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FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF REENTRY:
THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN SOCIAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTS

by

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Abstract

Faced with discrimination and isolation across society, ex-convicts are often left with few options to support themselves other than resorting to crime again. This study investigates what forms of social support are beneficial in the context of reentry, and how support can ameliorate ex-convicts' outcomes. Social service organizations are some of the only places to which ex-convicts can consistently turn for both material and psychological support; however, there is little sociological research investigating the perspectives of the staff that provide this support. This study uses semi-structured interviews with nine social service staff to investigate their perspectives in providing this support, and compares such perspectives with the literature on social support in reentry, to produce a more comprehensive picture of social support. Staff viewed the support they provide in direct relation to the systemic barriers faced by their clients. Organizations provided expressive (emotional) support to support their clients in the short term, stopping illicit actions at moments of crisis, and in the long-term, repairing their self-esteem and giving them hope. They also provided instrumental (material) support, helping their clients access services while also building up organic support and setting up their clients' mentality for long-term success. Many of these forms of support are consistent with existing literature: staff generally described the forms and effects of social support the same way as the literature. However, these perspectives also advance existing literature by: investigating ex-convict outcomes other than recidivism, analyzing the similarities between formal and informal support environments, and finding that many forms of support benefit multiple outcomes for ex-convicts.

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<u>Introduction</u>

You walk out of prison with the belongings you came in with, maybe a few dollars or a bus ticket depending on which state you're in. Only a few people have kept in contact with you; of those, only a couple are near you. What would you do? Who would you turn to? My interviewees continually described how they work with people daily who are overwhelmed by the vastness of the challenges heaped onto them in the instant they exit prison.

Millions of people have exited incarceration in the U.S., and millions more will continue to do so. Immediately after incarceration, ex-convicts are affected by stigma and discrimination that sets them up for failure and often forces them back into incarceration. In this context, reentry support can have significant compounding benefits for individuals and their communities. The dedicated staff of these social service organizations provide diverse services to help ex-convicts succeed despite these barriers. This paper particularly analyzes this support through the conceptual lens of social support, in order to consider how these services benefit ex-convicts, and what kind of support helps ex-convicts reach better outcomes.

Sociological literature has conceptualized social support – the aid an individual receives (both material and psychological) from their relationships and communities – as playing a key role in crime and reentry, assisting ex-convicts with their material and psychological needs through legitimate means. However, few studies have investigated the provision of support from social services organizations. Additionally, few studies have considered what kind of support best improves ex-convicts' outcomes – and how it does so – particularly around outcomes other than recidivism. An important source of information for both of these questions has been under-researched: the staff of these very social service organizations. Such individuals have spent their

careers trying to most effectively support ex-convicts; therefore, they have intimate knowledge of the nature of social support for ex-convicts, especially in social service environments.

To respond to these gaps, this research project is framed around the theoretical question: "How do social service organizational perspectives on, and assistance with, the social support of formerly incarcerated individuals compare to the understanding of social support in sociological literature?" To answer this question, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with staff members of social service organizations that assist previously incarcerated individuals. The results of this paper speak to three major themes: the barriers to reentry that individuals face (and the need for social support in the context of these barriers), the role and effects of expressive support provided by interviewees' organizations, and the role and effects of instrumental support provided by interviewees' organizations. These themes are broadly consistent with the literature, while also extending previous research on how social support works in formal networks and reconsidering the lines between different forms of support.

The paper begins with its theoretical framework. Foundational literature of social support is discussed, and then after covering the structural barriers of reentry, social support is applied to the field of crime and reentry. The data and methods section covers the characteristics of the study's sample, and the method of interview analysis. The results section covers the main themes of the interviews: barriers to reentry, expressive support, and instrumental support. Finally, the discussion section compares these results to existing sociological literature and suggests how existing research may be advanced.

Theoretical Framework

Conceptualization of social support

Social support is a central concept in the study of social relationships, used by sociologists to investigate the resources transmitted in social ties on a micro and macro-level. Lin (1986) defines social support as "the perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners." First, social support can be real and/or perceived, with perceptions being an important part of how people interpret and accept support (Cullen 1994). Second, social support gives real benefits: Thoits (2011) categorizes these benefits under instrumental, expressive, and informational support. Instrumental support is typically the use of a relationship towards some material goal (Lin 1986), ranging from financial assistance to providing information or advice (Vaux 1988). Expressive support broadly covers the emotional and mental benefits of supportive relationships, such as "sharing sentiments, ventilating frustrations, reaching an understanding on issues and problems, and affirming one's own as well as the other's worth and dignity." (Lin 1986). Informational support includes "the provision of facts or advice that may help a person solve problems" (Thoits 2011). Third, social support can be either informal (between individuals without official status) or formal (provided by formal programs or officials) (Cullen 1994; Vaux 1988).

Building on conceptualizations of social support, Wellman and Wortley (1990) create an innovative study to specifically measure who provides social support and what kinds of support are provided. They divide instrumental support into three dimensions: small services – such as chores and lending items, etc. – large services – regular help and larger projects – and financial aid. These services all provide material benefits, but their provision and contexts are incredibly different. Similarly, they divide expressive support into emotional aid and companionship. They

find that emotional aid, companionship, and small services are all provided by a majority of networks; large services and financial aid are only provided by a small minority.

The benefits of social support extend to both physical and mental health. In another influential study of social support, Thoits (2011) synthesizes decades of social support literature to organize its effects on individuals' mental and physical health. In particular, social support can aid one's mental health through: social control (pressure to adopt healthy practices), a sense of purpose (accepting and finding meaning in one's social role or goals), self-esteem, belonging, companionship (Thoits 2011). These mechanisms have different effects, but generally act through creating a feeling of security, stability, and emotional affect.

Significant challenges in an individual's life – periods of aversity – can require immediate expressive or instrumental support so that one can tackle such a challenge and deal with the mental and physical tolls that it may bring. In these times, social support can become "intentional, visible, and focused on changing the individual's situation and/or feelings" (Thoits 2011). Most immediately, supportive relationships will provide active coping assistance, such as instrumental and informational assistance to help practically tackle a problem. Emotionally-sustaining behaviors will help reduce psychological distress and give individuals comfort in the show of support (Thoits 2011), overall assisting in managing negative emotions. The experience of reentry is a significant and unique period of adversity in individuals' lives, with overwhelming mental and physical tolls. But despite these tolls, those going through reentry often do not have access to the material support and social support that research has shown is necessary for periods of adversity.

The challenges of prisoner reentry

Reentry from incarceration has been conceptualized in sociological research as a truly unique challenge in an individual's life course. After exiting prison – an extremely psychologically-challenging environment – ex-convicts are immediately thrown into the outside world with little financial backing or social support available to them. Further, private businesses and public programs alike are allowed to discriminate against ex-convicts in most of America. This lack of support does not just mean that many can struggle to survive; it also means that many are pushed back towards illicit activities. These challenges have only been exacerbated in recent decades. Economic downturns in inner-city areas, increased punitiveness in criminal justice policy, and restricted welfare policies have all combined to result in the current precarity of the American reentry experience (Wacquant 2009; Wacquant 1999; Western 2006).

Ex-convicts re-enter society with many material needs and a deep need for social support; but they are often locked out of legitimate avenues available to fulfill needs at the same time as their social support is diminished. For many people, the life course is integrative. The major steps of life – education, employment, marriage – all lead an individual to greater financial stability and overall wellbeing (Western 2006). However, incarceration in the United States fundamentally disrupts the life course for those incarcerated. Even once they are released from prison, ex-convicts are unable to continue the normal life course and the benefits it brings (Western 2006). Incarceration significantly reduces lifetime earnings and employment trajectories because of the stigma attached to it (Western 2006), with employers legally allowed to discriminate against ex-convicts in most states. Social support, especially from families, helps people both find employment and stay away from crime. But incarceration also erodes these bonds of support, such as from family or friends (Western 2006). Coming out of incarceration, many individuals have to deal with the "ambiguous loss" (Boss 2009) of their loved ones: their

loved ones are still alive, but because of rejection or barriers to reach them, ex-convicts have to deal with an uncertain feeling of loss. The stigma they carry follows them for their entire life, affecting their relationships with both institutions and individuals.

African Americans – especially young African American males – are especially targeted by the American criminal justice system, facing higher rates of incarceration and recidivism. Many authors have argued that nationwide socioeconomic shifts over the decades since the 1960s (happening along with welfare reduction and the expansion of the criminal justice system) have especially harmed the legitimate opportunities Black inner-city communities, and pushed them towards crime and the criminal justice system (Anderson 1998; Wacquant 2009; Wacquant 1999; Western 2006). These developments have resulted in disproportionate incarceration and recidivism rates for Black individuals, especially Black men. Black men are incarcerated in state prisons at almost five times the rate of white people; Latinx people are incarcerated at 1.3 times the rate of non-Latinx white people. Nationally, one in 81 Black adults in the U.S. is currently incarcerated (Nellis 2016). This disproportionate incarceration continues the broader cycle of disadvantage of many nonwhite communities, with higher incarceration rates leading to higher crime and lower investment (Nellis 2016). Looking at recidivism, African American ex-convicts have a significantly higher recidivism rate than white ex-convicts (Lockwood et al. 2015). When controlling for a range of risk factors, the interaction of race and gender – for Black males in particular – is itself a predictor of time to reincarceration (Ropes Berry et al. 2020), showing there to be independent and disproportionate disadvantages faced by Black men. Imprisonment at these disproportionate rates severely harms the mental and physical health of those incarcerated; it also disproportionately harms the wellbeing of the communities they return to, especially their loved ones (Johnson 2019). These challenges are exacerbated by existing

inequalities for Black men: Black men (especially fathers) have high rates of depression (Sinkewicz & Lee 2011), while also being less likely to seek or receive help due to racial and masculine stereotypes (Johnson 2019; Perry & Johnson 2017). An understanding of the challenges of reentry – and the reasons that ex-convicts are ignored by the state and broader society – must include an eye towards the independent impact of both race and gender in independently disadvantaging countless ex-convicts.

