

# **Process and Evaluation Workgroup**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**November 2, 2022**

In attendance:

**Rodney Brooks**, Alameda County Public Defender's Office

**Karen Chin**, The Justice Reinvestment Coalition

**Charlie Eddy**, The Justice Reinvestment Coalition

**Jean Moses**, Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails

**Nancy French**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Alexia Young**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Laura Chavez**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Shawn Rowland**, Our Road Prison Project

**Gina Temporal**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Rayvon Williamson**, The Felton Institute

**Jenica Wilson**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Shadeequa Smith**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Damon Shuja Johnson**, Black Men Speak

**Steven Belowich**, Alameda County Probation Department

**Jamaica Sowell**, ROOTS Community Health Center

An introduction was made about the goals and previous successes of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup; then, attendees introduced themselves.

The group agreed to meet virtually in accordance with AB 361.

A summary of the meeting activities is listed below.

## **Evaluation of AB 109 Services Update**

- Probation will distribute a Request for Information, to gain an understanding of what potential evaluators estimate the cost of doing the work will be over a five-year period.
- The evaluation will include a combination of the services provided by Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the work of the government departments. The first step is to evaluate the readiness of each CBO and government agency, i.e., what data do you have, what information do you have about your clients?
- The goal is to start the evaluation by June 2023.
- A question was raised about the scope of the evaluation, it was confirmed that all programs and activities will be evaluated.

## **Presentation: Redesigning Pathways Home**

- The goal of the program is to achieve better outcomes, for PRCS clients who return to the County from state prison or have served their time in Santa Rita Jail.
- The first grant was received in FY 18, for approximately \$1Million. Two additional grants were secured in FY 20. One grant continues the programming, and one grant provides funding to evaluate the outcomes of the programs.
- Redesigning Pathways Home has four components:
  - Pre-Release Video Conferencing
  - Re-Entry Workbooks
  - Vergil online application – similar to a phone application to connect clients to services.
  - Virtual Reality Scenarios
- The Population served are our PRCS medium to high-risk male clients returning to Alameda County from State Prison or have served their term in county jail.
- The outcomes measured:
  - Increase in pre-release planning for PRCS clients before returning to our communities.
  - Increase in the rate of successfully reporting to Deputy Probation Officers within two business days of being released.
  - Increase of access to supportive services at the point of release.
  - Reducing rates of recidivism and revocation.
- Clients are randomly assigned to the Pathways caseload or the regular probation caseload.

### **Pre-Release Video Conferencing**

- Clients on the regular caseload view a video before release from state prison that covers Probation's risk assessment tool, conditions of probation, transportation arrangements upon release, and barrier removal referrals, including housing.
- The Pathways clients in addition to viewing the video, have a pre-release conference with their Probation Officer to review their individual situation, set goals, set up pre-release referrals and benefit enrollment.

### **Re-Entry Workbooks**

- PRCS clients complete a series of Re-Entry workbooks prior to release, the rationale being most Alameda County PRCS clients are in state prison for a short period of time, and therefore are not eligible for programming while incarcerated.
- Probation staff looked at other jurisdictions with workbooks, none seemed appropriate for our clients. County staff created four workbooks designed to address the clients' risks and needs, solicited feedback from clients, and worked with clients to make the workbooks accessible.
- The workbooks can be used as a case management tool and can be shared with a Deputy Probation Officer independent of how much of the workbook has been completed prior to release.
- In addition, PRCS clients receive a welcome home directory with resources and helpful information. The directory is available to all probation clients.

### **The Four Workbooks**

#### **Taking Care of Oneself**

- **Topics addressed in this workbook:** Mental Health and Trauma; Physical Health and Nutrition; Spiritual Health and Self-Care Techniques; Drug and Alcohol use; Health and Wellbeing Planning, and Yoga, which includes instructional guides.

#### **Changing Negative Thinking and Behavior Patterns**

- **Topics addressed in this workbook:** Cognitive Behavioral Treatment; Recognizing Negative Thinking Patterns; Identifying Triggers and Preparing for Difficult Situations; Family History and Trauma; Setting Goals and Planning for Setbacks; Mindfulness and Calming Techniques.

## Building A Fulfilling Career

- **Topics addressed in this workbook:** Jobs Versus Careers; Formulating Career Goals; Making an Education and Training Plan; Job Search Help; Being Successful in the Workplace.

## How to Succeed on Community Supervision

- **Topics addressed in this workbook:** An Introduction to Probation vs. Parole; Client Deputy Probation Officer Relations; Tips for Avoiding Re-Arrest; Protecting Yourself; Planning for the First Days/Weeks After Release.

