RESEARCH REPORT

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Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry

Maryland Pilot Study: Findings from Baltimore

Christy Visher, Principal Investigator
Nancy LaVigne, Project Director
Jeremy Travis, Policy Advisor

URBAN INSTITUTE
Justice Policy Center

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Justice Policy Center

2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
www.urban.org

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Executive Summary

This publication presents the final technical report for a pilot study of *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry.* This pilot study, which examined the process of prisoner reentry in Maryland and more specifically, within the city of Baltimore, involved self-administered surveys with 324 male and female prisoners approximately 30 to 90 days prior to their expected release date, and two post-release interviews with subsets of the original sample, one within 30 to 90 days after release, and one approximately 4 to 6 months after their release. In addition, 41 family members of prisoners were interviewed and focus groups were conducted with residents in two Baltimore neighborhoods experiencing high rates of returning prisoners. The purpose of this pilot study was both to examine the process of prisoner reintegration in Baltimore through the experiences of released prisoners in our sample, as well as to test our survey instruments and research design in preparation for implementation of the study in the three full-study sites.

For the pilot study, our goal was to recruit a sample of male and female prisoners who: (1) had been sentenced to at least one year by a Maryland court, (2) were returning to the city of Baltimore, (3) were within 30 to 90 days of release, and (4) were representative of all releases for the year (in terms of release reason, offense type, time served, race, and age). In accordance with Institutional Review Board approval of the study, only those prisoners who were 18 years of age or older were eligible for recruitment. Working with the Maryland Division of Correction, we chose nine facilities (six for men and three for women) that were in close proximity to Baltimore, housed prisoners of a range of security levels, offered a variety of programming, and would enable us to reach our sampling goal of 350 respondents within four months. As implemented, we surveyed 324 prisoners before release. Our pre-release sample is generally representative of all state prisoners returning to Baltimore with the exception that the Returning Home sample has fewer parole violators and more prisoners whose sentences expired than the general population of prisoners returning to Baltimore.

Our pre-release sample consisted of 235 males and 89 females and had an average age of 34 years. Eighty-three percent of respondents were black, eight percent were white, and the remaining nine percent identified with other racial groups. Three percent of respondents were Hispanic. About two-thirds of respondents had served a prior prison term, and 29 percent had served time in a juvenile correctional facility. With regard to their current conviction offense, over half were drug offenders, convicted of either dealing or possession. About 11 percent were serving time as a result of a parole violation. Over two-thirds (69%) were single and never married before incarceration, but 59 percent were parents of minor children at the time of admission. As of February 2003, all but eight of the survey respondents had been released from prison. Approximately 44 percent had served less than one year in prison this term. An additional 25 percent had served between one and two years, 21 percent had served two to five years, and the remaining 9 percent had served five or more years. Further descriptive information about our sample appears below in the topical sections of this summary.

Limited resources and the pilot nature of this study dictated smaller samples for the interviews conducted after respondents had been released from prison. The first post-release interview was conducted with 153 of the original respondents and the second post-release interview was conducted with 104 of the original respondents. When we compared those we interviewed at the first post-release

interview with those we did not interview, we found virtually no differences between the two groups, including similar rates of reconviction and return to prison or jail. However, readers should exercise caution in generalizing our research findings from the second interviews at four to six months after release to the larger population of prisoners returning to Baltimore for two reasons. First, analyses of outcome measures were limited due to the relatively small sample of former prisoners interviewed a second time. In addition, those whom we did not interview a second time were more likely to have been returned to prison or jail, suggesting that those we did interview were generally more successful at remaining crime free than the average released prisoner.

This report is structured to present findings on specific types of reentry challenges faced by men and women released from prison and factors that might influence post-release success or failure, such as employment, substance use, individuals' expectations and attitudes, health challenges, criminal histories, and the family and community contexts awaiting them. The purpose of this report is to inform policymakers and service providers about how released prisoners returning to Baltimore navigate these challenges of reentry, what services they need that are not currently being provided, and the extent to which certain individual and contextual factors can serve as either risk or protective factors with regard to subsequent drug use and criminal behavior. Highlights from the report are presented below by topic area.

EMPLOYMENT

- Many respondents in our sample entered prison with poor educational backgrounds and inconsistent employment histories. Less than half (42%) had high school diplomas before entering prison, and nearly half (45%) had been fired from a job at least once.

- Although most respondents expected to use newspaper ads or yellow pages to find jobs, the methods that proved to be successful for those who found jobs typically involved personal connections through family or friends. A significantly larger share of respondents who had worked since release (19%) talked to their former employer to find a job, as compared with those who had not worked since release (3%).

- About four of ten respondents were currently working full-time at the first interview 30 to 90 days after their release. More men than women found employment following their release from prison. In addition, respondents who reported working after release were more likely to have held a work release job, participated in job training, have work as a condition of supervision, and have debts than those who did not work.

- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents reported owing some amount of debt for supervision fees, child support, and other costs. Average monthly debt exceeded average monthly income for 20 percent of respondents interviewed at the first interview after their release.

- After release, respondents depended on their families for financial support to a greater extent than expected. Before release, the largest share of respondents (54%) expected to rely on their own jobs for financial support; after release, the largest share (51%) reported relying on their families for financial support.

SUBSTANCE USE

- A significant share of respondents had extensive and serious substance use histories. The majority reported some drug (78%) and/or alcohol (61%) use prior to prison, with cocaine and heroin topping the list of drugs by type. Thirty percent of respondents reported using cocaine on a daily basis, and 41 percent reported using heroin daily in the six months before entering prison.

- Pre-prison drug and alcohol use caused serious problems for most respondents. Nearly two-thirds of drug users reported arrests caused by their drug use, about one-half of drug users reported relationship problems and arguments at home about their drug use, and about one-third of drug users reported missing school and/or work and losing jobs as a result of their drug use.

- With regard to in-prison substance abuse treatment, 27 percent of respondents reported participating in a specific drug or alcohol treatment program, and 46 percent reported having attended Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA).

- Almost a third (32.6%) of respondents reported some type of drug use or intoxication during the first few months after their release. A number of factors were related to post-release substance use: younger respondents were more likely to use drugs after release than older respondents; drug users after release were also more likely to have family members with substance abuse problems and friends who used or sold drugs; and respondents who reported receiving drug treatment in prison were more successful at avoiding subsequent drug use than those who did not.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Over two-thirds of respondents (70%) reported participating in at least one program while they were in prison. Average participation rates varied by program; the largest shares (around one-third) participated in employment readiness and substance abuse programs. Women were significantly more likely than men to have participated in a program.

- Respondents who participated in educational/employment and substance abuse programs were more likely to have been sentenced to longer prison terms and to have had longer stays in prison than non-participants.

- Almost half of respondents (45%) reported participating in some kind of post-release program, but few said that programs had been helpful in their post-release transition. In fact, the largest share (41%) said nothing had been helpful to them. The next most common response was that family or friends had been helpful in the transition. When asked what programs or services they would have liked to have but did not receive, the most common responses dealt with employment: 26 percent of respondents said they would like job training and 13 percent simply said they wanted a job. Other common responses included housing (11%), education (10%), health care (8%), and drug treatment (6%).

HEALTH

- Most respondents expressed positive opinions about their physical health prior to, during, and following their stay in prison. Eighty-eight percent of those interviewed prior to release rated their pre-prison health as good or excellent, compared to 80 percent of those interviewed after release.

- Almost 40 percent reported having at least one physical ailment. Furthermore, one of every four respondents were taking medication for a chronic health condition prior to and during incarceration, and two-thirds of those individuals (66%) were still taking prison-distributed medications after release. The most common illnesses reported were asthma (17%) and high blood pressure (13%).

- After release, most respondents had no type of medical coverage or health insurance. Only 10 percent reported having private insurance or belonging to an HMO. Very few respondents (less than 5%) reported receiving a disability pension, being on Medicaid or Medicare, or having Veteran's Administration (VA) health insurance. Despite the lack of health insurance among respondents, more than half of the sample (58%) had visited a doctor for a general checkup since their release from prison, and 19 percent had used emergency room services for a heath-related problem.

- Exactly half of the respondents indicated a desire for help obtaining counseling following their release from prison, and 30 percent wanted help acquiring mental health treatment. Less than 10 percent of the respondents interviewed after release believed they suffered from mental illness, although about one-quarter of respondents reported experiencing serious anxiety and depression.

- About one in five respondents reported experiencing symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the 30 to 90 days after their release, including feeling upset when reminded of prison, avoiding thinking or talking about prison and having repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of prison.

FAMILY

- Familial criminal and substance abuse histories among sample members were significant. Sixty percent of respondents had someone in their family who had been convicted of a crime, and over one-quarter reported having three or more family members with a substance abuse or alcohol problem.

- Respondents reported close family relationships before, during, and after prison; over 40 percent reported four or more close family relationships at every data collection point. Ten percent of respondents reported no close family relationships after release from prison, indicating that a subgroup of returning prisoners has little or no support network to assist in their transition back into society.

- Forty-two percent of respondents expected family to be a source of financial support during the first month after release and, at 30 to 90 days after release, 51 percent were receiving some financial support from family. Expectations of family for living arrangements were

equally high: when interviewed in prison, two-thirds of respondents indicated that they expected to live with family after release, and 80 percent of respondents ended up doing so, including 20 percent who reported living with an intimate partner.

- Prisoners' expectations for family support overall—both emotional and financial—were generally realized after their release from prison. At the time of the first post-release interview, 82 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their family had been as supportive as they had hoped after their release from prison.

- Intimate partner and family relationships and support were significantly related to the intermediate reentry outcomes of employment and staying off drugs. Respondents with closer family relationships, stronger family support, and fewer negative dynamics in relationships with intimate partners were more likely to have worked after release and were less likely to have used drugs or become intoxicated.

COMMUNITY

- Almost 60 percent of Maryland prisoners return to Baltimore each year, and of this group, reentry is further concentrated in a few communities. Specifically, 36 percent of our prisoner sample returned to only 6 of 55 Baltimore communities. All six of these communities had above-average rates for unemployment, percent female-headed households, and percent of families living below the poverty level.

- Half of the respondents did not return to their old neighborhoods either because they were living with family members who had moved to new addresses or because they wanted to avoid trouble.

- Released prisoners in our sample generally felt safe and comfortable in the communities to which they returned. However, less than one-third (30%) of the respondents thought that their neighborhood was a good place to find a job, and 60 percent believed that drug selling was a problem there.

- About two thirds of respondents (68%) reported that they had a place to live before they were released from prison. At the first post-release interview, 82 percent said that they were living where they expected to live. However, less than half (48%) planned to stay at that location for more than a few months. Many of those who intended to move hoped to live on their own or with their children.

- Community members interviewed through focus groups were discouraged by the problems presented by prisoner reentry. Specifically, they expressed concern about the crimes committed by returning prisoners and the lack of police response. They had more sympathy for older ex-prisoners who were returning to the community after serving relatively long prison terms, versus younger ex-prisoners, whom they believed are not sincerely interested in seeking legitimate employment and becoming law-abiding citizens. Opinions varied between communities about the level of services available to returning prisoners, but most felt that the community should help with the prisoner reentry process.

ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Before they were released from prison, respondents ranked highly on measures of self-esteem, control over their lives, and readiness to change. Importantly, prisoners who reported higher levels of control over life were more successful with employment outcomes than those who reported lower levels. In contrast, ex-prisoners who experienced unemployment and reported substance use after release had expressed greater intentions to commit crimes and use drugs while they were incarcerated. And those who were rearrested after their release had lower self-esteem scores than those who were not.

- Many in our sample expressed negative views toward the law and the criminal justice system—what researchers term "legal cynicism." Similarly, respondents held negative attitudes toward their local law enforcement officials. At least half of the respondents reported that the police in their neighborhoods were racist (49%) and that they brutalized people in the neighborhood (62%). Legal cynicism was significantly related to post-release outcomes. Respondents who had been rearrested had higher measures of legal cynicism than those who had not. In addition, those who were employed for at least a week after release had lower ratings of legal cynicism than those who were not employed.

- Most respondents expected that dealing with reentry issues would be easy. For example, 82 percent thought that it would be easy to renew family relationships, and about two-thirds (65%) expected that it would be easy to find a job. However, not all reentry matters were as straightforward as prisoners had anticipated. At least half of the respondents who thought it would be easy to find a job, support oneself financially, and pay off debts, reported that these tasks were actually difficult in their post-release interviews.

- The majority of respondents wanted post-release assistance of some kind. For instance, 70 percent of those who would be looking for work said they would like some help finding work. Moreover, only 10 percent did not want additional educational instruction, and very few (11%) did not want additional job training. Women were more likely than men to report a need for assistance after release, especially in the areas of housing and financial assistance.

CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT

- Criminal histories among our sample members were extensive and began early in life: most respondents (84%) had at least one prior conviction, over two-thirds had served time in prison before, and over one-quarter had spent time in a juvenile correctional facility. More than half (56%) had been first arrested before they reached the age of eighteen. In addition, 60 percent had at least one family member who had been convicted of a crime, and 39 percent had a family member who was serving a prison sentence at the same time as they were.

- In spite of their extensive criminal histories and high levels of familial criminal involvement, 78 percent of respondents expected that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to stay out of prison.

- Over three-quarters (77%) of respondents were released to parole supervision. Most of the remaining quarter completed their sentences (i.e., "maxed out") and were therefore released with no further supervision.

- While in prison, most (82%) of the respondents who expected to be on parole believed that their parole officers would be helpful in their transitions back to the community; upon release, however, only about one-half felt that supervision had helped with their transitions, or would help them to maintain drug- and crime-free lives.

- Six months after being released, one-third (32%) of the sample had been rearrested, one-tenth had been reconvicted, and 7 percent had their parole revoked for a technical violation or new crime arrest. Collectively, 16 percent of the sample was reconfined to prison or jail within six months following release. Twenty-eight percent of charges were still pending as of June 2003.

- Drug charges accounted for half (49%) of respondents' current convictions and half (51%) of their reconvictions after prison release.

The policy implications of these findings are wide-ranging and pertain to the roles that families, jobs, the community, and substance use play in the reentry experience. Perhaps the greatest resource in reentry planning is the family. Families are an important source of housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall stability for returning prisoners. Strategies and resources designed to strengthen family ties during the period of incarceration and after release (e.g., prerelease family conferencing sessions) are recommended.

Families were also a source of support with regard to employment; returning prisoners who were employed after release relied largely on personal connections—family, friends, and former employers—to find their jobs. Social connections that are maintained during the period of incarceration can be an important resource in helping released prisoners achieve positive postrelease outcomes. It is also noteworthy that those who found jobs after release were more likely to have participated in work-release jobs while incarcerated than those who did not find jobs. Expanding work-release programs could increase the employment rates of former prisoners in Baltimore.

Community also plays a role in the reentry process. We found that a significant proportion of returning prisoners are clustered in a handful of neighborhoods with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Residents in two such neighborhoods cited parenting skills, education, more intensive policing, and a greater involvement of public agencies as areas in which to focus reentry efforts. In addition, focus group participants believed that the community should play a role in addressing the needs of ex-prisoners.

Substance use was prevalent among those in our sample: younger respondents, those with family members with substance abuse problems, and those with friends who sell drugs more likely to use drugs after release. Substance abuse treatment programs should target ex-prisoners with these characteristics. In addition, those who participated in substance abuse treatment programs while in prison were less likely to use drugs after release than those who did not participate. Expanding such programs could improve postrelease outcomes for more returning prisoners.

Finally, our most powerful findings from a public safety perspective are those pertaining to recidivism: one-third of respondents were rearrested within six months. Those who were rearrested were younger, had more extensive criminal histories, and were more likely to engage in substance use both prior to incarceration and after release. These data on recidivism underscore the overarching policy challenge of finding ways to slow down the revolving door of individuals cycling in and out of prison. One place to start is to focus squarely on the high levels of drug and alcohol use reported by prisoners themselves.

Chapter 1
Introduction

In 2001, researchers at the Urban Institute launched a pilot study for a four-state, longitudinal research project on prisoner reentry entitled *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry.* This pilot, which was conducted in Maryland, involved self-administered surveys with prisoners approximately 30 to 90 days prior to their expected release date, and two post-release interviews, one at approximately two months after release and another at four to six months after release. The purpose of the pilot study was both to examine the process of prisoner reintegration in Maryland through the experiences of released prisoners in our sample, as well as to test our survey instruments and research design in preparation for implementation of the study in the three full-study sites (see Background of Study below).

The importance of prisoner reentry as a societal concern in the State of Maryland cannot be overstated. In 2001, 9,448 people were released from Maryland prisons—nearly twice the number released two decades ago (5,436 in 1980). During 2001, 97 percent of all men and women released from Maryland prisons returned to communities in Maryland. Of those prisoners who returned to Maryland, well over half (59%) returned to one jurisdiction in the state, Baltimore City, and the flow of prisoners was further concentrated in a small number of communities within Baltimore City. Thirty percent of the 4,411 released prisoners who returned to Baltimore City returned to just 6 of 55 communities (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003). These high-concentration community areas in Baltimore, which already face great social and economic disadvantages, may experience reentry costs to a magnified degree. In addition, while these numbers represent individuals released from Maryland prisons after serving sentences of one year or more, it is important to note that approximately 5,000 additional inmates are released to Baltimore City each year after having served jail time (typically less than a year).

Returning prisoners are faced with many challenges, including finding jobs, housing, and substance abuse treatment; reuniting with family; and reintegrating into the community. Given the increasing numbers of returning prisoners, and the fact that they are returning to a small percentage of communities in the state, the impact of prisoner reentry on communities is a particularly pressing problem. Clearly, prisoner reentry is an important policy issue, and one that has significant implications for public safety and quality of life across the state and within the city of Baltimore.

This publication represents the final technical report for the Maryland pilot study, which focuses on prisoners returning to the city of Baltimore. For the benefit of other researchers, we have documented our lessons learned with regard to sampling, interviewing and tracking procedures, and have also provided detailed information on the analyses employed (see the Research Design chapter). These design issues are not repeated in subsequent chapters, and thus readers should exercise caution when interpreting findings from individual chapters outside of the context of research design limitations. For the benefit of our policymaker and practitioner audiences, we have structured the report to present findings on specific types of reentry challenges faced by returning prisoners and factors that might influence post-release success or failure, such as employment, substance use, individuals' expectations and attitudes, criminal histories, and the family and community contexts awaiting ex-prisoners. Rather than detailing the policy implications specific to these reentry challenges throughout the report, we have reserved the final chapter

for an overview of major themes from each of the preceding chapters, as well as an extensive discussion of how our findings might inform policy and practice. In addition, we encourage readers to refer to the summary sections at the end of each chapter, as well as to the Executive Summary, for highlights of the most important findings.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Most research on prisoners or former prisoners examines the likelihood of continued involvement in criminal activity, which is referred to as "recidivism." Recidivism is usually identified through officially recorded instances of rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration (see Blumstein et al. 1986; Langan and Levin 2002; Wolfgang et al. 1987). Recidivism studies typically focus on identifying the factors that predict the re-occurrence of criminal activity. Such research generally does not examine the process by which an individual continues to be involved in crime or desists from crime, nor does it focus on an ex-prisoner's reintegration into society; rather, it focuses on one outcome (e.g., arrest or not).

Recently, scholars have recognized that the study of prisoner reentry and reintegration is similar to research on desistance, which requires a broader focus on a longitudinal process, rather than on a discrete outcome (Bushway, Piquero, Broidy, Cauffman, and Mazerolle 2000; Laub and Sampson 2001; Maruna 2001; Sampson and Laub 1993; Shover 1996; Visher and Travis 2003). Such a research approach would permit a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges of prisoner reentry and pathways to subsequent success or failure, which is critically important to reducing the costs associated with the high rates of re-incarceration. Historically, few studies have examined the experiences of men and women released from prison (e.g., Waller 1974; Zamble and Quinsey 1997).

In 2001, a team of researchers at the Urban Institute launched a longitudinal study to provide systematic knowledge about the process of prisoner reintegration. The study, called *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*, aims to answer two broad research questions:

- What is the experience of those being released from prison and returning home?
- What factors influence a released prisoner's propensity to reoffend?

Returning Home is a multi-state study of the challenges of men and women released from prison and returning home along five dimensions: (1) the individual trajectory of post-prison adjustment; (2) the family context both before incarceration and after prisoners return; (3) relationships with peers both in prison and after release; (4) the community context to which prisoners return; and (5) the state-level context of regulations and policies and other social and economic influences. Data on these dimensions are collected through interviews with prisoners prior to release and periodically during the year after release; interviews with prisoners' family members after release; and data on the communities to which prisoners return, including focus groups with residents. In each state, one metropolitan area is selected for the study and prisoners returning to that area are the focus of the study. State laws and policies are reviewed to provide the overall political and policy context. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are used to examine our primary research questions, including the factors that influence intermediate outcomes such as staying drug-free and finding employment, as well as continued involvement in criminal activity, and the impact of prisoner reentry on families and communities. Figure 1.1 presents examples of the data items in the study and sources for those data.