Despite a clear need, there is a lack of governmental support towards ex-convicts. While parole supervision continues to cover more and more people across the country, the system itself provides few supports for ex-convicts to meet requirements, such as housing or employment requirements (Petersilia 2003). Instead, they are locked out of many governmental programs, from income support to affordable housing initiatives (Miller 2021). Private, nonprofit reentry programs and social service organizations often take the role of government, aiding ex-convicts in finding jobs, getting housing, getting counseling, and a range of other services. However, these services cannot fully substitute for the gap left by the federal and state criminal justice systems.

The challenges of reentry lead to the risk of severe mental health challenges and negative outcomes for ex-convicts. Previous literature has discussed the intense psychological impact of incarceration and reentry: after being given no choices, freedom, or trust for years, an ex-convict is immediately supposed to act like a "normal" member of social life (Ekland-Olson et al. 1983) For many people, the material insecurity of immediate reentry and long-term challenges go hand-in-hand with mental health problems, exacerbated by the stigma of reentering social life outside of prison (Western et al. 2015). The rejection from assistance programs and from greater society can lead to intense feelings of helplessness, where individuals feel like there is no possible path

to the goals that society expects of them (Miller 2021). All of these challenges can often culminate in feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and helplessness, that are terrible in themselves, and further increase the difficulty of reentry.

Social support in crime and reentry

Theories of social support have been continually applied to the study of both crime and reentry, as it is a central factor in helping individuals meet their needs and desisting individuals from crime. In a seminal paper, Francis Cullen argued for a "social support paradigm" in criminology in opposition to the coercion paradigm (Cullen 1994). Extrapolating Lin (1986)'s conceptualization of social support, Cullen outlines theoretical mechanisms through which social support reduces crime on the macro and micro levels. These proposed mechanisms outline possible avenues of future research on social support in criminology, both in finding evidence of these mechanisms and in investigating the nuances of social support in criminology.

Later work has further conceptualized social support's varied effects in the context of crime and reentry. Social support has been conceptualized as a force in opposition with coercion (compelling one to act through fear, threat, or similar measures) (Colvin et al. 2002). In this model, coercion does not help an individual meet their instrumental needs, but instead creates mental health problems and reproduces weak social bonds that are ineffective at stopping one from committing crime. On the other hand, consistent social support helps an individual meet their instrumental needs and cope with adversity through healthy, noncriminal means, and provides informal control as a barrier to crime (Colvin et al. 2002). An emphasis on social support is thus theorized to have very tangible benefits on the behavior and state of mind of ex-convicts; more broadly, it shifts the focus of reentry from individual deficiency to healthily

addressing systemic challenges (Bunn 2019). While there has been extensive theory on social support in crime, the empirical literature on the topic is still developing.

There have been multiple studies that have operationalized theories of social support to find its effects in reentry, putting empirical support behind the theoretical mechanisms of social support's benefits. Many of these studies have emphasized family support. Quality ties and support of relatives makes offenders less likely to recidivate and more likely to be employed (Berg & Huebner 2011). Additionally, studies have found that ex-offenders are often able to rely on family support to deal with material concerns and mental health challenges (ranging from loneliness to depression) (Ekland-Olson et al. 1983; Davis et al. 2013). Families have also served as informal control to reduce the chance of re-offense (Martinez & Abrams 2013). Another major group of study is friends: friends can provide valuable emotional assistance similar to families, and their support can materialize in times of crisis (Martinez & Abrams 2013; Davis et al. 2013). However, these studies also noted the limitations of support by these informal social networks of family and friends. Individuals often do not have the resources to give proper support, and some individuals may be bad influences and push someone towards crime. (Martinez & Abrams 2013; Davis et al. 2013). These studies have broadly mapped onto the existing conceptions of instrumental and expressive support.

The role of reentry programs in prisoner reentry and support

There has been some research investigating the role of social support in reentry service provision; however, research on this topic – and on reentry services in general – is very limited. Despite limited research, reentry services remain an essential component of many people's reentry experiences, forming a third primary source of support along with family and friends.

Studies have found the general benefits of reentry services, especially towards reducing recidivism. One quantitative analysis found that community-based service involvement significantly reduced the odds of recidivism, with more frequent contact making services more effective (Chung et al. 2007). In relation to other groups – especially family and friends – ex-convicts in a study expressed the importance of reentry services available to them, especially when the services' interventions were consistent and long-term (Davis et al. 2013).

There has been some research on how exactly the support of reentry services benefits ex-convicts; however, few studies have specifically focused on the social support from staff of reentry services to ex-convicts. In a comprehensive review of reentry services, Miller (2014) categorized reentry services into three primary groups: employment-focused, cognitive reframing, and personal transformation. Miller's description of support from service staff is in line with the dimensions of social support: meeting material needs, supporting clients' mental wellbeing, and giving clients advice on how to not recidivate. Multiple studies have specifically found that mentorship from social service staff (active relationships that included emotional support and the promotion of pro-social activities) led to reduced recidivism; this is especially true when the relationship is strong (Sells et al. 2020; Jäggi & Kliewer 2020; Pettus-Davis et al. 2015). Finally, services are strongest when they respect a client's needs and provide the services requested. However, many ex-convict clients do not receive every service that they believe are essential for their success (Gill & Wilson 2017). These studies have laid an important foundation for understanding social support in social service organizations. However, these studies, similarly to studies on social support in crime, do not explicitly apply the concepts of social support to this field, and do not interrogate how social support may have unique characteristics in

reentry. Further, these studies generally do not interrogate if social support from these formal networks acts the same way as ex-convicts' families and friends.

The present study will build on the gaps in prior literature, specifically gaps in investigating the mechanisms and specificities behind social support's benefits. Previous research on social support in reentry is often unable to investigate specifically how social ties can work to improve an ex-convicts' prospects; instead, social support is often described as generalized aid that helps in a vague sense. When it does investigate the provision of support, it is almost always analyzed in the context of recidivism, without considering other outcomes. While recidivism is an essential outcome to analyze, the success of ex-convicts should be considered broader than simply this one outcome. This existing research also usually does not explicitly apply the concepts of social support (such as instrumental and expressive support) to reentry. Therefore, a study that looked at the specific provision of different forms of social support, and their impact on outcomes other than recidivism, would give clues on how to best produce effective support.

Of the little research on social services' support, very few studies investigated the efficacy of different support, or the perspective of social service staff on these supports. Many of these studies are able to find that a certain service – such as mentorship – does lead to positive outcomes, but they are unable to investigate what resources and support are given through such services that makes them beneficial. Similarly, very few studies have used social service staff as an information source for service provision, despite these staff being the very individuals providing services. Social services have an outsized role in the lives of ex-convicts, as they fill gaps in social support (from friends, family, or community) that they may experience. Social service staff are key in deciding what kind of services are run, and how these services are

administered; therefore, they are key in affecting the course of ex-convicts' lives. Understanding staff's perspectives has two main possible benefits: the literature may be advanced by incorporating staff's personal expertise, and the literature may recognize where the dialogue with social services must be expanded to ameliorate their service provision.

This paper seeks to build on this prior research by analyzing the differing forms and outcomes of social support from the unique perspective of social service staff. First, because this study analyzes in-depth qualitative interviews, it does not need to limit itself to one specific effect or outcome variable. Therefore, it is able to discuss the complex ways that ex-convicts draw support from their relationships, and how such support affects multiple outcomes: recidivism, material outcomes, and mental health outcomes. Second, it is also able to apply the foundational concepts of social support to this qualitative analysis, allowing this study to build on the foundational theoretical work around social support, which has not been adequately applied to reentry. Third, through analyzing in-depth interviews with the direct theory of social support, this study is able to consider what forms of support are provided through different services, and how this combination of support affects their outcomes. These possible contributions to social support theory draw on the unique expertise of social service staff, who have the lived experience of assisting previously-incarcerated clients in diverse ways. Their perspective will serve to both add concrete experiences of service provision and compare their broader perspectives with the academic literature. Drawing on careers of service work, these staff have rich and deep understandings of the kinds of social support that can positively affect those exiting incarceration. Social services can be an essential source of support for ex-convicts to overcome their challenges, and this study seeks to investigate how different services work and

how their service provision could be improved, rather than simply investigating if they are generally beneficial.

<u>Data and Methods</u>

I interviewed nine individuals who were all staff members at social service organizations in Illinois that assisted individuals returning from incarceration. The interviewees ranged from middle-aged to senior status, and interviewees were diverse across race and ethnicity. However, one limitation of the sample is that all but one of the interviewees were males. The nine individuals interviewed represented seven different organizations overall; these organizations varied in size and in their service provision. The largest had net assets worth more than $20 million, while the smallest had only recently been established, with limited funding secured. These organizations also assisted ex-convicts to different degrees; however, all organizations currently had clients with criminal records in their programs and worked with them on a daily basis. There was also a wide diversity of professional roles among the interviewees, ranging from the founder of one organization, to the vice president of strategic planning in another, to a transitional housing worker in yet another organization. All but one of the interviewees worked directly with clients, and the majority of interviewees held positions of seniority within their organizations. This trend of seniority was not deliberate. I sought to interview anyone who either worked directly with ex-convicts or had intimate knowledge of their organization's work with these clients. I found that most organizations simply put me in contact with more senior members. For some, I was told that these members would best be able to answer my questions and communicate the bigger picture of the organization. For snowball sampling, my interviewees ended up predominantly directing me towards senior members at other organizations.

