experience.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I learned that rich people have problems too...everyone’s story is important and valid.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I had a family who loved me so I found it difficult to write...because it was the choices I made...It was difficult to write until [Creative writing staff member] said it was OK.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Maybe small groups would help.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Last time The IF Project was two days.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I was allowed to step outside of my comfort zone.”</i></li> </ul>

Key themes from focus group discussion showed:

- High satisfaction with the workshop experience
- Both juveniles and adults mentioned how their perspective shifted in knowing that program was facilitated by law enforcement
- Experience offered hope
- Juveniles expressed appreciation for adults who listened and cared
- Adults wanted to hear more about how their stories impacted kids
- 2nd-timers found they could build on self-work from previous workshops

### IF Project Essay Analysis

All essays included in this analysis were generated from writing workshops during 2010-2013 in Washington correctional facilities. The breakdown of the essays according to year, youth/adult, and prison (men’s/women’s, only for adult essays), is presented in Table 12.

	Youth Detention	Adult Prison	
	Male/Female	Men’s	Women’s
Year			
2010	--	24	52*
2011	--		
2012	46	15	35
2013	114	14	31
Total	160	53	118

\*Duplicate essays were found in the files provided for 2010 and 2011. Thus, duplicates were removed and this set of essays is grouped into 2010/2011.

As a reminder, the narratives examined in this research consist of IF project participants’ written responses to the prompt provided. For adults, this question reads: *If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?* For youth, this question reads: *If there is something someone can say or do to help you on your path today, what would it be?*

The narratives generated by the youth and adult IF project participants departed in length and content, at least in part as a result of the different questions prompting the writings. The youth question calls for a present/future- oriented response and the adult question calls for looking back. Thus, the youth essays tend to provide more identifiable/concrete needs, individuals, and key events. These are also noticeably different in length, ranging from one sentence fragment to a short paragraph, always contained on one page. Entire responses from

some youth participants include:<sup>2</sup> "I'd like to meet my dad"; "If someone would help me see if I keep doing drugs where I will be."; "Support the little steps Like get back into school, complete inpatient, get a job, get a stable house"; "If someone help me with angry issues I wouldn't yell or punch things runing away from home."; Occasionally, these essays also include doodles and drawings elsewhere on the page. One essay, not included in the analyses, contains only an unidentifiable drawing.

In contrast, adult essays frequently include lengthy narratives that provide detailed life histories and thorough self-reflection and analysis. Many of these reflect what Kennedy, Agbényiga, Kasiborski, and Gladden (2010, p. 1741) refer to in their work as "risk chains," points marking "chronic adversity," which result in increased risk.

Some of these points evident within one's chain of risk include: poverty, abuse, loss, absence of positive or presence of negative influences, models of violence, crime, and substance use, adult responsibilities at a young age, crime, and system involvement for the participant or his/her family. In the IF project narratives, crime and system involvement can be conceived of as part of the risk. Examples of life history narratives reflecting these risk chains are presented below. The first is written by a participant in a men's prison.

THE STREET LIFE WAS EASY, AND FUN. I COULD BE CARELESS AND NOBODY WOULD REALLY CARE. I WAS COULD BE A GROWN MAN OR AT LEAST THINK SO AT THE TENDER AGE OF 14. I WAS THE PARENT AND TOOK CARE OF MYSELF AND MY YOUNGER SIBLINGS.

I WAS THE OLDEST OUT OF THREE CHILDREN ON MY MOTHER'S SIDE. SHE WAS A HEAVY DRUG ADDICT WHO STILL TRIED TO KEEP THE FAMILY STRUCTURED, AND WITH THE DRUG ABUSE THAT MADE HER LESSONS FALL ON DEAF EARS.

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HER, I DIDN'T KNOW HER. SHE ALLOWED THIS DRUG TO CONTROL HER.

HOW CAN SHE CONTROL OR TRY TO CONTROL THIS FAMILY WHEN SHE CONTRADICTS

---

<sup>2</sup> All writing, even when presented as retyped, is preserved in its exact form (either in full or as an excerpt), including spelling, punctuation, and grammar with the exception of capitalizations. Three asterisks are used to separate content from different essays when presented sequentially.



HER LESSONS WHEN SHE GETS HIGH.  
PLUS IM THE MAN OF THIS HOUSE,  
IM THE ONE TRYING TO FLIP THE WELFARE  
CHECKS TO PAY RENT AND OTHER BILLS,  
OR HUSTLING FOODSTAMPS SO MY  
YOUNGER SIBLINGS CAN EAT.

I COULD EVEN BE SELFISH AT TIMES.  
I FELT THAT WAS MY REWARD FOR ALL  
MY WORK.

NOW BY MY CONFESSIONS YOU CAN  
SEE THERE WAS NO POSITIVE MALE FIGURE.  
MY LITTLE BROTHER'S DAD STAYED WITH US  
BUT HE WAS NO DIFFERENT THAN MY MOTHER.

Another respondent, incarcerated in a women's prison, explained:

I believe that if I had the love of parents to teach me what is met from good and bad. And not be state raised. Being first put in a foster home, were I was sexually abused and mentally and ~~paper~~ physically abused all the time being called a fool, stupid, and alot more. Having these things happen to me led me to 1st become a runaway kid at the age of twelve. And to survive I had to steal my food and clothes. When I was put in juvi spent time alone in a cell. I felt safe here because no one will beat me harass me call me names like stupid, nigger and and more while in school. When I was released from juvi I was on the streets of down town Seattle 3rd Pike. Here I learned to become a drug addict and to drink. I also sold my body to have money. This became my life. The streets. Being on the streets taught me how to be tough a service then it lead me to Maple Lane a juvi prison for teens. Here I stayed until I was eight-teen. And again on the streets I learned how to shop-lift now I was a drug addict and alcoholic/shop lifter. Had I had someone teach me about the repercussions of living a life of crime and put me in treatment and school I would not of become a robber of banks x 3 times in prison from a life of crime. If I had one person care for me and take me in a love me and show me how to love myself and others

This is in contrast to the youth essays in which writers reveal risk factors in their essays as part of the request for change and help, but these are not as frequently presented as a chain of events.



## Youth Essays

Youth essays point to: histories of disrupted or terminated school attendance, negative or non-existent associations with key figures in their lives (siblings, parents, and friends), and histories of drug and alcohol use and criminal offending (of self and peers and family members). Yet even more notable are the broad themes around unmet needs and expectations of others and acknowledgement of self-responsibility and accountability.

Although the question prompt asks the youth: *If there is something **someone** could say or do something to help you on your path today, what would it be?* (emphasis added), youth also brought the response back to what they could do themselves even if they identified a need from others to facilitate that self-determination. The findings presented below reveal what they need from others, what they need from themselves, and finally how the former can facilitate the latter.

## Others Helping Me

Youth essays, when pointing to a need that invoked someone else, center around three broad central and related themes: modeling and direction, hope and self-validation, and quality of interpersonal relationships.

### Modeling and Direction

When youth call for direction and modeling from others, this is presented as a need for specific direction and discipline, as well as for the removal of negative influences and presence of positive models. Discipline and direction include someone explicitly relaying the potential negative consequences of the youth's current path (for example, the effects of drug use, truancy, and hanging around with certain friends) and, in other instances, this was provided as a need for direction towards positive change.

Cautions regarding the potential negative consequences include:

If, someone would help me see if I keep  
doing drugs where I will be.

\*\*\*

The something someone  
could do to help is  
show me how I will  
turn out if I stay on  
the path im on.

\*\*\*

If there was something someone could have said it would  
have been telling me something about the justice system  
or letting me know that someone could take away  
my freedom for the rest of my life. Things would be  
so different for me right now if I knew that I  
wasn't invincible and that I could ruin my life.

Alternatively, other respondents specified a need for more specific direction toward pro-social pathways. For example: "...When you get out of jail call a sponsor, not your dope dealer"; "Stay in school, find friends that will help you stay out of trouble"; and "Help me get my G.E.D and become a M.M.A Fighter." Another youth wrote:

ways to help me stay out  
of trouble and stay sober.  
and find things I would  
enjoy instead of the  
things I'm doing.

This theme of modeling and direction also reveals the role of positive and negative associations whom the youths identify as influential. In some instances, the youth point directly to the negative association as a key influence in their lives (e.g., siblings and peers): "What could help me on my path if I had strictur parents and if I hung out with a better crew..."; and, "If I never let my older brother influence mi"). As two other essays reveal:



If my oldest Brother would stop doing drugs  
+ if we can go back to the way it  
was. If we can talk like we used to.  
If we could just hang out + do things  
that don't involve Criminal activity.  
If he would tell me he loved me +  
I know he means it...

\*\*\*

You're Not Like your Brother. You Never will be.  
He and you are different people and your path  
will be more wise. We will no longer compare him to you.  
I know you look up to him but that is someone  
you don't want to be. Gangs Are NOT for you.

For others, this is stated explicitly as a need for a change in physical proximity. For example: "if somebody would take me out of the town that I live in." And: "Move me away from old friends that were up to no good."; and "move off the res for me cause thats whats doing it all."

The other side of the same issue presents a need for the presence of a positive role model or influence. As one youth writer states, "If I had a positive male role model." Another similarly indicates: "Well honest, hif there was someone good I can look up to thats good role modle." And another: "I need a mentor." In other essays this is detailed as a need for someone to demonstrate and help to discover pro-social ways of life, what one writer calls "sober fun" and another explains: "If someone could help me find that same rush I get from engaging in criminal activities." Others explain in greater detail, highlighting the need for this person to show and accompany the youth through this way of life, rather than simply state it.

I would want somebody to be  
there to spend time with me,  
encourage me to stay clean,  
and show me how to have  
fun once I get clean. I would want  
somebody to guide me, and help  
me find new hobbies And I would  
want someone to have faith in  
me, no matter what.



\*\*\*

If there was someone can say or  
Do to help me on my path Today it  
would be to have people or resources  
to have the same problems as me and  
has changed and was success in life.  
I would Really wish that when I finish  
my time that I will talk and meet  
with someone to work w/ me and  
help me change and have a better life.  
if there is someone that can help me  
I would be at the meetings or ~~be~~ be  
w/ the person and willing to change to have  
a better life than to just sit around  
and do drugs and just watch my days

This component of relatability (i.e., "...the same problems as me...") presented in this essay above is also revealed in other instances: for example, as a way to help the youth not feel alone in the struggle. One respondent wrote: "If someone could have shown me there was more people with my problems. and if there was a way to show what life can offer." This comes up again in looking at the need for qualitatively different relationships in their lives, including with those who understand what they are going through.

### Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

There are many ways the youth describe what can be summed up as a need for more of a positive and secure presence in their lives. This includes indicating a need for love and care in general. Some essays indicate they want someone to let them know that. For example, one youth writes: "If the people I love, could tell me they care, and stop pushing me away." Sometimes the need is directed toward a particular person. "to hear ~~some~~ my brother say he loves me and that everything would be okay and know it really was going to be."

But youth also write about a need for more communication: someone to talk to, who will listen to them and work to understand their perspective. This can include a need for support from someone with shared circumstances as well as simply more quality time and focus in general. These patterns are illustrated in select youth responses that follow.

I love you, I care for you, I will be here for you.  
you mean something to someone in the world, I will  
never let you down. I know you can do it,  
Don't do drugs or drink, To spend time with  
my dad, I am able to hangout with some  
friends, Not abuse me, Treat me with respect.  
Treat me like my other family.

\*\*\*

If i got hugs all the time from  
my dad =)!

If i could be heard.

If i could spend time with  
my family like the old  
days.

If i was told not to do  
marijuana.

\*\*\*

Somebody to be there for  
me AND care for me talk  
to me when I'm feeling  
down or when I'm angry  
and ready to go crazy  
I JUST want a true  
friend to talk to  
and calm me down.

\*\*\*



If someone told me that they would be willing to listen to me, about my personal problems, maybe I wouldn't have to keep everything bottled up inside. Also I probably wouldn't have low self-esteem and instead I would have more confidence in what I do.

Another aspect to this need for qualitatively better connections with key people in their lives is a clear desire for stability in these relationships. One youth specifically indicated a wish for "someone to love me unconditionally, guide me, and be there for me growing up. Constantly moving foster home, foster home is hard." Others used phrases such as "stick by my side," "never let you down," and "stay with me."