Returning Home is being implemented in two phases. Phase I is a pilot study in Maryland and the city of Baltimore, which was conducted from December 2001 through May 2003. Phase II involves implementation of the full research study in three additional states: Illinois, Ohio, and Texas. The full research design calls for a sample of 650 soon-to-be-released prisoners (450 men and 200 women), followed for 12 months after release and interviewed three times after the initial in-prison survey. In the pilot study in Maryland, our reduced sampling goal was 350 prisoners returning to Baltimore and two post-release interviews within six months (see Data Collection, below).

As implemented, we ended up surveying 324 prisoners before release (235 men and 89 women). Because of limited resources, the first-post release interview was conducted with 153 of the original respondents and the second post-release interview was conducted with 104 respondents. While no notable differences exist between those interviewed at the first post-release interview with those we did not interview, readers should nonetheless exercise caution in generalizing our research findings from the second interviews at four to six months after release to the larger population of prisoners returning to Baltimore. Analyses of outcome measures were limited due to the relatively small sample of former prisoners interviewed a second time. In addition, those whom we did not interview a second time after release were more likely to have been returned to prison or jail, suggesting that those we did interview were generally more successful at remaining crime free than the average released prisoner. Readers should also refrain from generalizing the findings from our family interviews due to the small sample size. While *Returning Home*'s full design for the family component calls for a post-release interview with a family member of every prisoner surveyed before release, our sampling goal for the Maryland pilot was to interview 50 family members nominated by the prisoners in our sample, and we ultimately interviewed 41 family members. Thus, the findings reported from the family interviews should be viewed as preliminary and highly exploratory.

INTERPRETING THIS REPORT

Research projects of this complexity are often accompanied by a number of caveats with regard to interpreting and generalizing findings, and this study is no different. We believe it is important to underscore the fact that the intent of *Returning Home* is to present the released prisoner's point of view, a perspective that is not often represented in criminal justice research. This view is derived from self-reported data. This is a time-honored method of gathering sensitive information from a variety of types of respondents, and one that enables rigorous analyses that cannot be achieved through ethnographic studies, focus groups, and various forms of journalism. The perspective of reentry presented here is both distinctive because it is richer than official data, and representative because it tells the story of all prisoners reentering society, rather than just those who avail themselves of social services or who are rearrested. Thus, the findings in this report are authentic, drawing from the perspectives of those who are experiencing first-hand the challenges of prisoner reentry. Yet, it is important to bear in mind that, as with all self-reported data sources, our findings may include factual inaccuracies resulting from lapses in memory and the potential for respondents to over- or under-report certain types of experiences and behaviors (e.g., crime and substance use). Nonetheless, we are confident that the findings presented here are valid and as accurate as those collected through comparable studies that rely upon self-reported data.

Readers may view some findings in this report as new, different, or at odds with other descriptions of the reentry experience. This is explained in part by the fact that prisoners' views of that experience differ in some respects from the assumptions shared by many researchers, practitioners, and

policymakers. It is also likely that some commonly held views of prisoners are shaped by the experience of working with certain sub-populations rather than all those who return to society. Thus, it is important to note that this research is based on a sample of prisoners being released rather than a sample of released prisoners who have sought services in the community.

It is also important to bear in mind that this sample represents a reentry cohort rather than a portion of the existing "stock" population of prisoners, and this distinction has implications for our findings. For example, prior Maryland Division of Correction data indicate that only three percent of prisoners participate in work release programs, whereas this study found that almost 33 percent of our sample did. Both statistics are correct, but the former represents a snapshot of the work release experience at any given moment, while the latter statistic represents the percentage of released prisoners participating in work release over time. In addition, the *Returning Home* focus is on prisoners returning to Baltimore and specifically on those serving prison rather than jail terms.

Thus, readers of this report should view it as presenting a unique perspective, namely that of a representative sample of those released prisoners sentenced to time in state prison and returning to Baltimore. Our cautions about the study's limitations with regard to sample size or other methodological concerns should not detract from the study's potential to inform practice and policy and shed light on the experience of leaving prison.

Figure 1.1 Examples of Data Items and Sources by Conceptual Domain

Conceptual Domain/ Data Item	Data Source					
	Individual interviews	**Family interviews**	**DOC records**	**Community focus groups**	**Stakeholder interviews**	**Other state, Census, local data**
Individual						
Criminal history; current incarceration; pre-incarceration physical and mental health.	Pre-release	X	X			
Pre-incarceration living situation, education, income, training, jobs; psychological attributes.	Pre-release					
Demographics; in-prison experiences, behavior, education, training, jobs, substance abuse.	Pre-release		X			
Post-release education, training, jobs, substance abuse, physical and mental health.	Post-release	X				
Geographic location of residence.	Post-release	X	X			
Family						
Family history; pre-incarceration family relationships/ contacts, emotional and economic support; in-prison emotional/ economic support.	Pre-release	X				
Family structure and network; in-prison family relationships/contacts	Pre-release	X				
Post-release family relationships/ contacts, emotional and economic support.	Post-release	X				
Peer						
Pre-incarceration and in-prison peer relationships	Pre-release					
Pre-incarceration and in-prison gang affiliations	Pre-release					
Post-release peer and gang relationships	Post-release					
Community						
Residents' attachment to neighbors, willingness to intervene, mutual trust, legal cynicism, tolerance of deviance.	Pre-release	X		X	X	
Social support agencies; organizations/ activities; job prospects; housing prospects and tenure; residential mobility.	Post-release	X		X	X	X
Percent female-headed households, new immigrants, mixed land use; unemployment rate; median income.						X
State						
Pre-release programming; reintegration training, job placement, treatment.	Pre-release	X	X			
Post-release supervision	Post-release	X	X			

Chapter 2
Research Design[1]

The *Returning Home* project is designed to explore the phenomenon of prisoner reentry within the five domains described in the introduction: the individual, the family, the peer group experience, the community context, and the broader policy environment at the state level. This study examines individual outcomes as the dependent variable, both with regard to recidivism as well as intermediate outcomes that represent post-prison adjustment and can, in turn, affect recidivism. Examples include acquiring and maintaining a job, obtaining and paying for housing, and avoiding illegal drugs and excessive alcohol use.

These perspectives on prisoner reentry are complemented by analyses of official data on the criminal justice involvement of individuals released from prison. The result is a rich data set reflecting, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of prisoner reentry from these five viewpoints. Quantitative analyses examine what factors influence outcomes conducive to reintegration, such as staying drug-free and finding employment, as well as factors that are related to recidivism. Qualitative analyses explore the impact of prisoner reentry on families and communities. This chapter describes the data collection, instrument design, and sampling methodologies employed in conducting interviews with prisoners and their family members.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

As mentioned earlier, we expect that a variety of personal and situational characteristics are important in predicting post-prison adjustment and propensity to reoffend, including: demographic profile, pre-prison experiences, in-prison experiences, and post-prison circumstances (including family ties, community context, and criminal justice supervision).

Instrument Design

At the center of this complex research design are the surveys and interviews conducted with returning men and women released from prison. In order to gather baseline information from soon-to-released prisoners, we employed a self-administered questionnaire, which was delivered to groups ranging from 3 to 29 prisoners[2] and proctored by two to three research staff. (Sampling and recruitment are described below.) This method was chosen because of its successful implementation in previous studies (O'Brien et al. 2001; Steurer 2001) and to reduce data collection costs. Hence, the survey instrument was designed to be compatible with this data collection method (e.g., no skip patterns appear in the instrument).

The baseline and post-release instruments were, in large part, developed from existing surveys, articles, and reports on the domains of interest. Where feasible, published scales were used or were adapted for this study. (A list of the primary sources is available upon request.) In the baseline instrument, we were primarily concerned with documenting pre-prison characteristics, in-prison experiences, and expectations about the period immediately following release. The conceptual domains

[1] Nancy La Vigne, Christy Visher, and Jennifer Castro, authors.

[2] Group sizes varied tremendously depending on the size of the prison facility and the attendance rate for any given session.

include: personal characteristics (demographics), attitudes and beliefs (e.g., readiness to change, control over life, spirituality, likelihood of future criminality), health status, substance use, criminal history, expectations for post-release success/failure, employment history, financial status/needs, antisocial influences/networks, prosocial networks and activities, social support, service needs, and family background and support.

The interviews conducted after release gathered information on the individual's post-release circumstances and experiences. Topics included expectations of release experiences, current housing situations, reunions, and encounters with family and friends, attempts to find work, participation in the community, physical and mental health status, substance abuse treatment, self-reported involvement with illicit drugs and illegal activity since release, and parole supervision.

The draft pre-release instrument was reviewed by a panel of 17 experts who had substantive experience in corrections, reentry, employment, and health, among other topics, and their comments greatly improved the revised instrument. We were concerned about the need to develop an instrument that was accessible to persons with low literacy levels; hence, the instrument was constructed to avoid complex sentences, response options, or skip patterns. The Flesch-Kincaid readability test, a subroutine in Microsoft Word, scored the baseline instrument at a third-grade reading level.

The instrument was initially designed to be delivered orally to the group of selected respondents. That is, each question would be read aloud by a proctor, and the respondents would follow along on the printed survey, completing each question after it was read.[3] Pre-testing of these procedures among 21 prisoners quickly revealed that reading each question aloud was a tedious process and was not tolerated well by the respondents, as those with higher reading comprehension levels skipped ahead and became impatient. During a subsequent round of pretests, few respondents encountered difficulty in completing the survey on their own, so this latter procedure was adopted for the baseline data collection. The survey subcontractor staff, serving as proctors for the survey, answered questions individually and helped respondents when they had difficulties.[4]

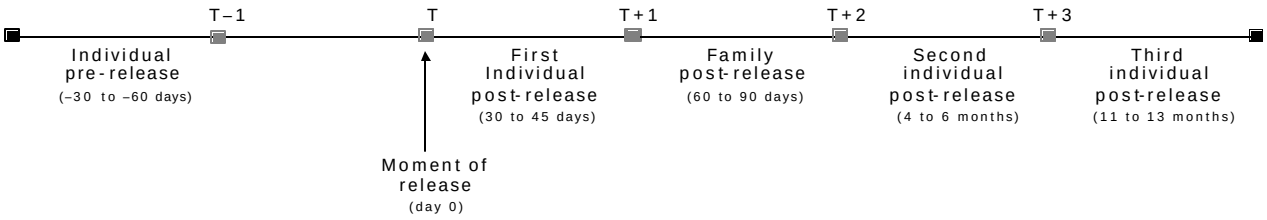
Data Collection

Our pilot study design in Maryland, with a special focus on the city of Baltimore, entailed conducting three separate interviews with prisoners at three distinct time points. Our goal was to capture each respondent's life circumstances immediately prior to and following their release from prison, as well as several months into their reintegration within the community. The first interview was to be conducted 30 to 90 days prior to each prisoner's release. The second interview (PR1) was to be conducted 30 to 45 days following release from prison. The third and final interview (PR2) was to take place four to six months after release from prison. We further specified that the PR2 interview should be conducted no less than 60 days after PR1 to allow a sufficient period in which to observe changes in respondents' life circumstances. Figure 2.1 depicts the planned timing of these interviews, as well as the family interviews, which are described below.

[3] This had been the procedure in a United States Department of Education-sponsored study administered to prisoners in three states (Steurer 2001).

[4] No non-English speaking respondents appeared in our sample, so we did not have the need for foreign language translation.

Figure 2.1 Timeline of Individual and Family Member Interviews



The Urban Institute worked with its survey contractor, CSR Incorporated, to design tracking procedures to achieve a high retention rate. These procedures included obtaining information in the pre-release interview about persons who might know how to contact our respondents after release (e.g., "Is there someone who always knows how to find you?"), the location of their favorite hangouts, and any nickname or alias they may use. As an incentive to participate in the interviews, participants received a $15 grocery certificate, which was mailed to their post-release address, and were given $25 each for the first and second post-release interviews. Given the transient nature of our sample, we expected to encounter some difficulty in maintaining our desired interview schedule. Overall, however, most of the interviews were conducted within their specified time frames. One notable exception was that the PR1 interviews were completed approximately one month later than we intended them to occur following release from prison. The pre-release and PR2 interviews were conducted within acceptable windows of time. The average pre-release interview took place 42 days prior to release, and 50 percent of the interviews occurred within the 30 to 90 day pre-release time frame. An additional 43 percent were conducted less than 30 days prior to release.

Turning to the PR1 interviews, only nine percent were conducted within the intended time frame of 30 to 45 days post-release. Rather, most took place between 45 and 100 days after release from prison, and the average PR1 interview was conducted 81 days post-release. However, we were pleased to find that 68 percent of the PR2 interviews occurred no less than 60 days following their respective PR1 interviews. Furthermore, 71 percent of the PR2 interviews were conducted within the intended time frame of four to six months post-release, and the average PR2 interview took place approximately five months (158 days) after release from prison.

Sampling and Recruitment

For the pilot study, our initial goal was to recruit a sample of 350 male and female prisoners who: (1) had been sentenced to at least one year by a Maryland court, (2) were returning to the city of Baltimore, (3) were within 30 to 90 days of release, and (4) were representative of all releases for the year (in terms of release reason, offense type, time served, race, and age). In accordance with Institutional Review Board approval of the study, only those prisoners who were 18 years of age or older were eligible for recruitment.

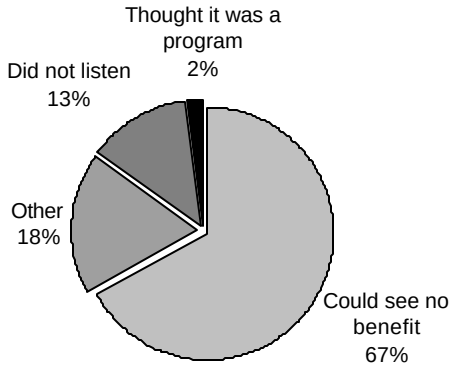
Working with the Maryland Division of Corrections (DOC), we chose nine facilities (six for men and three for women) which were in close proximity to Baltimore, housed prisoners of a range of security levels, offered a variety of programming, and theoretically would enable us to reach our sampling goal of

350 respondents within 4 months. Thus, we aimed to obtain a "temporal sample" of the population of prisoners being released from these nine facilities over the course of a four-month period.[5]

The recruitment process we implemented to select our sample was based on the realities of conducting research in a prison setting. We learned, for example, that release dates and locations of individuals changed frequently, and by the time updates were entered into DOC's main computer system, the information was often no longer accurate. We also found that we were unable to create a regular interview schedule at each facility due to a scarcity of meeting space and conflicts with DOC classes and programs. Instead, we identified case managers in each facility who generated lists of soon-to-be-released prisoners and helped us schedule interview sessions at available times and locations. After receiving the lists from case managers, we selected individuals, grouped them in interview sessions, and sent the schedules back to the case managers for review. Even in the course of one week, we would often learn from the case managers that several persons on the list had been transferred or released, and these individuals were therefore removed from the list of those scheduled for the interview. Once a list was finalized, individualized flyers were generated and distributed to each prisoner by corrections staff. On the morning of the interview, corrections staff would distribute passes to each individual invited to attend the session, indicating that attendance to the orientation to learn more about the research project was mandatory.

Of those prisoners who attended the orientation sessions, refusal rates among men played a moderate role in obtaining our sample. Reasons for not participating varied among prisoners, with the most common reason being that they could see no benefit to themselves in taking part in the study. Others indicated that they had thought the interview session was a program and, when they learned otherwise, they were not interested in participating. Some briefly entered the room and when they learned that it was not mandatory for them to participate in the study, they left before listening to the study description (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Reasons for Non-Participation



[5] We selected facilities in and around Baltimore because the DOC informed us that these prisons had a greater proportion of individuals returning to the city, and this decision also enabled us to limit travel costs. In addition, Maryland DOC routinely transfers men who are returning to Baltimore to facilities in Baltimore within a year of their release date.

Discussions with and observations of our survey subcontractors revealed that there were two types of survey staff conducting the sessions: graduate students and young professionals, and members of the community who were primarily involved in service delivery jobs. By and large, the latter category of research staff was much more effective in communicating with prisoners and persuading them to participate in the study, so some mid-course staffing changes were made that slightly lowered the male refusal rates to about 34 percent from 36 percent. Refusal rates among women, however, were extremely low at four percent. Many proctors were of the opinion that the female prisoners looked forward to the change in routine that the orientation session offered and enjoyed sharing their experiences both verbally and through completion of the survey.

An additional reason that might explain the lower refusal rate among women was that they appeared to value the study compensation much more than the men. Prison policies precluded us from paying prisoners cash or crediting their prison accounts during their incarceration, so instead we offered to send a $15 grocery gift card to their address after their release. This strategy was employed both to offer an incentive as well as to obtain more accurate release address information from participants in order to facilitate tracking in the community. To test whether the gift card could be responsible for the large difference between male and female response rates, we persuaded prison officials to allow us to credit the prison accounts of participants in the final two weeks of recruitment (or, if prisoners were to be released within two weeks, money orders were mailed to their release addresses). However, our refusal rates did not improve.

Sampling and Selection Bias

The sampling and recruitment processes described above were constrained by the realities of conducting research in a prison setting. Each step of the process—requesting lists of soon-to-be released prisoners, asking prison officials to distribute invitational flyers and passes to prisoners to attend the orientation session, describing the study and following informed consent procedures—has the potential to introduce sampling and selection biases. Sampling bias is a threat to our study based on the fact that we are unable to ascertain which prisoners did not receive the invitational flyer and/or a pass to attend the orientation session, nor which prisoners had scheduling conflicts. Thus, whereas we aimed to sample the population of prisoners soon-to-be-released from nine facilities returning to Baltimore over the course of a four-month period, it is likely that this sample was, to some degree, biased. In addition, some prisoners may have received the flyer and pass and simply did not attend because they were not interested in participating in the study.

Selection bias is perhaps even more likely to result from the orientation session because, based on informed consent procedures, prisoners were free to refuse to participate in the study. Because sampling and selection bias can affect the validity of between-group comparisons (internal validity) and may also limit the extent to which findings can be generalized to all returning prisoners (external validity), detection of sample and selection bias is critical prior to modeling any post-release outcomes.

In order to identify sampling and selection biases, we employed both binary and multinomial logistic regression. A binary logit model was estimated of the prisoners' decision to attend the orientation or not, and a multinomial logit model was estimated with a three-category dependent variable: (1)

attended and participated; (2) attended and refused; and (3) did not attend.[6] We also used bivariate regression to identify overall differences between study participants and non-participants.[7]

The binary model predicting attendance indicated that only two variables, number of prior incarcerations and race, were significant: those with more previous incarcerations were less likely to attend the orientation session and blacks were more likely to attend than whites. The results of the multinomial model indicated that men were more likely than women to attend and refuse to participate, and those facing a period of supervision after release were more likely to attend and refuse than those being released without post-release supervision. Those with longer sentence lengths (i.e., the sentence meted out by the court) were also more likely to attend and refuse to participate, but this difference failed to reach significance at a probability less than 0.05 ($p=.058$).

The results from our bivariate regressions are presented in Figure 2.3. There were no significant differences between study participants and non-participants on twelve of the sixteen variables tested ($p>.05$). Both groups were similar in age, number of prior arrests, type of pre-prison and post-release supervision, likelihood of a felony or drug conviction, and status as a habitual violent offender. Perhaps most importantly, both groups were similar with regard to recidivism in the six months following release. Study participants and non-participants were equally likely to have been rearrested, reconvicted, and recommitted to prison/jail, and both groups accumulated similar numbers of new arrests. On four of the sixteen variables, however, study participants and non-participants did differ significantly from one another ($p<.05$). Study participants were more apt to be black and female, and they had fewer prior incarcerations and months of time served. Study participants also had shorter sentences than non-participants, and this difference closely approached significance at $p=0.055$.

[6] These analyses are available on request.

[7] In the DOC data we received, 64 cases had prison admission dates more than one year after the date that a prison sentence was imposed—meaning that DOC personnel had possibly overwritten previously correct data when such individuals were returned on parole or probation violations. For these cases, we were uncertain about the validity of variables measuring sentence length, time served, and felony conviction. Therefore, we chose to include a dummy variable in the binary and multinomial logits to account for these cases (this dummy was not significant), and we excluded these cases from the bivariate regressions examining those variables.