Interviewee #	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Organization Services	Position
Interviewee 1	Hispanic	Male	Violence prevention; trauma support; family and youth development	Director of Violence Intervention and Prevention Services
Interviewee 2	White	Male	Youth development; community reentry; workforce development; support services	Director of Community Re-entry and Employment
Interviewee 3	Black	Male	Violence prevention; youth development; support services	Executive Director
Interviewee 4	Black	Male	Education; workforce development; community reentry; support services	VP of Strategy and Innovation
Interviewee 5	Black	Male	Youth development; education; workforce development; housing; health; violence prevention	Director of Violence Prevention Initiative
Interviewee 6	Hispanic	Male	Youth development; education; workforce development; housing; health; violence prevention	Chief Growth Officer
Interviewee 7	Black	Male	Youth development; workforce development; community reentry; support services	Executive Director
Interviewee 8	[Unknown]	Female	Housing; support services; health	Halfway house owner; volunteer
Interviewee 9	Black	Male	Support services; community development; family development; workforce development	Executive Director

I chose social service staff as my interview group for multiple reasons. First, they have in-depth knowledge and experience with supporting ex-convicts. By the nature of their work, they can speak to the kinds of barriers that ex-convicts face and the kind of support that is most useful for them. Second, I have found few studies on reentry in which social service workers are tapped as an information source; as one of the main groups assisting ex-convicts, I believe it is

important for their perspectives to be included in the literature. Third, they are a group that was relatively accessible for this study, and I was able to contact them through accessible avenues such as over the phone or email.

I began my organizational search by searching reentry support services in Illinois via the internet. I also searched social service organizations in general, and selected organizations that noted that they assist ex-convicts. I contacted organizations by phone and email, and directly emailed staff members assisting in reentry services. I got into contact with 4 of my interviewees through this method. I got into contact with 3 of my interviewees through snowball sampling with my previous interviewees, reaching out via email to them. I got into contact with my last 2 interviewees through recommendations by my thesis advisor, Professor Waldo Johnson.

I conducted these interviews using a semi-structured interview guide, focusing on certain questions and asking follow-up questions based on the individual's background and the direction of the interview. The interview focused on: their background, how their organization assists ex-convicts, the needs of ex-convicts, the sources of support available to ex-convicts, the effects that different sources of support can have on their wellbeing, and the barriers towards ex-convicts gaining different forms of support. The interview guide will be attached as an appendix; however, it is important to note that follow-up questions were a major part of every interview, so the guide itself is not fully representative of the interview content. Interviews were 45 minutes long on average, with the longest interview being 70 minutes and the shortest being 30 minutes. The research was conducted with the approval of the University of Chicago Social and Behavioral Sciences IRB.

Approximately half of interviews were conducted over Zoom, while the other half were conducted over the phone. All but one of the interviewees agreed for the interview to be audio

recorded. For the eight individuals who agreed to be audio recorded, I used the transcription software Otter.ai to automatically transcribe the interview recording. Afterwards, I used the Otter.ai software to review the transcript, changing transcription errors as needed. For the individual that requested to not be recorded, I took detailed notes during the interview, with their permission.

I followed the method of Timmermans and Tavory (2014) – abductive analysis – to guide the coding and results of my data. Timmermans and Tavory (2012) report, "Abductive analysis specifically aims at generating novel theoretical insight that reframe empirical findings in contrast to existing theories." I used this method to compare and contrast my results with the existing literature on ex-convicts' experience of social support. Using this method, I searched for themes in an inductive manner, and put them into conversation with existing themes with the literature (in a more deductive manner).

Interview transcripts were initially read in an inductive manner using a close reading of the text. This initial reading and coding were done to remain open to many possible directions for the analysis. The interviews were then reread from the perspective of values coding in order to catch the instances of "a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview." (Saldaña 2021). This step was especially important for this study as it hinges on the beliefs of the staff participants, and the value they place on different sources and methods of social support. The interviews were then re-read in context to avoid misinterpretation. From the organization of codes, coding categories were generated (Saldaña 2021). From those categories and their constituent codes, themes were generated around significant factors in the experience of social support, especially the context of social support, barriers to gaining support, the mental health benefits of social support, and the material benefits

of social support. I isolated the different constituent parts of each of these categories in order to discuss each of their effects. For each theme discussed in the results section, I reviewed the instances in which I coded it in order to assure that the analysis of the particular theme was representative of the interviews. For each of these categories, I reviewed the written sections with social support concepts and categories in mind to better ground the results in existing understandings of social support. In the discussion section, these themes were compared with the existing literature that focuses on social support in the context of crime and reentry, with the inclusion of some literature generally conceptualizing social support. Further, themes from the interviews were corroborated with existing literature in the general field of reentry to put interviewees' perspectives into the context of the broader literature. This method of analysis allowed me to keep myself open to the diversity of forms and effects of social support available in the interviews, while also being able to put it into conversation with the existing literature in a relevant and effective manner.

MAXQDA was used for the coding of the individual interview transcripts. The software assured the proper organization of the codes and allowed me to easily gauge the prevalence of different codes within the interviews.

Results Section

In the qualitative interviews conducted, interviewees fundamentally saw their role in reentry as assisting ex-convicts in their struggle against the inherent disadvantages of reentry. Interviewees described the experiences of their clients as being ones of material and mental hardship, especially as they face both legal discrimination and general social stigma. Further, the staff viewed these barriers as being coupled with previously existing disadvantages from

demographic factors such as race, education, and socioeconomic status. In this context, the services of interviewees' organizations aimed to provide two main themes of support, "expressive support" and "instrumental support". These categories come from pre-existing concepts within sociological literature. While analyzing the interviews, I realized that the forms of support provided by organizations fell neatly within these two categories, and therefore elected to use them as a lens through which to understand beliefs of staff members and the aims underlying their services.

Expressive support from the individuals and services of these organizations served to emotionally aid ex-convicts during times of crisis and sought to improve their long-term mental health, such as beliefs of self-esteem or motivation. Expressive support was provided in diverse ways, with individual and group support, and short-term and long-term support, all benefitting clients' mental health. I divided this emotional aid into five different subsections, that stay accurate to the interviewees' beliefs while also mapping onto common themes in the literature on expressive support. These five subsections focus on different aspects of expressive support, but they generally all work as emotional aid through boosting various positive points in a client's mentality – such as their self-esteem and feelings of stability – that serve to combat immediate crises and set up a client's psychological health for long-term success. Additionally, the organizations' services aimed to provide effective instrumental support, that served to help clients fulfill their material needs, such as employment or housing. This support was borne from the organizations themselves, services found through them, or connections through the organizations. The three main aspects of services' instrumental support fell into three main subthemes – their social network, assistance in navigating services, and the material impact of psychological support – which all benefitted clients' short-term and long-term material

challenges. In the context of the disadvantages placed upon ex-convicts, these interviews with staff members give depth to the ways in which social support provides psychological and material benefits for those exiting prison.

Barriers to Reentry: Dual Discrimination and Structural Inequalities

Interviewees emphasized that social support and individual relationships are necessary for ex-convicts as an attempt to directly counter the institutional barriers – perpetuated by both specific laws and general social stigma – that they face. Ex-convicts are faced with dual forms of discrimination: institutionalized discrimination explicitly authorized by law, and the general stigma of a criminal record. These policies and stigma interact with other structural factors that they face – including racial inequalities, lack of government support, and economic inequality – to doubly disadvantage them in their challenge to reenter society. Such problems compound to form overwhelming challenges to individuals' material and mental wellbeing, problems that often feel impossible to overcome. The programs that interviewees facilitate were founded on the assumption that social support is necessary because it can help them push through the ingrained challenges of their experience. Interviewees attempt to facilitate a patchwork network of support in the lives of ex-convicts – from social service workers to friends and family – to defend against the most pernicious effects of reentry, maintaining the motivation to overcome such barriers.

This excerpt from one interviewee is representative of interviewees' wider understandings of the real negative impacts of systemic barriers on the lives of those with criminal records. In this context, interviewees experienced their clients often having almost nobody to turn to.

> You usually hit the ground with a very limited support network, very limited
> access and knowledge, to what's available in your neighborhood, and you have to

> stumble… People get out, and they have all the motivation in the world. But if you don't have support to go with it, you don't know what employers will hire you. So you start getting rejected, again, and again and again. And before long, like "Okay, I gotta have money. How am I gonna get it?"… And then if they don't get a legit source of income, they start having to dip into non-legal sources. And once they do that, you just see them deflate, and they're like, "dang, I'm just back to the same old thing".

Interviewees' perceptions of reentry support were premised on their understandings of systemic barriers that make it very difficult to succeed. Persons are left on their own immediately after release with little help from the state. A limited support network is inevitable for many ex-convicts, who have not been able to stay in contact with their network during prison, or who may have been rejected by people in their network such as their family. Limited knowledge is often inevitable as well, especially in gaining access to necessary services. These limited resources combine with legal discrimination: across interviews, it was emphasized that people are left unemployed because of their criminal record.

In this context, the need for social support is incredibly high; yet many staff members interviewed said that their clients are often left with almost nobody to turn to. In the scenario above, with nobody to turn to, an ex-convict is not able to overcome their challenges, and for good reason. But this scenario stands in contrast to others that interviewees discussed, where the support one of person can make a difference in how an ex-convict reacts to these barriers.

The next excerpt – from the leader of violence intervention and prevention services at a different organization – focuses on the dual forms of discrimination that people with criminal records face.

> [People need] something that you can turn around and fulfill your life as opposed to "No, you're an ex-felon, I can't do nothing for you. I won't even let you sling burgers at Burger King"… we need to impress upon our society that people can change and they do change, if given the opportunity, if not just blacklisted for the rest of their lives… If we don't legitimize them and let them return back to our society, and welcome them back, they're gonna do what they need to do to

survive, they're not going to stay home and just starve to death, they're going to go back out into that world and do what they were doing before.

