



Step By Step Re-entry Family Circles

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Introduction

The program conducts reentry circles for incarcerated women in the Monroe Correctional Facility. Each core member volunteers to be involved in three re-entry family circles. The reentry process consists of two phases.

1. Two pre-release circles
2. One Post-release circle

Restorative justice is an alternate method used to reduce crime. The traditional system focuses on the offender through punishment and retribution. Restorative justice, conversely, is victim focused. The main aim of the process is to identify the harm done to the victim, the community, and any others and for the offender to play a role in repairing it. Victim-offender mediation, victim-offender panels, family circles and peace circles are all examples of restorative processes. The circles used in this program are focused on the needs of the family and supporting the core member through her re-entry process.

The circles help the women transition from incarceration back into the community.

Program Description

Women are involved in the criminal justice system at growing rates and have distinctly different needs from men. This program seeks to meet those needs, specifically recognizing the importance of relationships for females. The women participate in Step-by-Step workshops while incarcerated, and are connected with a mentor and a case manager from the Catholic Family Center. The program hopes to assist the families with a smooth transition from the correctional facility back into the community without reoffending. Trained facilitators conduct three circles with the women. The first circle is meant to be done with the core member and her family, as a healing circle, the second circle is done with the core member, family, and professionals in order to create a transition plan, and the final circle, conducted once she is released is done with anyone who want to participate and is as closure to the process.

Process

Step 1: Involved in an 8 week Step By Step Workshop and choose to participate in reentry circles



Step 2: Initial meeting with facilitator and counselor



Step 3: Separate pre-circle conferences done with core member, family member (s), and other as necessary



Step 4: First Circle conducted (2 months prior to release) : family harm reparation



Step 5: Steps 2 and 3 conducted for second circle



Step 6: Second circle conducted (1 month prior to release): Transition Planning



Step 7: Steps 2 and 3 conducted again for third circle



Step 8: Third circle conducted (1 month post release): Follow-up and Closure

Evaluation Method

1. Case Overview :
Case overview documented and analyzed .
2. Surveys
 - Pre-Circle Surveys to :
 - Core Member
 - Family Members
 - Facilitators
 - Other Participants
 - Post- Circle Surveys :
 - Core Member
 - Family Members
 - Facilitators
 - Other Participants
 - Two Focus Groups :
 - Mentors
 - Professional staff
3. Phone Interviews:
 - Core Members after their release from correctional facility
4. Program Indicators will be collected:
 - Descriptive data on the total number of: participants, circles, core members, mentors, and applicants for the circles
 - Total number of first circles
 - Total number of second circles
 - Total number of third circles
 - Completion of Step By Step workshops
 - Number of Step By Step meetings attended
 - Recidivism data
 - Substance abuse data (self-report)

Expected Outcomes

1. Help incarcerated women transition back into community
2. Reduce rate of recidivism among incarcerated women
3. Help the core member to establish goals
4. Core member and family members receive support
5. Core member feels confident about re-entry
6. Step by step workshops prepare core member to be confident in their transition
7. Help rebuild trust between the core member and family members .

Where Are We Now?

We are currently in the process of collecting the pre-circle surveys from :

- The core members
- Family members
- Facilitators
- And other participants

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