Figure 2.3 Characteristics of Study Participants and Non-Participants

VARIABLE	Participants (N=324)	Non-Participants (N=396)	Significance
Baseline Characteristics			
Age	33.87	33.76	0.851
Race = black	0.90	0.85	0.021
Gender = male	0.72	0.87	0.000
Number of Prior Arrests	10.61	10.73	0.832
Number of Prior Commitments	2.02	2.53	0.008
Sentence Length in Months	39.50	46.10	0.055
Time Served in Months[8]	17.95	22.13	0.038
Pre-Prison Parole Supervision	0.12	0.13	0.792
Post-Release Non-Conditional Supervision	0.22	0.16	0.102
Felony Conviction	0.67	0.68	0.818
Drug Offense	0.49	0.45	0.312
Habitual Violent Offender	0.13	0.15	0.387
Recidivism 6 Months Post Release[9]			
Rearrested for New Crime[10]	0.32	0.32	0.882
Number of Rearrests	0.48	0.46	0.687
Reconvicted for New Crime	0.10	0.13	0.277
Reconfined following Reconviction	0.07	0.10	0.227
Reconfined for Supervision Violation (technical or new crime)	0.10	0.09	0.640

Overall, the results of both the multinomial and bivariate regressions that present possible implications for both internal and external validity are that: (1) the number of prior incarcerations predicted non-attendance and non-participation, (2) post-release supervision predicted refusals, and (3) participants had fewer months of time served and to some extent shorter sentence lengths. Thus, prisoners with extensive criminal histories and more serious conviction offenses were less interested in attending the orientation session or in participating in the study and may be underrepresented in the sample. Despite these differences, non-participants were rearrested, reconvicted, and recommitted at similar rates as study participants.

To complete our analysis of how sampling issues may have influenced the particular characteristics of our sample, we also compared our sample of 324 soon-to-be-released men and women to all prisoners released in 2001 who returned to Baltimore. The results of that comparison are presented in Figure 2.4.

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[8] For this variable, we excluded 89 cases for which respondents were released on parole and then returned to prison before their current sentence had expired, because we could not ascertain the time of such prior release.

[9] Recidivism data was missing for 63 individuals (25 participants and 38 non-participants) for one of the following reasons: (1) their prison release date occurred too recently to allow a six-month observation period, or (2) their state identification number was either missing or incorrect, meaning that the DPSCS could not link the individual to his or her official record.

[10] We also examined type of rearrest between participants and non-participants and found no significant difference with regard to rearrest for a drug charge.

The *Returning Home* sample was comparable to Baltimore releases on age and race. Since we attempted to include 100 women in our study, it is not surprising that our sample contains many more women than the Baltimore release population. Our sample differed slightly from the Baltimore release population on some criminal justice characteristics: prior commitments were lower (63% vs. 72%), the median sentence imposed was lower by 12 months, and median time served was lower by 5 months. Our sample also had relatively more drug offenders and relatively fewer violent offenders. Our sample was also less likely to contain parole violators (11% vs. 32%) and contained more sentence expirations than the broader population returning to Baltimore (21% vs. 8%). Both of these differences are likely due to the facilities we chose for our sample. In addition, gender differences may explain some of this variation between our sample and that of the 2001 Baltimore releases.

Not surprisingly, the facility of release was different for our sample than for the population of Baltimore releases in 2001: 51% of our sample was released from the Metropolitan Transition Center (MTC) compared to about 14% of all Baltimore releases. Recall that our sampling plan specifically utilized facilities in the Baltimore area, and MTC is the largest of these facilities. However, a smaller proportion of our sample (13%) was released from a designated pre-release unit compared to all Baltimore releases (21%).

Figure 2.4 Comparison of Maryland prisoners who returned to the city of Baltimore in 2001 with the *Returning Home* sample

Variable	Maryland prisoners returning to Baltimore city in 2001	*Returning Home* respondents
Demographics (n=4412 and 324, respectively)		
Age (median)	33 years	33 years
Gender – male	90%	73%
Race – black	89%	83%
Race - White	9	8
Race -Other	2	9
Criminal history (n=3809 and 295, respectively)		
Prior prison commitment[11]	72%	63%
Current prison term due to parole violation	32	11
Major conviction offense (n=3809 and 295, respectively)		
Violent	28%	22%
Property	21	21
Drug	40	49
Other	10	8
Prison sentence (n=2503 and 249, respectively)[12]		
Sentence imposed (median)	36 months	24 months
Time to first release (median)	16 months	11 months
Percent of sentence served (median)	48%	46%

Chart continues

[11] As measured by DOC records only. This number will not match what was reported in the *Returning Home* final report, as those data were supplemented with self-report information.

[12] Analysis is further restricted to new court commitments (i.e., those without a previous release from their current prison term) because it is not possible to accurately compute the time served by those who were released and later returned to prison on the same sentence.

Figure 2.4 Comparison of Maryland prisoners who returned to the city of Baltimore in 2001 with the *Returning Home* sample

Variable	Maryland prisoners returning to Baltimore city in 2001	*Returning Home* respondents
Type of release (n=3809 and 282, respectively)[13]		
Parole, discretionary[14]	31%	18%
Parole, mandatory[15]	61	59
Expiration of sentence	8	21
Release security level (n=2911 and 170, respectively)[16]		
Pre-release	46%	58%
Minimum	27	29
Medium	26	13
Maximum	1	0
Type of facility at the time of release (n=3804 and 281, respectively)		
Correctional Institution[17]	41%	15%
Home Detention Unit	11	2
Metropolitan Transition Center (MTC)	14	51
Other Pre-Release Unit	21	13
Patuxent Institution[18]	7	1
Unknown or Other Facility Type[19]	5	17

A note about sample sizes: Except for the demographic characteristics, all of the statistics in this table exclude records that were thought to contain questionable data (i.e., DOC records with more than 13 months between the sentencing and admission dates may have been data entered incorrectly.) Fourteen percent of the data on all prisoners returning to Baltimore and nine percent of the data on survey respondents were excluded for this reason. Other exclusions from the total N are noted individually as footnotes.

Attrition Analysis

As is the case in most longitudinal studies, not every prisoner who participated in *Returning Home* completed all phases of the study. Although 324 respondents completed the initial pre-release survey, we only completed the first post-release interview with 47 percent of the initial sample, and the

[13] Analysis further excludes the records of 13 prisoners in the study sample who were not released by the time of the data analysis in the spring of 2003.

[14] Includes both first releases to parole and continuations of parole after a revocation. Notably, all but one of the study respondents were on their first parole release from this prison term. By contrast, 6% of all Baltimore returnees were released on continuations of their parole.

[15] Includes both first releases to mandatory supervision and continuations of mandatory supervision after a revocation. Notably all of the study respondents were on their first mandatory supervision release from this prison term. By contrast, 5% of all Baltimore returnees were released on continuations of their mandatory supervision term.

[16] This may not be a very reliable indicator. Many prisoners (24% of all Baltimore returnees and 42% of the Returning Home sample) were missing data on their security level shortly before release.

[17] Correctional Institutes included the Maryland House of Correction, the Maryland Correctional Institution at Jessup, etc. This category also includes the Maryland Reception, Diagnostic, and Classification Center, which was the facility of release for 10 percent of all Baltimore returnees, but none of the study participants.

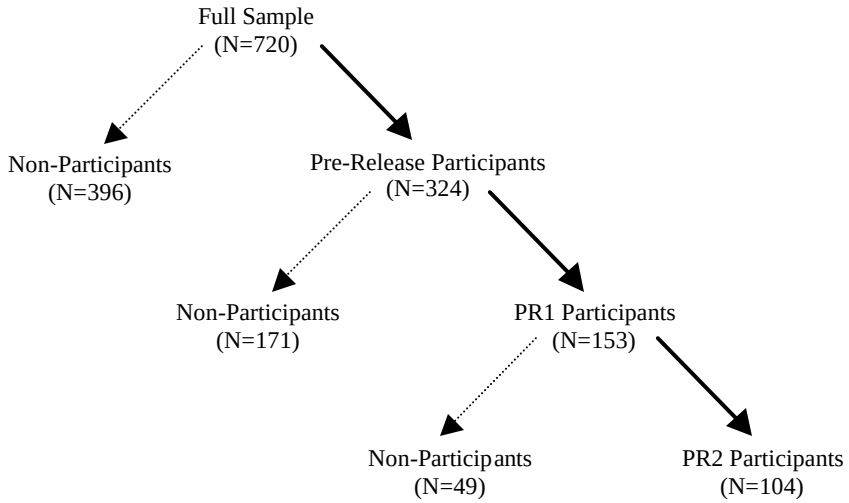
[18] This is listed separately because it is a treatment-oriented correctional facility within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, but independent of the Division of Correction.

[19] Unknown facility types included the Dismas House and Threshold program, from which 17 percent of study participants and 4 percent of all Baltimore returnees were released; these were not classified as pre-release units by the Division of Correction.

second post-release interview with 32 percent (see Figure 2.5 below). Approximately half (n=153) of the initial sample of pre-release respondents completed the first post-release interview, and one-third (n=104) completed both the first and second post-release interviews. These low sample sizes were intentional. Due to budgetary constraints and because the study was a pilot for the full *Returning Home* project, we deliberately reduced the target sample sizes for the first and second post-release interviews to 150 and 100, respectively. Because these reduced sample sizes were also associated with a tight completion timetable, it was virtually unavoidable that post-release interviews were completed by participants who were easier to locate.

High attrition rates can threaten the results of a longitudinal study when the factors related to attrition are also related to the substantive outcomes of interest, such as recidivism. Therefore, it was important for us to assess whether respondents who were available for post-release interviews differed significantly from those who were not available. Toward this end, we evaluated differences between post-release participants and non-participants by comparing measures of baseline characteristics and post-release recidivism. We derived these measures from official criminal justice records obtained for the full sample and from responses to items in the pre-release survey.

Figure 2.5 Diagram of Sample Attrition



We tested differences between participants and non-participants in two stages. First, we looked at attrition from the first post-release interview (PR1) and compared the 153 respondents who completed both the PR1 and pre-release interviews with those who completed only the pre-release interview. Second, we looked at attrition from the second post-release interview (PR2) and compared the 104 respondents who completed the PR2 interview with those who did not. In each comparison, we used bivariate regression to identify significant differences between post-release participants and non-participants. The results of these comparisons are presented in Figures 2.6 and 2.7.

Figure 2.6 Characteristics of PR1 Participants and Non-Participants

VARIABLE	PR1 Participants (N=153)	PR1 Non-Participants (N=171)	Significance
Baseline Characteristics			
Age	34.35	33.44	0.338
Race = black	0.92	0.89	0.373
Gender = male	0.76	0.69	0.134
Number of Prior Arrests	10.39	10.82	0.606
Number of Prior Commitments	1.78	2.22	0.104
Sentence Length in Months[20]	39.09	39.89	0.865
Time Served in Months[21]	18.81	17.08	0.532
Pre-Prison Parole Supervision	0.09	0.15	0.134
Post-Release Non-Conditional Supervision	0.21	0.22	0.886
Felony Conviction	0.69	0.65	0.407
Drug Offense	0.56	0.42	0.024
Habitual Violent Offender	0.14	0.12	0.699
Pre Release Interview Responses			
High School Grad or GED	0.49	0.39	0.962
Employed Pre-Prison	0.65	0.66	0.947
Married or Lived Together as Married	0.16	0.14	0.813
Number of Children	1.88	1.50	0.042
Age at First Arrest	19.42	17.23	0.002
Number of Prior Convictions	2.80	3.94	0.029
Number of Close Friends in Prison	2.21	1.87	0.498
Number of Family Members Convicted	1.55	1.35	0.276
Frequency of Drunkenness Pre-Prison	1.55	1.80	0.293
Used More than One Drug at a Time	0.64	0.60	0.462
Number of Problems Due to Drinking	1.99	2.34	0.392
Number of Problems Due to Drug Use	4.38	4.10	0.556
Self-Esteem Scale	3.14	3.02	0.047
Recidivism 6 Months Post-Release			
Rearrested for New Crime[22]	0.26	0.39	0.015
Number of Rearrests	0.33	0.63	0.003
Reconvicted for New Crime	0.08	0.13	0.194
Reconfined following Reconviction	0.07	0.08	0.670
Reconfined for Supervision Violation (technical or new crime)	0.07	0.12	0.081

[20] See previous footnote regarding excluded cases.
[21] See previous footnote regarding excluded cases.

With regard to virtually every baseline characteristic, there were no significant differences between PR1 participants and non-participants ($p>.05$). Ex-prisoners who completed the first post-release interview and those who did not were of similar age, race, gender, and criminal history. They had also received and served similar lengths of time in prison, and they were equally likely to have current felony convictions and to be habitual violent offenders. Surprisingly, the one statistically significant baseline difference between groups was that PR1 participants were more apt to have been drug offenders than PR1 non-participants ($p=.024$).

There were also few significant differences between PR1 participants and non-participants with regard to pre-release interview characteristics. Both groups were similar in terms of pre-prison education, employment, marital status, alcohol and substance abuse and related problems, and the number of criminal friends and family members. However, the groups differed with respect to two measures of criminal involvement: PR1 non-participants were younger when first arrested, and PR1 non-participants had more self-reported previous convictions. PR1 non-participants also had fewer children and slightly lower (albeit still positive) self-esteem at the time of the pre-release interview.

With regard to recidivism, respondents who did not complete the first post-release interview were more apt to have been rearrested in the six months following release than were PR1 participants. PR1 non-participants also accumulated a significantly, although not substantially, higher number of post-release arrests. There were, however, no significant differences in the percent reconvicted or recommitted to prison/jail between PR1 participants and non-participants.

Figure 2.7 presents results from our comparison of prisoners who completed the second post-release interview with those who did not. There were virtually no significant differences ($p<.05$) between PR2 participants and non-participants on each baseline and pre-release interview characteristic assessed. Both groups were similar in age, race, gender, number of prior arrests and commitments, type of pre-prison and post-release supervision, and status as felony, drug, or habitual violent offenders. Interestingly, the only significant and near-significant baseline differences favor non-participants. PR2 participants received longer prison sentences ($p=.033$) and served more time on those sentences than PR2 non-participants ($p=.053$).

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[22] We also examined type of rearrest and found no significant difference between PR1 participants and PR1 non-participants with regard to rearrest for a drug charge.

Figure 2.7 Characteristics of PR2 Participants and Non-Participants

VARIABLE	PR2 Participants (N=104)	PR2 Non-Participants (N=49)	Significance
Baseline Characteristics			
Age	34.87	33.27	0.258
Race = Black	0.93	0.90	0.502
Gender = Male	0.75	0.80	0.533
Number of Prior Arrests	9.95	11.35	0.259
Number of Prior Commitments	1.85	1.65	0.637
Sentence Length in Months[23]	43.55	29.59	0.033
Time Served in Months[24]	21.80	12.55	0.053
Pre-Prison Parole Supervision	0.09	0.10	0.757
Post-Release Non-Conditional Supervision	0.20	0.25	0.515
Felony Conviction	0.70	0.67	0.714
Drug Offense	0.57	0.52	0.576
Habitual Violent Offender	0.14	0.12	0.715
Pre-Release Interview Responses			
High School Grad or GED	0.48	0.49	0.962
Employed Pre-Prison	0.61	0.73	0.145
Married or Lived Together as Married	0.15	0.17	0.813
Number of Children	1.75	2.15	0.189
Age at First Arrest	19.75	18.75	0.430
Number of Prior Convictions	2.66	3.09	0.439
Number of Close Friends in Prison	1.64	3.36	0.080
Number of Family Members Convicted	1.53	1.59	0.834
Frequency of Drunkenness Pre-Prison	1.78	1.09	0.045
Used More than One Drug at a Time	0.69	0.53	0.071
Number of Problems Due to Drinking	2.32	1.09	0.059
Number of Problems Due to Drug Use	4.39	4.37	0.985
Self-Esteem Scale (1=High)	3.14	3.16	0.847
Recidivism 6 Months Post Release			
Rearrested[25]	0.23	0.32	0.225
Number of Rearrests	0.27	0.45	0.147
Reconvicted for New Crime	0.07	0.11	0.435
Reconfined following Reconviction	0.05	0.11	0.204
Reconfined for Supervision Violation (technical or new crime)	0.02	0.16	0.005

[23] See previous footnote regarding excluded cases.
[24] See previous footnote regarding excluded cases.
[25] We also examined type of rearrest and found no significant difference between PR2 participants and PR2 non-participants with regard to rearrest for a drug charge.

With regard to pre-release survey responses, both groups reported similar levels of education, marital status, pre-prison employment, drug abuse and related problems, criminal history, criminal friends/family, and self-esteem. The groups only differed significantly ($p=.045$) on the variable measuring frequency of drunkenness pre-prison, but it was actually PR2 participants who reported getting drunk more frequently.

Finally, there were no significant differences with regard to post-release rearrests and reconvictions between PR2 participants and non-participants ($p>.05$). However, PR2 non-participants were much more likely to be returned to prison for a supervision violation than PR2 participants.

Generalizability of *Returning Home* Sample

Overall, the results of our sampling and attrition analyses point to few distinguishing characteristics between prisoners in our sample as compared to all prisoners who return to Baltimore. Our sample, however, does contain greater numbers of parole violators and prisoners whose sentences expired than the general population of prisoners returning to Baltimore. Few differences existed between those who completed the first and second post-release interviews and those who did not. The most important difference we noted was that prisoners who did not complete PR1 (conducted one to two months after release) were more likely to be rearrested in the six months following release than prisoners who completed PR1, but these arrests were not more likely to result in reconviction or recommitment. In addition, significantly greater numbers of PR2 non-participants had been recommitted to prison at 6 months. Readers should exercise caution in generalizing our research findings from the second interviews at four to six months after release to the larger population of prisoners returning to Baltimore for two reasons. First, analyses of outcome measures were limited due to the relatively small sample of former prisoners interviewed a second time. In addition, those whom we did not interview a second time were more likely to have been returned to prison or jail, suggesting that those we did interview were generally more successful at remaining crime free than the average released prisoner.

Respondent Demographics

Of those who ended up in our initial sample of soon-to-be-released prisoners, respondents represented a range of ethnic, racial, social, and educational backgrounds. Of the 324 prisoners interviewed (235 male and 89 female), respondents were a median age of 34 years old. In terms of race, blacks represented the largest share of respondents, at 83 percent, followed by 8 percent of respondents who identified themselves as white, and 9 percent of respondents who identified with other racial groups (see Figure 2.8). Three percent of respondents considered themselves to be Hispanic.

Survey respondents were predominantly male (73%). Over two-thirds were single and never married before incarceration (69%). Only 7 percent reported being married but 69 percent were parents at the time of admission. According to our pre-release survey information, 57 percent of respondents were parents of minor children. In terms of citizenship, more than 97 percent of prisoners were born and raised in the United States, and 98 percent reported that they were U.S. citizens.

With regard to their current conviction offense, respondents indicated a mix of crime types. Over half (55%) were drug offenders, convicted of both dealing and possession. Burglary, theft, and fraud comprised the next largest group. About 27 percent reported they were serving time as a result of a parole

violation; of those, 58 percent reported that they were incarcerated for a technical violation and 42 percent reported they were incarcerated for a new crime committed while on parole.[26]

As of February 2003, all but eight of the survey respondents had been released from prison. Approximately 44 percent served less than one year in prison this time. An additional 25 percent served between one and two years, 21 percent served two to five years, and the remaining 9 percent served five or more years.

Respondents were asked about the highest education level they achieved both before entering prison as well as currently. Before prison, the largest percentage (38%) of prisoners reported having a 10^{th} to 11^{th} grade education, and 16 percent each had graduated from high school or earned a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). When the surveys were administered, the share of respondents who reported a GED as their highest level of education increased from 16 percent before prison to 24 percent at the time of release.

For most survey respondents, this prison term was not their first encounter with the criminal justice system. Many survey respondents began their criminal careers at a young age: the average age at first arrest was 18 years old, two thirds (66%) were first arrested at age 18 or younger, and 28 percent had served time in a juvenile correctional facility. Not surprisingly, respondents had several prior convictions, with 84 percent reporting more than one conviction, and 35 percent reporting that they had five or more convictions. Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents had served a prior prison term, an average of 1.6 prior prison terms. About 53 percent of the survey respondents reported being on parole at least once in the past. Of those who had been on parole in the past, 71 percent indicated that they had their parole revoked and had been sent back to prison one or more times.[27]

Figure 2.8 Characteristics of the Maryland Pre-release Survey Respondents (N=324)

Age		
Mean	33.4 years	
Median	33.5 years	
Gender		
Male	235	72.5 %
Female	89	27.5

chart continues

[26] 27percent of respondents self-reported serving their current sentence for a parole violation, yet DOC records indicate that only 11 percent of respondents had violated conditions of an earlier release on their current commitment. The most likely reason for this discrepancy is that DOC records may not account for parole violations by prisoners who committed a new offense while under supervision from a previous (rather than their current) commitment.

[27] It should be noted that these demographic statistics are based on self-reported information collected through the pre-release survey instrument; in the sampling and attrition analysis sections above, as well as in Chapter 10: Criminal involvement, we analyzed both self-reported and official Division of Correction criminal justice data for our sample.