The reentry stories shared by staff across interviews portray two forms of discrimination faced by ex-convicts: they are not allowed access to many material opportunities, and they have to carry the constant stigma of a criminal record. This second form of discrimination is produced by both laws and individuals, ranging from employers to one's own family. When they have nobody to turn to, people are forced back into illicit activity, despite their desire to change. Rejection has clear material and psychological effects, and both effects combine to push people towards giving up their struggle to reenter mainstream society.

Society has got this twisted mentality that certain people deserve mercy and certain people don't. And you know what that is, if you're brown or black, you don't deserve mercy, if you're Caucasian, oh, he's mentally ill, you know, we look for all excuses to get them treatment as opposed if they're black or brown, oh they're animals, they need to be locked up and the key needs to be thrown away.

As it does throughout the criminal justice system, many interviewees discussed how race is a fundamental factor in how ex-convicts are treated by institutions and individuals alike. From their discussions with clients, interviewees argued that Black and brown ex-convicts bear the brunt of institutionalized discrimination on two fronts: they have worse material outcomes, and they are not afforded the support to see themselves as equal. These two sides – the material and the mental punishments of being nonwhite – combine to again force ex-convicts towards illicit activity, as everything around them is pushing them out of mainstream society.

The next interviewee quoted, the president of a violence prevention organization, discusses how specific tactics of support are necessary to combat the preexisting disadvantages that many ex-convicts experience. These disadvantages are exacerbated by the discrimination of ex-convicts.

> Some [ex-convicts] are just not ready, you know, sometimes you have to work with people, meet them where they are, and work with them on their cognitive skills. And you have to understand some people may have dropped out of school in the grammar school years, or at the high school level. Some people don't feel confident or competent enough to actually make it in mainstream society… So people will look at them and say, "They're grown men and grown women, they should be good." Everyone looks like they're taking care of business. But that's not the case, you know, with some of the people… That's just the way it looks, but people need help out here. So I think the first step is to work with people and to see where they are on a scholastic level, academic level, or just a basic educational level, basic stuff. Some people not real good with math, they're not good at reading or writing… You have to handhold people a lot, we call it "constructive shadowing".. It's important to have patience for the work. You know, some people may not have the patience to hold nobody's hand that long.

An important factor mentioned in this excerpt is low educational attainment, a major theme throughout interviewee responses. Low educational attainment is itself a result of many structural factors in individuals' lives, from low educational investment, to community violence, to low family support. Interviewees emphasized many other systemic factors that work together with the discrimination of a criminal record to doubly disadvantage ex-convicts. Community violence is one such factor, creating community fear and limiting individuals' community and social network. Interviewees described a deteriorating situation in many of their clients' communities, where community violence is coupled with low economic investment to reduce employment opportunities for everyone, leading to further illicit activity.

The compounding barriers of reentry and existing disadvantages can result in severe mental health challenges. The expressive support from social relationships in particular is necessary in the context of factors that negatively affect the mental health of ex-convicts, especially the challenges of both incarceration and reentry.

> But some people… don't connect the dots, they may never get fully reintegrated or assimilated in society based on whatever happened while incarcerated… For example, people in solitary confinement for 10 or 20 years, you know, no human contact other than the guards or whatever. You have to sit still for 15/20 years by yourself. That's tough. You have to condition your mind.

Multiple interviewees talked at length on the mental health impacts of incarceration, especially focusing on behavioral changes and trauma. Spending years by oneself in a confined space is extremely difficult, and the interviewee says that this challenge forces incarcerated persons to change their mind. These circumstances also cause very real and deep trauma for those that go through it; another interviewee paraphrased their client in saying: "I did five years in prison… And the answer for me wasn't a job, I had to address the scars in my life". In a case such as this, it is necessary to address the mental trauma before moving to the kind of material needs that many people focus on when discussing reentry.

Immediately after incarceration, there are many parts of the reentry experience itself that directly strain ex-convicts' mental health: stress from the material challenges of reentry, the stress of having few people to help, and the stigma of a criminal record and incarceration.

Even with support, the material challenges of reentry can be overwhelming. As a previous quote said, "If they don't get a legit source of income, they start having to dip into non-legal sources. And once they do that… you just kinda see people deflate". For someone with a record, fulfilling their needs can feel impossible while staying true to one's hopes. These barriers wear down their clients' dedication; they soon have to focus on their survival instead. The stress of material problems can be exacerbated by the limited assistance available because of a criminal record: "A lot of reentry programs… are more like 60 to 90 days, that's really not enough to get a job and have anxiety and stress sort of disappear" As this interviewee says, this kind of assistance is not enough to truly assist with the stress of reentry; instead, it is like a deadline at which time the individual has to deal with one more problem again.

Interviewees continually stressed that reentry is often a very solitary process; with few people available to help them with material needs, or even just be emotionally available for

them, ex-convicts' mental health can further deteriorate. One interviewee discussed how a client's family had passed away by the time they were released; another discussed a family rejecting someone because they went to prison. For both, as a different interviewee summarized, "You usually hit the ground with a very limited support network… and you have to stumble".

The stigma that was discussed in the previous section has very painful effects on ex-convicts. As previously discussed, interviewees consistently felt that there is a general stigma against those in prison and those released from prison, especially the idea that, "we have this retributive system of you did something bad and so now you should hurt because of it." This stigma has very real effects on individuals' mental health.

For some readers, it may seem improbable that the support of a few people can change an individuals' outcomes in the face of so many barriers; however, interviewees argued that there are true material and psychological effects of social support in the lives of ex-convicts. The next sections of this paper will argue that these acts – which are often taken for granted by people – can make a real difference, even as people have to face the massive force of legal and social discrimination.

Social Support in Reentry: Expressive Support

In the face of mental health problems with diverse causes, interviewees consistently described the importance of social support in addressing said problems. The role of expressive support – emotional and psychological aid from supportive relationships – in these organizations became clear from interviewees discussing the beliefs behind their organizations' programs. Across the interviews, interviewees' discussions of expressive support fell into five major themes, with each theme centered around a particular aspect of expressive support. Most of these

themes – though not all – lined up with existing concepts in the sociological literature. These five themes were: expressive support's role in repairing self-esteem, the benefits of perceived expressive support, guidance as a form of expressive support, the role of expressive support during crisis, and the importance of time in the provision of expressive support. The organizations did provide some formal social support; but they were often instead trying to create an environment to facilitate informal social support, just as someone might receive outside of their organizations. Therefore, interviewees' understandings are important in comparison to general ideas of reentry support, not just in the context of formal social services. With that in mind, these five subsections are the major ways in which interviewees discussed supporting the psychological health of ex-convicts. Each theme is relatively independent from the others; but put together, the themes show the variety of ways that ex-convicts receive psychological support, especially from social services.

Long-Term Effects of Expressive Support: Repairing Self-Esteem

One of the most common themes of expressive support throughout interviewee responses was the relation of an ex-convict to their own identity, and how outside people view that identity. As previously discussed, incarceration and reentry have long-term impacts on the mental health and self-esteem of ex-convicts. Some people may view the idea of expressive support as immediate aid, such as helping someone get through a mental health crisis. But interviewees described how much of their support sought to build up their client's positive identities and set them up for long-term psychological success. Particularly for those undergoing reentry, interviewees discussed three major forms through which supportive relationships helped ex-convicts recover their self-esteem: accepting failure and moving past it, recognizing their good

qualities and abilities, and putting them on an equal footing with others. Each of these forms of support was an aim of interviewees' services, where organizations specifically sought to repair self-esteem through their services. These different recognitions of the individual all aim to achieve similar things: they help support an individual's own perception of self-esteem and gives them hope and motivation in the face of systemic rejection.

> When someone says to me, "my family says I'm a bum. I'm no good, I've never amount to nothing." I say so "let's talk about how I how I see you. Not how others see you. I see potential and greatness in you. We want to walk that we want to walk on the pathway to success with you."

> We have to build a community of people at [organization], where failure is part of the process, and it's embraced and we just, we just fail forward. And fail a little less, succeed a little more.

Nearly every single interviewee touched on the importance of moving past failure and discussed how support can help people move past failure towards a successful reentry. As one interviewee said, failure is almost inevitable in reentry because of the barriers that someone faces, from not being able to get a job to being rejected by one's family. Therefore, the support of others to get past this sense of failure is essential to both individual challenges and the broader experience of reentry. Interviewees discussed this theme partially through their own opinions, but mostly in describing the support that their organizations' mentors and support groups directly foster. Just as the first quote demonstrates, without positive support, an individual can get bogged down by negative feelings from the society around them, possibly adopting a negative view of themselves and their prospects. In this moment of crisis, social support materializes and serves to explicitly comfort and empower individuals. The two aspects of the organizations mentioned in these quotes – mentorship and the broader community of an organization – are used to confront this problem. Social services seek to use both individual relationships and their

community environment to broadcast that it is possible to move past a less-than-perfect reality and grow through it. The simple premise that it is okay to move past failure is an important one, as interviewees experienced many ex-convicts feeling that it was nearly impossible to move past their crime or incarceration.

> Part of it is to not have deficit thinking in our approach. Or it's about saying, No, these are individuals of merit and worth. They have value that have assets inherent to them, as individuals. So how do we capitalize on those assets? How do we build those up?