Finally, youth indicated a common need for others to simply provide help and support in their efforts to do what they expressed an interest in doing. This ranges from specific efforts ("Help me get my G.E.D. and become a M.M.A. Fighter"; "If someone, anyone would help me be able to express my feelings"; "it would be someone helping me stay clean and taking me to NA meeting's") to a much more general calls for help such as "if...I had my father help me when I needed help." Others include: "If someone would've asked me if I needed help" and "It would probably just be someone saying that they're there to help me or there for me to talk to." More detailed examples include:

Something someone could do to help me on my path would be to help me when I ask for it. For instance, if I'm struggling with something, they could give me a hand or give me some advice. ~~It~~ I don't like constantly feeling like I'm on my own all the time and I've got to do everything by myself.

\*\*\*

It would probably be by asking me what I need help with in my life. Just if I'm safe and that I'm not doing anything stupid. Someone to come out and help me find a job. Someone to help get out of the life style that I'm living.

## Hope and Self-Validation

Finally, youth called for others to provide hope and, even more so, self-validation. This means a sense that the she or he is not only valuable, but also capable of moving beyond her/his current circumstances. The essays reveal worry that there might not be an opportunity for a change in their path and a need from others to indicate it is possible. This may be as simple as a need to know "it's goin to be alright" or "I love you and your worth it! You can fallow your dreams! 'You can do it!'" or more specific as the examples presented below.

It would be, theres always tomorrow. Theres always another chance, That today isnt it. Because I always felt like this was the end for me, that I couldnt make it anymore because of where im at today. But its not true, because theres always a tomorrow. You always have another chance to make yourself better.

\*\*\*

That no matter how many times I mess up or get in trouble, I can be or do anything I want.

That I hurt more than just myself everytime I get in trouble.

\*\*\*

When I look at my life today where I'm at, where I'm heading and where I've been I ~~can~~ can think of so many what ifs, what if I wasn't born into the game? what if my parents weren't dealers? what if my family cared about ~~me~~ each other more than they cared about dope? what if I never smoked meth? what if I never got involved in hover? what if I never ~~blamed~~ blamed heroin? ~~what if I never~~ what if I didn't have a history of abuse? but the nubur one thing would be what if someone had showed me I had a chance to not be like my family some one had hope in me?

\*\*\*



If there was something someone could say it'd be something like "It'll be okay..." I've gone through hard times like any other human-being, but it would help if I just heard someone tell me it'll be okay not just because I want to hear that but because they strongly believe that inside themselves.

In one particular instance, a writer provided a specific need to be able to move past his/her history of involvement with the system indicating: "Help me seal my criminal record, of my felony at least. So I can join the military. If that does not work out then I will go to college to get a degree in Anesthesiology, or neurosurgery..."

Related, the youth present a need to know that others believe they are capable of moving past this – that there is hope that it can occur and that they themselves have the capabilities to ensure it does, needing to hear from others sentiments along the lines of: "You are stronger than you seem you can get through it." And: "[Name] your going to do good. When you grow up [Name] you will succeed if you put in the right amount time and effort. Your going to have great support and things that keep you on the right path." And: "You can have a better life than this. You can do what you need to get your life back."

Yet, the need for self-validation extends beyond belief in one's capabilities to a more general sense of self-worth. As one respondent clearly and simply states: "Tell me I'm not bad."

if someone would of got to know  
the real me, and let me know  
how worth I am.

\*\*\*

I'm proud of you. I believe in you,  
and I won't give up on you.  
you are important & I care.

And in a less common indication of love from family, one respondent still called for a need to be "good enough."

I would want my dad to think I am good enough. I would want him to know that I always try my best, even though it's not all the time its most. I know he loves me <sup>But</sup> and he is trying his best.

### **Me Helping Myself**

In spite of the implicit direction of the essay prompt, many youth indicated taking responsibility for their paths, both as they had been paved in the past and in terms of their ability to make changes in the future, characterizing each as choice. Accepting responsibility for past actions includes general statements such as: "Wat if I hadent choose to do bad choices in life."; and "What if, I had never decided to skip school to go and do stupid stuff with 'friends.'" More specific discussions of accountability for past actions are presented below:

if i wouldve said  
no to drugs, casinos  
sex, and guns to stop  
acting like other people  
and to not rob people  
and live the best  
of life

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My parents have always told me all the right stuff! they raised me right but it wase me that went down the wrong road. I'm trying to get back on the road that I was when I was in 8th grade, when I wasn't smoking weed! playing sports. I'm tired of being a fuck up. It's time to change my life: make my parents proud.

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"If" my friends told me: should stop smoking weed. If they told me I should stop snorting coke. If I would have taken the advice people told me. If I wouldnt leave my house, and hustle my own stuff to buy drugs. If I didnt act "hard" and stop going to school, stop doing my homework, stop being a stupid punk. If I spent time with my family and didnt kick it with my "friends".  
If I didnt do drugs!

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If I could listen to  
My Heart and Do wat is right.  
If I wasnt too Proud to ask  
for help.  
~~if I could~~  
If I stopped trying to blame  
Everybody else for wat I Do

Others presented specific things they could do in the future to change their paths including avoid drugs, stay in school, and ask for or accept help and support when available. One respondent wrote: "If I can change my drug problem It'll change my life." Another indicated: "Wake up and change your mindset, change my drug addiction to a music addiction."



And another: “I need to quit doing drugs find new way to deal with my problems and deal with them.” As one respondent stated simply: “Only you can make a difference in your life.”

### ***Others Helping Me Help Myself***

A final crosscutting theme among the essays written by the detained youth is an intersection between accepting responsibility and needing support from others in these efforts. As is evident in many of the examples presented above, the youth acknowledge and frequently detail the complexity of intersecting factors affecting their past behaviors and circumstances and the potential for change in the future – for example, individual decision making and “choice” as clearly affected by lack of positive associations (and related support) and the presence of negative associations (and modeling). One essay presents this interaction most explicitly asking:

Give me advice so I can make better choices and follow the path I want so I can have a better future & stay out of trouble.

Another indicates the need for a model to follow, even as the writer acknowledges his/her agentic role.

If I had a positive male role model  
if my mom told me its not the friends  
I hangout with it the actions I chose  
to do when Im with them

### ***Adult Essays***

As mentioned at the start of the section on essay findings, in contrast to the juvenile essays, adult essays provide much more extensive historical narratives regarding pathways toward incarceration both as a result of the retrospective nature of the question and by virtue of the longer time period upon which to reflect. This means that from the adult essays emerge more detailed understandings of the life trajectories that lead to incarceration beyond a concrete list of what “someone could have done.” Still, many of the themes introduced in the youth essays are similarly revealed in the adult essays, albeit with greater nuance and richer context. Thus, with the exception of the first section that provides a an

understanding of the family and community contexts in which these paths developed, these results are similarly organized to reveal how others could have helped participants, how they could have helped themselves, and how the former can facilitate the latter. Notably, reference to choice and taking responsibility also emerge among the adult essays, even though the essay prompt again asked for respondents to indicate what *someone* (presumably, someone other than you) could have done to help.

#### *Drug and Alcohol Use, Abuse, Crime and Gendered Pathways*

For both male and female prisoners, pathways to incarceration are commonly marked by loss and absence of key people in their lives, family histories of drug and alcohol use, crime and repeated criminal justice system involvement, and abuse and violence. It was not lost on many respondents that these components of life history revealed intergenerational patterns – patterns of which they are now a part, as are many of their children. As a writer from a women’s prison explains, “*If the pipe wasn’t what I learned by my parents but to be all I could be.*” Similarly, a writer from a men’s prison indicates:

There could have been a day, just one day of peace in my home for the first ten years of my life. Without my father telling me “Don’t you ever hit a woman, you can push [redacted]?” & then see him put my mother in the hospital of asking, “Dad, what is that funny smelling cigarette?” & him telling me, “Never mind. Don’t you ever smoke them.”

Some respondents reveal this trajectory from their parents to themselves, and now to their incarcerated children. One writer in women’s prison explains:

is much more than that. which brings me back to us because most of us are mothers. And the cycle is repeating itself. I am doing to my children. what my mother showed me. And for that reason I believe <sup>is the reason</sup> my son is incarcerated also. He is 15 yrs. old. And I need to learn to embrace him & show him love so he can love himself. Or I’m pretty sure he too will have a child young & his child will feel the same way. And go threw the same things. So



Perhaps most explicit is the below example in which one prisoner in a men's prison identified himself at the top of his essay as follows:

Prison time served 14 1/2 years  
Father of 3 Kids 2 whom are in prison  
and 1 who was just released.

In addition to examples of violence and drug use, some respondents showed how crime and the criminal justice system were a part of their lives at a very young age. As one prisoner in a men's prison wrote: "I was born [date] while my Father was in Fedrall prison in Mackneil Island serveing time For robbery. The first time he ever held me was in there visiting room." Another presents a nuanced understanding of the context in which he grew up and the subsequent effects the structural environment had – effects that became normalized and routine.

I was raised in what I refer to as "The Set-Up," which is: an unfortunate upbringing that lowers any child's chances of a good family structure, safe and healthy environment, adequate education, success and increases the chances of neglect, abuse, addictions, violence, incarceration and early death. All of my friends, peers, role-models and "big homies" were all in gangs, selling drugs, robbing people and indulging in random destructive activities. Not only were these things alluring, but they became normal, everyday activity. I wasn't raised with my dad, in fact, him and I only met once when I was around eight years old before he committed a robbery and ended up in prison, which led to my eldest brother becoming somewhat of my father-figure/role-model. Being that my brother was involved in a gang, selling drugs and living a destructive lifestyle, I naturally wanted to be like him. Deep down, my brother didn't want me to follow in his footsteps, so he encouraged me to stay in school, focus on being a football star and to stay away from the madness that was all around. Though my brother encouraged me to do positive things, he also contradicted himself by showing me how to form my fingers into gang signs, giving me my first blue bandanna, provided me with drugs to sell and giving me the okay to rob certain people.

As the examples above begin to reveal, respondents were exposed to serious adult problems as children. In the essays, this is presented in many ways: in terms of their own experiences as direct victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and as observers of the victimization of loved ones; direct experiences with crime and violence at an early age and as observers of loved ones' involvement; and, as both direct participants in drugs and alcohol and as observers of it by peers and family members. As one writer in a women's prison states, "At 5yrs old I heard and saw alot." She writes of her mother "pulling knives & guns," sexual and physical abuse, "coming home from kindergarten and finding cops everywhere" and eventually the arrest of her brother which meant the loss of her "protector and mentor."

At least in part because of these experiences participants are also challenged to manage the heavy pains associated with them including loss of loved ones. As one female prisoner notes, "...and if I had someone to turn to when my granny was murdered, I know that I wouldn't be here." Male prisoners similarly describe some of the effects of experiences with loss. In the following example, one describes the loss as a significant turning point in his life toward crime.

One thing that I now have come to know, deal with, came to terms with is that my Father was taken from me at the age of 11, Reat terrible, for no reason. I WAS real close to my DAD AND didnt know how to deal with this. So I ran away from home, couldn't understand how God could do this to our family. I stayed on the streets, stole from stores, houses. My Mother had 8 of us to deal with it was too much for her, she just couldn't do it. All us siblings had a tough time of it. I WAS Mom's worse, because she couldn't control (or) deal with me. She let them put me in a boys home because she ~~was~~ thought it would help. I've been locked up since then in and out, 5 times in boy's reform schools, 2 times in prison. I took someones life at the age of 22. Now I sit here at the age of 48 with life with out the possibility of parole. I think that if I would of had a brother, friend, man figure that could of helped me deal with this tragic event, I think it would of ~~be~~ helped change the path



In some instances, this loss includes taking on adult responsibilities that include having to care for one's siblings, the household and oneself as a child, and stepping in where other stability is absent as one respondent (essay excerpt presented in earlier) in a men's prison indicated as follows:

THE STREET LIFE WAS EASY, AND FUN. I COULD BE CARELESS AND NOBODY WOULD REALLY CARE. I WAS COULD BE A GROWN MAN OR AT LEAST THINK SO AT THE TENDER AGE OF 14. I WAS THE PARENT AND TOOK CARE OF MYSELF AND MY YOUNGER SIBLINGS.

One writer in a woman's prison reflects on the loss of childhood including this as part of her response to the IF question: "To be given the chance to be a child. Not a maid, laundry porter, cook, & babysitter." Another writes:

If my mom would have been stable with a good job and rent & food. Some structure for us, children then maybe I wouldn't have been the kid that felt like I needed to make some money to help. And as far as I knew my mom didn't seem to mind how I got money or where I spent my time she just didn't share any of those feelings with me so I'm thinking that I could have used some structure a mentor my oldest brother for a while would tell me not to take drugs but that all ended when I seen him using.