Figure 2.8 Characteristics of the Maryland Pre-release Survey Respondents (N=324)

Race/Ethnicity		
African-American or Black	262	82.9 %
White	26	8.2
All Others	28	8.8
Hispanic ethnicity	9	3.1
Marital status (pre-prison)		
Never married	217	69.1 %
Living with someone as married	20	6.4
Married	21	6.7
Separated or divorced	53	16.9
Other	3	0.9
Parenthood		
With any children	216	69.0 %
With minor children (<18)	177	57.1
Highest educational attainment		
Below 10th grade	46	14.7 %
10th to 11th grade	103	33.0
High school graduate	49	15.7
G.E.D.	75	24.0
Some college or graduate	39	12.5
Substance use in 6 months before prison		
Daily alcohol use	81	26.5 %
Daily cocaine use	94	30.1
Daily heroin use	127	40.7
Current conviction offense		
Murder/robbery/assault	41	15.3 %
Burglary/theft/fraud	46	17.4
Drug dealing	94	35.3
Drug possession	53	19.9
Other offense	32	12.0
Criminal history		
Previous juvenile incarceration	89	27.5 %
Previous prison incarceration	202	65.0
Criminal involvement of family members		
Family member ever convicted of a crime	189	67.0 %
Family member currently in prison	121	42.9

Note: Percentages are based on the non-missing responses to each item.

INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

The family component of our study of prisoner reentry was examined in two ways: as a factor affecting the individual's reintegration experiences and as an entity that may be influenced by the individual's incarceration and return. Thus, family members were asked about the family structure and living situation before the prisoner was incarcerated, and about his or her relationships with family members and peers. We also asked how the family was affected by the individual's incarceration, both emotionally and financially (exploring the effect on both adults and children in the prisoner's life), and the nature and extent of contacts between family and the prisoner while incarcerated. We inquired about the ex-prisoner's relationships with family members and the extent to which the family provided emotional and economic support after release. Questions about how family functioning is affected by the return of the released prisoner were also explored.

Instrument Design

In our review of the literature on the role of the family and family relationships in the process of prisoner reintegration (both as it affects individual prisoners and as it is affected by a family member's incarceration and return) we were unable to find any study that had interviewed both released prisoners and their family members. Hence, we decided on a very exploratory approach for this component of our pilot study in Maryland: to design an instrument with many open-ended questions and to conduct a small group of such interviews. We felt that the information gleaned from this family pilot study would enable us to develop a more systematic instrument for use in the full research design to be implemented in the other three states.

We drew upon existing research to develop questions that we thought would provide us with information about the role of the family in prisoner reintegration, especially research on the role of the family in overcoming substance abuse. We also consulted the broader literature on family relationships and selected scales or components of scales that have been used to measure the degree and type of support (emotional, financial, tangible) between family members. We were interested in family members' relationships with our respondent at three points in time—prior to incarceration, during incarceration, and after release. In addition, because a majority of prisoners are parents, and family members are likely to be temporary caregivers for these children, we also developed questions about the children of our prisoner sample and their relationship to our respondent.

The conceptual domains in the family interview include: demographic information; nature and quality of the relationship with the prisoner; prisoner's children; familial criminal and substance abuse history; nature of family cohesion, conflict and control; experience of incarceration and reentry from the perspective of "family"; expectations for relationship and behavior upon release; community connections; and relevant attitudes and beliefs. We identified four experts who reviewed the draft instrument. After incorporating their suggestions, we conducted pretests with six family members and made final revisions.

Data Collection and Family Referral Process

Family members were identified through referrals by our prisoner respondents during the pre-release survey. Individuals were asked to list up to three people who were family members with whom they were in touch prior to incarceration and with whom they planned to be in touch after release. We also requested their permission to contact these individuals to learn more about how post-prison

relationships might affect their reintegration experience. For the purposes of this study, we defined "family member" as a *blood or legal relative, someone with whom the prisoner has a child in common, or a significant other or guardian our respondent lived with prior to his or her incarceration or plans to live with after he or she is released from prison.* Ideally, this person would be someone who is familiar with the prisoner's life circumstances before incarceration and would be knowledgeable about many of his or her post-release experiences.

We originally planned to interview family members twice during the course of the study, once at about 30 days prior to their incarcerated family member's release, and again at approximately four to six months after the prisoner's release.[28] However, completing the survey with our prisoner respondent 30-45 days before his or her release, then locating, scheduling, and conducting an interview with the family member referred to us before the prisoner was actually released, created serious logistical challenges. Thus, we revised our design to conduct one post-release interview with a family member of our respondent, combining the pre-release and post-release instruments. In addition, identifying family members of our respondents proved to be challenging. During the pre-release survey, many respondents were either unable or unwilling to provide three family referrals and sometimes they were unable to provide full contact information for those family members that they did provide. Thus, we revised our design to also elicit family referrals at the first post-release interview. At that time, we inquired as to which family members our respondent had been in contact with since release and the nature of that contact. We then asked permission to contact these family members.

Overall, we received fairly accurate contact information for the family members and we did not have much difficulty locating them. However, family members preferred, and sometimes requested, that the interview be conducted over the telephone. To encourage greater participation, we further modified the family design so that the family instrument was administered primarily as a telephone interview. Family members were given $25 for the interview.

Sampling/Selection Bias

Through the family referral process, our intention was to draw a family sample that consisted of individuals who were close to the returning prisoner and were able to speak to the daily experiences and challenges that prisoners face as they reintegrate into their communities and their families. As discussed above, our original family referral process simply asked prisoners to provide the names and addresses of three family members we could talk to about their experiences. After examining the composition of our family sample, it appeared that respondents referred us to those family members whose addresses they knew, such as mothers and grandmothers. We further speculated that in referring mothers and grandmothers, perhaps prisoners were referring family members that they thought would speak more positively about their experiences with the prisoner than perhaps other family members, such as siblings or cousins.

However, upon reviewing data from the pre-release, PR1 and PR2 surveys, we were pleased to find that the composition of the family sample was similar to the composition of those who prisoners indicated they were closest to prior to and during their prison terms. Thirty-two percent of the family sample consisted of mothers or stepmothers and 35 percent of prisoner respondents indicated the person

[28] The timing of this second interview is gauged to surpass the "honeymoon period" that may occur upon the individual's initial return.

in their family they were closest to before prison was their mother or stepmother. Intimate partners made up 31 percent of our family sample. The percentage of prisoners who reported their closest family relationship before prison was with an intimate partner was 18 percent. However, it should be noted that we specifically over-sampled intimate partners, as we hypothesized that spouses and intimate partners would be very important to the process of reintegrating into the family and community. Therefore, all intimate partners who were provided through the family referral process were included in the family sample.[29] On average the family respondents had known the prisoner for approximately 24 years and over half the family sample (54%) had lived with the prisoner during the year before they began serving their current prison term.

Thus, we feel relatively confident that the members of our family sample were close to the prisoners who referred them and were informed about the daily activities and challenges the returning prisoners faced. However, it is difficult to determine what biases, if any, were associated with the family referral process we employed.

Analytic Methods

This research intended to shed light on the process of prisoner reintegration and to identify the mechanisms by which that process leads to successful or unsuccessful outcomes, including recidivism. Fulfilling this research goal required the collection of a vast amount of data from a variety of sources and called for the use of both qualitative methods and a number of quantitative methods.

Quantitative Methods

Initially, our analysis activities involved a variety of data reduction methods as part of a larger initial exploratory analysis of the data, including diagnostic work to examine the distributions of dependent and independent variables and examination and possible elimination of outliers. For example, we used exploratory factor analysis to create scales using specific questions we had identified to measure a particular concept, such as family support. In some instances, the responses to individual questions led us to eliminate a question from a scale if the factor analysis indicated that the individual responses were systematically different from other questions in the same set. These analyses helped to reduce the number of independent variables in our statistical models, preserving degrees of freedom and statistical power.

Second, we used lower-level quantitative methods to describe our sample through analyses that examine frequencies, report means, and produce histograms. Results of the individual and family surveys were linked to individual administrative records so that we could provide an overview of the characteristics of the inmate populations returning to the areas under study, describing the individual reentry trajectory in the aggregate. It was likely that many similarities in experiences exist among individuals in each stage of the reentry process, enabling us to identify policy issues that might improve the likelihood of successful reintegration.

Third, we compared means to explore if different individual characteristics were associated with both intermediate outcomes of interest, such as employment and substance abuse, as well as measures of

[29] A sample protocol was established by which family referrals were selected for inclusion into the family sample. We wanted to ensure our family sample was representative of our inmate sample based on several factors. For example, wanted to make sure we did not draw our family sample solely from inmates who served shorter sentences, who may have more easily maintained family relationships.

reoffending.[30, 31] These analyses would shed additional light on the factors that policy-makers should consider during the reentry process.

Qualitative Methods

We quantified many aspects of family support identified through our individual and family interviews, which we entered into the models described above. However, we also collected valuable qualitative data that were subsequently analyzed through a content analysis of responses to open-ended questions. This enabled us to describe and generate hypotheses on the role that family relationships play in an individual's reintegration experience. Analysis of the neighborhood focus groups was entirely qualitative.

[30] We measured reoffending as each of the following operations: rearrest, reconviction, and reconfinement.

[31] The results we report in forthcoming chapters are based on testing the equality of means across two sub-groups in the sample while assuming equal variances surrounding those means. In several instances, this equality of variance assumption was found to be suspect using a Levene's F-test; in several others, this assumption could not be reliably tested because of small and unbalanced sub-samples. In most cases, however, acknowledging and incorporating unequal variances did not alter our substantive findings; we arrived at the same conclusions only with lesser confidence.

CHAPTER 3
Employment and Finances[32]

Released prisoners' experiences in the workforce can play a significant role in their reentry transitions and may influence recidivism outcomes. Prior research shows that a majority of offenders were employed prior to incarceration and presumably want to find legal and stable employment following their release. Two-thirds of state prisoners reportedly held a job just prior to their incarceration (Lynch and Sabol 2001). Finding and maintaining a legitimate job after release can reduce the chances of re-offending following release from prison, and the higher the wages the less likely prison releasees will return to crime (Sampson and Laub 1997; Harer 1994; Uggen 2000).

Many former prisoners, however, experience difficulties finding jobs after their release. They often enter prison with poor educational backgrounds and little work experience. During the time they spend in prison, inmates often lose work skills and forfeit the opportunity to gain work experience (Western et al. 2001; Sampson and Laub 1997). In addition, long periods of incarceration may weaken social contacts that lead to legal employment opportunities upon release (Western et al. 2001; Hagan and Dinovitzer 1999). While the period of incarceration could be viewed as an opportunity to build skills and prepare for placement at a future job, small shares of prisoners participate in such programming, and the evaluation literature provides mixed to negative support for the effectiveness of in-prison job training programs (Bushway and Reuter 2001; Gaes et al. 1999; Wilson et al. 1999). After release, the stigma of their ex-prisoner status makes the job search even more difficult. A recent survey of 3,000 employers in four major metropolitan areas revealed that two-thirds of the employers would not knowingly hire an ex-prisoner (Holzer et al. 2001).

In this section, we present a number of analyses relating to employment experiences of released prisoners in Maryland. First, we describe respondents' pre-prison work histories, in-prison job-related experience and programming, and expectations regarding employment after release, examining differences by gender and criminal history. Next, we describe released prisoners' work experiences after their return to the community, including job seeking activities, barriers encountered, and nature/extent of employment in the first 60 days and at six months, examining differences by gender and criminal history. Finally, we present findings regarding the factors that relate to employment success/failure in the first 6 months after release.

EMPLOYMENT DATA COLLECTED THROUGH *RETURNING HOME*

Information about our sample's pre-prison employment histories and post-prison work experiences was gathered at all three data collection points. During the pre-release self-administered survey, prisoners were asked about their work experiences during the six months before the current prison term. They were asked about how many jobs they worked, if any, the total number of hours worked each week, the type of work, whether the job had a regular schedule, and how much they earned. At this time, the respondents were also asked about their work experiences while in prison—whether they held an in-prison job, what kind of work they did, how many hours they worked, how long they had the job, whether

[32] Vera Kachnowski, author.

it had a regular schedule, and how much money they earned. Respondents were also asked about their expectations and plans for employment after their release, including how they planned to find employment, how much money they expected to earn, how difficult they anticipated finding and keeping a job to be, and whether they plan to take any job training classes after their release.

During their first post-release interview (PR1), respondents were asked more extensive questions about job experiences and job training received during prison. They were asked whether they had a work release job while in prison, what kind of work they did for their work release job, how many hours they worked per week, and how much they earned. At this point in time, they were also asked about their experiences looking for work since release—whether, how, and for how long they looked for a job, and how their criminal record may have affected their job search. They were asked whether, for how long, and in what capacity they were working, as well as how many hours per week they worked and how much they earned. In addition, they were asked how they found their current job (if employed), how many jobs they held since release and how far their job is from where they live. Finally, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with their work, which were adapted from the NIDA Life Events Survey. The second post-release interview (PR2) completed by respondents in our sample asked similar questions about current employment and also covered lifetime employment history and job training classes taken since release.

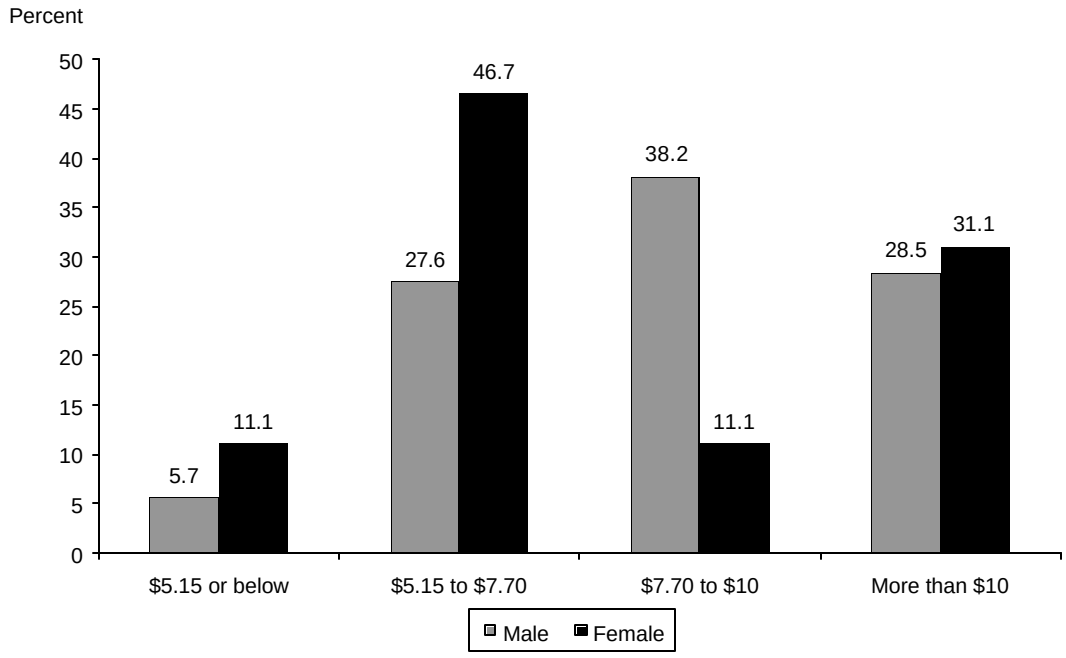
PRE-PRISON EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Many of the respondents in our sample were employed just prior to entering prison for their most recent terms, but their extended employment histories were often characterized by little continuous employment and one or more dismissals from places of employment. For about half of the respondents (46%), the longest time they had ever maintained employment at one job was two years or less. Nearly half (45%) of respondents had been fired from a job at least once before.

With regard to the six months before they entered prison, 65 percent of respondents in our sample indicated that they had worked for money during that period. About half (48%) worked between 31 and 40 hours per week, most commonly at jobs such as construction, installation, food service, and transportation. The median hourly wage for employment before prison was $8.50, with about 7 percent earning under the minimum wage of $5.15 and another one-third earning less than the $7.70 living wage established by the Baltimore city government.[33] More female prisoners reported pre-prison wages in the $5.15 to $7.70 range, and more men reporting wages in the $7.70 to $10 range (chi-square significant at .005; see Figure 3.1).

[33] Baltimore passed a living wage law in the mid-1990s which requires city contractors to pay their workers at least $7.70/hour as of FY 1999 (Neidt et al. 1999).

Figure 3.1 Pre-Prison Hourly Wages, By Gender (N=168)

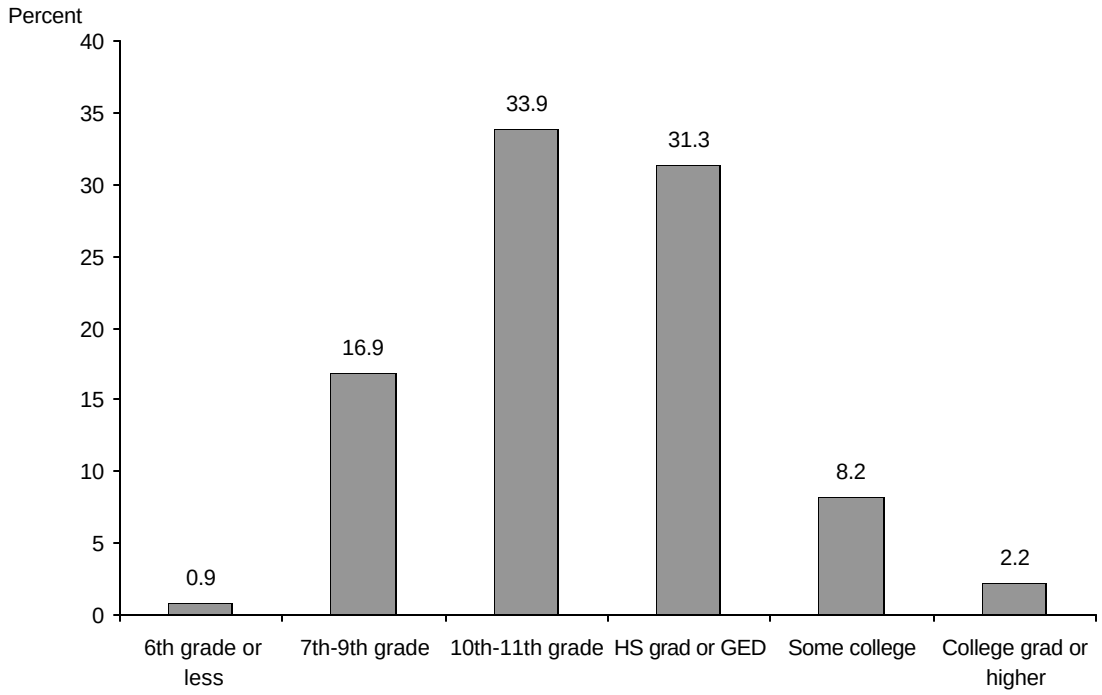


PRE- AND IN-PRISON EDUCATION LEVELS

Before entering prison for this term, less than half (42%) of the respondents in our sample had a high school or GED diploma. The largest share (38%) had completed their educations up to the 10th or 11th grade (see Figure 3.2). For most of the respondents in our sample (87%), their education level remained the same during the time they spent in prison for this term. The other 13 percent increased their education level to some extent while they were in prison.[34]

[34] Twelve respondents in our sample reported in-prison education levels that were lower than their pre-prison education levels. These data were excluded from this analysis.

Figure 3.2 Pre-Prison Education Levels (N=319)



Maryland Prison Educational Programming
An Excerpt from *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*

Maryland Department of Correction has several programs aimed at educating prisoners, improving job skills, and providing employment experience. For instance, MD DOC operates a mandatory education program in compliance with Maryland state law that requires prisoners who do not possess a high school degree or GED and who are sentenced to a minimum of 18 months to attend school while incarcerated.[35] This program, which is conducted in accordance with the Education Coordinating Council for Correctional Institutions, requires eligible prisoners to participate in school at least 12 hours per week in maintaining institutions[36] or 5 hours per week in prerelease system facilities for a minimum of 120 calendar days. Prisoners who meet the eligibility requirements for this program are assigned by their case manager to the appropriate class and are required to participate. If they refuse to participate or are removed from the program because of disciplinary or other problems, the consequences are severe. They lose all diminution credits accrued up to that point and are not allowed

[35] The Maryland Correctional Education Program is administered by certified staff of the Maryland Department of Education.

[36] Maryland correctional institutions other than prerelease facilities.

to participate in any other programs and, therefore, cannot earn any diminution credits until certain conditions, as outlined by the case manager, are met.[37]

Unfortunately, because of teacher shortages, there is not enough room for all eligible prisoners to participate, and many are released without having taken part in the mandatory program. Between 1990 and 2000, Maryland's prison population grew 54 percent while the number of correctional educators only increased by 4 percent.[38] In 2001, more than 1,500 prisoners were on waiting lists to participate in educational or vocational programming. Seventeen percent of the inmate population (4,132 prisoners) participated in the correctional education program in some way during that year.[39] One thousand nineteen hundred ten (1,910) participated in mandatory education, 966 prisoners earned a GED, 1,625 prisoners completed basic literacy/ life skills certificates, 500 prisoners participated in postsecondary education programs, and approximately 600 prisoners served as inmate tutors to their peers.[40]

The correctional education program also coordinates 17 vocational programs designed to improve job skills. These programs cover a range of skill areas, including auto body repair; automotive power services; building maintenance; business data processing; commercial roofing; computer repair; drafting; electrical wiring; furniture upholstery; graphic arts; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; masonry; plumbing; residential construction; sheet metal fabrication; vocational trades internship; and warehousing/distribution. It is important to note, however, that vocational programs are not distributed equally among MD DOC institutions, making them unavailable to many inmates who may be interested in participating in them. About 1,000 inmates, or 4 percent of the total inmate population, are trained in vocational programs each year.[41]

IN-PRISON EMPLOYMENT

At the time of the pre-release interview, less than a third of respondents (30%) indicated that they currently had a job in prison (see Figure 3.3). Female inmates (54%) were significantly more likely than male inmates (20%) to have a job in prison (chi-square significant at .000). Respondents who held in-prison jobs averaged 30 hours of work per week and earned an average of $3.00 per day (half earned about $1 per day). The types of jobs respondents held were mostly food service and sanitation jobs.