After moving past failure, interviewees also discussed the importance of focusing on peoples' good qualities, helping them develop their positive skills and traits to stay with them through life. Just working through someone's failures – such as an incarceration experience – is not enough. Many of the organizations' programs – from mentorship to workforce development – were premised on the idea that ex-convicts must also be aided in recognizing the positive aspects of their selves and considering how to best use their strengths. Services sought to both materially build up their clients' strengths and show their clients the significance of these strengths. In this sense, the acceptance that comes with social support both helps people move past their faults and helps them build up their strengths. Further, interviewees hoped that this emphasis on strengths could psychologically empower individuals: as emotional aid, they saw its role as directly building up self-esteem, and giving hope that it is possible to get a job, find housing, and more. This support can again combat the negative perceptions of self-worth that a criminal record can bring from mainstream society, helping remind them of who they are outside of just a label.

> Clients getting a say in their services is empowering, because they don't get any agency in prison. If not, they can be hopeless, which leads them to more crime. You're not in a returning citizen parent group. You're a parent. And you get treated fully, like a parent, like a caregiver, even if you've been gone for a while.

Finally, interviewees believed that building the self-esteem of ex-convicts required the work of putting them on an equal footing with others, rather than only defining them by their incarceration. In prison, individuals are treated as fundamentally different than anyone else, with harsh effects on their mental and physical wellbeing. Ex-convicts are often separated from others by institutions and individuals alike, even if it has been years since their incarceration. From interviewees' perspectives, when people accept ex-convicts as real people rather than different from those without criminal records, it can completely change their own outlook on their prospects. The second quote illustrates what this looks like in practice: this program functionally treats ex-convicts the same as anyone else, who have simply "been gone for a while". This acceptance gives material empowerment to ex-convicts, allowing them to access services and have a say in their relationships just like anyone else would. Further, it gives them the hope that they can overcome the stigma they face, and that not everyone sees them as just an ex-convict. This interviewee and others agreed that the real effect of this equality and positive support was ex-convicts gaining the motivation to continue on a path back into mainstream society. No matter the resources they may have access to, repairing self-esteem is a key part of supporting someone returning from incarceration; without the necessary self-esteem or motivation, these resources may be worthless in the long run. Overall, this first instance of expressive support is about repairing the emotional trauma of prison and reentry.

Support from Groups: The Benefits of Perceived Expressive Support

Another important theme in interviewee responses was the importance of perceived support. Support from individuals and groups is not objectively provided, but it is instead perceived and received a certain way by the individual. This was mostly described by

interviewees as solidarity – the mutual support within a group – where this very perception of

support serves to build ex-convicts' confidence and feeling of support. The mutual support of a

community gives ex-convicts a strong perception of social support – itself being a positive

influence on their psyche – and the real support of the group itself.

> Folks need people to talk to you after they've experienced something life altering,
> something tragic. They want to be a part of a community of support that will help
> to rebuild broken men, because a lot of the times when men come to us, they are
> in desperate need of supports that are holistic in nature, right?

> Sometimes you just have access to a person or a set of individuals who would
> offer a listening or empathetic ear, but it's good enough for the fathers. It offered
> some form of emotional relief.

It is especially difficult for ex-convicts to find support because of the stigma that they face: many

people do not understand or empathize with their situation, which makes it hard to even find

people that will listen. In this case, interviewees discussed the strong positive effects of having

dedicated people in their life that do listen and can truly empathize with their challenges.

Multiple interviewees talked about how many people how have been incarcerated – especially

men – do not have anyone with whom they can be emotionally vulnerable. Interviewees felt that

this absence was a major gap in the support of ex-convicts and attempted to solve it through

administering support groups. In response to this problem, most organizations interviewed had

created some form of support group, with the aim being to give ex-convicts or those with trauma

a space to speak freely to those that have been through similar challenges. Interviewees felt that a

major benefit of these groups was the simple perception of support: that clients felt support and

acceptance from such a group, in relation to the feeling of rejection from many other realms of

social life. Through talking in these environments, interviewees believe that the perceived social

support made participants feel supported and motivated. The examples from interviewees'

organizations – especially support groups made up of people who have left prison – are powerful

forms of support because they offer individuals an avenue of expression that is wholly

unavailable outside of it. As in the first quote, the challenges and trauma they have been through

are life-altering; it is therefore important to have the support of those who can understand these

unique struggles and help work through them. The simple act of expressing these troubles, and

knowing that those listening will understand the troubles, is therefore a powerful avenue of

emotional relief that contrasts starkly with a lack of understanding from those who have not been

involved with the criminal justice system.

An Unexpected Source of Expressive Support: Guidance

Direct guidance – while usually only thought of as a means to ameliorate material

outcomes – can be an important form of expressive support as well: it provides ex-convicts with

confidence and stability, especially as they navigate emotionally challenging barriers.

> You are helping them organize, like, what do they want to achieve? Why did they
> come to [organization]? What are their hopes, their dreams? And then how can I,
> as a life coach or case manage, come alongside you to help you get there?

As previously discussed, ex-convicts are often left on their own immediately after incarceration,

with so many questions for them to struggle with on their own. What should be immediate goals?

How to accomplish one's goals and needs? The challenge of figuring all of this out, immediately

on coming back into society on one's own, can be overwhelming.

Guidance is often thought of solely in an informational sense – as information to help

someone materially succeed. But in the cases described by interviewees, they often emphasized

guidance as expressive support, where ex-convicts could find stability and hope through

someone's guidance, along with the material benefits that come from such advice. As mentors

and program directors, interviewees often provided advice and information to ex-convicts; they

found that this information served to materially help ex-convicts, but also to provide them with

newfound hope and confidence. In these cases, interviewees stressed the benefits of having

someone available to directly help them think through their problems and being available for

when they need direct help going through something. As the quote above shows, caring people in

an ex-convict's life can be important resources for them, especially when the mentor has gone

through reentry before, to help them get through barriers and show them that it is possible.

Interviewees said that both direction and encouragement are important in these relationships,

helping people work through their problems and giving them the motivation to act on their plan.

Therefore, information and guidance serve as emotional aid as well, dispelling some stress from

the experience of reentry.

The Role of Expressive Support in Crisis: Holding Someone Responsible

An important theme in interviews was the role of ex-convicts' support network in holding

them responsible for their actions – acting as concrete social control in moments of crisis – to

further the individual's own hopes. Most of the time, interviewees discussed expressive support

in terms of long-term support for individuals' mental health and wellbeing. However, there were

also important moments where support had to be immediate, especially to convince someone out

of an action they would later regret.

> If you're going to be a client here, you know, we're going to be on the street, we're
> going to be all up in your business. If you call me at two o'clock in the morning,
> saying, "Hey, they want me to get in this car, and I'll do a hit with them?" Well,
> I'm going to tell you "Hold on, I'm gonna be right there", I'm gonna be all in your
> business trying to persuade you not to get in that car or do something else.

As has been previously discussed, the barriers that ex-convicts face make it extremely

difficult – materially and psychologically – for many to fulfill their needs through fully

legitimate means. Therefore, most interviewees referenced their own personal experiences of making their support for a client concrete through an intervention such as the one quoted, keeping ex-convicts on track with their original hopes and goals. As in the quote for this section, interviewees had personal experiences of holding someone responsible through stopping negative behaviors; this often happened through informal control. One method is convincing them out of an action, such as above: the support network of an individual can help remind them of what they truly want for themselves, despite the challenges of the immediate moment. In the quote above, the client knows what he is about to do is probably bad and knew to call because of it; but they needed the extra push of direct intervention to actually follow through on what they know is right. The staff interviewee essentially serves as an involved family member, staying "up in your business", which some people may find annoying, but which he believes is important to keeping people accountable. Another method of pushing someone to stay responsible and persevere can include changing individuals' thinking. In another interviewee's experience, the communal beliefs of one support group directly made someone stop themselves from killing someone: "I remembered some of the teachings of [support group name] and turned my car around, and I came to the meeting instead of killing this guy". These actions serve as an important way to support someone, even if it may seem like the intervening person is going against one's wishes. As these examples show, people can know what the right thing to do is, and have the tools for it, but if they cannot change their own thinking in the moment of a pivotal choice, then all of it will be for nothing. Therefore, the support of relationships materializes in this moment as social control, holding a person accountable and making sure that they stay on the right path. Despite being a formal organization, the control manifested by social services is

informal just as a family's would be, as it is manifested in both interpersonal relations and commonly-held beliefs of the social group.

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The Importance of Support Continuing over Time:
A Temporal Dimension of Expressive Support

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The necessity of stable, sustained expressive support was the theme most frequently touched upon by interviewees, and for good reason. In the context of reentry's nearly permanent challenges, a sustained relationship will allow an individual to grow and succeed. The previous themes discussed – repairing self-esteem, perceived support, guidance, and support during crisis – all have the most impact when an individual's social support stays with them over time. The emphasis on this theme by interviewees especially points towards the necessity of understanding social support as temporally-grounded. One instance of support changes little; but consistent support across time can lead to large benefits.

> We see ourselves as coming alongside them to try to figure out whatever it is they need to deal with, to get where they get to a point in their lives, that they feel like they are stable, satisfying and thriving, and hoping that along the way, we can empower them to raise their expectations, to overcome barriers, to persevere through disappointments

The benefits of a caring relationship are neither instantaneous nor inevitable; supportive people in an ex-convict's life can only truly support them if they are committed. On the other hand, temporary support can leave someone feeling just as alone and unsure as they were without support to begin with. The programs of this interviewee's organization, along with the majority of other organizations, were founded on the premise that continuing to work with a person would only yield greater rewards. When asked about why they chose this strategy, they mentioned both material and psychological benefits. Psychologically, the challenges of reentry often do not go away, or even lessen over time; additionally, just one weak moment can mean a client going

back to prison. Therefore, sustained expressive support is important to make sure that the support that helped someone succeed – for any reason – does not go away, risking the loss of pride, motivation, or material successes that they'd developed. Further, sustained expressive support gives a certain level of security and stability, combating the instability that is forced upon someone by many institutional barriers. Time allows the other aspects of social support to truly benefit someone's live, helping them develop and combat the mental health problems forced upon them.

