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Reducing Recidivism Rates

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Abstract

This main purpose of the project is to support Santa Cruz County to reduce recidivism rates. Defining recidivism from the county's perspective and discussing the factors that contribute to recidivism helps to understand the problem this project seeks to address. A discussion of the consequences of high recidivism rates helps the community understand why something must be done. AB 109 is an important bill that impacts this population in Santa Cruz county allowing for innovative solutions to be implemented. With AB109 funding a new service center was created to serve this population. The Santa Cruz Probation Service Center (PSC) opened in June 2019 and seeks to serve the community by providing needed services. One component of the service center is to have front line peer navigators support the clients as they utilize services. The project was to create the Peer Navigator Position, create a recruitment strategy, and provide evaluation materials to support professional development of this important position. The peer navigators play an important role at the PSC by working in conjunction with Probation officers and the offenders to reduce recidivism rates.

Keywords: Recidivism, Criminogenic, Peer Navigator, Recidivism

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Agency & Communities Served

Sobriety Works was established in 1998 with a mission “to provide superb recovery programs for persons suffering from chemical dependency” (Sobriety Works, 2019). Sobriety Works is a California state licensed addiction treatment center located in Capitola, California. Sobriety Works provides services for private pay clients but is also covered by many insurance companies. The agency is certified by the California State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Due to Medi-Cal billing regulations AB 109 clients are from Santa Cruz county. Sobriety Works collaborates with judges, attorneys, probation and parole officers, mental health and human services agencies to provide services for the clients under supervision in Santa Cruz County..

In October 2011, the Adult Division of the Department of Justice became responsible for the implementation of policy AB 109, which redistributed the responsibility for certain offenders from the State to the County (Fletcher, 2017). Alternative To Incarceration (ATI) clients are people with local prison sentences who got charged with misdemeanors and low-level offenses such as non-violent and non-sex offenders. According to Resource Development Associates, (2017) The majority of Santa Cruz County AB 109 population are White or Hispanic/Latino, and that 87% of the County’s AB 109 population is male. Among Santa Cruz County AB 109 population there are 399 AB 109 individuals who are white, 287 individuals who are Hispanic/Latino, 60 individuals who are African American, and 29 individuals who are from another racial/ethnic background.

Santa Cruz County Probation Service Center was established June, 2019. The probation service center will make it easier for clients to access services at one location as opposed to having to visit multiple locations. The County intends to fund evidence-based services in the

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following areas: Diploma and Computer Literacy Classes, Job Development and Placement, Mental Health Counseling and System Navigation, Reentry Planning and On-Going Support, Literacy and Education, Peer Mentoring, Substance Use Disorder Assessment and Referral, Cognitive-Behavioral Classes and Groups, Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment and more. The center will be accessible to all adults under probation supervision.

Problem Description

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2019) states that although the number of inmates housed in state prisons has decreased in recent years, recidivism rates for inmates in California have remained stubbornly high, averaging around 50 percent over the past decade. The State defines recidivism as when a person is convicted of a subsequent crime within three years of being released from custody. A recidivist is a person who is released from prison and who later commits another crime, or reoffends, such as a parole violation or the commission of a new crime. Recidivism rates by state vary but California is among the highest in the nation (California Innocence Project, 2019).

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2019) states that inmates are more likely to recidivate if they have drug abuse problems, have trouble keeping steady employment, or are illiterate.

Contributing Factors

Antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs and cognitive emotional state

The first major risk factor is Antisocial attitudes, Values and beliefs and cognitive emotional states. This risk factor is important as an individual with this need may have negative expressions towards law enforcement, negative expressions regarding conventional institutions. Negative expressions about self-management and behavior. Offenders often have cold

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heartedness such as lack of empathy and sensitivity towards others. Also, offenders often minimize and neutralize their behavior. An example of this is when someone makes comments such as when it is ok to break the law. Denial of responsibility, injury or the victim are some examples of neutralization. Some examples of this include not taking responsibility for their crime. According to Latessa (2015) these are critical risk factors that determines how we behave.

Antisocial Associates

This risk factor is one that many of us are familiar with. Antisocial associates refers to having pro criminal friends and a lack of prosocial friends and acquaintances. Antisocial Friends often act as negative role models and reinforce criminal behavior.

Antisocial personality

Antisocial personality shows us that many offenders are often self-centered and have an inflated sense of self-esteem. Antisocial personality is often correlated with other risk factors such as peers and attitudes. In addition, it is often thought that low self-esteem is correlated with criminal behavior but it is actually high self-esteem that plays a role in criminal behavior. Being impulsive, Weak problem solving skills, Tastes for risks and low coping skills are also examples of antisocial behavior.