Roughly the same share of respondents (33%) held a work release job in the community for anywhere from 4 to 38 weeks while they were incarcerated; the average number of weeks at work release job was 17 (see Figure 3.3). A significantly larger share of male inmates (38%) than female inmates

[37] Prisoners do not lose their diminution credits if they were unable to participate because they remained on a waiting list throughout their term. Source: Maryland Division of Correction.

[38] The Job Opportunities Task Force. 2003. *Baltimore's Choice: Workers and Jobs for a Thriving Economy*. Baltimore, MD. Available at: http://www.jotf.org/baltimoreschoice.pdf (Accessed February 2003).

[39] Not all inmates may need or be eligible for these programs.

[40] Maryland Division of Correction. For information on the effectiveness of Maryland correctional education in reducing recidivism, see Steurer, S., L. Smith, and A. Tracy. 2001. *Three-State Recidivism Study*. Lanham, MD: Correctional Education Association. Available at http://www.ceanational.org/documents/3StateFinal.pdf. (Accessed October 2002.)

[41] Not all inmates may need or be eligible for these programs. Maryland Division of Correction.

(17%) had work release jobs (chi-square significant at .024). Of those respondents, male and female, who had work release jobs, the largest share (68%) worked 40 hours per week. Inmates' hourly work release pay ranged from $0.85 to $11, with an average of $6.63. The most common work release jobs were in the food service industry (41%), such as being a cook or dishwasher, or warehouse work (24%). About 13 percent of respondents had both work release jobs and in-prison jobs while they were incarcerated (not necessarily at the same time).

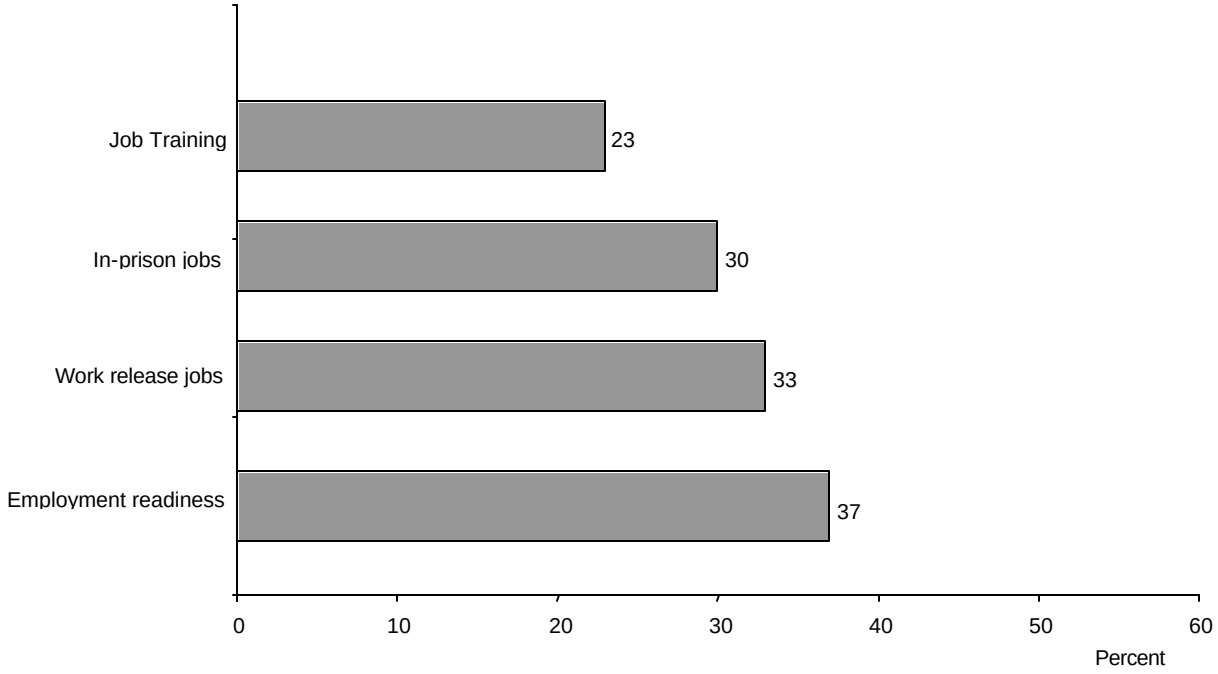
IN-PRISON JOB TRAINING

Nationwide, prisoners are less likely to have participated in education and vocational programs than they were in the past. Between 1991 and 1997, the number of soon-to-be-released prisoners who reported participating in educational programs dropped from 43 percent to 35 percent. The number reporting participation in educational programs dropped from 31 percent to 27 percent over that same period (Lynch and Sabol, 2001). With regard to prerelease programming, which often includes an employment readiness component, in both 1991 and 1997, only about 13 percent of soon-to-be-released prisoners reported participating in such programs (Lynch and Sabol, 2001).

The employment program participation rates among respondents in our sample were similar to or higher than these national averages. Just over a third (37%) of Maryland respondents participated in an employment readiness program while in prison, and 23 percent participated in a job training program (see Figure 3.3). A significantly greater share of women (51%) than men (33%) participated in employment readiness programs (chi-square significant at .041). About 27 percent of respondents participated in a pre-release program, and of those, about three-quarters were exposed to some instruction on finding a job or a job referral during the pre-release program.

Respondents' reasons for participating in employment readiness programs included getting and keeping a job (25%), feeling good or better about themselves (16%), getting a better education (15%), or because it was mandatory (14%). These reasons were generally similar to respondents' reasons for participating in job training programs: getting and keeping a job (19%), learning a trade/getting a license (17%), getting a better education (17%), and because it was mandatory (10%).

Figure 3.3 Share of Respondents Who Participated in Employment Programs and Work Release Jobs While Incarcerated (N=152 and N=149)



Maryland Division of Correction Work Release Program

The Work Release Program places qualified soon-to-be-released inmates in jobs with a private employer in the community. The program aims to help prisoners with the transition from prison to home by providing an opportunity to learn skills and acquire trades that will help them to find and keep jobs once they are released. The program is highly structured with supervision requirements for participants.

Source: Maryland Division of Correction website.

FINDING EMPLOYMENT AFTER RELEASE: EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES

Most respondents were optimistic about the prospect of securing and maintaining employment after prison. When asked during the pre-release interview about the importance of finding a job after they are released, nearly all respondents (97%) agreed that finding a job was important to them and that having a job was important to staying out of prison (90%). While most respondents (84%) also indicated that they would need *some help* or *a lot of help* finding a job after their release, 65 percent felt that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to find a job. An overwhelming 88 percent felt that, once they obtained a job, it would be *easy* or *pretty easy* to keep it.

By the first post-release interview, however, a smaller share of respondents (53%) said it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to find a job since their release from prison. Of those who were employed, about three-quarters (74%) said that it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to keep a job since release. At their second post-release interview, just under half of employed respondents (45%) said it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to find a job since their release; about three-quarters (74%) said it had been easy to keep a job (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5).

Figure 3.4 How easy or hard will it be/ has it been to find a job?

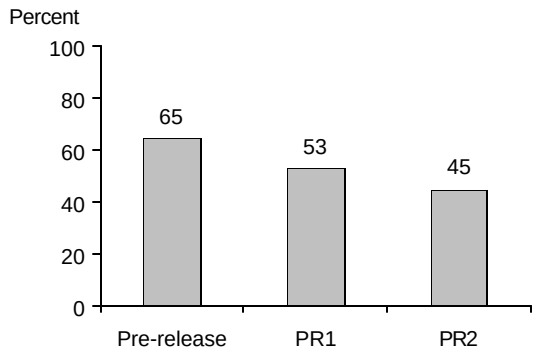
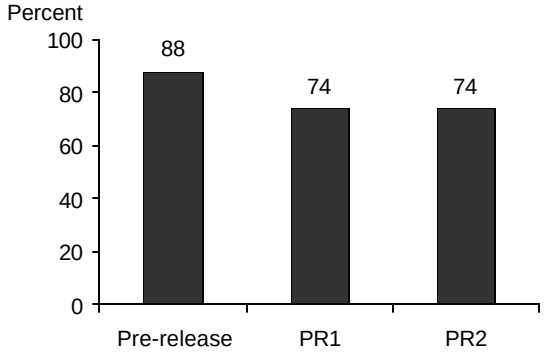


Figure 3.5 How easy or hard will it be/has it been to keep a job?



Respondents' expectations for job-findings methods were also different from the methods that those who found employment actually used. Respondents expected to use an average of six different methods to find a job after their release, including using newspaper ads (75%), answering help wanted signs (60%), or simply walking in and applying for jobs (60%) (See Figure 3.6). A significantly greater share of females than males expected to talk to their parole officers to find a job (chi-square significant at .007; 53% vs. 33%), but otherwise similar shares of male and female respondents expected to use each job-finding method.

Figure 3.6 Expected Post-Prison Job Finding Methods (N=207)

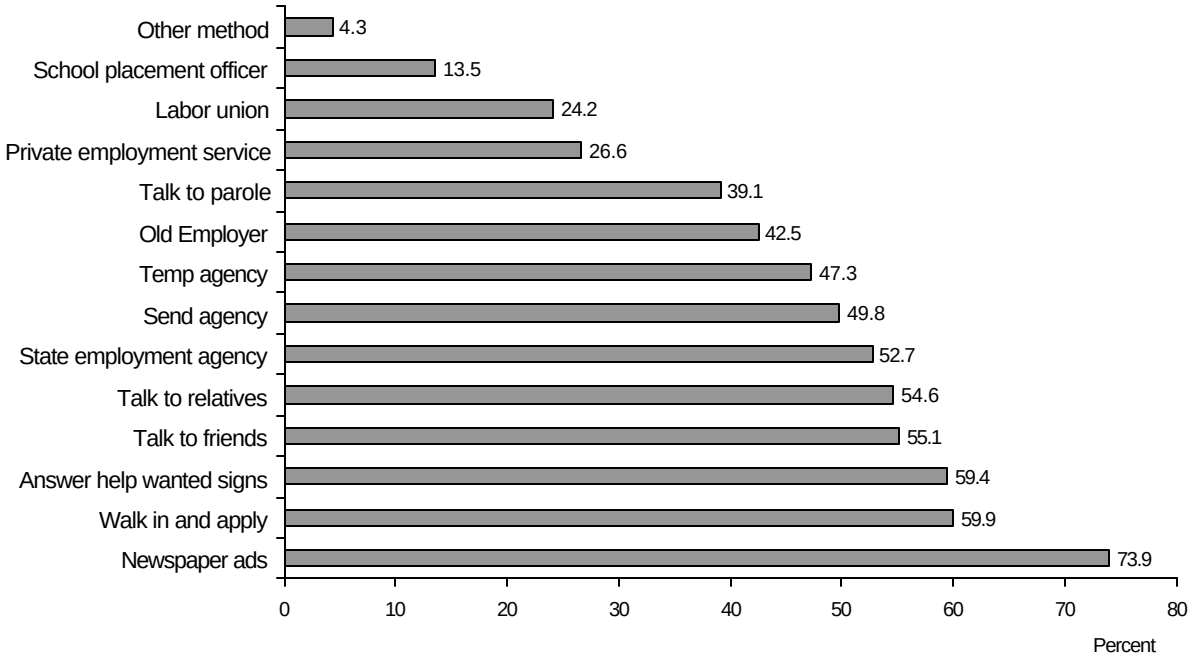


Figure 3.7 Most Common Job Finding Methods of Those Who Had Worked Since Release (PR1)

- Talk to Friends
- Talk to Relatives
- Use Newspaper Ads
- Walk in and Apply

At PR1, the most common methods used by respondents who had actually worked for at least one week after release were different from the top methods respondents had expected to use. Specifically, working respondents talked to friends (54%) and/or relatives (45%), used newspaper ads (40%), and walked in and applied (35%) to get their jobs (see Figure 3.7). Significantly larger shares of respondents who had not worked since release than those who had secured employment used the following methods: talked to parole officer (33% vs. 9%; chi-square significant at .003), and used the yellow pages (20% vs. 4%, chi-square significant at .009), used newspaper ads (61% vs. 40%, chi-square significant at .053). A significantly larger share of respondents who had worked since release (19%) talked to their former employer to find a job as compared with those who had not worked since release (3%; chi-square significant at .033).

At PR2, the largest share of currently employed respondents (39%) talked to friends to find their job. Employed respondents also talked to relatives (12%), used newspaper ads (9%), temp agencies (9%), or other methods (33%)—including finding work through their work release assignments (7 respondents) or through a halfway house (3 respondents). It is noteworthy that while respondents expected to use "impersonal" individual methods, such as newspaper ads and walking in and applying to find their jobs, those who actually found jobs relied on personal connections with friends and family. Respondents who had not worked since release were more likely than those who had worked to have used impersonal methods like newspaper ads and the yellow pages in their job-finding attempts.

EXTENT AND KIND OF POST-RELEASE EMPLOYMENT: PR1

At PR1, two-thirds (64%) of respondents indicated that they had spent time looking for a job since their release from prison, whether or not they had actually succeeded in finding a job. Of those respondents who had not looked for a job since release, 62 percent said that they already had a job lined up after release. The number of hours that respondents spent looking for work each week ranged from 1 to 42, with a median of 10 hours. The largest share (20%) of respondents had contacted just one employer since their release.

Figure 3.8 Employment at PR1

64% (96 respondents) had worked for at least one week since release.

Median number of weeks worked was 6.

Most Common Job Types

- Warehouse or factory work
- Food service industry
- Construction/demolition

At PR1, two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they had worked for at least one week since their release, with 77 percent of those saying they were currently employed at the time of the interview. Thus, about half of our respondents (49%) were currently employed at the first interview. The majority of the respondents (91%) who were currently employed at PR1 said they worked at one job, and two-thirds said they worked 40 hours per week. Thus, of all respondents interviewed at PR1 (n=149), 44 percent were *currently* working at a job at least 40 hours per week. The most common jobs included warehouse or factory work (29%), food service industry jobs (20%), and construction/demolition (11%) (See Figure 3.8).

These results are both surprising and sobering. We were surprised to find that a majority of our respondents had worked since release. However, only 44 percent were currently working at a full-time job at the time of our first interview about two months after release. Only 22 percent had a job lined up before release. Moreover, as Figure 3.8 indicates, the most common jobs held by our respondents do not require advanced skills and are probably not a preferred long-term employment option for our respondents.

We ran ANOVAs on some additional explanatory variables that we thought could relate to post-prison employment outcomes. Specifically, we wanted to see if respondents who had worked for at least one week after release and respondents who had not worked differed significantly across a number of factors. We found that there were, in fact, differences between these two groups. Those who had worked for at least one week were more likely to be male, to have debts, and to have work as a condition of their post-release supervision than those who did not work. In addition, "working" respondents were more likely to have participated in an employment readiness class or job training programs while in prison, and to have held work release jobs than those who did not work. By contrast, those who worked for at least a week after release were no more likely to have held in-prison jobs than those who had not worked since release. There were also no significant differences in terms of prior prison terms and whether or not the respondent has worked since release (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who had Worked for At Least One Week at PR1 to Those Who Had Not[42]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Held work release job (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	96	.45	.50		
	Has not worked	53	.13	.34		
	Total	149	.34	.47	16.795	.000
R's perception: Having a job is important for staying out of prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	95	.80	.40		
	Has not worked	52	.19	.40		
	Total	147	.59	.49	77.307	.000
Work regularly condition of supervision (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	79	.70	.46		
	Has not worked	37	.41	.50		
	Total	116	.60	.49	9.479	.003
Gender (1=male)	Worked for at least one week	96	.83	.37		
	Has not worked	53	.64	.48		
	Total	149	.77	.43	7.237	.008
Participated in job training (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	95	.28	.45		
	Has not worked	50	.12	.33		
	Total	145	.23	.42	5.134	.025
Regular schedule at main job pre-prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	61	.89	.32		
	Has not worked	32	.78	.46		
	Total	93	.83	.38	4.180	.044
Has debts (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	55	.82	.389		
	Has not worked	27	.63	.492		
	Total	81	.76	.432	3.558	.063
Participated in employment readiness (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	96	.43	.50		
	Has not worked	52	.29	.46		
	Total	148	.38	.49	2.770	.098
High school graduate (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	90	.61	.490		
	Has not worked	51	.47	.504		
	Total	141	.56	.498	2.621	.108
Worked for money pre-prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	95	.69	.46		
	Has not worked	48	.58	.50		
	Total	143	.66	.48	4.180	.188
Longest time ever worked at one job (years)	Worked for at least one week	95	3.44	1.42		
	Has not worked	41	3.18	1.41		
	Total	146	3.35	1.42	1.167	.282
Any prior commitments (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	96	.64	.48		
	Has not worked	53	.57	.50		
	Total	149	.61	.49	.685	.409

chart continues

[42] Shaded boxes indicate items that are significantly distinguished between respondents who had worked for at least one week and those who had not. For example, 45 percent of those who had worked for at least one week at PR1 had held a work release job, compared to only 13 percent of those who had not worked.

Figure 3.9 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who had Worked for At Least One Week at PR1 to Those Who Had Not[42]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Held job in prison	Worked for at least one week	90	.32	.47		
	Has not worked	50	.28	.45		
	Total	140	.31	.46	.266	.607
Convicted for drug offense (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	96	.55	.499		
	Has not worked	53	.53	.504		
	Total	149	.54	.499	.077	.782
Ever fired from a job (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	94	.46	.501		
	Has not worked	53	.43	.500		
	Total	147	.45	.499	.075	.785
Age (years)	Worked for at least one week	94	33.93	7.85		
	Has not worked	53	33.57	8.73		
	Total	147	33.80	8.15	.066	.798
Returned to pre-prison neighborhood (1=yes)	Worked for at least one week	96	.51	.503		
	Has not worked	52	.50	.505		
	Total	148	.51	.502	.014	.904

EXTENT AND KIND OF POST-RELEASE EMPLOYMENT: PR2

At PR2, 76 percent of respondents said they had worked for at least one month since their release, and of those, 72 percent were employed at the time of the interview. The majority (86%) of respondents employed at PR2 said they worked at one job, while 12 percent were working at two jobs. The largest share of those employed at PR2 (55%) worked 40 hours per week, with a quarter working less than 35 hours, and a fifth working more than 40. Most of the respondents who did not work full-time (<35 hours) cited lack of available work as the primary reason for their part-time schedules. Of those who had worked for some period of time since their release, three-quarters said it took them less than a month to find a job.

We conducted a similar analysis to that performed at PR1 to identify any difference between respondents who had worked for at least one month since release and those who had not (see Figure 3.10). Many of the characteristics of respondents who had worked for at least one month were similar to those of respondents who had worked for at least one week at PR1, including their gender (males more likely to have worked), having had a regular schedule at pre-prison job, having had a work release job in prison, having "work regularly" as a condition of supervision, and having debts. Participation in employment readiness and job-training programs, which were significantly different among "workers" and "non-workers" at PR1, were not significantly different among those who had and had not worked for at least a month at PR2.

By contrast, some variables that did not reveal significant differences between groups at PR1 were significant at PR2. Specifically, respondents who had worked for at least a month were more likely to have worked during the six months before this prison term and to be high school graduates or hold

GEDs than those who had not worked for at least a month. In addition, respondents who had worked were, on average, older and had longer periods of continuous pre-prison employment than respondents who had not worked.

