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Prop 47 Client Qualitative Evaluation Survey

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Abstract

Historically, rural South Monterey County has experienced many social determinants depriving community members from accessing mental health services, substance use disorder services, employment services, housing, and health care services that impact one's ability to refrain from criminal activity resulting in incarceration. Proposition 47, known as the No Zip Code Left Behind Project, is funded in the form of a state grant which is required to be awarded to collaborative partnered agencies: Motivating Individual Leadership Through Public Advancement (MILPA), the Public Defender's Office, Behavioral Health, Goodwill, Housing Resource Center (HRC), Sobering Center, Sun Street substance use disorder treatment, and Sober Living Environment housing that provide specialty mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, housing, and diversion programs for those in the criminal justice system. The project purpose and expected outcomes are to decrease nonviolent drug offenders' risks for repeat offenses, and treat behavioral health disorders among people with co-occurring conditions, to reduce the need for more frequent and costly hospitalizations, entitlement benefits, and supportive services by utilizing a community-based solution to improve public safety. Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are utilized to examine, evaluate, and analyze the effectiveness of a community-based intervention. Most important findings conclude that the grantees have made substantial progress implementing the project activities and producing the expected outputs as established in the project's theory of change. Monterey County will continue to address and tackle regional inequality and disparities to expand the supportive network of services through innovation that will keep people struggling with mental illness and substance use disorders out of the criminal justice system.

Keywords: *No Zip Code Left Behind, HRC, Goodwill, MILPA, Sun Street Center*

Agency & Communities Served

Monterey County Behavioral Health is a public agency that advocates for Prop 47 state grant known as the No Zip Code Left Behind project from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to reduce incarceration to community intervention with the goal and mission to reduce recidivism and improve public safety. Providing community members with a criminal history with the opportunity for reclassification by addressing inequities through collaborative partnerships from a micro-level approach using evidence-based interventions for positive outcomes can improve one's healing process providing hope for the future.

Prop 47 provides the County of Monterey with reclassification, housing, employment, mental health, and substance use treatment to assist clients with achieving long-term goals. Partner agencies providing these services are the Public Defender's Office, MILPA (Motivating Individual Leadership Through Public Advancement), Monterey County Behavioral Health, Goodwill Central Coast, Sun Street Centers, and Housing Resource Center (HRC). In addition, services under Prop 47 are available at no cost to those who currently reside or have resided within the last five years in South Monterey County (Gonzales, Soledad, and King City) and have been arrested, charged, or convicted of a criminal offense (Board of State and Community Corrections California, 2022). As California continues to pursue criminal justice reforms, understanding the effects of Proposition 47 and local treatment programs will be essential to achieving further reductions in recidivism, overcrowded incarceration facilities, and maintaining rehabilitation for the most vulnerable populations of society (Public Policy Institute of California, 2022).

Problem Statement

The United States now houses more than 1.5 million people in state and federal prisons and more than 750,000 in local jails. According to the U.S Department of Justice (2022), about 7 in 10 persons under correctional supervision were supervised in the community (3,890,400) at year-end 2020, while about 3 in 10 (1,691,600) were incarcerated in a state or federal prison or local jail impacting budgets and society. One of the things California lawmakers discovered after they passed the three-strike law was that harsher sentences didn't encourage criminal rehabilitation and, in some cases, seemed to make things worse. Factors contributing to recidivism include a person's social environment, community, circumstances before incarceration, events during their imprisonment, and difficulty adjusting to everyday life. California's recidivism rate has averaged around 50% over the past ten years (World Population Review, 2022).

Passed by voters in November 2014, Proposition 47 brought broad and significant changes to California's criminal justice system to improve rehabilitation resources focusing on community-based interventions due to substance abuse and mental health challenges contributing to recidivism. Undertaken in the wake of public safety realignment in 2011, Proposition 47 reduced the penalties for specific lower-level drug and property offenses. It further prioritized prison and jail space for higher-level offenders (Public Policy Institute of California, 2022). Prop 47 addresses the historic, unmet need for substance use disorder treatment, mental health services, and supportive services, including housing and employment in rural South Monterey County, as this population continues to struggle with many social determinants that have justifiably been a barrier to improving the lives of community members who have criminal histories along with addiction, and psychiatric disabilities that impact quality of life.