Social Support in Reentry: Instrumental Support

Instrumental support can, in many instances, help ex-convicts directly succeed in their material needs, from finding housing to succeeding in a job. Just as with the themes of expressive support, I generated these subsections firstly through analyzing the interviews, and then applied sociological concepts of instrumental support to best clarify the subsections. The discussion of instrumental support fell into three main categories. First, in many cases, social connections organically led to opportunities and material assistance for ex-convicts; many organizations interviewed tried to produce the conditions for such development to happen. Second, assistance in providing information and navigating services is essential for ex-convicts to get access to the services available to them. Third, themes discussed in the context of expressive support also have an impact on assisting ex-convicts towards their material goals.

Organic Instrumental Assistance through Social Connections

Multiple interviewees discussed how ex-convicts are often lifted up by specific instrumental support – opportunities and material assistance – that organically spring from social connections.

> What we believe is that people create opportunities for people that they know, trust, and love. The question is, who do we know? Who do we trust? Who do we love? And so, we try to create that space at [organization], where volunteers are knowing, they're growing in trust, and they're loving their neighbor… And then miraculously, opportunities emerge for people.

One interviewee discussed how individuals in communities of greater wealth help each other and perpetuate their families' wealth and experience. Describing his experience growing up, he said, "Our dads were… setting up summer part time jobs for us at each other's landscaping business. "My son needs some additional work ethic", you know, it's like, "Oh, send him over to me", they're trading these economic favors for each other". This interviewee was exposed to beneficial, informal economic networks in his childhood. But in lower-income communities, especially those harmed by community violence and mass incarceration, his professional experiences had taught him that it is difficult for these economic networks to form. People do not have the ability to offer such favors, and this interviewee also noted that these community factors have reduced community cohesion. In this context, interviewees noted the importance of material favors and opportunities coming from individuals' relationships. One objective of the programs of social service organizations – such as the one quoted above – is to help ex-convicts form these social connections, and then benefit from them without direct action by the organization itself. Explicit material support from organizations is of course important; but in their experience, interviewees saw this kind of organic support as benefitting clients across their lives. The role of these material opportunities was so important to multiple interviewees' organizations that they explicitly designed activities and community to foster the kinds of social ties that would create

such opportunities. After an ex-convict support group meeting, one person's car broke down; however, someone they had met through the group happened to be a mechanic. They fixed the car for free, saving them from spending their savings on the car and putting "them on the brink of financial collapse". In the reciprocal environment fostered at multiple organizations, volunteers often help the people with whom they connected – with whom they "know, trust, and love" – ranging from small favors to employment opportunities. Through community events, some organizations even try to rebuild community feeling and trust. In those community events, one interviewee says that, "people start to have a different habit, a different feeling, and they're coming out, they're connecting with each other". Just as existing literature says, material benefits often spring from social ties; the organizations interviewed understood that such ties were not inevitable, but instead have to be fostered through an interactive, reciprocal environment. Organizations attempt to facilitate these environments; and if they are successful, favors and opportunities are given through genuine relationships.

<div align="center">Informational Support: Information and Connections</div>

A second essential instrumental form of social support is in the provision of information and experience, especially in navigating services.

> People aren't dumb, right? They more or less can figure out the vast majority of the steps it takes to reach a goal. And so we ask questions, help people document their answers. So you want a job? What do you think are some barriers that you might be facing currently? Let's identify what those might be. And then we can work on removing them one at a time and get you closer.

In most of Chicago and Illinois, there are many overlapping service providers available to people; the problem is for ex-convicts to find them and get in contact with them, often on their own. However, a key part of people overcoming this barrier is the information and advice that

they gain from their social ties. In staff's experience, word of mouth is one of the main ways people find their services, especially as the criminal justice system does not allow the organizations to advertise as much as they would like. Once people have been connected to these organizations, interviewees stressed that much of the instrumental work they do is in helping people connect to pre-existing services. There are many government or nonprofit services available for food, housing, employment, training, and more. In social services, interviewees often understood the role of themselves and their coworkers as connecting their client with these services, essentially acting as a knowledgeable friend or family member would. These organizations' relationships to clients were especially founded on the assumption that their support acts as a bridge between an ex-convict and their material success. In this sense, social relationships simply give them the information necessary to help them fulfill their own, pre-existing goals.

From one perspective, this informational support is markedly different from the direct material opportunities of the previous section. The previously-discussed instrumental assistance often has direct financial benefits for the recipients, such as a job or an offer of housing. However, interviewees viewed these two forms not as inherently different, but rather as two sides of the same coin, with information and direct assistance both leading to positive material outcomes for ex-convicts. While information's benefits are more indirect, interviewees paired information with more direct assistance to move towards the same goals.

Connecting this subsection with the Guidance subsection of "Expressive Support" makes it clear that information can be seen as both expressive and instrumental support. The provision of information and advice clearly benefits clients' material outcomes in helping them receive support and opportunities. But as the Expressive Support subsection shows, it also givs clients

stability and confidence going forward. Therefore, the inclusion of a similar theme in both expressive and instrumental support shows how the role of information does not just serve one end.

<div align="center">The Unexpected Role of Expressive Support in Material Outcomes</div>

Finally, a surprising finding of the interviews was that much of the support aimed towards improving clients' mental health essentially serves as instrumental support. While services like mentorship and support groups are mostly aimed to improve the psychological wellbeing of ex-convicts, interviewees emphasized that the qualities these services develop – such as self-esteem, motivation, confidence – all prepare their clients to succeed in their material goals. Although this theme is under the section of "Instrumental Support", it shows how the relationship between expressive support and instrumental support is closer than one may expect. Similarly, ex-convicts' material and mental health outcomes affect one another, with positive mental health preparing a client to overcome their material challenges.

> Let's say the first week, this guy's never worked before, he starts and he's late for work three straight days. We don't fire him, because you can't do what you don't know. We mentor them. We give him life skills.

> You might lose the job we just got you, you might lose it in three years. You're welcome to come back here, no charge, and we keep your resumes all that stuff. And we're going to help you again and again and again.

Most organizations interviewed designed their programs using a holistic approach to service provision, aiming to help fulfill most of a client's needs and goals. The impact of this holistic approach became clear as staff talked about how their programs often affected both clients' psychological outcomes and material outcomes. The support of individual staff and of group environments has clear benefits for the mental health of their ex-convict clients, as discussed in the expressive support section of the results. But interestingly, the benefits of such support –

such as improving clients' self-esteem and motivation – has clear impacts on their own material outcomes as well. The barriers to a successful reentry are overwhelming, but through bolstering clients' mental health, staff thereby gave them to motivation to keep trying to overcome their material barriers, and many clients were eventually able to do so with the motivation and confidence of the services' support. Organizations generally sustain this support over long periods of time; just as it improves psychological outcomes, this sustained support also leads to real material success for people, as they continue to help until someone has "all the things you need to get back, live a good life". They understand that everyone has different needs, and that some arbitrary goal – such as not recidivating within three years (a common benchmark in the field) – does not mean that a person has passed all of the barriers of reentry.

The values that staff bring into their psychological support for clients affect material outcomes as well. The most illuminating value across interviews in this case was acceptance, with staff believing that ex-convicts should be treated equally as all others. This belief clearly impacts organizations' instrumental support: staff accepted that all ex-convicts deserved to be assisted, and that everyone had to be assisted in different ways to best achieve their goals and develop their skills. Interviewees mentioned that many ex-offenders have reading limitations; their recognition of this challenge directly led them to work to resolve it, when others may ignore it or give up. Employment is the key example of the application of these values. Many ex-offenders come in with little professional experience, skills, or access to jobs. Social services aim to meet them where they are and provide training, from basic things like writing a resume to real training to help exemplify their strengths. Even if a client lost a job or was re-incarcerated, the organization would still be open to them again. In this way, values such as acceptance – which

were primarily discussed in the context of supporting clients' mental health – also served as the value foundation from which organizations helped clients fulfill their material needs.

Discussion

Consistencies with the Sociological Literature

There are many ways in which interviewees viewed the role, forms, and effects of social support similarly as the existing sociological literature. Firstly, they viewed social support as necessary in direct relation to navigating the systemic barriers to reentry. They saw the dire need for social support not as inevitable nor natural, but instead as a direct result of the public policy and general social stigma that harms ex-convicts. Secondly, consistent with the literature, interviewees viewed social support as having two main roles: the provision of emotional (or expressive) support, and the provision of material (or instrumental) support. Essentially all of the ways that interviewees discussed reentry support fell fairly easily into these two categories.

Within these two broader categories, interviewees' discussions often mapped onto themes in the social support literature as well. Of the five subsections of expressive support, three of them readily map onto existing conceptions of expressive support in reentry: self-esteem (part 1 of expressive support's results), perceived social support (part 2), and expressive support in crisis (part 4).

Expressive Support Section 1: Self-Esteem

For self-esteem, both interviewees and the literature agree that expressive support serves a beneficial role in establishing an individual's confidence and motivation. Both groups viewed self-esteem as being a major component of facing the challenges of reentry. To this end, they saw self-esteem as an important and effective target of social support. However, few accounts in

the literature placed self-esteem in such a central role for reentry support, while the interviewees viewed it as essential to a successful reentry.

Expressive Support Section 2: Perceived Social Support

For perceived social support, both groups agree that the perception of social support has important effects, even independent of real social support, with the comfort of perceived social support being concretely beneficial. Support groups were certainly effective at helping individuals talk through their challenges; but interviewees especially emphasized the collective feeling of support that the groups generated.