Figure 3.10 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who had Worked for At Least One Month at PR2 to Those Who had Not

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
R's perception: Having a job is important for staying out of prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.68	.47		
	Has not worked	26	.15	.37		
	Total	102	.55	.50	27.514	.000
Gender (1=male)	Worked for at least one month	76	.82	.39		
	Has not worked	26	.54	.51		
	Total	102	.75	.44	8.332	.005
Has debts (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	40	.88	.33		
	Has not worked	10	.50	.53		
	Total	50	.80	.40	7.855	.007
Regular schedule at main job pre-prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	45	.89	.32		
	Has not worked	12	.58	.51		
	Total	57	.82	.38	6.609	.013
Held work release job (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.39	.49		
	Has not worked	26	.15	.37		
	Total	102	.33	.47	5.218	.024
High school graduate or GED (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	70	.66	.48		
	Has not worked	25	.40	.50		
	Total	95	.59	.49	5.203	.025
Worked for money in 6 months pre-prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.66	.48		
	Has not worked	22	.41	.50		
	Total	98	.60	.49	4.522	.036
Work regularly condition of supervision (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	63	.68	.47		
	Has not worked	17	.41	.51		
	Total	80	.63	.49	4.309	.041
Longest time ever worked at one job (years)	Worked for at least one month	76	3.42	1.356		
	Has not worked	23	2.74	1.60		
	Total	99	3.26	1.43	4.127	.045
Age (years)	Worked for at least one month	74	35.20	7.58		
	Has not worked	26	32.19	8.32		
	Total	100	34.42	7.85	2.886	.093
Ever fired from a job (years)	Worked for at least one month	75	.47	.50		
	Has not worked	26	.31	.47		
	Total	101	.43	.49	1.996	.161
Held a job in prison (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	71	.31	.47		
	Has not worked	23	.43	.51		
	Total	94	.34	.48	1.197	.277

chart continues

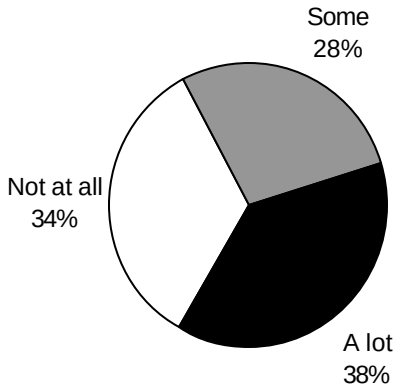
Figure 3.10 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who had Worked for At Least One Month at PR2 to Those Who had Not

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Any prior commitments (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.64	.48		
	Has not worked	26	.58	.50		
	Total	102	.63	.49	.375	.542
Participated in job training (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	75	.29	.46		
	Has not worked	25	.24	.44		
	Total	100	.28	.45	.260	.611
Returned to pre-prison neighborhood (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	75	.48	.503		
	Has not worked	26	.54	.508		
	Total	101	.50	.502	.259	.612
Participated in employment readiness (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.39	.49		
	Has not worked	26	.42	.50		
	Total	102	.40	.49	.063	.802
Convicted of drug offense (1=yes)	Worked for at least one month	76	.57	.49		
	Has not worked	26	.58	.50		
	Total	102	.57	.49	.010	.922

DOES CRIMINAL HISTORY AFFECT EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES?

Roughly two-thirds of respondents (66%) reported that their criminal records had some or a lot of effect on their job searches (see Figure 3.11). This was especially true of respondents who had not worked since release: a significantly greater share of respondents who had not worked (64%) than respondents who had worked (26%) thought their criminal records had a major (negative) effect on their job search (chi-square significant at .002).

Figure 3.11 Effect of Criminal Record on Job Search (N=90)



Although respondents, especially unemployed respondents, perceived their criminal records to have had a major impact on their job hunt, a considerable share of employed respondents secured their jobs with their employers fully aware of their criminal records. At PR1, the majority (83%) of currently employed respondents reported that their employers knew about their criminal records at the time they were hired. Similarly, 80 percent of respondents who were employed at PR2 reported that their employers knew of their criminal records. This suggests that respondents' perceptions of employer's willingness to hire ex-prisoners are not entirely accurate. It is also possible that any employers knowingly have hired ex-prisoners in our sample in light of the personal connections (using friends, relatives) through which many working respondents found their jobs. These personal connections may have offered a reference or otherwise vouched for the ex-prisoners.

SPATIAL MISMATCH?

While nearly all respondents in our sample reported that finding a job was important to them, the availability of jobs in their neighborhoods can constrain ex-prisoners' ability to actually find a job. At PR1, 70 percent of respondents did not think the neighborhood they lived in was a good place to find a job. Those who were working reported that their jobs were located anywhere from less than a mile to 45 miles from their homes, with an average of 10 miles.[43] Respondents traveled between 5 minutes and two hours each way to arrive at their jobs, with an average of 45 minutes.[44] The largest share (33%) reported traveling between 45 and 60 minutes each way to their jobs. Both the average distance from home to work and commute times were the same at PR2.

Both working and non-working respondents expressed willingness to travel a considerable distance to work: one-third of respondents indicated that they would be willing to commute an hour to a job, with another third saying they would be willing to commute up to two hours for a job. Although they may be willing to commute these lengths, respondents' job opportunities may be limited by the modes of transportation available to them. At PR1, two-thirds of working respondents reported riding public transportation to their jobs; the next largest share (15%) said they rode in a carpool to arrive at their jobs. Reponses were similar at PR2, with 70 percent of working respondents using public transportation to get to their jobs. Seventeen percent said they drive their own car to get to work.

QUALITY OF WORK

Some research has suggested that recidivism outcomes are affected not only by whether an individual holds a job or not, but also by their job satisfaction (Sampson and Laub, 1993). At PR1, the majority of employed respondents reported being generally satisfied with their jobs. Most (86%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they liked the work they do at their job, and 70 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they would be happy if they still were at their job a year from now. Nearly all (99%) working respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they got along with the people they work for. Very few working respondents reported not getting along with co-workers (13%) or feeling that they were treated unfairly by the people they worked for (11%). About half of the respondents were not happy with the amount of pay they received at their job.

[43] As measured by the median.
[44] As measured by the median.

At PR2, working respondents continued to be generally satisfied with their jobs, though slightly less so than at PR1.[45] Eighty-one percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they liked the work they do at their job, and 62 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they would be happy if they still were at their job a year from now. Nearly all (98%) respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they got along with the people they worked for, and very few (10%) felt that they were being treated unfairly by the people they worked for. Larger shares of respondents reported not getting along with co-workers (28%) and being unhappy with the amount of pay they receive at their job (60%) than at PR1.

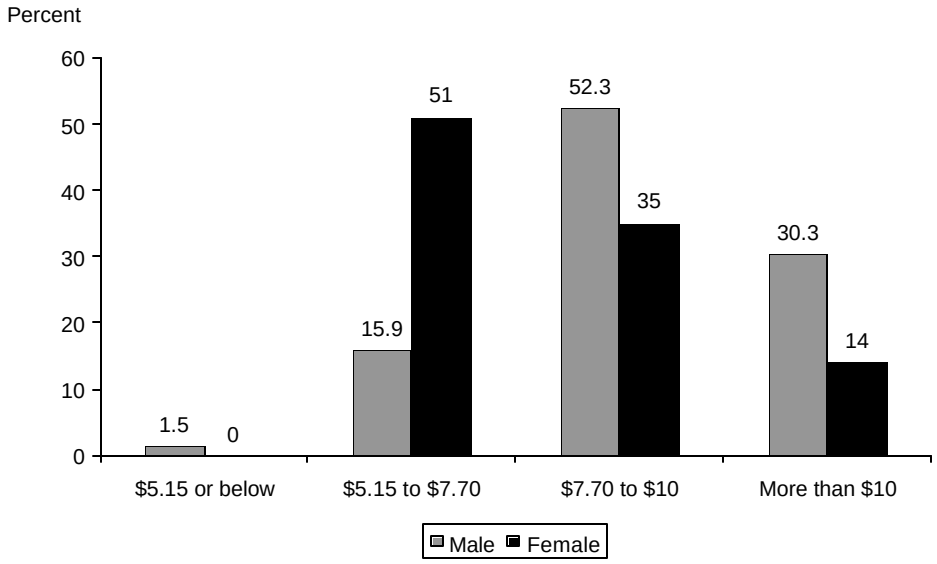
INCOME

Pre-Prison Versus Expected Post-Prison Income

Respondents' expectations for earnings after their release were generally similar to what they reported earning before entering prison. The median self-reported hourly wage for employment before prison was $8.50; the median expected wage for after release was slightly higher, at $9.00 per hour. About half expected to earn roughly the same hourly wage upon release as they did before prison, with 28 percent expecting to earn more and 22 percent expecting to earn less. As shown in Figure 3.12, female and male inmates had significantly different expectations for their post-release hourly wages (chi-square significant at .000). For example, 51 percent of women expected to earn $7.70 or less, as compared with 16 percent of men who expected similar wages. This is perhaps not surprising considering that female inmates, on average, reported earning less pre-prison than their male counterparts (see Figure 3.1).

[45] We created a job satisfaction score (1=highly satisfied, 4=highly dissatisfied) based on a five-item scale consisting of the following questions: You like the work you are doing, You don't get along with the people you work with (reverse-coded), You'd be happy if you were at this job one year from now, You think this job will give you better opportunities in the future, You get along with the people you work for. Factor analysis using these five-items account for 60 percent of the variance, with an Eigenvalue of 3.028. The mean job satisfaction score at PR2 (2.22) was less than the mean job satisfaction score at PR1 (1.97). Cronbach's alpha for the job satisfaction scale at PR1 is .698; Cronbach's alpha for job-satisfaction scale at PR2 is .771.

Figure 3.12 Expected Post-Prison Hourly Wages, By Gender (N=183)



Expected Versus Actual Post-Prison Income

At the first post-release interview, the median self-reported hourly wage of those who were working ($7.50) was lower than the expected median hourly wage of $9.00 respondents had reported at their pre-release interview. In fact, for the two-thirds (66%) of respondents employed after release, their actual hourly pay was less than what they had expected to earn (see Figure 3.13). Twenty-seven percent were earning roughly what they expected their hourly wage to be, while 7 percent were earning more than what they had expected their hourly wage to be.

At the second interview after release (PR2), respondents' self-reported hourly wages ranged from $1 to $18, with an average of $8. Eight percent of respondents earned less than the minimum wage of $5.25 per hour, and 45 percent of respondents earned less than the living wage of $7.70 per hour. Between PR1 and PR2, hourly earnings increased for 42 percent of respondents, stayed the same for 26 percent and decreased for 31 percent. At both PR1 and PR2, women earned less on average than men (see Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.13 Difference between Actual and Expected Post-Prison Hourly Wages (PR1) (N=56)

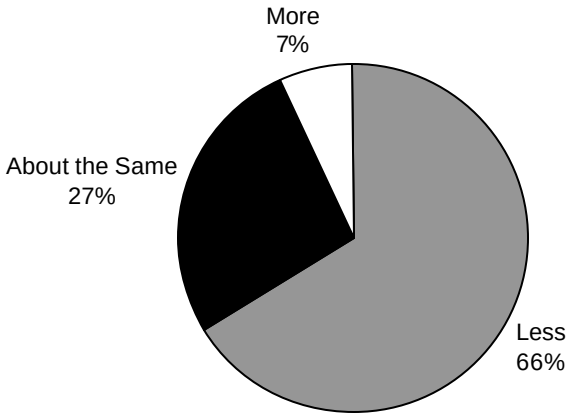


Figure 3.14 Self-Reported Pre-Prison, Expected, and Actual Average Hourly Income From Legal Employment, by Gender

	All Respondents	Females	Males
Pre-Prison	$8.50	$7.35	$8.60
Expected	$9.00	$7.50	$9.76
Actual—PR1	$7.50	$6.75	$7.50
Actual—PR2	$8.00	$6.50	$8.00

Income From Sources Other Than Legal Employment

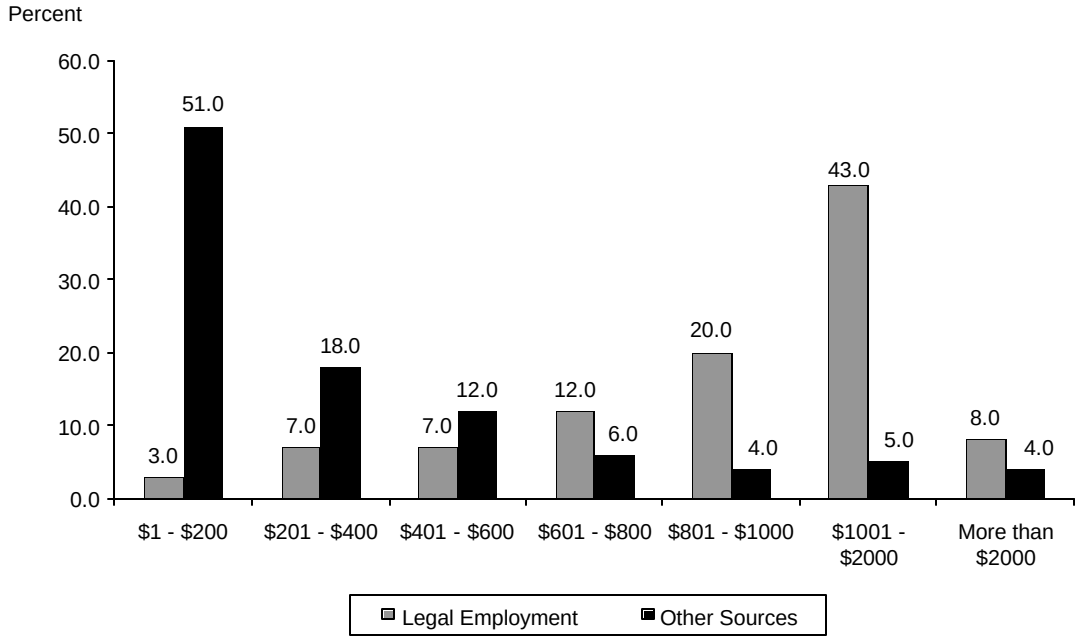
In addition to income from legal employment, respondents reported receiving monthly income from a number of other sources including spouse, family and/or friends, food stamps, social security, public assistance, "under the table" employment, illegal activities, and other sources (see Figure 3.15). At PR1, the amount of monthly income respondents earned from these combined sources ranged from $20 to $6,300[46] with a median of $200. The amount of monthly income working respondents earned from legal employment ranged from $185 to $6,000 with a median of $1100. The median monthly income from all sources, including legal employment was $800 (see Figure 3.16). Forty-eight percent of respondents (working and non-working) who reported monthly earnings earned more money from other sources than from any legal employment.

[46] 90 percent of our sample reported monthly income totaling $2000 or less.

Figure 3.15 Sources of Monthly Income, PR1 and PR2 (N=151 and N=103)

Type	Source of income—PR1	Source of income—PR2
Legal employment	67%	62%
Spouse/family/friends	47%	42%
Food stamps	12%	14%
"Under the table"	11%	12%
Public assistance	7%	3%
Social security	3%	4%
Illegal activities	3%	6%
Other sources	3%	7%

Figure 3.16 Self-Reported Monthly Income from Legal Employment (N=72) and Other Sources (N=90), PR1



At PR2, respondents' monthly income from sources other than legal employment ranged from $15 to $1,700, with a median of $164. Working respondents' monthly income from legal employment ranged from $30 to $4,200, with a median of $900. Respondents' median monthly income from all sources including legal employment was $750. Thirty-seven percent of all respondents (working and non-working) who reported monthly income earned more money from other sources than from legal employment. Over half of respondents (52%) reported higher total monthly income from all sources at

PR2 as compared to PR1. For 42 percent of respondents, their total monthly income from all sources was less at PR2 than at PR1, while it was the same for the remaining 6 percent of respondents.

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT POST-RELEASE

At their pre-release interview, survey respondents had indicated that supporting themselves financially after release would not be difficult: nearly three-quarters (72%) thought that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to support themselves. At their first post-release interview (PR1), however, over half (55%) of respondents said it had been *pretty hard* or *very hard* to support themselves financially since their release from prison. At PR2, roughly the same share of respondents (51%) said it had been *pretty hard* or *very hard* to support themselves financially since their release from prison.

Most respondents left prison with few financial resources and many financial obligations. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported having some money at the time of their release in amounts ranging from $3 to $2340, with a median of $40.[47] The primary sources of money respondents had at the time of their release were prison or work release jobs (49%), money family had sent (36%), and/or money from a prison account (16%). Other than the money they had with them on the day of their release, just over half of respondents (51%) reported that family members provided financial support to them during the first month after release.

In fact, family members were the most commonly cited source of financial support to respondents after their release. Fourteen percent of respondents also said they relied on financial support from friends during their first month out of prison. By contrast, 26 percent relied on their own jobs and just 5 percent relied on their own savings. These are very different from respondents' pre-release expectations (see Figure 3.17). The largest shares of respondents had planned to rely on their own jobs and their families to support themselves during the first month after release, as these were the two most frequently chosen sources of financial support (54% and 42%, respectively).

By the second post-release interview, 78 percent of respondents said they had received financial support from their families for at least some time since their release from prison (see Figure 3.18). Fifty-three percent of respondents said they had received financial support from friends since their release from prison, especially during the first two months following release.

[47] The way the questions were asked in the survey does not allow us to clearly distinguish between gate money and other funds. See Employment and Finances chapter for more information about other financial resources respondents had at the time of release.

Figure 3.17 Expected and Actual Post-Prison Financial Support During First Month Out (N=272 and N=153)

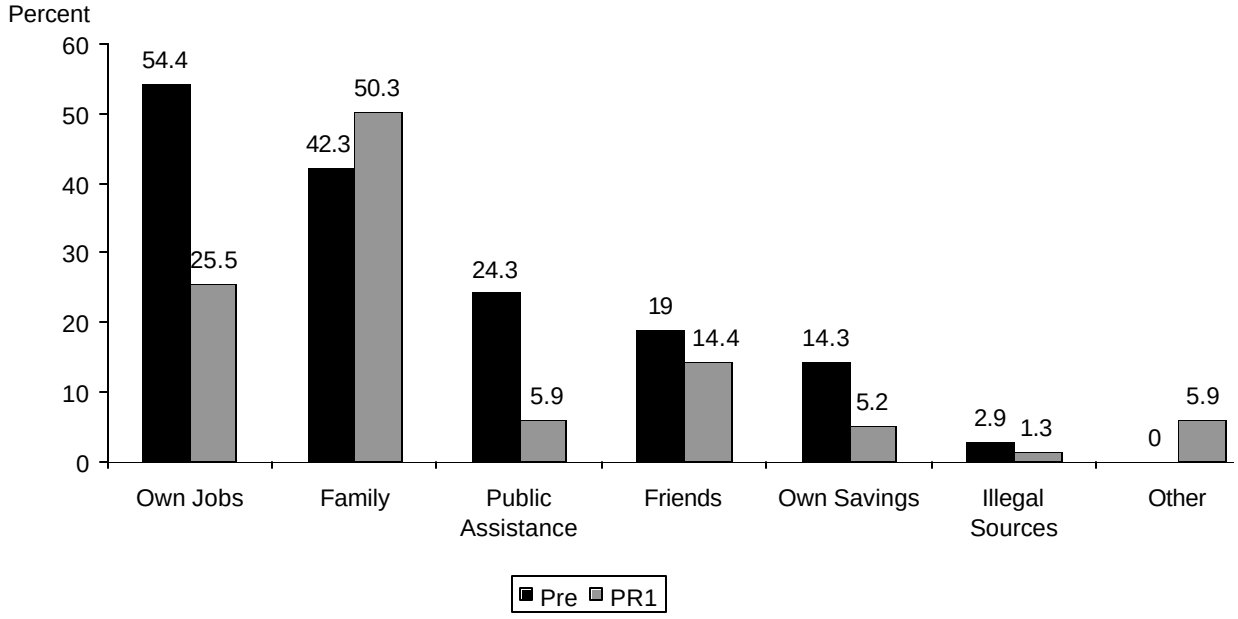
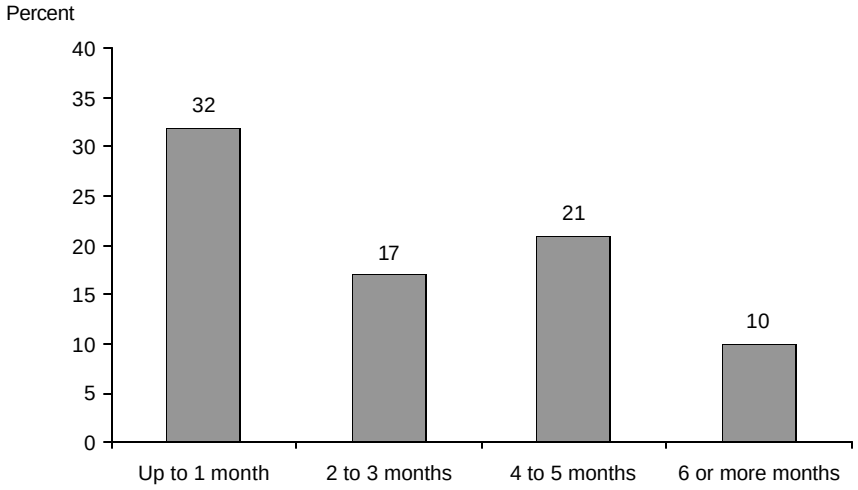


Figure 3.18 Months of Financial Support from Family, PR2 (N=80)



FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

At the first post-release interview, about 62 percent of respondents reported having some debt or other financial obligations, including supervision fees, child support, court costs, drug/alcohol testing fees, consumer debt, fines, taxes, restitution, and other debts (see Figure 3.19). Among those who had debts, the amount owed each month ranged from $15 to $7,040, with a median of $67. The total amount

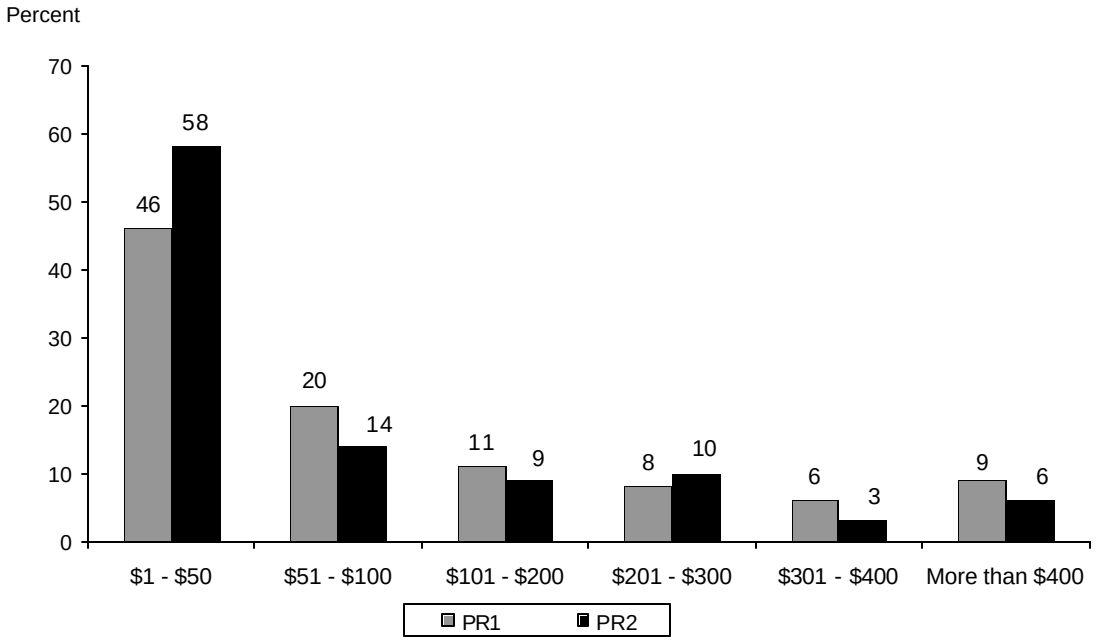
of debt owed ranged from $40 to $100,600, with a median of $1,070 (see Figure 3.20). For nearly all respondents who reported owing money for child support, their child support debt accounted for 90% or more of their total debts.[48]

Figure 3.19 Share of Respondents Who Owe Each Type of Debt, PR1 and PR2 (N=150 and N=102)

Type	PR1	PR2
Supervision Fee	46%	43%
Child Support[49]	42%	39%
Court Costs	17%	16%
Drug/Alcohol Testing Fee	15%	14%
Other Debt	12%	11%
Consumer Debt	8%	3%
Fines	4%	5%
Taxes	4%	3%
Restitution	2%	3%

[48] Only 24 respondents reported the total amount of child support owed.
[49] Percentage includes only respondents who had children.