## Discussion, Questions and Answers About the Workbooks

- **Question:** The Workbook is available in how many languages; **Answer:** Only English, Probation is having them printed in Spanish.
- **Question:** Is there a potential to have facilitated sessions (about how to fill out the workbooks and understanding the goals of the workbooks) in a group process, potentially led by someone with lived experience and substance abuse training. **Answer:** That is a great idea, we are not doing it, but it will be raised with probation leadership.
- Sometimes the workbooks are considered personal property, so released individuals are prohibited from bringing them out of prison.
- **Question:** Post Release Community Supervision clients should no longer go to state prison, why are we seeing a significant number of them? **Answer:** People who have violent crime convictions prior to their AB 109 eligible conviction must spend their incarcerated time in state prison.
- **Question:** Have clients who used the workbooks had the opportunity to provide feedback. **Answer:** At every stage of development of the workbooks there has been feedback from the clients, including individuals on parole. The largest issue has been the reading level, which is sixth grade, and still too advanced for a small part of the user population. Clients also stated the shades of blue were too reminiscent of law enforcement, so they were removed.
- **Question:** People who received their new CAL ID while inside will have their fines and fees waived, is there way for the workbooks to include this information.
- **Question:** Is there any idea about how many people will receive the workbooks since clients are selected randomly. **Answer:** The pre-release consultations with Probation Officers are randomly assigned since those are for clients in the Pathways Program. The workbooks are not randomly assigned, they are available to all probation clients. While there is no way of evaluating how intensely the workbooks are being used by clients, Probation has partnerships with evaluators

from U.C. Berkeley's Possibility Lab and Georgia State University. Approximately 207 workbooks have been sent into state prisons.

### **The Virgil Online App (In Development)**

- Access to the app will be randomly assigned to Probation clients, there will be a treatment and control group. The expectation is to have 45 clients in the treatment group and 45 clients in the control group.
- A short video was shown outlining how the Virgil App will work, highlights included:
  - "Pathways" are sent to clients who will have the virtual app; they are designed to breakdown tasks, responsibilities, to do's etc. into small manageable steps to make them less daunting.
  - The app sends checklists and reminders to clients about the next steps to be taken in the current Pathway.
- In addition to the step-by-step activities, the app also sends congratulatory messages to clients as they complete a series of steps.
- Ideas 42, the company that makes the app, assists the Probation client in loading the app and will assist with challenges.
- All clients are eligible to receive a phone as they exit incarceration.

### **Virtual Reality (In Development)**

- Institute for the Future decided to develop a virtual scenario of going to the DMV after doing research with Probation clients. Access to the virtual reality will not be randomly assigned since every client will not need to go to the DMV. The program is expected to launch in 2023.

### **The Evaluation of the Redesigning Pathways Home Initiative**

- The pre-release video program has been evaluated most thoroughly to date. Possibility Lab staff has analyzed a sample of 66 clients who participated in the Pathways Pre-Release Video Conference and a control sample of clients who were not in the program.
- The results showed clients in the Pathways Pre-Release Program were 16.6% more likely to report to their Probation Officer within 48 hours of being released. Also, 13% more likely to reach 270 days without a parole revocation; and 14% more likely to successfully complete probation in one year.
- The Possibility Lab is currently performing an analysis over a longer period of time. The Georgia State evaluators are working on an evaluation over the next five years.

### Additional Questions

- **Question:** Are you willing to share what is transferable with the Santa Rita Jail staff. **Answer:** Yes, the workbooks and the app are best suited for people coming out of Santa Rita.
- **Question:** What is the scope of work for the Possibility Lab and the Georgia State Evaluators? **Answer:** The Possibility Lab does the evaluation of the program as a stand-alone project; their funding is connected to the grant and ends when the grant funding terminates. Georgia State is evaluating the long-term impacts of the Pathways grant in Alameda County and other jurisdictions around the country who have received the funding. The outcomes being evaluated are the same by Possibility Lab and Georgia State.

### Update on the December Evening Meeting

- Each AB 109 Workgroup has one evening meeting a year, the goal is to have more community members attend.
- Some language was developed to invite service providers and people with lived experience to attend the December meeting.
- The agenda will be designed to highlight the Process and Evaluation Workgroup's prior successes and to allow for new attendees to ask questions. The overall goal is to increase Workgroup participation in 2023.
- Damon Shuja Johnson expressed appreciation about the meeting and the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37