Contributing Factors

Substance Abuse

Many contributing factors impact one's ability to adapt to society after incarceration. Substance abuse is common in the criminal justice population. Apart from contributing to criminal relapse, the high prevalence of substance abuse has been shown to be associated with elevated mortality and psychiatric symptoms in the criminal population compared to the population in general (Colute & Kopf, 2018). According to the Criminal Justice clearing house (n.d), drug and property crimes, from felonies to misdemeanors, tend to be committed by individuals with an underlying substance use disorder (SUD) or mental health issues more effectively addressed in the community rather than in the justice system. As a result of correctional facilities providing minimal rehabilitation resources, many inmates continue to use and abuse substances while incarcerated, making it difficult to maintain sobriety after being released. When inmates have already engaged in drug use and are released to the community without a home, money, or a job, they are at high risk of engaging in illegal activity to maintain their cravings and addictions.

Data and statistics justify that the most reported reason for needing Prop 47 funding was limited access to mental health and substance use disorder for the target population (Board of State and Community Corrections California, 2022). In addition, multiple grantees pointed to a reduction in court-mandated drug treatment as a diversion option once drug possession became a misdemeanor because of Prop 47 (Board of State and Community Corrections California, 2022). When this population is mandated to inpatient or outpatient community interventions for SUD, this can assist formerly incarcerated individuals in rehabilitating, adapting to society, and

learning therapeutic skills to manage cravings to prevent relapse and violating terms of probation.

Mental health

It is justifiable that many people committing crimes are a contributing factor to having a mental illness that plays a part in their criminal behavior. According to Maryville University (2022), efforts to reduce the U.S. prison population often focus on the possible connection between mental illness and criminality. With limited psychiatric support in correctional facilities, many inmates have little chance to engage in psychiatric treatment, which is concerning. About 44% of people in jail and 37% of those in the state or federal prison have been diagnosed with a mental illness, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), compared to about 20% of the general population (Maryville University, 2022). Data and statistics justify the urgent need for community-based intervention solutions because the more prolonged mental health treatment is delayed, the worse their symptoms and long-term prognosis may become. It is a world wide known factor that mentally ill people are more likely to be victims of crimes than perpetrators, and charges are often minor, exacerbated, or caused by their underlying mental illness and related drug use.

It is a known contributing factor that many risk factors can impact public safety when a mental illness goes untreated. Correctional facilities have difficulty stabilizing inmates with severe mental illnesses, which can influence their behaviors behind bars. For example, one study identified jail inmates were twice as likely (19% versus 9%) to be charged with facility rule violations (Hearth, 2021). Additionally, due to most inmates' untreated psychiatric symptoms, many released inmates have the most difficulty adapting to society and accessing mental health resources. Community-based intervention can support this population with wrap-around services

that include a psychiatric social worker, psychiatry provider, and social worker to assist this population with long-term stabilization.

Homelessness

Being unhoused ultimately increases the risk of recidivism because people experiencing homelessness are more likely to interact with the justice system. Many environmental factors can trigger the use of substances and can exacerbate mental health symptoms making it difficult to maintain housing and refrain from criminal activity. Addressing housing stability and reducing homelessness was identified as a goal by 30 percent of Prop 47 grantees (BSCC California, 2022). Homelessness after reentry puts formerly incarcerated people at risk. As a result of having a criminal record, many inmates, when released, experience barriers and challenges in obtaining housing because most housing applications require a background check. In addition, living without a home makes it more challenging to secure and maintain employment. California Policy Lab reports people experiencing unsheltered homelessness who were surveyed between 2015 and 2017 reported an average of 21 contacts with police in the past six months, ten times the number reported by people living in shelters (Urban Institute, 2020). Being forced to live outside can lead to citations or arrests for low-level offenses like loitering or sleeping in parks.

Inmates without family support face the most challenges in obtaining housing and maintaining good health. Data from 2018 shows that homelessness is one of the most significant, and formerly incarcerated people are almost ten times more likely to be homeless than the general population (Stephens, 2021). Community interventions can assist with housing insecurity to help former inmates explore equitable housing opportunities. Many people with conviction histories face discrimination in housing and employment that can prevent them from finding a home and stable job, leaving homelessness as their last resort.