Figure 3.20 Amount of Monthly Debt, PR1 and PR2 (N=93 and N=64)



At the second post-release interview, the same share of respondents—2 percent—reported having debts in amounts ranging from $10 to $600 per month (median was $45; see Figure 3.20). The total amount of debt still owed at PR2 ranged from $50 to $60,400, with a median of $940. Of those respondents who reported debt, 40 percent reported a smaller total amount of debt at PR2 than at PR1 (see Figure 3.21). For 20 percent of respondents at PR1, their average monthly debts exceeded their average monthly income. The same was true of 11 percent of respondents at PR2.

Figure 3.21 Median Monthly Income and Monthly Debts

	PR1	PR2
Monthly Income	$800	$750
Monthly Debts	$67	$45

At PR1, in addition to supporting themselves and paying off debts, 43 percent of respondents had at least one other person depending on them for financial support. Of respondents with children, over two-thirds (69%) reported that they provided some financial support to one or more children. About 76 percent of respondents with children were financially supporting one or more children prior to their incarceration. At PR2, 36 percent of respondents had at least one other person depending on them for financial support. In addition, 93 percent of respondents with minor children[50] reported having provided

[50] 54 percent of PR2 respondents had minor children (N=55).

at least some financial support, such as housing, food, health care, or cash, to their minor children since their release.

Respondents had a fairly accurate perception of how easy or hard it would be to handle financial obligations following their release from prison. During their pre-release interviews, of those who reported having some debt, 62 percent expected it to be *pretty hard* or *very hard* to pay off their debt. At their first post-release interviews, roughly the same percentage (60%) said it had been *pretty hard* or *very hard* to pay off debts. By the second post-release interview, however, the share of respondents who said it had been *pretty hard* or *very hard* to pay off debts dropped to 48 percent. At the pre-release interview, about 63 percent of respondents who had child support obligations expected it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to pay child support after their release. At their first post-release interview, however, just 33 percent of respondents said it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to pay child support since their release from prison.[51]

SUMMARY

Many of the respondents in our sample entered prison with poor educational backgrounds and spotty employment histories. Less than half had a high school diploma or GED before entering prison, and only 13 percent improved their education level while in prison. Although nearly two-thirds of respondents were working during the six months before entering prison, most were working less than 40 hours per week. Moreover, their extended work histories reflected unstable employment with about half holding a job for two years or less and nearly half having been fired from a job at least once before.

During the time they spent in prison, roughly a third of respondents participated in each of the following: job training and employment readiness programs, in-prison jobs, and work release jobs. The participation rates among respondents in our sample were roughly similar to or slightly higher than nationwide averages. Female inmates were more likely than males to have held in-prison jobs, while males were significantly more likely than females to have held work release jobs. Female inmates were also more likely to have participated in an employment readiness program. While these data could be an indication of a higher propensity among female inmates to participate in programming, they could also reflect a greater capacity on the part of female prisons to offer programming.

When asked during the pre-release interview about their expectations for finding work after release, most respondents were optimistic about the prospect of obtaining and maintaining post-release employment. Although 84 percent of respondents indicated that they would need some help in finding a job, two-thirds thought it would be easy to find a job, and 88 percent thought it would be easy to keep a job. Following their release, however, it became clear that reality did not exactly match these high expectations. Over time, the share of respondents who said it had been easy to find a job dropped from 65 to 45 percent, while the share saying it had been easy to keep a job fell from 88 to 74 percent.

In addition, the job-finding methods that most respondents expected to use did not match up with the methods that proved to be most successful after release. Specifically, rather than using newspaper ads or the yellow pages as expected, the job-hunting methods of employed respondents typically involved family and/or peer connections. The use of personal connections in finding employment may explain why so many employers were willing to hire respondents despite their criminal history. This speaks to the importance of maintaining/and or restoring such connections during prison and before release.

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[51] Response rates for the PR2 question "How easy or hard has it been to pay child support?" were too low to report any frequencies.

Regardless of the methods they used, by the first post-release interview, two-thirds of respondents had worked for at least a week, although only 44 percent were currently working at least 40 hours a week. Importantly, only about one in five respondents (22%) had a job lined up before their release from prison. By the second post-release interview, three-quarters of all respondents had worked for at least a month at some point since their release. Among those respondents employed at both PR1 and PR2, most were generally satisfied with their jobs, although about half were not happy with the pay they received. By the second interview, 60 percent were unhappy with their pay and about 40 percent did not want to be employed in their current job a year from now.

Several factors were related to respondents' ability to obtain jobs following their release from prison. At both interviews, respondents who had worked for at least a week and at least a month, respectively, were significantly more likely to be male, have debts, and think finding a job was important to staying out of prison. Respondents who reported having worked for a month or more at PR2 were significantly more likely to be older, to hold a high school diploma or GED. Respondents who reported having worked for a month or more at PR2 had worked for longer continuous periods than those who had not worked since release. At both points in time, there were no significant differences between "workers" and "non-workers" in terms of whether they had been in prison before this term. These data suggest that the characteristics of working respondents reflect what most employers look for in applicants—education, work experience, and maturity.

With regard to programming, respondents who had worked were significantly more likely than those who had not worked to have had a work release job while in prison. By contrast, there was no significant difference between working and non-working respondents in terms of holding an in-prison job. These findings correspond with the gender differences in post-release employment—specifically, that males were more likely to be employed than females. While females were more likely to have in-prison jobs, this factor did not correspond to post-release employment. Males were more likely to have held work-release jobs and this was related to post-release employment. It is unclear, however, whether program participation or something intrinsic to gender explains the gender differences in post-release employment. In either case, these data suggest that increasing work release program participation rates, both by providing more opportunities for participation and by actively encouraging inmates to participate, can yield positive post-release employment outcomes, and should be supported.

While respondents achieved some success in obtaining employment, they still faced many financial hurdles. Most respondents left prison with few financial resources and many financial obligations. Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported owing some amount of debt for supervision fees, child support, and other costs. After their release from prison, respondents depended on their families for financial support to a greater extent than expected, which may be related to the fact that working respondents' post-release hourly income was, on average, lower than expected. Significantly, only 26 percent reported their own jobs as a source of financial support after release.

A large number of prisoners are able to find jobs after release, but for many, these jobs are not continuous or full-time, the pay is unsatisfactory, and the type of work has no long-term career prospects. Ex-prisoners must turn to other sources of income to support themselves and their dependents, most often family members. Moreover, those who secured jobs often relied on help from family or friends, suggesting that prisoners without such resources may need direct post-release job placement assistance. Our interviews revealed that successful post-release employment would be enhanced by greater access to

GED programs, greater availability of job training and job readiness programs, and additional placements in work release jobs. Expanding these programming efforts may lead ex-prisoners to higher quality jobs. And, as research shows, higher quality jobs, typically those that require industry-specific skills lead to higher wages and a reduced likelihood of return to criminal activity and prison.

CHAPTER 4
Substance Use[52]

The substance use history and behaviors of a released prisoner can have important implications for his or her reentry experience, posing an additional hurdle to the already significant challenge of staying crime free. The link between substance use and criminal activity has been well documented. In a 1997 national survey, more than half of state prisoners reported that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time they committed the offense that led to their imprisonment (Mumola 1999). In addition, many crimes are motivated by the need for money to purchase drugs (Wish 1990-1991). Thus, prior research suggests that a large proportion of released prisoners are at risk of reoffending due to both drug-induced behavior and the commission of economically motivated crimes linked to their drug use. Furthermore, those who use illegal drugs risk arrest when they purchase and use those drugs. Substance use problems not only increase the chance of reoffending, but they may also hinder the returning prisoner's ability to complete job requirements and reestablish relations with family.

In this section, we present a number of analyses relating to substance use among released prisoners in our sample. First, we describe respondents' pre-prison substance use histories and the substance use histories of their family members; in-prison substance abuse treatment program participation; and expectations regarding their use of alcohol and drugs after their release, examining differences by gender, conviction offense, and prior criminal history. Next, we describe released prisoners' self-reported substance use activities after their return to the community, and any substance abuse treatment they may have received. Finally, we present findings regarding how an individual's substance use history and other relevant factors may serve as predictors of post-release drug use. Rates of drug use or intoxication after release for those in our sample were significant, with one of every three respondents (34.3%) reported any drug use or intoxication at one to two months after release.

SUBSTANCE USE DATA COLLECTED THROUGH *RETURNING HOME*

Information about our sample's pre-prison and post-release substance use activities was gathered at all three data collection points. During the pre-release self-administered survey, prisoners were asked about their frequency of alcohol or drug use in the six months prior to their current prison term, the substance use histories of their family members, and a series of questions designed to gauge the extent to which alcohol or drug use interfered with their job performances, family relationships, and daily activities. Respondents were asked a few brief questions about any substance abuse treatment and Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA) participation while in prison, as well as their expectations about whether they would stay away from drugs and alcohol after their release.

During their first post-release interview (PR1), respondents were asked more extensive questions about substance abuse treatment received both during their incarceration and since their release from prison. They were also asked whether they had used drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days as well as about lifetime use of drugs and alcohol, the extent to which any post-release drug or alcohol use interfered with

[52] Nancy La Vigne and Christy Visher, authors.

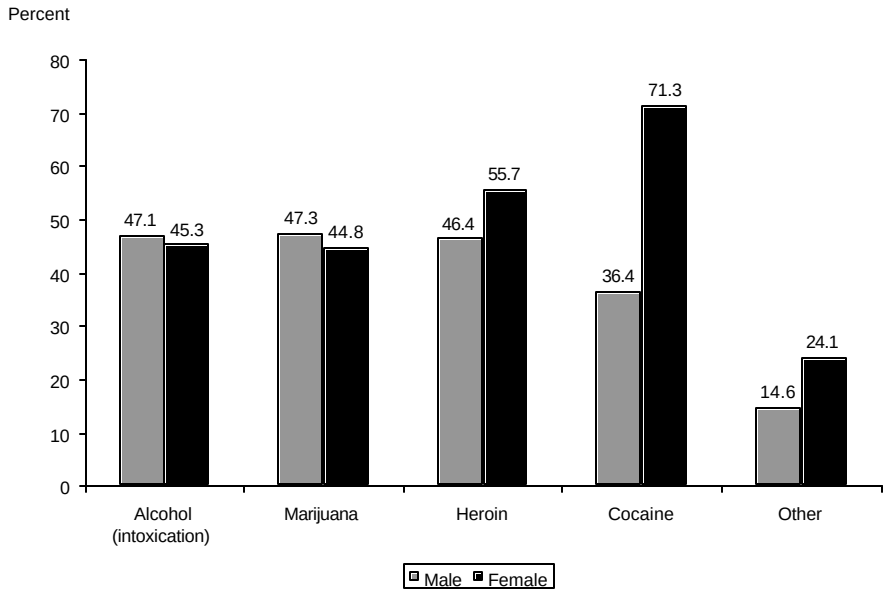
their work or interpersonal relationships, and whether any post-release criminal activity was drug-related (e.g., if respondents engaged in drug dealing or committed other crimes to obtain money to buy drugs).

The second post-release interview (PR2) completed by respondents in our sample covered any additional substance abuse treatment involvement since their release, as well as any alcohol or drug use in the past 30 days. In addition, during this interview, a calendar was used to document periods of substance use since release by month in relation to other indicators of post-release success or failure, such as employment and self-reported criminal behavior. Due to problems associated with the small PR2 sample size (N=104), however, as well as missing data across survey items, very few PR2 findings are reported in this chapter.

PRE-PRISON HISTORY AND PRE-RELEASE EXPECTATIONS

A history of substance use is prevalent among incarcerated men and women and can serve as a predictor of post-release outcomes. Maryland prisoners were asked several questions about their drug and alcohol use during the six months leading up to their incarceration. The majority reported some drug (78%) and/or alcohol use (61%), with cocaine and heroin topping the list of drugs by type. As depicted in Figure 4.1, male and female respondents reported use of drugs and alcohol in similar proportions. However, females reported use of cocaine at a significantly higher rate than males.[53]

Figure 4.1 Type of Substance Use During the Six Months Prior to Incarceration, by Gender (Ns vary by substance: 309, 313, 312, 312, 312, and 302, respectively)



[53] Chi-square significant at .000.

For many in our sample, their alcohol and drug use appeared to be fairly serious based on responses to survey questions about their drug using behavior. For example, about 66 percent said they spent a lot of time using, or recovering from using, alcohol or drugs during the six months prior to their incarceration, and approximately the same share (63%) reported using alcohol and drugs more often or in larger amounts than intended during that time.

Frequency of substance use varied among respondents by type of substance: one-quarter (24%) of respondents used marijuana on a daily basis in the six months before entering prison; 27 percent drank alcohol daily; 30 percent used cocaine daily; 41 percent used heroin daily; and 23 percent injected drugs at least once in the six months before entering prison. It is interesting to note that those respondents who had served previous prison terms did not report excessive alcohol or drug use at greater frequencies than those who were serving their first prison term (as measured by whether respondents reported having used more than one drug at a time, or having drank to the point of intoxication, at any time during the six months prior to incarceration).

While frequency of alcohol use prior to prison did not differ significantly by gender, the frequency of drug use did. Specifically, female respondents were much more likely to report daily use of heroin and cocaine than their male counterparts. Almost 52 percent of female respondents reported daily use of cocaine, versus 22 percent of men.[54] While only significant at the .09 level, a similar difference was observed with regard to heroin, for which 50 percent of females reported daily use versus 37 percent of males. With regard to both heroin and cocaine, frequency of use followed a bi-modal distribution, with male and female respondents clustering at two ends of the spectrum, "no use at all" and "daily use" (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

[54] Chi-square significant at .000.

Figure 4.2 Frequency of Heroin Use During the Six Months Prior to Incarceration (N = 312)

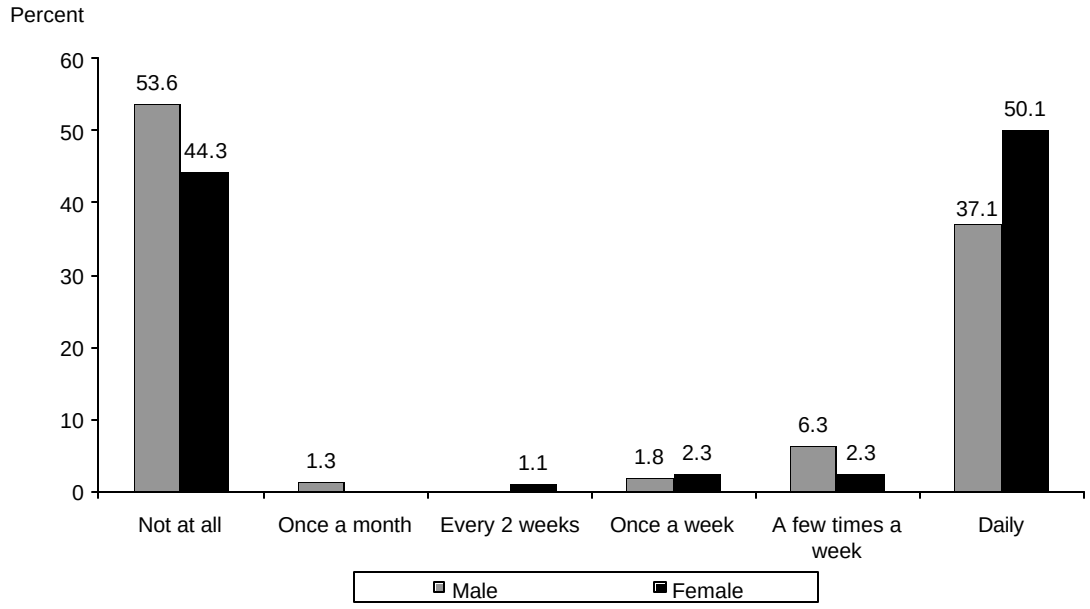
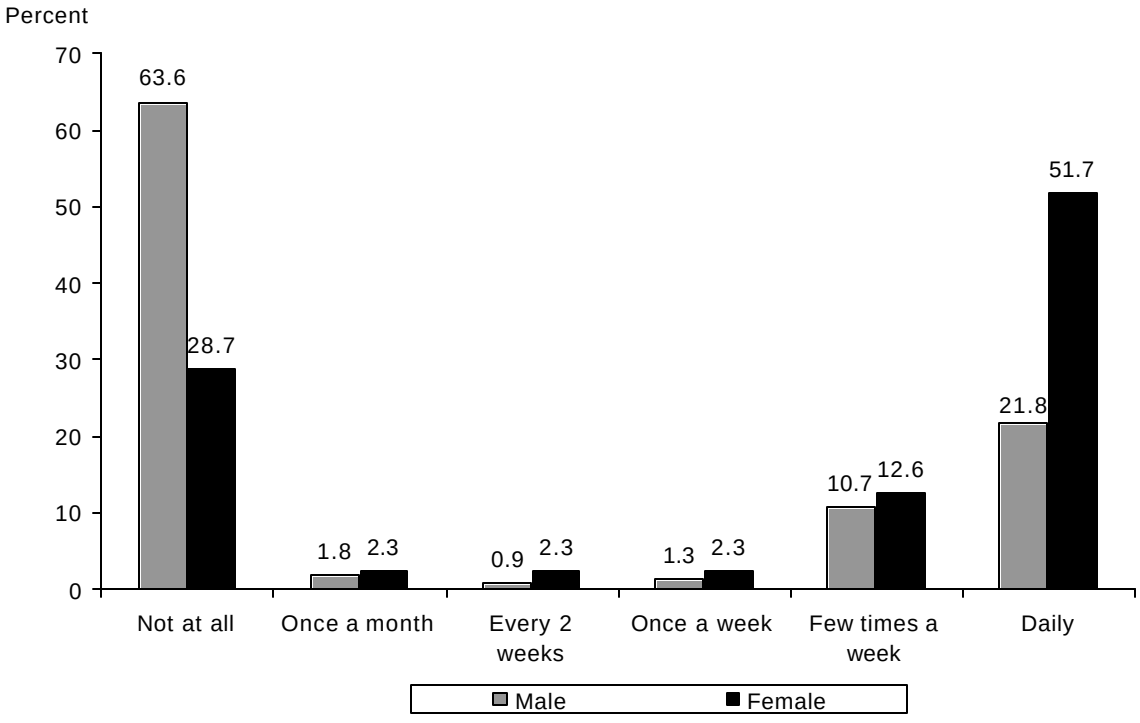
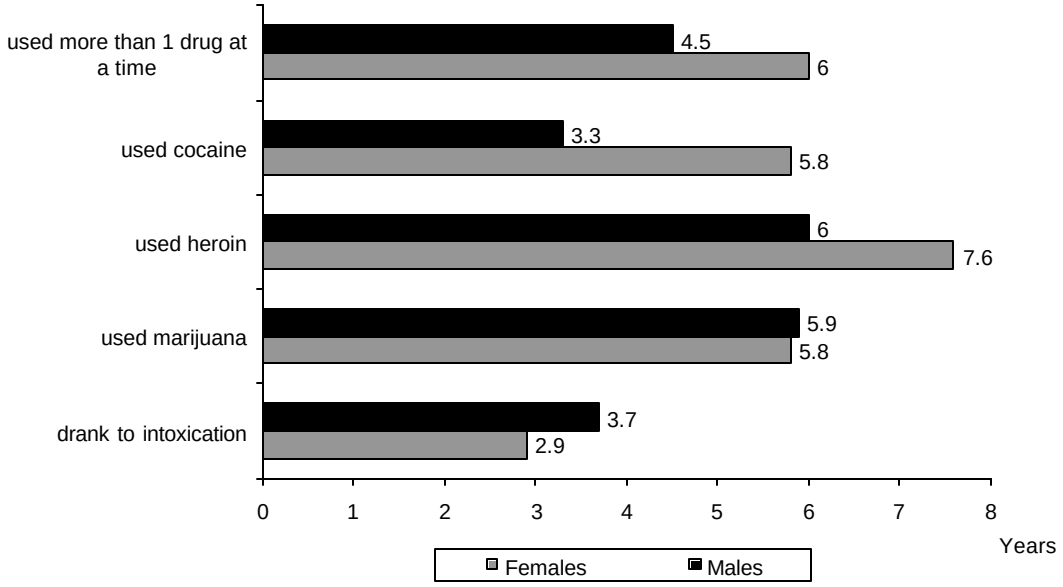


Figure 4.3 Frequency of Cocaine Use During Six Months Prior to Incarceration (N = 312)



Based on PR1 interviews with respondents, we also learned that for many of the individuals in our sample, drug and alcohol use had been a part of their lives for several years. Heroin use was the most long-term substance use problem, with respondents overall reporting an average of over 6 years of use and one respondent reporting 40 years of heroin use. Perhaps more importantly, while not statistically significant,[55] the differences between males and females with regard to lifetime use of heroin, cocaine, and multiple drugs are noteworthy. Females reported much longer average periods of drug use (see Figure 4.4 below).