These cycles of instability, for some, began at a very young age leading to early involvement with the justice system. Respondents tell of abuse at four years old, alcohol consumption at nine, running away at age ten, moving to foster care at age eleven, drug use in adolescence, and juvenile justice system involvement at thirteen – many of which were coupled with a decrease in school attendance and dropping out altogether. For many, this exposure to severe risk factors and subsequent crime created pathways that began when these adults were young children. As prisoner writing from a men's prison explains:





Now, being that my mother was so young, she really didn't know how to care for a child. My grand mother started caring for me and eventually became my guardian. My father showed up every now and then, but not for long. The last time I seen him was when I was 9 months old. I never really had a father figure. There was a lot of violence and alcohol in my household. When my uncle would babysit me, he would give me beer in my baby bottle. My grandfather was an alcoholic. He was real abusive: physically and mentally. He would physically harm: me, my grandmother, my mother, and my two female cousins. And, we would all get put down and called dirty names.

So, after years and years of abuse, I ended up looking for adventure and I turned to the streets. By the time I was 9, I was a full pledged alcoholic. I took my first trip to juvenile hall when I was 11. I got caught joyriding in a stolen car.

### Uniquely Gendered Pathways

Although the above themes were evident in essays written by male and female prisoners alike, select life history themes were more prominent for each. For example, as revealed in an essay excerpt above, prisoner essays written in men's prisons more commonly noted the significance of the absence of a male figure, often directly associated with loss of their fathers. These essays also more often commonly included mention of the larger cultural environment and "lifestyle" of crime – what can be broadly construed as the culture of the streets. As one essay indicates, "If I had grown up in a better environment where there is no gangs, drugs and violent. Rather, there would be social systems, schools, teachers, neighbors, relatives, and friends who would care enough and not turn a blind eye to help me get on the right track." Another draws the direct connection between "fighting in school", which the writer later characterizes as "cool", to "fighting in prison": "Playground to prison." Pointing to the connections between this "way of life," one's own (masculine) identity, and the associated status among peers, another essay reads:

Upon my release I hooked up with my new drug connection. I was starting into a new way of life with a new set of rules. I soon learned from these new so called friends the rules for this new way of life. I adopted this belief system and believed it was the way of life. This street code involved violence without regard. It had a so called code of honor that I now know is completely false. At the time I thought this is

what it meant to be a man. One thing did not change: My peers looked up to me even more.

This essay excerpt further highlights the significance of male figures for male identity and the relationship between these and one's path toward crime.

For writers in women's prisons, two key noteworthy patterns emerge related to mental health and related to identity as a mother. The first reveals the intersection between histories of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by family and other intimates, feelings of pain, hurt, guilt, and loneliness and subsequent self-medication through drugs and alcohol. These are not independent from a need for validation of one's self that participants also indicate is central to their "IF" answer. As one female prisoner writes: "After all the years of my moms hatred I couldn't believe I was loved and so losing the love I had with my husband and kids and inlaws hurt so deeply and totally destroyed my life I finally found drugs that so completely made me numb and totally unfeeling." Other writers in women's prisons explain:



If someone would have said to me it is OK to hurt...  
When I was a small child my mommy went away  
Altho I knew it was to keep her safe...  
My dad lived a life of crime, he was a very hurtful  
man no respect for our  
When mommy went away my brother and I became  
his personal Abuse "bogs" he blamed us for our  
mommy moving away he said "she couldn't stand us"  
so she abandond us these painful words were  
Just the begining to a long road of pain he  
physicly, mentally, sexually Abused us both my  
Brother would jump in and take most of the  
Abuse until one day we were 11-12 when he  
got Arrested the 1<sup>st</sup> time this was when I got  
beat, Abused, Sevirally, I was told my mother  
was dead no hope for reuniting, I had a lost  
hurt broken sole, I hide all this pain way down  
deep within I did not want anyone to know, to  
Afraid to tell he would destroy my life so this  
was my family secret, eating at my sole for  
36 years now I've been torn apart inside my heart

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IF SOMEONE WOULD HAVE SAID "LET ME  
TAKE YOU TO SEE A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER,  
BECAUSE I THINK YOU'RE DEPRESSED AND NEED  
TO TALK WITH SOMEONE," I THINK THAT  
WOULD HAVE BEEN WHAT I CALL "PREVENTION"  
IN MY LIFE.

With my BACKGROUND OF LIVING WITH AN  
ALCOHOLIC MOTHER, AND MEN ABUSING ME, I  
WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED TO ALCOHOL MYSELF  
TO EASE THE PAIN OF MY LIFE.

I WOULDN'T HAVE RUN AWAY, ONLY TO END  
UP IN WORSE SITUATIONS.

I NEEDED TO HAVE A FATHER & MOTHER  
FIGURE, AND TO BE LOVED & TAUGHT TO LOVE.  
I DIDN'T KNOW I DIDN'T NEED ALCOHOL TO  
NUMB MY PAIN, UNTIL I FOUND OUT I WAS  
DEPRESSED - WHICH WAS AFTER MY ARREST.



The second prominent theme is the respondent's role as a mother in making sense of her pathway toward crime and, perhaps even more so, the consequences of it for her experience of punishment. Related to this, respondents wrote about the ways in which their crime and drug and alcohol use specifically affected, or could potentially affect, their children either through losing children to the system or as an influence on them (as also discussed above). As one respondent explains, "I was a baby when I started having babies and not only became a struggling teenage mother but also became a struggling drug addict addicted to methamphetamines. Meth soon became my best friend, and my way of life. I put my children second and drugs first." These themes could also be intertwined. That is, one may fill the absence of love by having a child, commit crime as a means of survival to support her children, and experience deep feelings of pain as a result of the related consequences. As one prisoner in a women's prison explains:

If my family would have told me that they still loved me & I wasn't a worthless, poor excuse for a mother I wouldn't have continued to use drugs. I wouldn't have gotten worse & eventually became a junkie.

I feel so much guilt & shame for losing my children, my mother through it in my face on a daily basis. She even went as far to tell me that my grandma was so ashamed of me that she didn't want me in her home. That hurt me the worst. My grandmother was and still is my inspiration. I stayed away from my grandparents house because of what my mom told me.

#### Anomalous Examples

Not every story, however, unfolded in ways that reveal the patterns discussed above. Although rare among the sample of essays, select cases reveal how otherwise supportive and stable environments still resulted in a path toward crime and incarceration. One prisoner explains that she "was brought up in a pretty trusting and protective life style. Although I had an alcoholic Mother I still was never raised around violence. I had a close loving family who was involved and supportive." But then she began a relationship that was ultimately abusive and eventually she became a "habitual offender, drug addict, street smart, harden by the game – stuck in prison for my second time." Another respondent reveals that she too "grew up in a wonderful family" and it wasn't until an injury that she became aware of and connected to drugs.



I have had quite a few things that have happened to me in my life where i wish i could have just got help consisting someone was there to talk to me. I grew up in a wonderful family. i didn't even know you could go to jail as a teenager i had no idea. I knew nothing about drugs and that kind of lifestyle until 2008 when i broke my pelvis in 3 places and ~~was~~ was perscribed Oxycontin. Shortly after that i found out that my brothers used this drug and sold it. If my brother wouldnt have offered ~~me~~ for me to learn how to flip my money and always have money no matter what if my oldest brother who is my best friend "who said you can shoot up with me as long as i know your with me" let you do it. After i started using ~~the~~ Oxycontin in that matter my life slowly started spiraling out of control. I believe if i were never introduced to some things my life would have stayed on the path i was on before where i had graduated from beauty school, and working in a Salon taking care of my son and having a family of my own!

Another respondent reveals that there is not anything anyone could have done, that this was simply her path to take.

I Don't ACTUALLY KNOW IF ANYBODY COULD'VE RE-DIRECTED MY PATH. A SELF-PROCLAIMED KNOW-IT-ALL; SO SURE OF WHOSE I WAS HEARD; SO RESISTANT TO OTHERS OPINIONS OF WHAT I NEEDED, HOW TO GET IT or WHERE I SHOULD PUT IT. I BLINDLY RAN IN THE DARK WITH ~~SCISSORS~~ SCISSORS IN MY HAND. BLINDLY POINTING, MOVING AT WILL. I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW OR BELIEVE ANY OUTSIDE INFLUENCE COULD'VE CHANGED THE TRAJECTORY OF MY LIFE. IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-DO SOMETHINGS, Heck Yeah, I'D CHANGE SOME THINGS. BUT I MUST HONESTLY SAY/ASK, WOULD I HAVE GOTTEN THE MESSAGE; MADE THE CHANGE; GONE THE DISTANCE? I DON'T KNOW. WHAT I DO KNOW IS TODAY I AM RECEPTIVE TO SUGGESTIONS, CHANGE & INPUT. I TRY TO BE OPEN AND TENDABLE. PLAYING FOR WISDOM IN MY CHOICES, ACTIONS, THOUGHTS AND WORDS.

I WAS BLESSED WITH AN AMAZING MOTHER WHO LOVED ME FIERCELY. SHE GAVE US KIDS HER ALL. SHE COULD NOT HAVE CHANGED MY ODD & FLOW. MY SON IS MY HERO, HIS INPUT VITAL AND CRUCIAL. EVEN HIS PROTECTIVE COULD NOT, DID NOT GET MY ATTENTION. THIS HAS MY FULL ATTENTION. I MUST BE IN CONTROL OF MY LIFE; NOT LET ANY LIFE OR OUTSIDE INFLUENCES CONTROL ME. SLEEPWALKING THROUGH MY LIFE IS NOT THE ANSWER. A GAVE TO DRUGS & ALCOHOL.

I SEE NOW THAT BEING A POSITIVE EXAMPLE CAN HELP MY SON IF MOTHER HE HAD, HAD A BETTER MOTHER, MAYBE HE WOULD NOT BE STRUGGLING THROUGH HIS LIFE. SO THEREIN LIES THE ANSWER. POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR OTHERS.



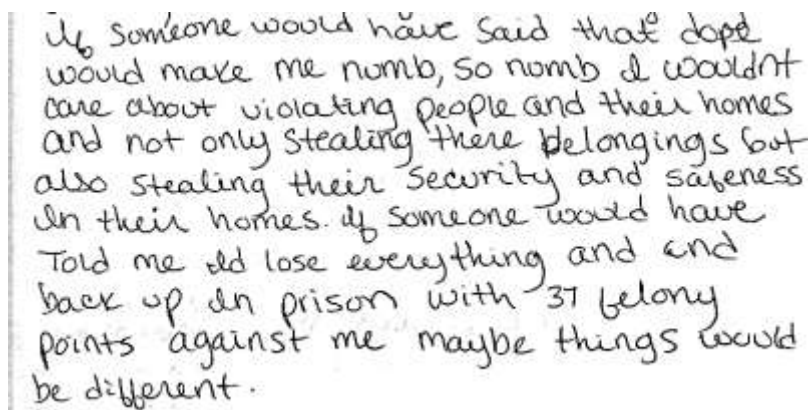
### *Others Helping Me*

Similar to the youth essays, adults detailed the how others in their lives could have provided better examples and direction for them, improved quality of relationships more generally, and a sense of self-worth and validation.

### Modeling and Direction

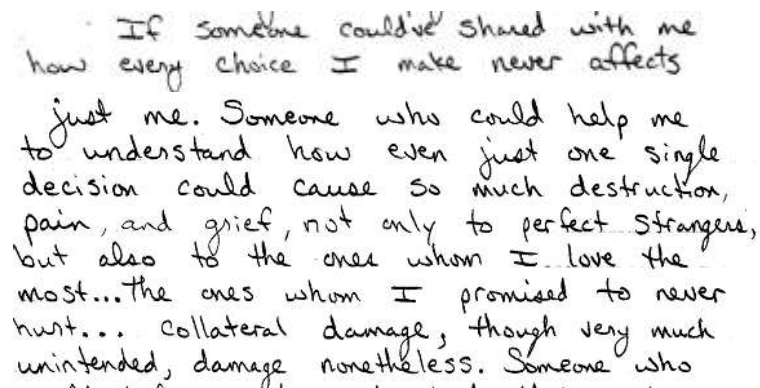
People in the lives of respondents could have helped them by providing discipline and direction and by acting as positive role models rather than as negative influences. As in the juvenile responses, a need for discipline and direction includes a desire to have had someone relay the potential consequences of one's actions, provide general guidance and direction, and care about doing so. This includes providing and demonstrating positive alternatives to one's high-risk trajectory.

