

State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC)

Children of Incarcerated Parents Work Group – Meeting 1 Summary

Present: Sheila Kiscaden; Bill Hutton; Kim Cleminson; Anne Barry; Toni Carter; Jeanne Ayers; Brian Kopperud; Tim Sumner, Susan Morris; Kay Naestrom; John Poupart; Rebecca Schlafer; Tim Thompson; Brian Howard; Simone Jones; Dawn Beck

Absent: Joan Brandt; Jackie Dionne; Ryan Erdmann; Devon Gilchrist; Renee Frauendienst; Harlan Madsen; Amandia Gurley; Brett Grant; Aaron Sojourner, Tyler Winkleman, Roger Heinen; Charles Dixon; Lee Buckley, Jackie Dionne, Guy Bowling

Staff: Anna Lynn; Megan Waltz

Welcome:

The group did introductions and reported on their visits/planned visits to jails

Scope

What is the county's role in supporting children of incarcerated parents?

We understand that everyone brings different wants and needs to the table and we wanted to explain that we are starting with counties because that is the opportunity in front of us as a SCHSAC working group – that is the access we have at this point. These are the relationships we have at this point. This process and scope will surely help identify other areas that each of us may want to delve into in the future and can act as a spring board for those future actions in other places and spaces that each of us may be in. But for now, the reason we are here is to develop some actions that county commissioners and sheriffs can implement that will support positive short and long term outcomes for children and families.

Tribal Perspectives

Work group member and Tribal elder, John Poupart discussed the historical nature of tribal populations being incarcerated and the overrepresentation of American Indians in the criminal justice system. Mr. Poupart also described that the separation of children from their families by the white dominant culture is an historical norm as well dating back to pre-civil war times. Finally, Mr. Poupart discussed Public Law 280 coupled with his perspective that working groups like this one simply don't have enough historical context to make recommendations for tribal populations.

Panel: Parents and Caregivers of Children of Incarcerated Parents

John, Chris, Amber, and Jamila

For counties (from panelists):

- Visiting liaison to help with understand rules/regs – what can we do, what can't we do – we need a buffer.
- Someone like a case manager who knows county resources and services to contact the inmate's family.
- Onsite person to help visitors and incarcerated parent to manage and process their emotional response and to make the most out of their visits.

- Caregivers are on their own. We need to know what resources are available – family specialists to act as navigators for social services what we're eligible for.
- What can we do to bolster relationships?
- Gift catalogues for inmates to give gifts for important holidays for kids
- There is a long waiting list for child care – is there a way to expedite some services for children of incarcerated parents?
- We need MFIP
- We need help with basic needs such as diapers, formula, etc.
- There's no one to help complete paperwork for health care, insurance, etc.
- More resources for relative caregivers
- Are kiddos of incarcerated parents eligible for NorthStar care?
- Communication about when loved one has been moved to a different facility before a visit (there are some limitations in
- *Communication-* Don't just arrest someone and assume that loved one know what's happened. Don't just lock up someone and assume that loved ones know where the person has been taken. Don't just move someone and assume loved ones know about the move.
- View the interface with children and caregivers through the lens of ACEs. For examples, make public areas where kids may be taken more kid friendly.

Group Reflection

- Significant amount of time spent on prison population and interface at that level rather than the jail level – families don't know enough about how things go down at the prison level.
- Public safety: public feels that prisoners will be "fixed" when they come out.
- Caregivers spent time discussing prison experience and not county
- Do we need another panel to represent county level caregivers?
- Women being transferred into our county jails. We have a role in understanding who's in our jails and if they have children and what our responsibilities are to those families around communication, refers for services, navigation of maintaining a relationship between parents and children
- How do we help incarcerated parents describe their situation to their children?
- Visiting liaison role mentioned
- Takes a level of stability to be able to come here and talk to us. Selection effects – jails. (Families dealing with the jail part of this experience are in the thick of it, a very chaotic time. Unlikely that they engage in a panel during that time.)
- Every situation is very different – using singular lens is not going to be helpful
- Adult children of incarcerated parents panel? Can we do this?
- Things have not changed as much as we would like to think they have.
- Caregivers are the world of difference in the success of children of incarcerated parents
- How do we identify the kiddos that don't have caregiver support?
- We need to know and understand each situation so that we can impact ACEs and other adversities
- How do we get caregivers resources that they need so they can continue to do what they're doing
- The ACE in this case is the separation (Megan would like to point out that this is not an ACE, as defined in the study, rather an adversity)
- Start at the beginning with the end in mind...
- We don't make it easy for caregivers... ie childcare MFIP WIC eligibility

- How do we care take the caregivers?
- Shame piece is so huge for families
- Children and caregivers need advocates
- Family home visitors get referral for caregivers and children with mom and dad – there's no way to continue services if children are split from original caregivers
- Can we direct home visiting programs specifically for children of incarcerated parents.

Next Steps: Programs/Practices

- *Work group members need to think of programs or practices that affect incarcerated parents, children of incarcerated parents, and caregivers of children of incarcerated parents. Anna and Megan will send out a list to start with.*
- *Should we hear a judge's perspective?*
- *Group would like to hear from youth and adults who have experienced incarcerated parents.*

Next Meeting:

Wednesday August 22 12:30 -3:30

[St. Paul Youth Services](#)

2100 Wilson Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55119

Three Simple Rules of the State-Local Public Health Partnership

- 1. Seek First to Understand**
- 2. Make Expectations Explicit**
- 3. Think About the Part and the Whole**