History of antisocial behavior

History of antisocial behavior is a strong predictor of future behavior/ risk. It is also a risk factor that is most commonly used. Examples of this is how many DUI's an offender has, If someone has 3 previous DUIs it is more than likely they may have a drinking problem. At what age an offender started getting in trouble.

According to Latessa (2015) she states that Life course studies indicate that by age 12 years and up, up to 40% of later serious offenders have committed their first criminal act, and

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that by age 14 years, up to 85% have committed their first criminal act.

Consequences

Higher risks or premature death

Premature death is a consequence of being incarcerated and not receiving proper treatment while incarcerated. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2019) formerly incarcerated individuals are at an increased risk for experiencing health issues. For example, within the 2 weeks following their release, former prisoners are 129 times more likely than the general public to die of a drug overdose. Former prisoners are also at a higher risk for committing suicide soon after their release.

Minimal Opportunities

According to the article *Ban the Box, Criminal Records, and Racial Discrimination: A Field Experiment* by Agan and Starr (2016) they go on to state that job access for people with records can reduce criminal recidivism, potentially improving public safety. This proves that by helping community members with criminal records find employment, the community as a whole benefits. Apart from improving public safety they also contribute to the economy by paying taxes.

Morbidity rates

Incarceration also increases the rates of morbidity in the US. According to Bureau of Justice Statistics data (n.d.). about 1 in 10 male state prisoners in the U.S. has a confirmed case of tuberculosis, while about 5% have hepatitis, and another 1.5% of both state and federal prisoners are HIV-positive. Prison environment puts inmates more at risk of being exposed to infectious diseases. Pridemore writes, "exposure occurs in an environment where group quarters and prison culture create efficient conditions for disease transmission, including overcrowding,

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poor health care, poor nutrition, and a host of risky behaviors like sharing hygienic facilities and personal hygiene items, amateur tattooing and piercing, practicing unprotected sex, and using unsterilized drug injection equipment."

Watson from Prison Legal News (2016) states that stress is just as harmful to a prisoner's overall health especially on longevity. Stress is often overlooked but very important as it can weaken immune systems. According to Watson the shock of incarceration, as other studies have noted, can be just as traumatic, if not more so, as marital separation or the death of a close family member. Incarceration "is both an acute and an enduring stressor. One element of incarceration's enduring nature is that it is not an isolated event but can last for years, thereby presenting chronic stress on top of the initial shock (Watson, 2016)."

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Antisocial Attitudes, Values and Beliefs	Over 50% of the inmates in California will reoffend within three years.	Higher risks or premature death
Antisocial Associates Antisocial personality		Minimal Opportunities
History of antisocial behavior		Higher risk of morbidity rates.

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Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

This capstone project is going to support the Santa Cruz Probation Service Center (PSC) with the hiring process of the Peer Navigators within the PSC, which includes the job description that is being used, recruitment strategy to encourage participants who qualify to apply, The behavioral assessment Felipe Hernandez(Mentor) will use to see if they are the right candidate for the job and lastly, the evaluation of the navigators that will be used on a monthly basis during a one on one monthly review with Felipe Hernandez.

Job Description & Application

To develop the peer navigator job description we first discussed what we wanted the peer navigators to focus on. We researched similar job descriptions such as the ones posted on the following webpages: Indeed and SAMHSA. SAMHSA's web page was really informative as it provided information regarding what the roles of navigators are, who makes the best Navigators, the advantages of using peer navigators in rehabilitative services, and tips for peer navigators and their supervisors. Once we gathered enough information and discusses what we wanted to do as peer navigators we were able to create our own job description. The Job description and required skills were created as follows.

The Peer Navigator, under the direction of the Peer Navigator Program Director, is responsible for the development, coordination, implementation, and management of a comprehensive, holistic social support network for Peer clients referred to the Service Center. The Peer Navigator builds and coordinates a diverse network of strategic partnerships to support clients with multiple service needs in becoming more resilient and achieving positive outcomes in the three areas of Reintegration - Custody, Re-Entry, and Community Supervision. The Peer

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Navigator ensures service partner's work together to integrate care and facilitate the most appropriate delivery of services in a consistent and high-quality manner. The Peer Navigator leads, with input from the Peer Navigator Program Director and service partners, the research and development of policies, protocols, agreements, and procedures necessary to support collaboration and coordination among partners to enhance a holistic response to participant needs. The Peer Navigator is an integral part of a core staff team and works collaboratively with the team to achieve goals, and outcomes. Also, the Peer Navigator will assist the Peer Navigator Program Director, in deepening our collective knowledge of promising and best practices around integrated service models so that we can drive high impact work and achieve our outcomes. (Appendix B).