The perceived value in knowing and understanding the results of one's actions is presented in many ways. In some instances, this is presented generally: "If someone could give me direction, would check on me & make sure I'm still on the right path." Another writer states simply: "Had I had someone teach me about the repercussions of living a life of crime and put me in treatment and school I would not of become a robber of banks x3 time's in prison from a life of crime." Another writes: "Someone should have screamed at me that I could lose everything if I don't speak up." A writer in women's prison explains:



If someone would have said that dope would make me numb, so numb I wouldn't care about violating people and their homes and not only stealing their belongings but also stealing their security and safeness in their homes. If someone would have told me I'd lose everything and end back up in prison with 37 felony points against me maybe things would be different.

Two excerpts below from essays written in a men's prison similarly reveal the role of being presented with, and understanding, the consequences of one's actions:



If someone could've shared with me how every choice I make never affects just me. Someone who could help me to understand how even just one single decision could cause so much destruction, pain, and grief, not only to perfect strangers, but also to the ones whom I love the most...the ones whom I promised to never hurt... collateral damage, though very much unintended, damage nonetheless. Someone who

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IF BEFORE I TOOK MY FIRST HIT OF ANY DRUG, SOMEONE WOULD HAVE STOPPED ME AND SAID, "HOLD UP LITTLE HOMIE, BEFORE YOU HIT THAT AND THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY YOU BETTER THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES" WHAT DO YOU MEAN CONSEQUENCE "WE'LL TAKE A LOOK OVER HERE LL HOMIE, THIS

GUYS RIGHT HERE IS 40 YEARS OLD AND LIVES IN HIS MOM'S GARAGE. NEVER HAD A JOB, NEVER HAD A GIRLFRIEND AND CAN'T QUIT USING DRUGS. "I'VE MET THIS MAN AND I'M NOT TRYING TO END UP LIKE THAT". IS THAT HOW YOU WANT TO BE? IS THAT COOL TO YOU? "NO, BIG HOMIE, I WANT TO BE A BUSINESS MAN." WELL YOU BETTER DROP THAT STUFF YOUR ABOUT TO SMOKE AND GET YOUR MIND RIGHT, YOUR FAMILI NEEDS YOU"

OR THE DAY I STOLE MY FIRST CAR SYSTEM. RIGHT BEFORE IT SMASHED TO WINDOW AND ALL THAT IF SOMEONE WOULD HAVE SAID "HOLD IT UP LITTLE HOMIE, DO YOU REALIZE NO ONE LIKES A THIEF AND YOUR CAUSING THESE PEEK PAIN AND HEADACHE BY STEALING WHAT THEY HAVE WORKED FOR". "HAVE YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE STEAL FROM YOU?" "NO". "OK THEN LITTLE HOMIE, EVERY TIME YOU STEAL IM GOING TO SMASH A WINDOW FROM YOUR MOM'S CAR AND YOU TELL ME HOW SHE FEELS." A THIEF AND A LAR GET NO RESPECT AND IS A SWEET EXCUSE OF A MAN.

Others reveal the value of having a better understanding also of the indirect causes of their actions. Two essays from a men's prison look to the effects on their children.

BUT, ONE THING I DO KNOW, IF SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME THE AFFECTS THAT BEING IN PRISON WOULD HAVE ON MY CHILDREN, I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT I WOULD HAVE CHANGED. KNOWING THAT I'LL NEVER WATCH MY SON PLAY FOOTBALL OR MY DAUGHTER PLAY SOCCER, OR THAT NOT BEING THERE FOR THOSE THINGS WOULD HURT MY KIDS SO MUCH WOULD HAVE HAD A ~~MASSIVE~~ HUGE IMPACT ON MY CHOICES.





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If someone who had kids and who themselves had experienced prison life and the effects of themselves being locked up had on their kids, told me that my actions and being locked up would have a affect in a bad way on my kids, that my kids were more likely to abuse drugs, alcohol and were more likely to get into trouble themselves and more likely to come to prison this would have changed my path that led me here.

No parent ever wants to see their kids locked up, or following in their footsteps of destruction.

Yet, respondents also explain how some of this guidance may be more effective within the context of further support. One writer from a women's prison reveals how even positive words may not be useful without accompanying guidance.

If I had someone to teach me that is was not ok to do drugs. The times were very blurred for me when I was young, I never had a good, healthy role model in my life. No one to give me direction of what I was capable of accomplishing. I was always told that I had so much potential, but then again no direction of where to put all of my good energy. I believe you need to be a good role model, and give your

An essay from a men's prison similarly reveals the importance of not only providing the direction but caring enough to "see it through."

Life is hard to interpret, and it's helpful when there's someone who can point out the pitfalls, the problems, and people who mean you ill will. While helping someone avoid challenges, a person can, or could've shown me positive alternatives and the opportunities they provide... but at the end of the day, they have to be there, and dedicated to seeing it through.

Some respondents took this further in pointing out that, in addition to teaching consequences, it would have been helpful to know what other positive alternatives to their current lives existed. Interestingly, this was commonly presented as being "shown" rather than just "told." As one writer in a women's prison explains,

If someone would have showed me what a healthy relationship looked like or felt like, maybe my path could have been different. maybe I could have made better choices and loved me and my family more than the pain that laged and waited in my inner being.....

A respondent in a men's prison also reveals the value of actions over words in the following excerpt.

For me, the "IF" Factor consists of two things. The first is the do as I say not as I do factor. My parents always said don't do this or don't do that but they did those very things. They told me not to do that left me confused & full of questions that had no answers.

This concept of "showing" is further implied by the value of having a particular person to serve as a positive role model or the removal of someone who is a negative model. As one writer in a women's prison explains,

If I could had Roll Models in my life or Even parents that gave me proper Guidence & Direction. Taught me Right from Wrong. Loved me and told me that, Not just bye the Words, but by there actions as well.

A writer in a men's prisons similarly explains:

credibility. I need this somebody  
to spend time with me, showing me  
other alternatives to selling crack,  
or assaulting and robbing individuals.

I needed somebody who had  
a beautiful family and was making  
it in society, legit.

People have tried to assist  
me through my troubled adolescent  
years, none of them appealed to me  
or my situation.

For writers in a men's prison it is not uncommon to specifically identify the gendered role of this figure as male as discussed briefly earlier.

Still I wonder at times what life  
could have been like IF some one  
would have taken the time to speak  
to me on what it means to be a man.  
IF some one could have taken the time  
to show a little boy the true meaning  
of being a man.

In the absence of a positive role model, respondents also revealed the many negative influences that were prominent in their lives. Many of these negative influences are revealed in the first part of this section – familial offending, abuse, and drug use – and lay the foundation for life histories that created the pathways to offending. Respondents are often aware of the effects that close proximity to negative influences has had on their lives through family and then associations with peers who were similarly situated. One respondent in a men's prison provides a nuanced examination of several of the themes related to direction, discipline, and role models including the critical need to *have* more positive role models rather than just see them.



Unfortunately, that wouldn't have mattered because regardless of what my brother SAID, I paid more attention to the things he DID. As an adolescent being raised in the Set-up, I NEEDED a positive, consistent, male influence to deter me from all of the destruction that was all around me everyday, all day. My mother, being a single-parent, raising my two older brothers and my older sister (now deceased) was strong-willed, God-fearing and did all she could to deter her children from the madness in the set-up. Sadly, she wasn't equipped to keep my brothers and I from indulging in the destruction because as a woman, there was only so much that she could've done. Once I reached a certain age (around 12) I needed a male influence because I wasn't able to relate to mom anymore in the sense of looking up to her as a role-model. <sup>I felt as a woman, she couldn't understand.</sup> As ~~an~~ adolescents, we gravitate towards role-models who's consistent, and unfortunately, my role-models were negative. I SAW positive role-models, but I HAD negative role-models. The only positive influences were the ministers at my church and these were individuals that I saw maybe once a week ... my negative influences were there everyday!

If I had a consistent, positive, male influence/role-model I may have been able to focus more on positivity rather than the negativity. If I was raised around positive peers, <sup>family members, friends and</sup> ~~older~~ <sup>older</sup> ~~homicides~~ <sup>homicides</sup> who didn't think it was cool to rob random individuals for fun, who didn't look for fights to prove that we were the hardest around, who didn't sell drugs instead of looking for jobs -- maybe I wouldn't have thought those things were cool either. If I had someone, who was raised in the Set-up, explain to me the full consequences and/or possibilities of the criminal and destructive activities that ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> became <sup>so</sup> normal to me -- maybe I would have reconsidered robbing that house nine years ago at the age of 16, which led to the 14 years that I'm now serving as a result.

### Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

Much as the youth did, the adults describe the need to have strong, secure, and loving relationships with people who are reliable, consistent and that they can trust. Indeed, a key component of this void is not just love, but love that is unconditional and which generates positive, rather than negative, attention (often in the form of abuse) in response to positive, rather than negative, behavior.

Related to the *active* quality of a role model, some writers indicate that simply telling of their love and care was not enough to have it be meaningful. Rather, *showing* this support through spending

positive time, for instance through talking and listening, would have been critical to their feelings of support and to their understanding of how to do the same for others. One writer in a women's prison explains the trajectory of these issues in her life.

I believe that I could have been influenced down a different path if just one person had showed an genuine interest in my future. If one person had told me they loved me every day. If one person had sat down after school to help me study. But instead I came home to an empty, abusive, lonely household. I didn't have someone I could count on, I began looking for love in all the wrong places. I sought attention and finally found I could get it with negative behavior. Since nobody noticed when I was good, I made them notice me by being bad. I made all the wrong friends. I stole. I partied. I had sex. I skipped school. I did whatever it took to feel like somebody cared what I was doing. I started doing Meth when I was 14 and the saying goes "took a hit of meth and never left" I dropped out of school, I got in fights. I got arrested. Now I'm 21 and in prison for the SECOND time. This time I'm here to change my life, not just to do my time.

As indicated in the essay above, the love and positive attention can be shown in many ways that move beyond providing the basic necessities to spending more quality time doing things that represent the very kinds of alternatives to lifestyles full of risk that respondents call for from absent positive role models. One essay that stands in contrast to others describes a life history filled with high cost experiences and material items and ways money was used to solve problems, but that lacked the kind of quality relationship the respondent, writing from a women's prison, needed.

But looking back there was so much I didn't have. Yea, to most everyone I was spoiled, I had whatever I wanted, so much that an average kid would be jealous. But what I didn't have is what I wanted & what I needed the most... Time with my parents, having my parents in my life. Talking with my parents, laughing with my parents, even arguing with my parents.



For many respondents the nature of the time together, includes talking, listening, and truly hearing and understanding in a way that requires relatability. One respondent in a women's prison begins her essay response: *"If I only knew what was happening to me, happens to a lot of people."* Another writes: *"If I had someone who experienced life like I am now and talked to me about it instead of glamourizing it, I would have listened."* And another: *"I wish someone who knew what I felt like at the time and who had overcome what I had been going through could of came and spent time with me and showed me the joy of loving life."* One respondent in a men's prison explains the value of relatability in talking and listening in greater detail:

If there was someone who could've listened to me, not with sympathy, but with empathy. Someone who had actually understood my fears, the peer pressure that I felt, the anger issues that I had because they had actually experienced those specific issues that I was going through. Someone who had dealt with and overcome fears of abandonment, who had overcome peer pressures of always having to be #1, or the tough guy, or the guy who everyone was always expecting to step up and be the first person to react so that people wouldn't perceive you as weak or an easy target. Someone who had recognized that they too had anger issues and had come to understand the importance of patience, tolerance, rationalization, humility, and consequences. Someone who, although armed with having faced these similar hardships, could listen without being judgmental. Someone who could've advised without telling or forcing demands on me.