Expressive Support Section 4: Expressive Support in Crisis

Finally, both groups viewed some instances of social control as a form of expressive support, with those close to an individual making their support concrete through efforts of control at times of crisis. However, interviewees mostly only talked about positive social control, where an ex-convict's social network had good intentions in mind when intervening. The literature makes it clear that social control is not necessarily positive; social support – and control – can come from individuals of good and bad intentions.

Of the three subsections on instrumental support, two of them readily map onto sociological concepts of social support: organic instrumental assistance (part 1 of instrumental support's results) and informational support (part 2).

Instrumental Support Section 1: Organic Assistance

Social services constitute a very formal environment, unlike the informal social network of friends and family usually studied in social support literature. That is why it was surprising to

discover that interviewees emphasized the necessity of organic social connection and subsequent material assistance from these connections. Further, the organizations explicitly acted to create the possibility for informal friendships and exchanges, viewing this organic assistance as another important way to help ex-convicts, along with more formal programs. Therefore, the interviews showed a surprising similarity between literature on social support and interviewees' perceptions, with both highlighting the importance of informal social networks; interviewees simply tried to encourage such informal networks through their formal organizations.

Instrumental Support Section 2: Information

Interviewees saw assistance with information and navigating services as necessary part of supporting ex-convicts, consistent with the literature's view of information in social support. If anything, interviewees emphasized this aspect to an even greater extent than the existing literature. Their emphasis on information was informed by their intimate knowledge of the difficulties of learning about, and getting access to, the complex services that are technically available to ex-convicts, but that have many barriers – information, time, location, technology, know-how – to actually accessing them.

Areas of Advancement: Inconsistencies with the Sociological Literature

This study also advances the conceptualization of social support in the sociological literature. In particular, the results of this study highlight a few key areas that further research may expand on. These areas are: outcomes of ex-convicts other than recidivism, similarities between formal and informal support provision, and nuances in the lines between expressive and instrumental support.

Outcomes of Ex-Convicts other than Recidivism

Firstly, the results of this study's interviews discuss a variety of outcomes for ex-convicts – recidivism, but also mental health and material wellbeing – that are often not discussed by relevant literature. While general social support literature has discussed psychological and material outcomes, literature on social support in reentry has almost entirely focused on the outcome of recidivism, with mental health and financials simply affecting recidivism. In contrast, the perspectives of interviewees describe reentry support as a holistic and comprehensive endeavor. While recidivism is an important outcome to avoid, interviewees also emphasized support for mental health and financial wellbeing as essential outcomes in their own right. Indeed, interviewees took holistic support as a starting point for ex-convicts – a right rather than a luxury – essentially placing them on the same level as anyone who has not been incarcerated. In a sense, one could view this perspective as one borne of respect, with all interviewees having deep knowledge of the grit and endurance it takes to get through the challenges of reentry. Interviewees' perspective should be considered in both the conceptual focus and the methods of future research; recidivism is not the only important outcome for ex-convicts, and researchers should keep this fact in mind and operationalize it in their work.

Similarities between Formal and Informal Support Provision

Secondly, a similarity between the literature and this study may actually be the basis for improving the conceptualization of social support: this study found that formal networks often provide support in the same way that informal ones do. As previously stated, interviewees' descriptions of social support provision in their organizations mostly mirror the ways in which social support is provided in individuals' social networks. Previous literature has made a

distinction formal social support and informal social support (Cullen 1994; Vaux 1988); but such a distinction may not be necessary. Interviewees discuss how their services attempt to emulate the organic and informal environmental of social networks, creating genuine expressive support and instrumental support. It seems that at the very least, the environment of formal organizations is flexible: organizations may provide social support through more or less formal means. While the organizational environment is important in structuring and resourcing these relationships, it may be more useful to think as "formal" environments simply conditioning social support in a particular – but not inherently different – way than "informal" environments. Therefore, future research may be better equipped to consider the specific environment of an organization, rather than viewing it through the absolute lens of "formal" versus "informal". Future research may benefit in further investigating the difference between these formal and informal environments, and assist in finding the keys to success across environments.

<div align="center">Nuances in the Lines between Expressive and Instrumental Support</div>

Thirdly, the results of this study point to the prospect that the concepts of social support – especially the lines between expressive and instrumental support – are not as clear-cut as the literature may say; support from individuals' relationships often cuts across these lines. The nuances of these categories are visibly seen in the subsections of both expressive support and instrumental support.

For instance, informational support has been described as an independent category of social support (Thoits 2011). However, interviewees described the role of guidance and information as fundamentally providing both expressive and instrumental support. From the perspective of the interviewees – who provide information to their clients – this information essentially primarily serves to improve the material condition of their clients. Information is the

means to accessing services, finding opportunities, and more; in this sense, it serves as instrumental support (rather than being an independent category) and works the same way as other instrumental support. Additionally, information has very real expressive benefits, providing individuals with confidence and motivation when facing an unsteady future. Almost no literature has considered the role of information as having direct expressive benefits; and yet interviewees made it clear that they provided information and guidance to both help clients' material outcomes and give them the motivation to reach that outcome.

Additionally, interviewees discussed the material effects of various aspects of expressive support, essentially describing aspects of expressive support to be instrumental support as well. Many of the expressive supports given to clients – building self-esteem, providing guidance, and committing to support clients over time – also have the impact of improving clients' material situations. Interviewees described that through benefits such as improved self-esteem and motivation, clients were able to overcome material challenges and find financial successes. Not only do these discussions point us towards the material impacts of expressive support (and mental health in general); they also point us towards the possibility that expressive and instrumental support are more intertwined that previous literature has described them. Expressive and instrumental support may both be capable of improving both the psychological and material wellbeing of individuals.

Conclusion

This research project was framed around the theoretical question: "How do social service organizational perspectives on, and assistance with, the social support of formerly incarcerated individuals vary broadly between services and the academic literature?" Interviewees viewed

their supportive role – and the role of social support in general – in the context of the psychological and material challenges of reentry, borne of intolerance by the state, employers, and society in general. The support that their services provide fell into the two main categories of expressive and instrumental support; however, these categories were not as clear as previous literature may have organized them. Despite the formal environment of social services, much of the social support was provided on informal, personal terms, with services aiming to build the social networks of their clients and produce organic support.

This study has a variety of limitations that restrain its explanatory ability. Firstly, there are multiple limitations with the participant sample. The sample size is smaller than would be preferred, with nine participants being lower than a truly representative sample would be. Secondly, there is less diversity of the sample than would be ideal. There is only one female in the sample; while social service staff in this field most likely lean towards being male, this is nonetheless a major limitation. However, no major differences were found between the one female and the other male interviewees; this consistency across backgrounds makes me more confident in results. Additionally, most of the staff interviewed were in quite senior roles (even if they had worked up from junior roles). More diversity in the roles would have painted a better picture of staff understandings. However, the focus on senior staff turned out to be very useful in order to see the behind-the-scenes decision making of these organizations: how they choose which programs to run, the benefits they intend of each program, and more. There is also an inherent limitation of using staff as a sample for this topic, as they do not have the same lived, personal experience of reentry that ex-convicts themselves do. One of the interviewees confirmed themselves to have been incarcerated; but I did not explicitly ask all interviewees if they had been incarcerated, so I cannot conclude anything from comparing the individual with

other interviewees. However, the comparison between the one confirmed incarcerated interviewee and all other interviewees does not show any fundamental dissimilarities between the two. The only major dissimilarity was that the previously-incarcerated individual emphasized group-based support more than other interviewees. Finally, there are limits due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews. Because interviewees discussed many different forms and outcomes of support provision, the study is not conclusive about any particular service or outcome for ex-convicts. Despite these limitations, this study's focus on social service staff and semi-structed approach allows it to investigate perspectives and outcomes that the sociological literature has not covered in depth.

The barriers to a successful reentry are vast and overwhelming. On the other hand, service provision to ex-convicts has compounding benefits, assisting them and resulting in large returns on investment due to lower crime and recidivism rates. This study seeks to amplify the voices of those that do some of the most work to assist ex-convicts, but who are often ignored from public view and ignored from adequate funding. Any improvement to the services offered to ex-convicts will have resounding benefits for the clients and their communities. Going forward, the sociological literature and public policy should put more consideration towards the existing efforts of social service staff – as the experts that they are – and seek to empower their efforts to improve the lives of ex-convicts across the life course. At the same time, these audiences should act to reduce the burdens placed on ex-convicts by laws and stigma. No matter the intention of these burdens, the sad reality is that they often increase recidivism in the name of justice. Both individual and systemic action must be taken to ameliorate the crises of recidivism, with each action having the potential to save lives and repair communities.

Appendix 1

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The College of the University of Chicago – Department of Sociology

Study Title: Organizational Perceptions and Assistance of Social Support during Ex-Offender Reentry

Principal Investigator: Waldo E. Johnson, Jr., Ph.D., MSW
Primary Contact: Jonah Norwitt

STUDY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW NOTE
This interview is designed to be semi-structured in nature. Use prompts when needed and skip questions when requested by participant.

Research Study Consent

Form 5: CONSENT FORM

1. The study that you are requested to participate is a study of organizational perspectives on social support in ex-offender reentry. First, I want to know about how you perceive the importance of social support in young adult releasees' reentries. Second, I want to know about different ways that organizations assist releasees in gaining and maintaining social support.
2. Before we begin to discuss these topics, I would like to review the consent form with you and answer questions or concerns you have regarding this interview.
   - <REVIEW CONSENT FORM WITH THE PARTICIPANT DURING THE VIRTUAL MEETING AND HAVE THE PARTICIPANT MARK THAT THEY CONSENT >
   - Thank you for reviewing the consent form with me and consenting to be in this study as well as different study procedures. Feel free to keep a copy of the consent form with for your records.
3. [PARTICIPANT CONSENTED TO AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDING]
   - During the consenting process you agreed to have this interview audio/video recorded.
   - I will be using a video/audio recording software to record, and I will safely store the recording.
   - Do I have your permission to begin audio/video recording our discussion?
   - <START AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING>
   - I am now audio/video recording this interview.
   - Please confirm for me that I have your permission to continue audio/video recording the remainder of this interview.
   - Thank you, we will now begin the interview.
4. [PARTICIPANT DID NOT CONSENT TO AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING]
   - During the consenting process you did not agree to have this interview audio recorded.
   - Instead of audio recording the interview, I will take notes to record your responses.
   - Do I have your permission to begin our discussion?