Consequences

Reoffending

When the formally incarcerated population does not engage in substance use treatment, it can violate one's probation terms. Combating recidivism takes community interventions to improve re-classification. When inmates are released and do not maintain recovery, they are at risk of reoffending, which can cause overcrowded jails and limit resources making it difficult to rehabilitate. Monterey County Prop 47 outreach coordinator V. Rojas states one out of five clients reoffends as a contributing factor to homelessness, one's inability to maintain recovery, and one's inability to manage psychiatric symptoms (V. Rojas, personal communication, September 7, 2022).

Ex-offenders likely relapse into criminal behavior and return to prison due to the difficulty and stress of managing a different everyday life. More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison every year; studies show that approximately two-thirds will likely be rearrested within three years of release, making the high volume of returnees a reflection of the tremendous growth in the U.S. prison population during the past 30 years (United States Department of Justice, n.d). Community organizations and corrections have proven to be a cost-effective way to meet agency needs and bring much-needed reentry services to offenders with a community-based intervention approach that can provide a wide range of needed rehabilitation services. A 2018 study conducted by OJP's Bureau of Justice Statistics found that five out of six state prisoners were rearrested within nine years of their release. In addition, many entered prison with mental illness or substance abuse problems that perhaps went untreated behind bars (U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). Consequently, it is evident that when formal inmates do not engage in community resources to maintain their mental health and substance use

challenges, they continue to engage in a cycle of criminal behavior and become a risk factor to society.

Unemployment

Unemployment refers to joblessness. Inmates released into society need employment for the same reason as everyone else: to establish housing, support themselves, and provide for their families. Data and statistics justify that formerly incarcerated inmates face structural barriers to securing employment within the period immediately following release (Colute & Kopf, 2018). Employment coaching and lack of ability to develop a work ethic while incarcerated impact this population's ability to obtain employment due to lack of experience. Over 600,000 people transition from prisons to the community each year, and although the transition involves many challenges, the roadblocks to securing a job have particularly severe consequences (Colute & Kopf, 2018). Without a stable income, many people have no choice but to engage in petty theft and robbery to provide for themselves. Without an income or employment, one can exhibit many financial stressors that can trigger mental health challenges making it challenging to cope with society's demands.

According to Monterey County Prop 47 Psychiatric Social Worker II, clients' inability to maintain recovery and environmental factors impact client's ability to maintain employment (T. Ocampoz, personal communication, September 7, 2022). Occupation has long been recognized as having a negative correlation with crime. Without money or equal employment opportunities, this population is at high risk of reoffending and consequently faces challenges rehabilitating, which impacts overcrowded correctional facilities. When former inmates have an extensive criminal history, it is evident this is a barrier. The consequence also affects this population's ability to obtain health benefits and a stable income. Employment helps formerly incarcerated

people gain economic stability after release and reduces the likelihood that they return to prison, promoting more excellent public safety to the benefit of everyone (Colute & Kopf, 2018)

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Factor 1 Substance abuse	One sentence problem definition- Social issues creating barriers to succeed.	Consequence 1- reoffending/ incarceration
Factor 2- Psychiatric challenges		Consequence 2- Unemployment/ no income
Factor 3 Homelessness		

Project Description

Working Title: Prop 47 Client Qualitative Evaluation Survey

Project Description

A qualitative survey will be conducted to gain in-depth information about Prop 47 participants' underlying reasoning and motivations to engage in services. Five Prop 47 participants will be interviewed to obtain information, including where they were before engaging in services, where they are now, and where they hope to be. Strategic themes of qualitative inquiry will guide the evaluation. This investigation will evaluate service delivery and help conclude recommendation outcomes. After collecting qualitative data, a findings chart describing themes, including participants' challenges, accomplishments, and hopes, will be formulated. Open-ended interviewing is part of the evaluation to engage clients from participating. Furthermore, data will be analyzed, qualitative findings will be clear and credible, and will address the relevant and priority evaluation questions and issues.

Project Justification-

The contributing factors that will be addressed are mental health, substance use, employment services, and housing. Collecting qualitative data for analysis by conducting a series of interviews to survey past and present Prop 47 participants allows clients to have a voice and share challenges, barriers, obstacles, and successes with Prop 47 resources. This evaluation will provide in-depth information that can encourage Prop 47 stakeholders to gain creativity and innovation for the next Cohort. Additionally, enhanced data collection procedures were implemented with Proposition 47 Cohort 2 grantees. At the close of the grant, the data will be combined across all grantees to allow for additional analyses and more robust conclusions about the effectiveness of Proposition 47 statewide program at reducing recidivism (BSCC California, 2022).