This need for someone to talk and listen stands in contrast to what many present as their experiences with those in their lives who, in contrast, tell them to keep their feelings and struggles inside. As one respondent writing from a women's prison indicates, *"If I wasn't growing up around drugs, guns and someone always telling you to keep things to yourself and never let it out."* Another indicates that someone could have said, *"To hold your head high and communicate your problems instead of acting out."* And another: *"Instead of telling me quit crying or Ill give you something to cry about. Why didn't you ask me why I was crying?"* Respondents indicate a need from others to help them cope with their challenges and pain related to their histories in ways other than through crime and substance use. As one writer in a men's prison explains, *"If I could have dropped a tear, two, three with no fear of being teased I would have felt it okay to express emotion in a productive way. One that didn't force me to bottle up all the ill-emotions brung by beatings with extension cords while tied up, ice cold baths, and deprivation of food."* One essay excerpt from a women's prison explains:



That my feelings mattered. Although my Parents loved me, still I wasn't really allowed to express or show any of the things I felt. I couldn't show pain, anger, hurt or sadness. I was told that was bad to express those feelings. So I bottled it all up. Dated out. Married an abusive man. - Again, my feelings just didn't matter - Couldn't express my hurt + pain or sadness without the abuse. -  
- maybe if I was allowed to express my Painful feelings in healthy ways then things possible could have been different. -

Finally, respondents indicated a need for people in their lives to provide security. As a respondent in women's prison writes, "I guess really I needed someone there to tell me its okay Ill keep you safe." Another writes: "I felt unprotective like any minute something could happen to me or my family." And another writes: "If I would've been protected from the monsters in the closet and under the bed." And later in the same essay: "If I would've been protected from all things that have hurt, abused, and torn me apart." This sense of security can come in many forms. It means people believing them when seeking help - for instance, in cases of reporting abuse. It means people taking responsibility when it is theirs to take. And still for others, this is about consistency in the support and love provided. More broadly, a secure environment is one that is characterized by an absence of the kinds of risk factors detailed at the start of this section and the presence of positive relationships and attention.

### Self-Validation

Finally, respondents indicate a common need for others to have provided self-validation or, in some instances, not to have it taken away. For instance, one essay respondent in a women's prison refers to being continuously "told I was worthless" and "told I was stupid and everthing I liked was not going to take me anywhere if I didnt marry someone with money I was none cause I was dumb." Another writes: "Someone to tell me I was worth it. Someone to make me feel like more than a slave." Other essays from women's prisons corroborate this point.



Maybe if someone told me I was smart or your mind has the endless capacity to get you far, to get you where you want to be your mind is beautiful instead of the body instead of your pretty, your cute your beautiful, your sexy at 80. if someone would have accepted my mind and allowed my mind to grow instead of stifling it and making it fit into this pretty little box and in this way of life. if someone would have loved & cultivated all parts of me & not just whatever part they wanted at that time. if someone socialized @ me instead of sexualized me. mind over matter

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I heard "I love you" a lot from my mom and grandpa when they were ~~at~~ at home and awake. Which wasn't often. I wish I could have heard it from the rest of my relatives. Instead I heard ~~racial~~ racial slurs, accusations, being told im "too dirty" or stupid to play with my cousins. I was always a bastard child. They were my aunts, uncles & cousins.. They were related by blood, we should have had a bond. I loved them - I just wanted them to love me. School was no better than home... the white kids didnt like me either... their parents told them I was bad... The other latinos didnt like me either - I couldnt speak spanish and my blood was mixed... I wish somebody would love me... or even just like me a little.. I wish my aunts would quit telling me im stupid and stop throwing the hairbrush at me... I'll have to tell my mom I fell if she leaves a mark... she doesnt believe my aunt throws things like a 2 year old... No one hears me. Im just a dirty, stupid, child. what do I know. They say it so much it must be true.

I wish they would have told me they loved me. That I was good enough, smart enough and could do the things other kids could do. I wish I could have heard my options rather than my restrictions.

I met some people that taught me; if they wont give it to you - take it. I wish I wouldnt have been ignored. <sup>then</sup> I wouldnt have looked for acceptance in the "dark."

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From a very early age I knew the  
pain of being rejected. At home I  
was never good enough. I was asked  
all the time what was wrong with  
me. I was told I'd never change. My  
so-called peers made my life miserable.  
They called me names and treated me  
like I was a leper. If I could change  
... I would it

This theme is not unique to respondents in women's prisons, however. Respondents in the men's prison also wrote about the need for self-validation in some instances as revealed in the excerpt below.

If someone told me that my voice had value the times  
I overlooked myself, I'd shout instead of whisper. No one took  
me by the hand and informed me that I could speak. So I  
remained silent. I never expressed my truth, and why would I  
when nobody cared enough to show me I was great? I was

Given these ways others could have helped, it is not surprising, that respondents commonly revealed a strong desire to belong and that their ways of filling that void led to further harm. One prisoner in a women's prison explains, "The desire to belong or to feel desired or wanted led me to a path of broken souls more so than even mine." Another explains:



If my mother hadn't re-married and began a new family that made me feel like an outsider. If my mother would have been there for me more and not working all the time leaving me alone to feel like I had to fit in with the cool kids. If someone gave me knowledge about how real prison is and how easy it is to get there. Because I wanted to be accepted by friends so badly I was a follower, doing whatever I needed to do to be accepted. If someone told me how important school is and how much potential I had. If I would have stood up for myself and said "no" when I really didn't want to. If someone would have listened and believed what I was feeling inside, instead of brushing it off and not dealing with it.

### *Me Helping Myself*

In spite of the framing of the IF question, some respondents also characterized their pasts as choices much as some of the youth did. In addition, essay writers detailed ways in which they could have in the past, and can now, help themselves.

### Choice and Taking Responsibility

Looking backward, it was not uncommon for respondents to characterize their pathways toward incarceration as their choice explicitly and implicitly present ways that reveal how they take responsibility for their actions. One respondent in a women's prison, for example, begins to describe the crime that led to her incarceration by indicating: "We all have a choice. I made the choice on [date] that changed a family's life and my life." The writer goes on to provide contextual details about the pain she endured in her life at the time of the offense related to intimate partner abuse and the events that led to taking "another person's life." Another writer begins: "I could have changed my actions when my conscious stepped into play..." A writer from a men's prison reflects back on when he was young "and began to make bad choices in my life." And another indicates that gang involvement was a choice.

As revealed in earlier excerpts, in some instances this choice is discussed in terms of now realized consequences. For example, one respondent indicates in an excerpt presented earlier, that an understanding of the effects of his choices on his children may have led him to change. Another excerpt presented earlier in an essay from a women's prison points to a need to have understood the consequences of her choices in writing: "If someone could've shared with me how every choice I make never affects just me."

Some writers point to what they specifically could or should have done in order to disrupt their paths toward high-risk decisions that relate and lead to crime. Some of these include direct actions such as staying in school and playing sports, but more often they address ways of accepting help when it was

available and asking for it when it was not. Essay excerpts from a men's prison, for instance, indicate help may have been available, but it wasn't used.

reality. IF I had truly listened to the advice and life lessons of my parents I would've made better choices that not only effected my life but others as well. And my parents, my family, and my children wouldn't have to suffer for my sins.

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You know there were people who tried to help me, but none <sup>of which</sup> I liked. They were all elders of the church. I didn't want to hear that.

A writer from a women's prison reveals the need to have asked for help.

Ive always known I needed help and deep down Ive always wanted it but for some reason I just couldn't ask for it, instead I ran from it. I expected my family and those who care about me to read my mind and know I needed help, and when they didnt I'd grow angry and hurt, making it easier to go out and self medicate myself with drugs and numb my heart so that I didnt care who I hurt in my destructive path including my loved ones and myself. I could think of hundreds of things that have happened in my life that had they happened differently would have helped change my path. But the biggest thing someone could have said or done to change things for me would have been me, realizing its ok to ask for help realizing I dont have to be stubborn all the time or feel ashamed to ask someone to help me.

Another area in which respondents expressed how they could have helped themselves is through their own self-validation, self-efficacy, and general wellbeing. One respondent in a women's prison writes: "Basicly if I would have loved myself my whole life would be different." Another writes: "I would of just looked @ all the things I had accomplished and quit putting myself down. Maybe I would have been able to forgive myself." And another essay states simply: "I would've believed the people who said good things about who I was, rather than living out the negative events in my life." And later in the same essay: "If I would've trusted myself and my good judgment." Another essay from a women's prison reads: "Maybe I couldve at least loved myself enough to make better choices and lived my life insted of just surviving it." Another reads:

You, but essentially they will be unkind  
to you, you need to listen to yourself  
in that quiet moment, the voice that  
tells you that it wasn't right that  
you got slapped, hit, punched or  
taken advantage of. No one is going  
to speak the truth about how you're  
getting treated better than your quiet voice.  
It's the voice that isn't being used to  
tell people "they love me" "I caused it"  
"they were stressed" It's the voice that  
you hear in the quiet moments  
(second) Don't stop asking for help  
when you know that it's over your  
head that you don't know how to make  
it stop. Keep telling people - people

Another writer in a men's prison looks to himself to have changed his path as follows:

It would have been myself, to follow my  
true self; to not have went against my creed. "For  
I know all the answers are within myself. Being  
fully aware of my lack of respect for myself and  
family, everyone and everything around. Also the  
individual signs of concern from all who love me,  
to busy with blinders; yet fully aware. To just  
take time for me, myself to look, listen feel.  
The ...

Finally, some respondents indicated a sense that helping themselves includes helping others. As one writer in a men's prison states: "I see now that being a positive example can help my son." And a respondent in a women's prison explains: "Take care of yourself so you can take care of your children."

### Looking Forward

Looking forward, the theme of choice and taking responsibility emerges from these essays once again as writers reveal their agentic role in their future, in contrast to how their previous paths have







Finally, another respondent reveals how his past choices inform expectations for how to proceed in the future in order to prohibit others from doing the same.

I wouldn't be in prison. Without that example it took the life of a innocent victim and sense of all hope lost for me to want to make a difference. I'm to blame for my actions and I am going to make the best out of my situation by helping others avoid this life choice. That way there is something good that finally comes from all the bad and destruction I've caused. I'm an expert on informing youth on what not to do, unfortunately.

#### *Others Helping Me Help Myself*

Finally, as is evident in many of the essay excerpts presented above, the essays written by adult respondents reveal an underlying intersection between what they need from others and what they need for themselves. The former can facilitate the latter in order to strengthen one's own sense of self and provide positive tools for managing hardship. As one writer in a women's prison indicates simply: *"If I had one person care for me and take me in a love me and show me how to love myself and others."* Another essay begins: *"If someone would have told me to accept myself."* Simply put, respondents need others not only to fill in where they have come up exceedingly short, but also to provide a foundation from which they can function in their own prosocial ways. One writer in a women's prison indicates how *someone else* could have *helped her* to then cope herself.

I believe if someone could've done or said something to change the course of my life for the better it would've been when I lost my innocence and gain true year. If someone would've stepped in at that very moment - Possibly - I could've learn to cope in a healthy way instead of mask and get numb.

Intervening may have helped respondents to mitigate the negative emotions and subsequent actions resulting from histories marked by risk factors. Another respondent states clearly: *"I wish I wouldn't have been ignored...then I wouldn't have looked for acceptance in the "dark."* Essay excerpts from both a men's and women's prison (respectively) further draw this link.



First, I believed that in order to be important, to have some kind of real value, I had to be a part of something. I believed that I needed the external approval and acceptance of others to feel good about myself.

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If only someone could have told me that in order to gain acceptance from others, you must first accept yourself... if only that could have happened.

Another writer in a women's prison explains that someone could have further facilitated her own sense of self by letting her know how to achieve it.

You are not alone. It's not always cool to be able to say you've done it. All accept who you are. It's OK to feel you don't have to run away from your problems. They are still going to be there tomorrow. Instead face them head on + as fast as you possibly can because if you don't the stress will eat away at you. You don't have to go with the flow. It's OK for people not to like you. It's not about anyone else. You don't have to do what everyone else is doing. And then <sup>trying to</sup> perfecting imperfection. It's OK to have your own ideas. Set standards for yourself. Respect yourself. Love yourself. It's OK if someone would have told me you don't always have to learn for yourself. It's OK to say no. Take the things around you + learn from them.