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- Thank you, we will now begin the interview.

Interview Guide (Meeting 1)

Section 0 – Introduction

THIS SECTION IS NOT DESIGNED TO BE READ VERBATIM, ONLY AS SUMMARIZED POINTS

0.1 Greeting
- Thank you for meeting with me today and taking the time to help me with my research.
- I want to introduce myself, tell you more about the purpose of the project, and let you know the kinds of questions I will be asking you today.
- But before I do, I want to go over a couple of things.
  - If you need to take a break at any time during the interview, please let me know.
  - I would like you to be as open and honest as possible about your experiences and responses.
  - I may take notes while you are talking to make sure that I gather as much of the information that you share as possible.
  - If you have any questions during this process, please ask me.
  - If at any time you feel uncomfortable with being audio recorded, please let me know and I will stop recording immediately.
  - If at any time you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, you may choose to not answer.
  - Additionally, if you decide that you no longer want to participate in the study, you can end your participation.

1.2 My Introduction
- My name is Jonah Norwitt and I am an undergraduate student in the College of the University of Chicago. I am majoring in sociology and political Science, and this research is going towards my B.A. Thesis in sociology.
- My research interests include criminal justice, urban sociology, and education.
- As an undergraduate, I have studied the criminal justice system and possible reform measures in different environments. I have taken courses focusing on the criminal justice system. As a research assistant I have studied the effects of the criminal justice system, such as those on the lives of adolescent fathers. I have also studied criminal justice policy in multiple public service environments. I am passionate about political change in the criminal justice system.

0.3 Re-introduction to the Study
- There are two things I want to understand regarding your understandings as a staff member at an organization assisting in reentry with formerly incarcerated young adult men:
  1. I want to understand how you perceive the importance of social support in young adult releasees' reentries.
  2. I want to know about different ways that organizations assist releasees in gaining and maintaining social support.

0.4 Purpose of the Study
- The primary purpose of my study is to investigate any potential differences between the academic understanding of social support during reentry and how it is thought of on the ground at organizations assisting in reentry.

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incarceration? How does the usage of different services vary?

Section 2 – Perceptions of Social Support

Introduction
- Thank you for sharing that with me.
- In this next section, I'm going to ask you questions about your understandings around reentry.

Question 4:	Starting very broadly, what has to happen for reentry post-incarceration to go well? (however you define "well")	[Prompt]
Question 4a:	What makes it go wrong?	[Prompt]
Question 4b:	What about for young adult men in general? Do your answers change?	[Prompt]
Question 4c:	How do you think your view compares to that of others?	[Prompt]
Question 4b.1:	Are any aspects of reentry overrated?	[Prompt]
Question 4b.2:	Are any aspects of reentry underrated or ignored?	[Prompt]
Question 5:	What are the major challenges facing young adult men during reentry?	[Prompt]
Question 5a:	Is assistance more important for facing certain challenges over others?	[Prompt]
Question 5b:	How do these challenges impact their lives during reentry?	[Prompt]
Question 6:	Where do releasees usually get the most support from?	[Prompt]
Question 6a:	What kind of variations exist?	[Prompt]
Question 7:	I recently read an article that argued that social support – giving assistance/comfort/companionship to cope with stressors and challenges – was an	[Prompt]

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- I will be talking with you about your experiences as a staff member of this organization because I believe what you have to tell me is important and I consider you the expert on this topic.
- I would like to learn more about your experience as a staff member by asking you to answer some questions.

- I will briefly explain the format of this interview before I start asking questions. Before I do, do you have any questions for me at this point?
  - [YES] <RESPOND TO QUESTIONS>. Those are great questions and I appreciate you asking them. If you have any other questions that come up during the course of this interview, please feel free to ask them at any time.
  - [NO] Ok. I know you don't have any questions for me right now, but if you have any questions that come up during the course of this interview, please feel free to ask them at any time.

0.5 Interview Format
- We will have this one interview which will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- During the interview, it may feel like I am repeating questions or asking them in different ways. I want to apologize for this up front. I am not trying to be repetitive—I am just trying to understand your perceptions from different angles.

0.7 Question and Stoppage Reminder
- At any point during this interview, if you are confused by any question please stop me and ask me to clarify what I am asking. I am happy to rephrase questions, clarify questions, or define terms and definitions that are unclear.
- As a reminder, you may feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions. Please tell me at any time if you wish to take a break or stop the interview. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions or topics that I will ask you, you are free to not answer or skip any questions. You are also free to stop and/or withdraw from the interview for any reason.

- Do you have any questions for me before I move on to some important definitions?
  - [Yes] <RESPOND TO QUESTIONS>. Good questions! Feel free to interrupt me if any other questions come to your mind.
  - [No] Alright. Again, feel free to stop me at any time if you have questions for me.

Section 1 – Icebreaker and Introduction

Introduction to Section One
In this part of the interview, I am going to ask you some questions to learn more about you and the organization for which you work.

Question 1:	Can you tell me a bit about yourself: how long have you worked at this organization and what is your role?	[Prompt]
Question 2:	How much do you personally interact with clients of your organization?	[Prompt]
Question 3:	What services does your organization offer to individuals undergoing reentry from	[Prompt]

	overlooked factor in the reentry process right now. What do you think about that?	
Question 8:	When I say "social support", what do you think of?	[Prompt]
Question 8a:	What do you think of for social assistance during reentry?	
Question 8b:	What do you think of for psychological assistance during reentry?	
Question 8c:	Do you have multiple meanings for it?	[Prompt]
Question 8d:	Where does social support come from?	[Prompt]
Question 9:	What role do you perceive social assistance or comfort playing in different aspects of young adults' reentry success?	[Prompt]
Question 9a:	In particular, how do you think that social support affects individuals' psychological success (i.e. mental health)	[Prompt]
Question 9b:	What about their financial success (such as employment and housing)?	[Prompt]
Question 10:	On the other hand, how do you perceive social assistance affecting young adults' likelihood towards reoffending?	[Prompt]
Question 11:	In general, do you see some sources of social support (professional, peer, family, community, etc.) as being more important or beneficial than other for young adults?	[Prompt]
Question 11a:	Why?	[Prompt]
Question 12:	For these past three questions, what experiences, interactions, or understandings have led you to these conclusions?	[Prompt]
Question 13:	Please share an experience – either a direct experience or one you have heard of from your organization – of social assistance or comfort affecting individuals' reentry experiences.	[Prompt]

Section 3 – Organization Assistance for Social Support

Introduction
- Thank you for sharing that information with me.
- I'm going to ask you about organizational services that assist releasees.

Question 14:	Can you tell me about the mission of your organization and the services it offers?	[Prompt]
Question 15:	How does your organization view its role in the reentry of its clients?	[Prompt]
Question 16:	Does your organization prioritize supporting/investing in certain services over others?	[Prompt]
Question 16a:	Why or why not?	[Prompt]
Question 18:	Can you tell me about the services your organization offers that assist previously incarcerated individuals in gaining social assistance, companionship, or comfort?	[Prompt]
Question 18a:	This could include: Peer or professional mentoring services, case managers, Mental health / counseling services, Family support / family reunification, Group or social activities	
Question 19:	What are your thoughts on the differing effectiveness of these programs?	[Prompt]
Question 19a:	Are programs that focus on a certain aspect of social support (professional, peer, family, community, etc.) more successful than programs that focus on a different aspect?	[Prompt]
Question 20:	What barriers do you think exist in accessing these services?	[Prompt]
Question 20a:	Possibilities include: information, stigma, program staff and environment, physical barriers, general accessibility	
Question 21:	Generally, across services in the Chicago area, do you think that any type(s) of social support need more focus? (professional, peer, family, community, etc.)	[Prompt]

Question 21a:	Do any gaps in coverage exist?	[Prompt]
Question 22:	Do you think that your own organization needs to change anything about how services are provided?	[Prompt]

Section 4 – Closing Questions

Concluding the Meeting
- We are almost done for today!
- I have a few short questions for you as we wrap up this interview. Before I get to those, do you have any questions for me?
  [Yes] <Respond to questions>. Very interesting questions! Thank you for asking them. Let's move on and get this wrapped up!
  [No] Ok. Let's get this wrapped up!

Question 23:	What should people know about young adults' experiences with social assistance during reentry?	[Prompt]
Question 24:	What questions about reentry and organizations' roles in it did I not ask that you think I should have asked?	[Prompt]
Question 25:	What questions about organizational assistance in social support did I not ask that you think I should have asked?	[Prompt]
Question 26:	Are there any questions that I have already asked that you would like to revisit?	[Prompt]
Question 27:	What organizations can you think of that have a similar mission to your own, or provide similar services to your own?	[Prompt]
Question 27a:	Put differently, what other organizations come to mind that would be useful for me to contact?	[Prompt]
Question 28:	Last question, are there any problems or issues that came up during our interview that you want to talk about?	[Prompt]

Section 5 – Concluding This Interview

- I appreciate you sharing all of this with me.

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- I want to be respectful of your time since we are at about 60 minutes.
    - Please let me know if you have any questions after this interview. Thank you so much for your time today.
- <STOP AUDIO RECORDING>

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