Benefits

The benefits of conducting a Prop 47 qualitative client evaluation survey was designed to collect insight directly from Prop 47 participants surrounding thoughts, emotions, desires, feelings, motivations, and recommendations that can support this population through their healing journeys for better outcomes and equitable opportunity.

Implementation Process

Stakeholder meetings were observed to explore and create a project to conduct a qualitative client survey to evaluate resources directly from a client's perspective. Participating in weekly collaboration meetings also provides a sense of the idea that would enhance the understanding of macro-level social work. Meeting with Prop 47 mentor weekly to learn how macro social work plays a vital role as advocates for communities who push for broader change at a policy level provided insight as to what methods would be conducted to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of community-based interventions. After identifying the problem impacting the reduction of recidivism and contributing factors, qualitative design strategies were determined along with data collection options and analysis approaches based on the evaluation's purpose with support from Prop 47 mentor. After themes and evaluation questions were approved by Prop 47 mentor, the following steps were to explore strategies to determine how to approach the interviews. Activities applied for the project implementation include the following: partnered agency facility visits to introduce the survey to gather volunteers, community outreach and engagement by contacting twenty clients to gather interviewees, collaboration with Prop 47 outreach coordinator and Psychiatric Social worker to coordinate interview time and dates, developed survey questions and themes, fieldwork to conduct survey interviews, formulated a findings table and labeled themes with client responses to analyze outcomes, conclusion, and recommendations.

Assessment Plan & Expected Outcomes

The assessment plan will investigate social issues impacting Prop 47 participants from reaching long-term goals and will evaluate services. This investigation will be conducted through research, community outreach, and other data collection methods by utilizing a macro social work approach to interview Prop 47 participants for raw data. The assessment plan will include a consent form for clients to sign and provide consent to be interviewed and voice recorded. The goal is to interview ten participants. In addition, the assessment plan includes facility visits to partner agencies to introduce the capstone project and gather volunteers.

Expected outcomes are exploring creative ways to conduct outreach and engagement to coordinate and connect with clients by utilizing motivational interviewing skills to encourage clients to engage and participate in an interview that will be voice recorded. It is expected that some clients may not feel comfortable with sharing their stories and maybe guarded because of the stigma. Other expected outcomes include providing Prop 47 participants with the opportunity to share their stories. Questions that will be conducted for assessing and investigating social issues are as follows: where they were before Prop 47 resources, how clients were enrolled in Prop 47 resources, where clients are now, how resources have effectively helped recidivism, and recommendations for the next Cohort. In addition, this assessment will provide recommendations directly from clients to encourage innovation and creativity for service delivery improvement.

Project Results

Initially, ten interviews were the target survey collection intended. However, many clients were unreachable via telephone after several attempts to engage clients. Collaborating with partner agencies to receive a list of potential interviewees was the measure taken to gather

volunteers to participate in the program evaluation survey interview. Findings conclude that all five participants did not have hope for the future before engaging in services; however, participants voiced through social connectedness and Prop 47 resources that there is hope for the future. This qualitative survey project achieved the expected outcomes by allowing Prop 47 participants to have a voice and share their challenges, accomplishments, and hopes to provide recommendations for innovation and creativity. Overall project results conclude that Prop 47 resources are adequate, improving quality of life and reducing recidivism.

Table finding

Participant	Past	Present	Future	Recommendations
Participant 1	The client was homeless and abusing substances that exacerbated thoughts of self-harm. As a result, the client was placed on a 5150 by behavioral health and was referred to Prop 47 resources. Client did not have parental rights of his son and burned his bridges with his family.	The client is working for Goodwill, graduated from the Sun Street inpatient program, is engaged with his mental health support team from behavioral health, has saved money to buy a car, and is housed with support from the Housing resource center funded by Prop 47.	Maintain sobriety and employment to afford housing after his Housing support from Prop 47 ends. The client would also like to go back to school to be a counselor one day and give back to his. Client would also like to maintain housing, for him and his child. .	Longer term housing by HRC, as a result of the cost of living being so high.
Participant 2	Client was in jail fighting a case for possession of paraphernalia that resulted in him	Client has graduated from Sun Street inpatient residential	The client would like to continue on the road to recovery by engaging in	Longer housing opportunities perhaps 30% of his annual income to reduce stress and