Similarly, an essay from a men's prison indicates:

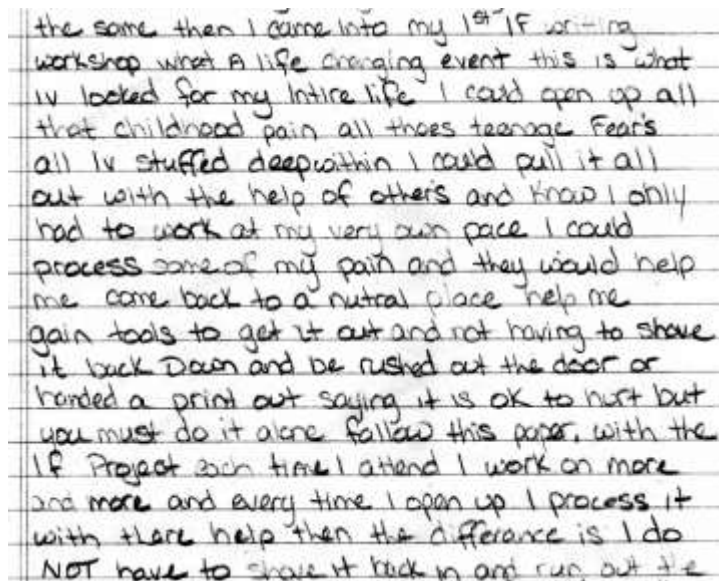
Just kept happening. So if I knew then the power of my voice, I would have said no. Would have stood in my strength & demanded my respect. No one did that for me. No one said, "██████████, you know you have a mouth for a reason, so please speak even if it's on paper." No one told me the power of a pen and piece of college rule. All I know was that I had no option to speak. My father



## The Role of the IF Project in Respondent Life Trajectories

Many of the themes that arise in the essay responses generated from the IF project question for youth and adults are needs targeted by the IF project. In particular, the program provides a positive role model and presence who will listen and understand (and who is relatable), support for one finding his/her self-worth, and support in taking responsibility for change. The level support extended to IF Project participants in the workshops extends beyond the context of the workshop environment. IF Project staff members make it clear in the workshops that they are available for ongoing support to any workshop participant. Furthermore, the IF Project has recently added a reentry component to assist a subset of selected IF Project participants in the women's prison in making the transition from prison to community through an intensive IF Project sponsored mentorship program.

This was not lost on select youth and adult respondents who mentioned the program itself in their essays. One youth respondent writes: "Out of [name of formerly incarcerated IF program staff] not just to me but to the grupe has been more than enuff. He is a role modle, someone who has been threw it all and can come out of it a changed man. I respect him more than anyone would no. You're a good man, and a type of "MAN" that people respect and look up to." Another writes: "If...the IF project came to me sooner." Further, for youth in particular, the program comes as an intervention on their path – one that adult essay excerpts above reveal could have helped to change its course. An adult essay from a women's prison explains what she has gotten out of the IF project in greater detail.



the same then I came into my 1<sup>st</sup> IF writing workshop what a life changing event this is what I've looked for my entire life I could open up all that childhood pain all those teenage fears all I've stuffed deep within I could pull it all out with the help of others and know I only had to work at my very own pace I could process some of my pain and they would help me come back to a neutral place help me gain tools to get it out and not having to shove it back down and be rushed out the door or handed a print out saying it is OK to hurt but you must do it alone follow this paper with the IF Project each time I attend I work on more and more and every time I open up I process it with there help then the difference is I do NOT have to shove it back in and run out the

She goes on to thank the program staff "for showing me this process...youve made a difference in my life and my daughters life...."

# PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S "IF" PROJECT

## CHAPTER 4

### Conclusion and Implications

#### Questions Answered

Results suggest that inmates who have participated are largely satisfied by the experience, gain self-insight, and appreciate the guest speakers, topics, and exercises. Pre/post surveys show greater change for youth while satisfaction with the seminars reported in post-surveys reflects greater satisfaction for the adult participants. This could in part be the result of the adults volunteering to participate (99% said they wanted to be in the workshops) while the juveniles had less of a choice (55% said they wanted to be there).

The purpose of the process evaluation was to develop a comprehensive portrait of the program with focus on the following program elements and research questions:

1. Outline and analysis of the IF Project's main goals – *What are the main goals of the IF Project?*
2. Outline of the process and delivery of services of the IF Project Workshops and Information sessions – *What occurs in the adult prison-based workshops and youth workshops and the adult prison-based monthly information sessions held at WCCW? (i.e., What are the structure, components, and content of the IF Project; What would an IF Project "Tool-Kit" look like for the purpose of future replication and evaluation?)*
3. Descriptive analysis of the IF Project components -- *What is the immediate initial general impact of the IF Project adult and youth Workshops and monthly WCCW information sessions on participants?*

The study provided an outline of delivery of services in the IF Project and provided results regarding the immediate general impact of the program on participants. However, the data collected for the purpose of the process evaluation do not offer evidence regarding the impact on future crime desistance. Future research (ideally an experimental or quasi-experimental comprehensive evaluation) is needed to examine the impact of the IF Project on measures of recidivism and crime desistance to answer the questions including:

- *Is the IF Project effective in changing the lives of participants in ways that contribute to desistance from crime for those exposed to the IF prison workshops?*
- *Is the IF Project effective in changing the lives of participants in ways that prevent future crime among juveniles exposed to the IF community/juvenile workshops?*
- *Does the IF Project effectively link participants with appropriate resources relevant to the "something" they identify may have helped them, or could help them right now, in the IF Project workshops?*

## **Program Implications**

Data showing the positive effects of the “IF” Project support a more nuanced understanding of the effect of ex-offender mentorship programs that serve at-risk youth and juveniles in detention with histories of delinquency that show the distinct differences between IF and seemingly similar programs of the past such as “Scared Straight” that have not been shown to be effective (Petrosino et al., 2000). These results provide evidence to complement previous assessments that have suggested that the effectiveness of the “IF” project is grounded in theory but inconclusive (Jones, 2012).

Differences found in the youth and adult workshops offer important information to guide future program efforts. For example, youth appear to be benefitting even though they may not initially want to participate, which is instructive when considering decisions about whether or not participation should be completely voluntary. What is revealed in the essay narratives is promising. Emerging literature on desistance reveals self-concept to be important to one’s likelihood of change. A move toward the “Good Lives Model” in rehabilitation allows for—and even encourages—a consideration of individuals’ orientations to positive selves, goals, and beliefs. As Ward and Brown (2004) explain, this is brought about through positive approaches to treatment, a better understanding of the relationship between risk management and “good lives,” and the role of competent therapists and offenders

In short, an adaptive identity toward one of a non-offender who is interested in a pro-social life, may be helpful for desistance. In many instances, the narratives reveal offenders who have begun the path toward a positive self-concept and identified goals. As such, the IF project may be well positioned to identify those most ready for desistance, most ready to make a strong effort in release and, more importantly, some of the key tools needed to help support the adapted identity. Still, The IF project may do well to consider developing a continuity of care approach that includes systematic ways to respond to stated individualized needs presented in the essays, ways to assess variability in need, conceptualizations of self, and prospects for change. In addition, tracking repeat essays (same writers) over time may provide an opportunity to begin to understand changes in narratives over the life course and how this relates to post-release life.

## **Concluding Comments**

The process evaluation involved developing methods to pilot measure the outcome of all components of the IF project including evaluation of workshops conducted from July 2012-December 2013 including workshops conducted in juvenile detention facilities, prison workshops, and monthly informational topic presentation sessions at the women’s prison through pre/post measures, observations, focus groups, and content analysis of essays.

This effort provides tool-kit data for the IF Project describing program structure, components, and content. Analysis of the IF Project essays also serves as an explicit contribution to, and

extension of, scholarship on general theories of crime (Agnew, 2005; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Tittle, 1993), trajectories of offending (e.g., Farrington, 2003; Laub & Sampson, 2006; Moffitt, 1993; Walters, 1990), and factors and individual-environment interactions influencing criminal behavior patterns (Helfgott, 2008; Horney, 2006; Robinson & Beaver, 2009; Thornberry, 1987).

More specifically, we hope the evaluation findings assist Detective Kim Bogucki, the Seattle Police Department, and The IF project's key stakeholders in identifying the structural and social factors which condition individuals' varied life paths and opportunities for desistance from crime.



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## APPENDIX A

### Adult Pre/Post Survey Instruments

#### "IF" PROJECT PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY – WCCW/MCC

---

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of workshop \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of workshop \_\_\_\_\_  
Essay Number \_\_\_\_\_

Your answers to this questionnaire will be used to help us measure the effectiveness of The "IF" Project and to show us where improvements to services can be made. Therefore, your participation is greatly appreciated. *Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer these questions in order to participate in The "IF" Project writing workshop.* Additional information on your participation in this important questionnaire is available from the IF Project and research staff.

---

#### **PRESENT INFORMATION**

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Do you want to be here today?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
2. Do you currently ask for help if you are experiencing a personal or emotional problem?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
3. Do you have resources available to you if you need help with a personal or emotional problem?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
4. Do you have a positive role model in your life at this time?
  - a. yes
  - b. no

---

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

5. How many times have you been incarcerated before this? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How old were you at the time of your first arrest? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever used illegal drugs?
  - a. yes
  - b. no **(IF NO, skip to Q#10)**
8. How old were you when you first used illegal drugs? \_\_\_\_\_
9. In the 30 days prior to the arrest that led you here how much money would you say you spent on illegal drugs? \$\_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you ever consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication (5+ drinks per sitting)?
  - a. yes
  - b. no **(IF NO, skip to Q#13)**
11. How old were you when you first consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication (5+ drink per sitting)?

12. In the 30 days prior to the arrest that led to your incarceration, how much money would you say you spent on alcohol? \$\_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you ever been seen for mental health services (including therapy, medication management, alcohol/drug treatment, peer support)?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
14. In your opinion, are there any mental health-related services that could have prevented this incarceration?
  - a. yes
  - b. no **(If NO, skip to Q#16)**
15. What services could have helped prevented this incarceration?
  - a. individual therapy
  - b. drug and/or alcohol treatment
  - c. psychiatric treatment
  - d. medication management
  - e. other \_\_\_\_\_
16. When you were younger, did you have a positive adult role model?
  - a. yes
  - b. no **(If NO, skip to Q#18)**
17. Who was your positive adult role model?
  - a. mother
  - b. father
  - c. family friend
  - d. relative
  - e. teacher
  - INSERT sibling option
  - INSERT AUNT
  - INSERT UNCLE
  - f. other (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_
18. Before you were eighteen years old did your parent or any other adult in your household ever push, hit, shake, hit or throw something at you?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
19. When you were twelve years old or younger did anyone ever do, or attempt to do, anything sexual to you?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
20. When you were thirteen years old or older did anyone ever do, or attempt to do, anything sexual to you that you did not want?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
21. If so, who was the perpetrator?

---

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

22. Please circle which option below best describes your ethnicity?
  - a. Caucasian
  - b. African-American
  - c. Latino/Latina or Hispanic
  - d. Asian/ Pacific Islander
  - e. Native-American/ Alaskan Native
  - f. Other (please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

23. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
25. What crime(s) were you convicted of? \_\_\_\_\_
26. How long is your current sentence? \_\_\_\_\_
27. Please indicate, in months, how much time you have served on your CURRENT sentence: \_\_\_\_\_ months.
28. Over your lifetime, how much TOTAL time would you say have you served: \_\_\_\_\_
29. What is the highest grade of school you have completed?
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade or less
  - high school (no diploma)
  - high school (diploma)
  - GED
  - technical school
  - some college
  - college diploma
  - graduate school or professional school
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
30. Which of the options below best describes your relationship status?
- single
  - in a relationship
  - separated
  - divorced
  - widowed
31. Which of the options below best describes your pre-incarceration employment status? (circle all that apply?)  
I was:
- Employed for wages part time
  - Employed for wages full time
  - Self-employed
  - Out of work and looking for work
  - Out of work but not looking for work
  - A homemaker
  - A student
  - Military
  - Retired
  - Unable to work
  - Other (please describe):
32. Do you identify as gay, straight, bisexual, or something else?
- gay
  - straight
  - bisexual
  - something else
33. Do you have children?
- Yes, please indicate how many: \_\_\_\_\_
  - No **(If NO, skip to Q#34)**
34. [If yes] Did your child/ren live with you prior to being incarcerated?
- Yes
  - No
35. Are you religious?
- Yes
  - No

c. Not religious, spiritual

36. If so, what is your religion? \_\_\_\_\_

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**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

37. I will graduate from high school (If not already)	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
38. I will finish college.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
39. I will get a job I really want.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
40. I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
41. If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
42. I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
43. If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
44. I can get along well with most people.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

45. It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
46. If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
47. I don't owe the world anything.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
48. What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
49. I really care about how my actions might affect others.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
50. I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

*How much do you agree with the following statements about making a change in your life?*

51. I really want to make changes in my life.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
52. Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
53. If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
54. I have already started making some changes in my life.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
55. Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
56. I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

THANK YOU!

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**"IF" PROJECT POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY – WCCW/MCC**

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of workshop \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Workshop \_\_\_\_\_  
Essay Number \_\_\_\_\_

Your answers to this questionnaire will be used to help us measure the effectiveness of The "IF" Project and to show us where improvements to services can be made. Therefore, your participation is greatly appreciated. *Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer these questions in order to participate in The "IF" Project writing workshop.* Additional information on your participation in this important questionnaire is available from the IF Project and research staff.

**WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**

Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following questions about your experience today:

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. The workshop was helpful	1	2	3	4	5
2. I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life	1	2	3	4	5
3. The workshop taught me something about myself	1	2	3	4	5
4. The speakers were interesting	1	2	3	4	5
5. I could relate to the speakers	1	2	3	4	5
6. The group discussion was useful	1	2	3	4	5
7. I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would like to participate in future workshops	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am glad I participated in this workshop	1	2	3	4	5
10. I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
11. Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective	1	2	3	4	5
12. Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am more likely to ask for help after participating in the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Participating in the workshop helped me heal my past.	1	2	3	4	5

17. What is the most important thing you learned today? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What did you like best about the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What could be improved in the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Did you discover any issues about your past that you were not aware of prior to participating in this workshop?
- yes
  - no [Skip to #5]
  - I don't know [Skip to #5]
  - If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What are some topics you would like to discuss in future workshops? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you have any suggestions about improving the format of the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

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**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

- |  |            |          |      |             |           |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 23. I will graduate from high school (if not already)                      | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 24. I will finish college.   | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 25. I will get a job I really want.  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 26. I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights.                    | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 27. If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them.                   | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 28. I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 29. If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them.                 | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 30. I can get along well with most people.                                 | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

- |  |            |          |      |             |           |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 31. It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then.                 | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 32. If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 33. I don't owe the world anything.  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 34. What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another.          | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 35. I really care about how my actions might affect others.                        | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 36. I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.                      | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |

*How much do you agree with the following statements about making a change in your life?*

- |   |            |          |      |             |           |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 37. I really want to make changes in my life.                           | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 38. Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem.                             | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 39. If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 40. I have already started making some changes                          |            |          |      |             |           |

in my life.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
41. Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
42. I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

THANK YOU!

## APPENDIX B

### Youth Pre/Post Survey Instruments

#### "IF" PROJECT PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY – YOUTH DETENTION FACILITIES

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Date of Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Essay Number \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Your answers to this questionnaire will be used to help us measure the effectiveness of The "IF" Project and to show us where improvements to services can be made. Therefore, your participation is greatly appreciated. *Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer these questions in order to participate in The "IF" Project writing workshop.* Additional information on your participation in this important questionnaire is available from the IF Project and research staff.

---

#### **PRESENT INFORMATION**

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Do you want to be here today?
    - a. yes
    - b. no
  2. Do you currently ask for help if you are experiencing a personal or emotional problem?
    - a. yes
    - b. no
  3. Do you have resources available to you if you need help with a personal or emotional problem?
    - a. yes
    - b. no
  4. Do you have a positive role model in your life at this time?
    - a. yes
    - b. no
- 

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

5. What best describes your living situation right now?
    - a. I live with both of my parents
    - b. I live with one of my parents
    - c. I live with a foster family
    - d. I live with another family member
    - e. I am homeless
    - f. I am incarcerated in a juvenile detention facility
    - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

#### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

6. Please circle which option below best describes your ethnicity?

- a. Caucasian
  - b. African-American
  - c. Latino/Latina or Hispanic
  - d. Asian/ Pacific Islander
  - e. Native-American/ Alaskan Native
  - f. Other (please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you currently attending school? YES NO
- a. If yes, what grade are you currently in? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. If no, what was the last grade you completed? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you been involved in juvenile court before? YES NO
11. What is your current employment status? (circle one or all that apply?)
- a. Employed for wages
  - b. Self-employed
  - c. Out of work and looking for work
  - d. Out of work but not currently looking for work
  - e. A student

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*How much do the following statements describe your family?*

- |  |            |          |      |             |           |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 12. I can tell my parents the way I feel about things. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 13. My family expects too much of me.                  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 14. Sometimes I am ashamed of my parents               | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 15. My family has let me down.                         | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 16. I like to do things with my family.                | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 17. I enjoy talking with my family.                    | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |

*How much do each of the following statements describe your neighborhood?*

- |   |            |          |      |             |           |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 18. Crime and/or drug selling.            | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 19. Fights.                               | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 20. Lots of empty or abandoned buildings. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 21. Lots of graffiti.                     | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 22. I feel safe in my neighborhood.       | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |



*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

23. I will graduate from high school.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
24 I will finish college.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
25. I will get a job I really want.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
26. I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
27. If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
28. I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
29. If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
30. I can get along well with most people.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

31. It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
32. If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
33. I don't owe the world anything.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
34. What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
35. I really care about how my actions might affect others.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
36. I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

*How much do you agree with the following statements about making a change in your life?*

37. I really want to make changes in my life.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
38. Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
39. If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
40. I have already started making some changes in my life.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
41. Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much
42. I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it.	Not at all	A little	Some	Pretty Much	Very Much

THANK YOU!

**"IF" PROJECT PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY – YOUTH DETENTION FACILITIES**

Date of Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Essay Number \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Your answers to this questionnaire will be used to help us measure the effectiveness of The "IF" Project and to show us where improvements to services can be made. Therefore, your participation is greatly appreciated. *Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer these questions in order to participate in The "IF" Project writing workshop.* Additional information on your participation in this important questionnaire is available from the IF Project and research staff.

**WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**

Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following questions about your experience today:

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. The workshop was helpful	1	2	3	4	5
2. I plan to apply the knowledge that I gained to my life	1	2	3	4	5
3. The workshop taught me something about myself	1	2	3	4	5
4. The speakers were interesting	1	2	3	4	5
5. I could relate to the speakers	1	2	3	4	5
6. The group discussion was useful	1	2	3	4	5
7. I will benefit from the knowledge I gained today	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would like to participate in future workshops	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am glad I participated in this workshop	1	2	3	4	5
10. I discovered things about myself I was not aware of prior to the workshop	1	2	3	4	5
11. Participating in the workshop gave me a new perspective	1	2	3	4	5
12. Participating in the workshop gave me hope that I can make new positive choices in my life	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am more likely to share my story to help someone else after participating in the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am more likely to ask for help after participating in the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I wrote about issues I have never discussed with anyone else before.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Participating in the workshop helped me heal my past.	1	2	3	4	5

17. What is the most important thing you learned today? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What did you like best about the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What could be improved in the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Did you discover any issues about your past that you were not aware of prior to participating in this workshop?

- a. yes
  - b. no [Skip to #5]
  - c. I don't know [Skip to #5]
  - d. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What are some topics you would like to discuss in future workshops? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you have any suggestions about improving the format of the workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*How much do you agree with the following statements?*

- |  |            |          |      |             |           |
|--|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 23. I will graduate from high school (if not already)                              | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 24. I will finish college.   | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 25. I will get a job I really want.  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 26. I am confident in my ability to stay out of fights.                            | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 27. If someone called me a bad name I would ignore them.                           | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 28. I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger.         | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 29. If someone disrespected my family, I would fight them.                         | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 30. I can get along well with most people.   | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 31. It is hard to get ahead without breaking the law now and then.                 | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 32. If I want to risk getting into trouble, that is my business and nobody else's. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 33. I don't owe the world anything.  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 34. What I do with my life won't make much difference one way or another.          | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 35. I really care about how my actions might affect others.                        | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 36. I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.                      | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |

*How much do you agree with the following statements about making a change in your life?*

- |   |            |          |      |             |           |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 37. I really want to make changes in my life.                                   | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 38. Sometimes I wonder if I have a problem.                                     | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 39. If I don't change my life soon, my problems are going to get worse.         | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 40. I have already started making some changes in my life.                      | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 41. Sometimes I wonder if my actions are hurting other people.                  | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |
| 42. I'm not just thinking about changing my life, I'm doing something about it. | Not at all | A little | Some | Pretty Much | Very Much |

THANK YOU!

## APPENDIX C

### WCCW MONTHLY IF PROJECT INFORMATION SESSION FEEDBACK SURVEY

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting \_\_\_\_\_

---

This questionnaire is totally voluntary. You do not have to answer these questions in order to participate in The "IF" Project monthly meetings. It is designed to help us collect data regarding the effectiveness of The "IF" Project. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. Did you find this meeting helpful?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
  - c. I don't know
  
2. What was the most beneficial aspect of this meeting?
  
3. Would you like to participate in more monthly meetings?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
  - c. I don't know
  
4. What are some topics you would like to discuss in future meetings?
  
5. Do you have any suggestions about improving the format of the meeting?

## APPENDIX D

### IF PROJECT TOOLKIT

#### IF Project Purpose

By listening to the experiences of the inmates themselves, we hope to glean some information that can be used to break the cycle—to get to a child in need before they head down the path to prison and empower already incarcerated women with esteem so after they're released, they don't return. The IF Project participants do not intend to excuse or dismiss responsibility for any of the crimes committed. Rather, they intend to take full responsibility and choose to look deeply into their past to learn what led them to this place.

#### *Project Goals:*

1. To create the opportunity for a new human connection.
2. To facilitate new understanding of one's options.
3. To facilitate a different relationship to law enforcement.
4. To provide the opportunity to tell one's story.
5. To create opportunities for participants to ask for help.
6. To include those experiencing the criminal justice system in developing solutions to existing crime and justice problems.

#### Project Implementation

The IF project consists of internal and external components. Each of these is described below including the basic required "tools" for each.

##### *I. Internal*

The Project conducts writing workshops inside prisons, jails, juvenile detention facilities, and truancy courts. These workshops last approximately 6-8 hours. The workshops consist of several components – 1) Introduction, 2) Preliminary writing prompts, reflection exercises, and discussion, 3) Posing the central IF Question – *"If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?"* 4) Discussion and Wrap-up. Part of the workshop time is dedicated to the writing workshop itself. The second part of the time offers a type of therapeutic presentation for the inmates to use to deal with the emotion and/or trauma that may have surfaced during the writing workshop.

The workshop sessions are highly interactive. Participants become support systems for each other through the sharing of their experiences. They often use this time to connect with others based on something they have in common that they did not realize in prior interactions. They also learn how to become resources for themselves.



### *Key Players and Their Roles*

Member of law enforcement	Introduces program and need for understanding between law enforcement, community members, and people who have committed crimes and are incarcerated and who will eventually return to the community.
Clinical research psychologist	Conducts sessions on mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation techniques.
Formerly Incarcerated IF Project Staff members	Formerly incarcerated IF Project participants who have been released, are successful, and interested in giving back to serve as IF Project staff members.
Creative writing teacher	Facilitates writing exercises through a series of writing prompts, posing the central IF Question, feedback, and discussion Works with the workshop participants on “thick” description in creative writing.
Program Participants	Voluntary participation of youth and adults in a range of correctional, court, and school-based contexts. In some cases in youth facilities, participation is mandatory. Participant enrollment range 12-50 people with ideal maximum cap of 40.

### *Short Term Session Objectives*

1. Participants will determine their own layers of need and understand where to find the resources to respond to that.
2. Participants will connect to the project and continue to participate through monthly meeting sessions. They will remain connected to the group.
3. Participants will learn new tools to manage stress and to determine a constructive path for their future goals and behaviors.

### *Long Term Session Objectives*

1. Self-reflection on history and patterns to provide tools for future crime desistance.
2. Understanding of the views and experiences of others in the community affected by crime (law enforcement, victims, community members).
3. A sense of hope, accountability, and self-efficacy in ability to change behavior and build a constructive future.