The application we developed is simple and it is able to give us an understanding of the applicants knowledge based off a questionnaire we created. (Appendix C)

Recruitment Strategy

To recruit participants to apply for the peer navigator position we will Post Job Descriptions at the collaborating agencies (Sobriety Works, Barrios Unidos, Encompass). We will send the Job Description via email to counselors at collaborating agencies from the service center. We will recruit participants internally from the service center who have completed reentry programs. Lastly, we will also Recruit interns from Cabrillo and CSUMB.

Peer Navigator Assessment

We developed an assessment that will be used during the interview to get a further detailed understanding of the applicants knowledge and skills. See Appendix D for more details.

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Peer Navigator Evaluation

Peer Navigator Program Director (F. Hernandez) is responsible for facilitating learning, supervising and evaluating peer navigators. Peer Navigator Program Director will facilitate learning with new hires clarifying clear job description and role of the navigators. In addition setting learning goals and expectations. Peer Navigators will begin their new job by shadowing the program director during their entire shift for the first week. Navigator and director will debrief after each shift to discuss each other's observations on what they did. In addition, Director will help navigators explore the role of various collaborating providers in delivering services, gaps in available services, the involvement of participants, the level of collaboration between providers and possible systems issues. Lastly, Peer Navigator Program Director will conduct individual evaluations of the navigators on a monthly basis. Evaluations will be based on peer navigators ability to resolve conflict, collaboration with partnering agencies, demonstrate leadership, provide participant care, communication and team functioning. (Appendix E).

Project Purpose

Peer providers are effective because they establish a rapport with participants based on their lived experience. In addition they also reduce stigma and discrimination. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) n.d. define a peer provider as “a person who uses his or her lived experience of recovery from mental illness and/or addiction, plus skills learned in formal training, to deliver services in behavioral health settings to promote mind-body recovery and resilience.” (SAMHSA n.d.). The key factor that defines peer providers is that they use their own lived experience of recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorders (SUDs), in conjunction with specialized training, to assist others on their path to recovery.

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One method of reducing recidivism rates is by treating the criminogenic risk factors of the client. Santa Cruz Probation Service Center will accomplish this by having programs that target the criminogenic risk needs mentioned above. Funding for these programs will come from Santa Cruz County receives funding from the State of California under Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109). Peer navigators will work in the service center, collaborating with probation officers and service providers to treat participants needs. A list of programs and services offered at the probation service center can be seen in Appendix F).

Expected Outcomes

Peer Navigator position at Santa Cruz probation service center will be fully staffed with a minimum of three part time employees by February 2020. Peer navigators will assist participants by referring 100% of AB 109 participants to services/classes to treat needs.

Project Results

Interviews began November 2019 and will continue until three Part time Peer Navigators are hired. As of December 1, 2019 Santa Cruz Probation Service Center has two new Peer Navigators. Job Description, learning plan and evaluation have been developed and approved by Sarah Cooper from Sobriety Works who was delegated with the task of managing the peer navigator position from Santa Cruz County. Descriptions and learning plans may change due to ongoing changes at the Probation Service Center.

Conclusion & Recommendations

We developed a job description, recruitment strategy and evaluation that Felipe has been able to use since November 2019. It gives the new peer navigators a better understanding of what to expect and what to work on for their own personal development. While looking at what other agencies used for their practice that helped us figure out what we wanted to do at the service

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center and what not to do. We also had to keep in mind that it was going to be constantly changing due to new partnerships we develop with other agencies.

Personal Reflection

Throughout the internship at both Sobriety Works and Santa Cruz Probation Service Center, I have had the opportunity to grow in a professional manner. I have also increased my knowledge in many different areas. I have come to get a better understanding of what being a professional helper means. I learned how important professional communication and Collaboration is in this field. The Major Learning Outcomes practiced the most during this semester were Collaboration, Professional Communication and Professional Development. What I enjoyed most was seeing the different things I have studied through my courses being applied in the field such as meeting clients where they are at, or building off the strengths participants already poses.

At Sobriety Works I started off slow but by the time I left there I was able to co-facilitate outpatient group and do presentations for the individuals who were incarcerated at Round-Tree Facility. It has been one of my memorable moments from my field placement it is something I learned to enjoy. I learned about the importance of boundaries, respect, being open minded, rules and confidentiality are important. I also enjoyed providing a service to others.