	losing his parental rights.	program with the ability to maintain recovery for over 1 year, has reunified with his child that he has full guardianship over, is employed, and housed by Housing resource Center from Prop 47	services, including NA meetings and social events. Additionally, the client would like to take over housing finances without stressors after he has exhausted HRC resources.	anxiety when his year of HRC support is finished.
Participant 3	The client was in and out of the hospital for alcohol withdrawal and started exhibiting visual hallucinations due to induced psychosis. The client also reported having challenges with DUI courts.	The client is at Sun Street center in King City, working on his recovery with 32 days sober. Is hopeful for the future through social connectedness and professional support.	Client would like to go back to school to earn his bachelor's degree in computer science.	The client reports social connectedness with peers is helpful, and wellness is also beneficial for his overall health. The client recommends gym memberships to develop health goals and improve quality of life.
Participant 4	The client was homeless, living out in the streets, tent communities, tracks, and china town because of the client's addiction that damaged family relationships. The client lost custody of her children and became violent because of her inability to	The client is at Sun Street center located in King City. The client is clean and sober. The client has been provided with visitation rights to see her children for reunification. The client is also seeking behavioral	The client hopes to become a peer counselor to help other mothers who have been through emotional and physical abuse. The client would also like to engage in community events and learn how to play an	The client recommends more extended treatment options for impatient Sun Street Centers and urges peer support to be a part of treatment teams. The client also recommends more extended housing options from HRC, one year to two years.

	regulate her emotions.	health services to learn how to manage her Bipolar disorder.	instrument.	
Participant 5	After the client was divorced she fell into a deep depression and was self-medicating on drugs. As a result of her drug abuse she was hopeless eating at churches and sleeping at bus stops.	The client is now a discharge coordinator for the Sun Street residential program. The client has maintained sobriety after graduating from the Sun Street residential program.	The client hopes to stay on the road to recovery with home and social connectedness.	The client recommends more extended program opportunities, perhaps a six-month program.

Conclusion & Recommendations

After thoroughly analyzing findings from the qualitative survey interviews by five Prop 47 participants, it is evident that many social issues, including housing, substance abuse, access to mental health services, family engagement, and environmental factors, impact this population's ability to reclassify and reduce recidivism. Findings conclude that Prop 47 community-based interventions improve quality of life and provide hope for the future through social connectedness. In addition, based on results from qualitative data, Housing Resource Center is recommended to expand housing opportunities from one year to a year and a half due to the cost of living. Expanding HRC services can also provide this population with the ability to secure employment and health benefits to reduce economic stressors. Lastly, focusing on wellness and better quality of life, it is recommended to provide participants with access to a gym membership to promote fitness, and good health.

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Appendix A

Project Implementation Plan

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
Collaborate with mentor and explore problem statement for capstone.	Summary of research conducted from the BSCC website	August 24, 2022	Phil, Sherwood
Interview Prop 47 PSW II and Outreach coordinator	Obtain collateral information regarding service delivery	August 31, 2022	T.Ocampos/Vanessa Rojas
Collaborate with Mentor, PSW II, and Outreach coordinator to discuss potential candidates for survey interviews	Obtained two candidates for Survey interviews for present Prop 47 participants for capstone project.	September 2, 2022	Phil Sherwood, T.Ocampos, and Vanessa Rojas.
Collaborate with mentor to discuss contributing factors regarding problem statement.	Identify contributing factors, consequences, and capstone development for approval.	September 14, 2022	Phil Sherwood
Identify capstone projects for mentor approval.	Present capstone project to mentor for approval	September 15, 2022	Phil Sherwood

Collaborate with Prop 47 PSW II and Outreach coordinator to discuss Survey participants.	Obtained four more survey participants for the capstone project.	September 28, 2022	T.Ocampos and Vanessa Rojas
Explore Survey questions with mentor.	Formulate ten survey questions for the project.	September 28, 2022	Phil, Sherwood
Coordinate facility visit with outreach coordinator	Present survey to clients for volunteers.	October 5, 2022	Vanessa Rojas
Conduct Interviews for survey questions	Obtain data collection and summary of responses.	October 12, 2022	Phil, Sherwood
Collaborate with mentor to discuss survey outcome	Analyze data to finalize statistics and evaluation.	October 19, 2022	Phil, Sherwood