### *Typical Writing Workshop Session Agenda*

1. Introduction

2. Preliminary writing prompts
3. Posing the central IF Question – *“If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?”*
4. Discussion and Wrap-up

<b>Sample Agenda – ADULT WORKSHOPS</b>		
9:00-12:00	Introduction	<p><b>Introduction</b> of The If Project purpose and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consent Forms and Pre-Workshop Surveys [for research component]</li> <li>- IF Team Introductions – Names only</li> <li>- Explain what IF project is – Briefly</li> <li>- <b>Presentation of The IF Project video</b>Show Video</li> <li>- Ask for feedback of questions about video</li> </ul> <p><b>IF Project formerly incarcerated staff stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff tell stories of their background, crimes, incarceration, release, and success</li> <li>- 1-3 stories -- 5-10 minutes each</li> <li>- Questions about stories</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p><b>Preliminary Writing Prompts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1) <b>“24 Word Bio”</b> – <i>“Write 24 words that describe you. Take the 24 words and pick 12. Take the 12 words and pick 6. Take the 6 words and pick 3, then pick 1 – a 1-word bio for today.”</i></li> <li>- 2) <b>“What do you miss?”/“What do others miss about you?”</b></li> <li>- 3) <b>“Unconditional love”</b> – <i>“Write a letter to the little you. Identify the point/place when you took the path that led you here and identify what it would look like to have received unconditional love at that time.”</i></li> <li>- 4) <b>“Old house/New House”</b> – <i>“Imagine yourself standing in front of the house or a house you used to live in when you were growing up. Draw a picture, use your senses. What did it smell like, look like, feel like? You’re writing a picture. What was the feeling of the house? Describe it for us. Then imagine the house you can build. Start shifting to that when you’re done. What would this new house feel like, smell like, taste like?”</i></li> </ul>
12:00-12:30	Lunch	
12:30-3:00	IF Question	<p><b>The IF Question</b> – <i>“If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?”</i><b>Meditation and Writing exercises</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>“Write a letter of forgiveness”</b> – <i>“Write a letter to yourself or someone who needs to be forgiven, or to someone who needs to forgive you.”</i></li> <li>2) <b>“Trigger Exercise”</b> – <i>“Think about a thing that irritates you, that would trigger a negative reaction. Some time in life when something happened that sent you in a direction you did not want to happen. Pause at the edge. Describe what you feel. Stop,</i></li> </ol>

		<p><i>observe, breath, expand, respond (rather than react). We have to retrain ourselves to be able to notice when we get triggered, that impulse to react, and what we want to do. Imagine bringing all your attention at that moment to your breath. Notice you can be with all of this and choose how to respond. As yourself, “what is it I really need?” Because usually when this happens we are not getting what we need. What thoughts do you have? Bring your feelings into your breath. What are you experiencing? Now bring it out...think of your scenario and think about how your response can align with the person you want to be and what your needs are.”</i></p> <p><b>3) SOBER</b> -- Stop, Observe what’s going on, Breathe, Evaluate, Respond,</p> <p><b>4) “Mountain Meditation”</b> – “Visualize yourself as a mountain that remains unmoving throughout the seasons. Unmoved by what is happening; silence and wisdom amid turmoil. ...Sit with this feeling embodying the rootedness, stillness, and majesty. Remember the stillness and groundedness. You can access it any time...”</p>
3:00-3:30	Discussion and Wrap-up	<p><b>Discussion and Wrap Up</b>  <b>IF Staff share contact information</b>  <b>Presentation of Certificates</b>  <b>Post-workshop survey</b> [for research component]</p>

*Monthly Meetings – WCCW*

The Project also conducts monthly meetings inside the prisons in which the writing workshops are conducted for 2 1/2 hours. These are open to anyone in the institution. In these meetings the Project brings topic specific information to the inmates per their request. For example Domestic Violence, Healthy Relationship, art, sexual assault and abuse, child abuse, and parenting have all been topics of presentations before. Professionals in the field present these topics. In December of each year, the participants are asked which topics and speakers they would like to have in the future.

These sessions also include updates on what is going on outside of prison related to the progress of the IF project including what other facilities are involved and funding. Upcoming writing workshop sessions are also announced here.

Sample Agenda –YOUTH WORKSHOPS

<b>Sample Agenda – YOUTH WORKSHOPS</b>		
9:00-12:00	Introduction	<p><b>Introduction</b> of The If Project purpose and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assent Forms and Pre-Workshop Surveys [for research component]</li> <li>- IF Team Introductions – Names only</li> <li>- Explain what IF project is – Briefly</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation of The IF Project video</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show Video</li> <li>- Ask for feedback of questions about video</li> </ul> <p><b>Icebreaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1) <b>“Common Ground”</b> – Each person stands up and says who they would like to stand up with them saying, “I would like to stand with anyone who_____.”</li> </ul> <p><b>IF Project formerly incarcerated staff stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff tell stories of their background, crimes, incarceration, release, and success</li> <li>- 1-3 Stories -- 5-10 minutes each</li> <li>- Questions about stories</li> </ul>
12:00-12:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
12:30-3:00	IF Question	<p><b>Break-Out groups</b> (2-3 kids per IF team member) (groups according to gender)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk about what we as a team can do to help change their path</li> <li>- Get to know their individual stories and relate to them</li> </ul> <p><b>The IF Question</b> – <i>“If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have kids answer the IF question on paper.</li> <li>- Take notes on topics on small group debrief sheet.</li> </ul>
3:00-3:30	Discussion and Wrap-up	<p><b>Discussion and Wrap Up</b></p> <p><b>IF Staff share contact information</b> -Exchange contact information with kids/team, give to officers, Remind kids where we will be next. <b>Give bracelets to officers for kids property.</b></p> <p><b>Post-workshop survey</b> [for research component]</p>

The If Project also does classroom, community center, and youth group presentations. These include a showing of the video and speeches from the former inmates. These also conclude in the youth answering the IF question. The gathered information is followed up on by adults requesting the Project. The Project has also done school or large group assemblies. These are approximately 1 hour. They include a showing of the video and IF speakers presenting to group.

## *II. External*

External components to the project include truancy workshops with high school and middle school youth. These workshops are approximately 3-4 hours in length. They include an introduction to the Project as well as the team, a showing of the IF Project video, small break-out groups with the formerly incarcerated speakers, and topic specific (i.e. truancy) discussion by entire group. In the break-out groups the team prompts the youth to construct a more in depth understanding of why they are truant and what is needed to get them back into a school type program. Questions include: What are some of the reasons kids don't go to school? What are things kids are doing when they aren't in school? What are the benefits of going to school? The workshop concludes with the youth answering the IF question. With the information gathered, the Project will do an immediate triage if necessary for any serious issues that arise. If the matter is not that pressing then information is shared with an adult or adults requesting the workshop for follow up. Pre and post evaluations are given at each workshop.

### **Project Co-Founder/Producer**



*Kim Bogucki*

Detective Kim Bogucki has been a member of the Seattle Police Department (SPD) for more than 21 years. Kim became involved in community outreach work to form a closer bond between the SPD and the people it serves, as a means of effecting positive change. In 2004, Kim was the co-creator of the Youth Outreach Unit. She is currently assigned to the Department's Community Outreach Unit.

Deeply inspired by the individuals of the populations she serves, Kim has developed and implemented many programs for youth and homeless that promote their unique voices to drive positive change. Programs Kim has developed have been implemented nationally, including The Doughnut Dialogues; Role Reversal; and the West Side Story Project.

Kim has received many awards for her outreach work with Seattle area communities, including: the Red Cross Heroes Award for work with homeless and street involved youth; the



Seattle Police Foundation (SPF) Community Ambassador Award for outreach to the East African Community; the Seattle Neighborhood Groups Community Builder Award for work with the Seattle East African Community; the Chief's Award for work with foster children; the Seattle Police Foundation Excellence Award for work with youth; and Special Recognition from Guatemala for her liaison work between Guatemalan citizens and the Seattle Police Department.

Kim is also a Girl Scouts Beyond Bars partner with the Girl Scouts of America. Through this program she works to form bonds and a newfound sense of trust between inmates at the Washington Corrections Center for Women and their daughters, and the SPD. Recently, Kim has been awarded the Washington Corrections Center for Women's Volunteer of the Year Award. She was awarded the Seattle Storm Women of Inspiration. She has been honored as a Greater Seattle Business Association Community leader. She has also received the Center for Children and Youth Justice President's Award.

Throughout her career, Kim has mentored dozens of youth. She has been a sounding board for them, taught them life skills, but most of all, she has been a friend. Even though many of the individuals she has worked with are now in their early twenties, they still remain a large part of her life.

### **Co-Founder/Director**



*Kathlyn Horan*

**Kathlyn Horan** is an independent director, producer and photographer living in Los Angeles, CA. Horan's career started as a camera operator working with such artists as Faith Hill, the Russian duo t.A.T.u, and Swedish pop group Play. In the following years she co-directed a live concert DVD for Vonda Shepard featuring interviews with Ally McBeal cast mates as well as behind the scenes footage of life on the road with Vonda. Horan co-directed a feature length film entitled "A Voice for Choice", documenting the "March for Women's Lives" that took place in Washington DC on April 25th, 2004. The documentary includes interviews with some of the nations leading politicians, activists and artists such as Hillary Clinton, Gloria Steinem, Sheryl Crow, Bill Maher and more. Horan recently completed a short documentary, "What is Zen?"

examining the lives of Zen Buddhist monks and is currently finishing a feature length doc, “Waiting for Silkwood”, following a group of environmentalists as they cycle 1,500 miles from Connecticut to Atlanta.

### **Director of Programs**



*Melissa Marsh*

Melissa Marsh returned to Seattle after a five year work and adventure stint in Boulder, Colorado. While there, she was bestowed the Boulder County PFLAG Activist of the Year Award for her diverse community building work, ranging from outreach to team building and education. Melissa led an innovative LGBTIQ youth program, facilitating training in schools, community organizations, medical and mental health providers about LGBTIQ youth inclusivity and affirmation. She also presented LGBTIQ 101 classes to students in two school districts, ran the Boulder County Transgender Task Force and fostered LGBTIQ education within the St. Vrain Valley Safe Schools Coalition.

Prior to her work in Boulder, Melissa garnered over 15 years of social work experience with organizations that focus on assisting homeless youth. She provided individual case management and fostered outreach to youth living on the streets in Seattle and San Francisco. Melissa completed her undergraduate work at Antioch University and a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Washington. She received certification in Advanced Leadership from the Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership. Her breadth of experience in non-profit management and social justice extends to her current role as the Director of Programs at The IF Project.

## Program Specialist



*Honey Jo Herman*

*Honey Jo Herman* has been with The IF Project since 2010. She began by sharing her own compelling story, alongside other IF Team Members, often serving as Team Leader. In addition to visiting schools and correctional facilities, she assists Kim in administrative aspects, and also appears in various television and radio interviews and public speaking engagements, representing The IF Project. She is inspired by the profound impact the presentation and breakout sessions has on the students. With this in mind, she began developing a curriculum for The IF Project to utilize, in order to reach as many students as possible, as effectively as possible. The curriculum is being finalized and will be utilized in the Seattle School District Interagency (Alternative) Schools this school year. As the Mom of 4 children, she is empathetic to the painful difficulties incarcerated parents face, when separated from their children. She is motivated to help people realize their personal power by sharing how she has found her own. "People are interactive in their own demise, but they are equally interactive in turning their lives around. The IF Project truly helps make that happen, and that's why I think it is just so important."

## Newsletter Editor



*Tiffany Privat*

*Tiffany Privat* is from Louisiana and after falling in love with the Northwest while working in Alaska, moved to Seattle and lived here for 5 years. While attending Seattle Central Community College, she worked as an Editor of the student news magazine and as a developmental English Teaching Assistant. She was inspired to work in the field of Prison Education after a student shared positive experiences about writing poetry while she had been incarcerated. Tiffany is a Frances Perkins Scholar, studying English Literature and Sociology with a focus on Criminology, at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She first worked with us as an intern in the summer of 2013, learning about The IF Project curriculum and mission, with plans of replicating it in Massachusetts. She currently updates the news and blog on The IF Project web site, and manages the weekly IF essay featured voice. She is inspired by the nature of The IF project being instrumental in positively affecting adults and youth. “The willingness of both the adults- who share what would have made a difference, and the willingness of the kids- who share what can make a difference now, is awe-inspiring. I believe in the power of writing a personal essay and this project gives the inmates and students the opportunity to do introspective writing that is beneficial and empowering.”

## The IF Project Team Speakers



The IF Project includes a primary component of team speakers who share their own individual and poignant stories of loss and gain, pain and recovery, incarceration and freedom. The team is made up of residents of Washington State who are former inmates of Washington State Department of Corrections facilities. The team speakers share riveting stories varying in topic, and include a broad range of experiences, often including: events leading to their arrest, challenges they faced before and during their incarceration, overcoming abuse, addiction and trauma. The compelling team offers insight regarding the result of choices, the danger of gang involvement and peer pressure and the long road to recovery and reentry. The insights are not limited to cautionary tales, however. The team gives explicit and definitive examples of the importance of setting goals, finding a mentor and focusing on becoming your own best resource. The team members are in a unique position to tell the story of before, during and after incarceration; this perspective is reasonably held in esteem by those who are facing incarceration or the possibility of incarceration. The raw truth of their struggle and success is inspiring and bittersweet, but most importantly, it is undeniably effective in fostering thoughtful contemplation and often a call to action and change.

### Fiscal Sponsor



The IF project is primarily sponsored by the Seattle Police Foundation. Fiscal support is also provided through grants and private donors including Eileen Fisher, Real Networks, Looking Out Foundation, and Tin Fish Films .