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Appendix A**Scope of Work**

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
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1. Discuss capstone project	Capstone projected approved	September, 2019	F. Hernandez,
2. Brainstorm Job duties	Discussion with F. Hernandez	September, 2019	F. Hernandez
3. Research Peer navigator job duties in reentry services	Research Indeed.com and SAMSHAA	September, 2019	O. Padilla
4. Develop Job Description	Material approved	November, 2019	F. Hernandez, S. Cooper
5. Research recruitment strategies similar agencies used	Research agencies who use navigators	November, 2019	O. Padilla
6. Finalize recruitment strategy	Present recruitment strategy to F. Hernandez & send copy to S. Cooper	November, 2019	F. Hernandez, S. Cooper
Create Peer Navigator application	Develop and finalize peer navigator application	November, 2019	F. Hernandez
Create Peer Navigator behavioral assessment	Develop and finalize peer navigator behavioral assessment	November, 2019	F. Hernandez
Post and email job description to collaborating agencies and counselors	Posted and sent copies via email to collaborating agencies and counselors	December, 2019	O. Padilla

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7. Capstone festival preparation	Presentation at capstone festival	December, 2019	O. Padilla, F. Hernandez, A. Saxton
8. Capstone Project	Capstone festival	December 2019	O. Padilla, F. Hernandez
9. Prepare capstone presentation in selected format	Instructor approval	December 2019	O. Padilla, A. Saxton

Appendix B

Required Skills:

- Must pass Department of Justice Fingerprint screening
- Annual TB test
- Considerable knowledge of criminal justice systems, economic, social and health-related trends impacting adults citywide and across the state/country.
- Knowledge and experience working with a diversity of adults who have difficulty accessing social services due to multiple barriers
- Knowledge of specific service needs, perspectives, and lifestyle patterns of impacted by community violence
- Knowledgeable on restorative justice and resiliency theory and practice, along with trauma-informed theory and healing-centered frameworks
- Project management experience, including demonstrated experience with program planning, policy development, and coordination of collaborative projects providing wrap-around services with various agencies
- Detail orientated with excellent organizational and time management skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including public speaking
- Strong facilitation and consensus building skills
- Ability to work tactfully and effectively with representatives of city agencies, community-based organizations and the community at large.
- Strong system and critical thinker and creative problem solver
- Excellent computer skills required: Microsoft Office, familiarity with databases, other presentation systems and project management platforms a plus
- Able to work independently and as a dependable, proactive, collaborative team player
- Level headed and work well under pressure
- Takes the initiative, self-motivated, growth-oriented, out of the box thinker · Flexible, comfortable with ambiguity, fast learner

Appendix C

Peer Navigator Application

Please answer the following questions:

1) What is a mentor? _____

2) Why are you interested in mentoring? _____

3) What is "pro-social" modeling? _____

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Appendix D**Sobriety Works
Peer Navigator Assessment**

Department: Santa Cruz Probation Service Center

Supervisor: Felipe Hernandez

Date:

Peer Navigator

- Personal experience of recovery.
1 2 3 4 5
- General knowledge of community resources.
1 2 3 4 5
- Insight into the needs and potential of the population served.
1 2 3 4 5
- Ability to promote evidence-based practices.
1 2 3 4 5
- Skills to teach and engage in basic problem-solving strategies to support individual clients.
1 2 3 4 5
- Ability to assist the client to address symptoms using strategies such as positive self-talk, and other techniques
1 2 3 4 5
- Good interpersonal skill
1 2 3 4 5
- Good communication skills, both verbal and written.
1 2 3 4 5
- Ability to work one-on-one with clients without supervision.
1 2 3 4 5
- Organizational skills and ability to keep detailed records.
- Functional knowledge of Microsoft Office programs (Outlook, Excel, Word).

Appendix E

Emotional Support	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Informational Support	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Community Navigation	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Care coordination	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Understanding as peer	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Accessibility	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Communication	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Professionalism	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations

Appendix F

Principal Service Area	Number of Proposals Received
Programs Addressing Criminal Thinking, Behavior and Identity	3
Workforce and Job Placement	4
Educational Programming	5
Mental Health Care and Forensic Case Management	2

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Parenting and Family Involvement	2
Emergency Shelter	1
Reintegration Service Coordination	4
Community Education and Engagement	1
Innovative and Promising Services	3