Figure 4.4 Years of Substance Use, by Gender
(Ns vary by response category: 122, 118, 122, 119, and 97 respectively).



Drug and alcohol use caused serious problems for most respondents. We asked respondents a series of questions about "whether drugs caused any of these situations in your life?"[56] Notably, nearly two-thirds of drug users reported arrests caused by their drug use. About one-half of drug users reported relationship problems and arguments at home about their drug use, and about one-third of drug-users reported missing school and/or work and losing jobs as a result of their drug use. For alcohol users, arrests and arguments at home were the most commonly cited problems associated with their alcohol use (see Figures 4.5 and 4.6 below).

[55] We suspect, however, that a larger sample size would yield a statistically significant difference between men and women with regard to lifetime use of drugs.

[56] Respondents were asked to "check all that apply." The problems listed were: missed work or school; lost job; other job problems; neglected child care; unpaid child support; arguments at home; arguments about your drug use; problems with relationships; reckless driving; driving under the influence (no arrest or charge); DUI arrest or charge; drivers' license suspension; physical fights or property damage; serious injury; arrests; other legal problems; blackouts/inability to remember what happened while you were using drugs; and health problems.

Figure 4.5 Top Five Problems Associated with Alcohol Use (N = 173)

Type of Problem	Percent
Arrests	34.1
Arguments at Home	30.1
Physical Fights/Property Damage	23.1
Relationship Problems	22.5
Missed Work/School	18.5

Figure 4.6 Top Five Problems Associated with Drug Use (N = 221)

Type of Problem	Percent
Arrests	62.9
Relationship Problems	53.4
Arguments about Drug Use	51.1
Arguments at Home	49.8
Missed Work/School	36.7

Many respondents reported multiple problems, with 28 percent of respondents reporting five or more different problems associated with their drug use (see Figure 4.7). Respondents reported significantly fewer problems stemming from their alcohol use, with just 8.3 percent reporting five or more problems (see Figure 4.8). With regard to differences by gender, alcohol appears to by a more serious issue for males than for females: the average number of problems male respondents indicated as associated with alcohol use was 2.29, versus just .94 for females.[57] However, both males and females reported roughly similar (i.e., not statistically different) numbers of problems associated with drug use (4.06 for males and 5.14 for females).

[57] Chi-square significant at .054.

Figure 4.7 Number of Problems Associated with Drug Use (N = 324)

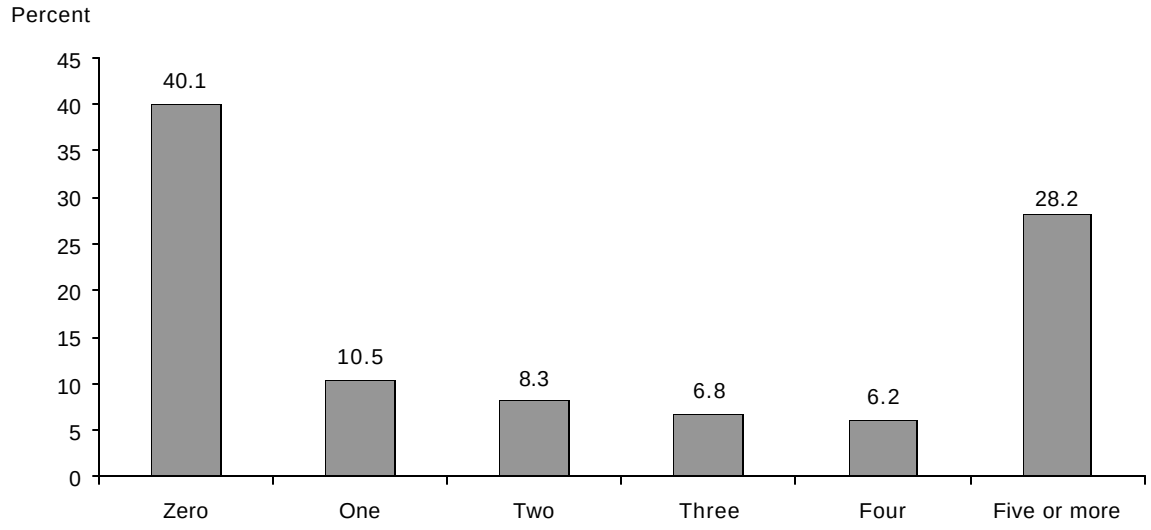
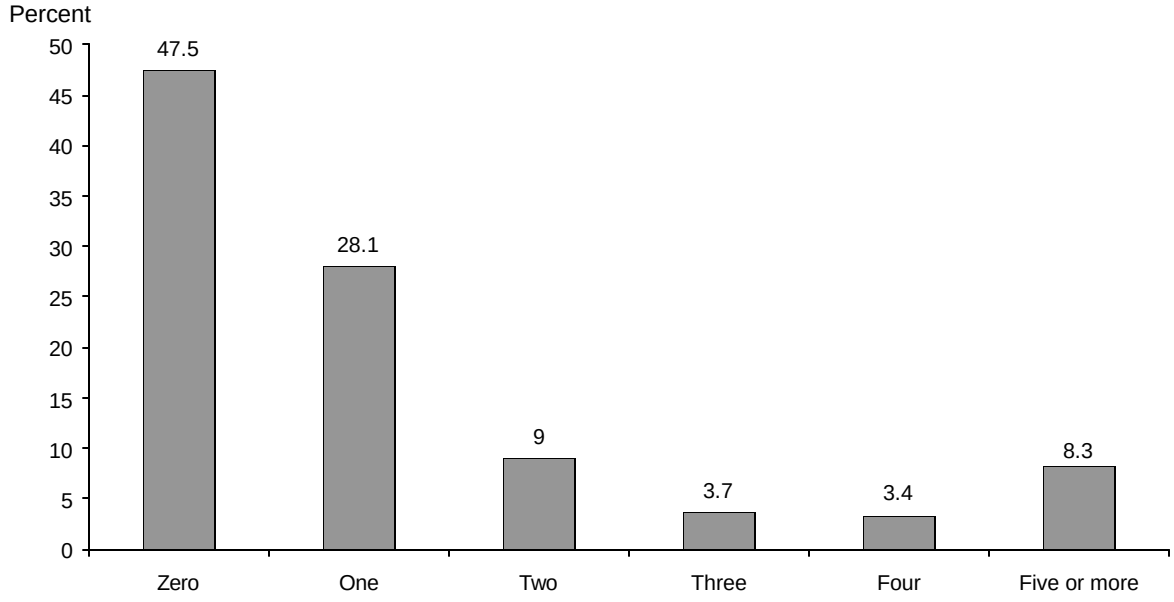


Figure 4.8 Number of Problems Associated with Alcohol Use (N = 324)

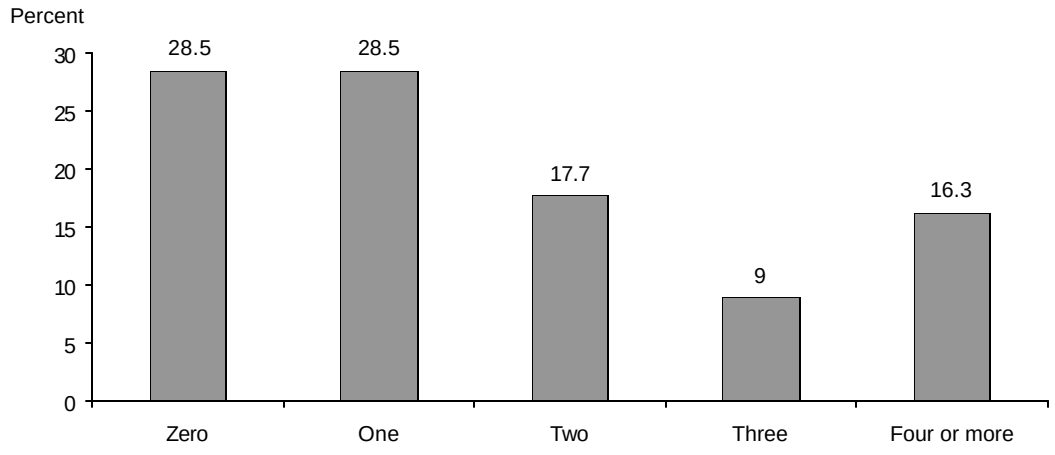


FAMILY HISTORY OF SUBSTANCE USE

It is not unusual for substance use problems to extend beyond the individual to other family members, and to be related to issues of family functioning and domestic violence. As mentioned above, relationship problems and arguments at home ranked high on the list of problems for those reporting both drug and alcohol use. In addition, the majority of respondents (71.5%) reported having at least one family member with a substance use or alcohol problem. Over 16 percent of respondents listed four or more family members with histories of substance use, and respondents overall reported a mean of 1.77 family members (see Figure 4.9). The reentry challenges for those returning to households consisting of substance users are significant—not only is the allure of substance use greater because returning prisoners may witness a family member's drug or alcohol use, but it is also plausible that substance-using family members are less likely to provide support for the returning prisoner.

Those who reported having consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication in the six months prior to incarceration were also much more likely to have reported physically hurting a family or household member (16.4%) versus those who did not report such excessive drinking (7.5%).[58] This finding was mirrored among those who reported using more than one drug at a time in the six months prior to incarceration: 15.3 percent reporting physically harming a family member versus 5.3% of those who did not use multiple drugs. Thus, substance use among returning prisoners raises issues regarding individuals' prospects for reentry success (e.g., staying drug- and crime-free) as well as for the safety of household members with whom they live.

Figure 4.9 Number of Family Members with Substance Use Problems (N = 277)



IN-PRISON SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND PROGRAMMING

Given the extensive substance use histories of many prisoners, the period of incarceration offers a useful opportunity to provide treatment and programming as a means of changing behaviors and improving the prospects for successful reentry. In the pre-release survey, 27 percent of respondents

[58] Chi-square significant at .013.

reported participating in a specific drug or alcohol treatment program, and 46 percent reported having attended Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA).[59] Those respondents whose primary conviction was for a drug offense (both possession and sales) were more likely to have participated in a drug or alcohol treatment program than those convicted of other offenses, with 35 percent of drug offenders reporting participation in substance abuse treatment compared to 20 percent of non-drug offenders.[60] However, there were no significant differences between groups with regard to AA/NA participation.

In the first post-release interview, we asked respondents more detailed questions about access to programs while respondents were incarcerated. Of the sub-sample of those interviewed at PR1 (N=153), 42 percent indicated that they were offered substance abuse programming. Of those, 22 percent reported participating in such programs (including Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, RSAT) while incarcerated. When asked why they participated in the treatment program(s), the most common response

Maryland Substance Abuse Programming
Excerpt from *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*

MD DOC operates several programs that address substance abuse problems. One of these programs, a residential substance abuse treatment (RSAT) program for prisoners who are identified as having a history of substance abuse problems, provides prisoners with six months of residential treatment at the Central Laundry Facility or the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. After their release, participants are referred for further treatment at community-based outpatient centers. In 2001, 610 men and 34 women, or 3 percent of Maryland prisoners, were admitted to the program.

Another substance abuse program offered by the MD DOC is the Women's Intensive Treatment (WIT) program. While much substance abuse treatment within prison systems focuses on inmates who will be released in the near future, WIT provides female prisoners who are serving longer sentences and are not yet close to their release date with intensive drug and alcohol treatment. The inmates who participate in WIT are typically 36 months or longer from release. The treatment, which is specifically designed to address the unique needs of female prisoners, may last up to nine months. In addition to drug and alcohol treatment, other components of WIT include self-esteem and relationship issues, domestic violence, and parenting assistance. In 2001, 73 women, or 6 percent of female inmates, were admitted to the WIT program.

In addition, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) groups are administered by addiction specialists at major facilities and most prerelease and minimum security facilities. Many of the prerelease and minimum security facilities also have AA and NA groups that are run by inmates. MD DOC does not maintain data on the total number of AA and NA programs available systemwide.

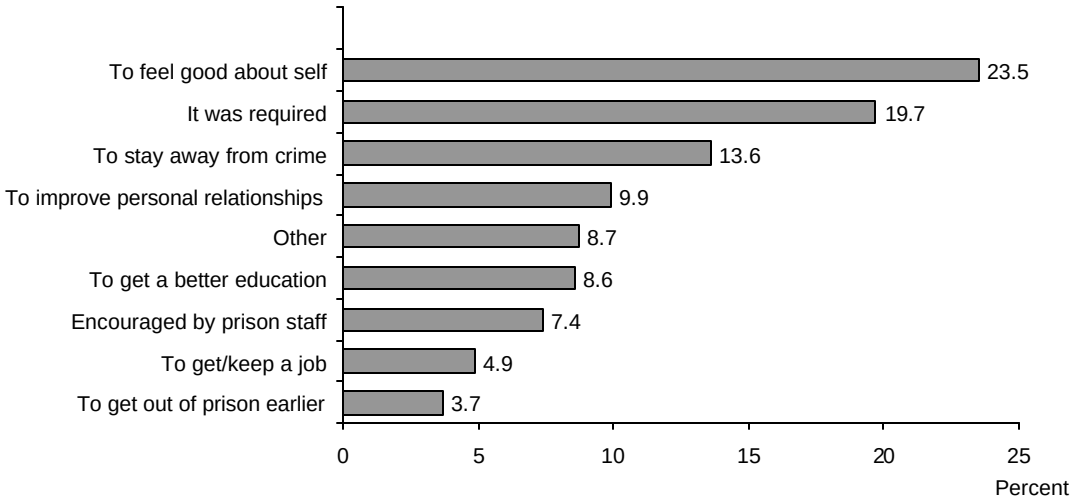
[59] In the survey instrument, we asked separate questions about participation in AA/NA and substance abuse treatment programs.

[60] Chi-square significant at .003. It should be noted that it is likely that a significant share of prisoners we identified as "non-drug offenders" may indeed have been convicted of drug charges; however, our DOC data source only included primary (most serious) conviction offenses for those in our sample.

was *To feel good about yourself* followed by *It was required/mandatory* (see Figure 4.10 below). These are two very different responses, raising the question of whether some motivations for treatment participation (i.e., those that are voluntary and based on an interest in self-improvement) may be more likely to predict positive outcomes than others. Unfortunately, our relatively small sample sizes do not allow us to explore this hypothesis in more detail.

It is important to note that some respondents may have considered drug education programs as substance abuse treatment. The most extensive substance abuse treatment program in Maryland correctional facilities, the RSAT program, only serves a small percentage of inmates. In our sample, about 11 percent reported participating in RSAT.

Figure 4.10 Reasons for Participation in Substance Abuse Programming (N = 81)

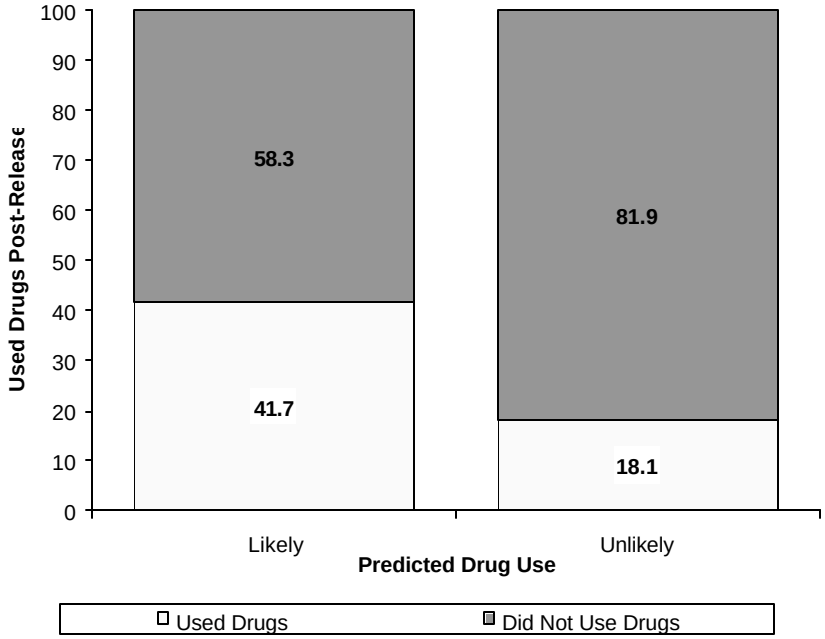


EXPECTATIONS FOR RELEASE

The risk of returning to prison appears to have an impact on whether respondents expected to engage in drug use after their release. Almost 21 percent of male and female respondents indicated that it was *likely* or *very likely* that they would use drugs if they knew they would not get caught. However, when the survey question was posed differently, asking the likelihood of drug use if the respondent knew he or she would be arrested for such behavior, only 12.8 percent of respondents reported that it was *likely* or *very likely* they would use drugs after their release. These questions were designed to both capture information about respondents' expectations about future substance use as well as to assess the extent to which the threat of arrest (and ultimately, reincarceration) might serve as a deterrent. Here we find that a small but significant share of respondents expect to use drugs after their release no matter what the cost; that said, an equal share of respondents expected that they would only do drugs if they knew they would not be caught.

Those who predicted that they were *likely* or *very likely* to use drugs following their release if they knew they would not be caught were indeed more likely to do so: 41.7 percent of those who thought they would use drugs under these conditions had done so in the past 30 days (at the time of the first post-release interview), versus just 18.1 percent of those who believed they would not use drugs (see Figure 4.11).[61]

Figure 4.11 Expected versus Actual Drug Use (N = 129)



Despite the extensive substance use and criminal histories of many of the individuals in our sample, abstaining from drugs did not rank high on the list of items respondents were presented with as being important in staying our of prison. Respondents were asked "Which of these things do you think will be important in order for you to stay out of prison" and were given the option to "check all that apply," and then were asked, of those they checked, which were the two most important factors.[62] Only 21.6 percent of respondents listed *not using drugs* as being one of the top two most important factors in preventing a return to prison.

Expectations about the challenges of staying off drugs, as well as for the amount of assistance they might need in doing so, differed significantly by gender. Women were more likely to report that refraining from drug use is an important factor in staying out of prison (80% of women versus 65.6% of men).[63] Likewise, female respondents were more likely to express a need for drug and/or alcohol

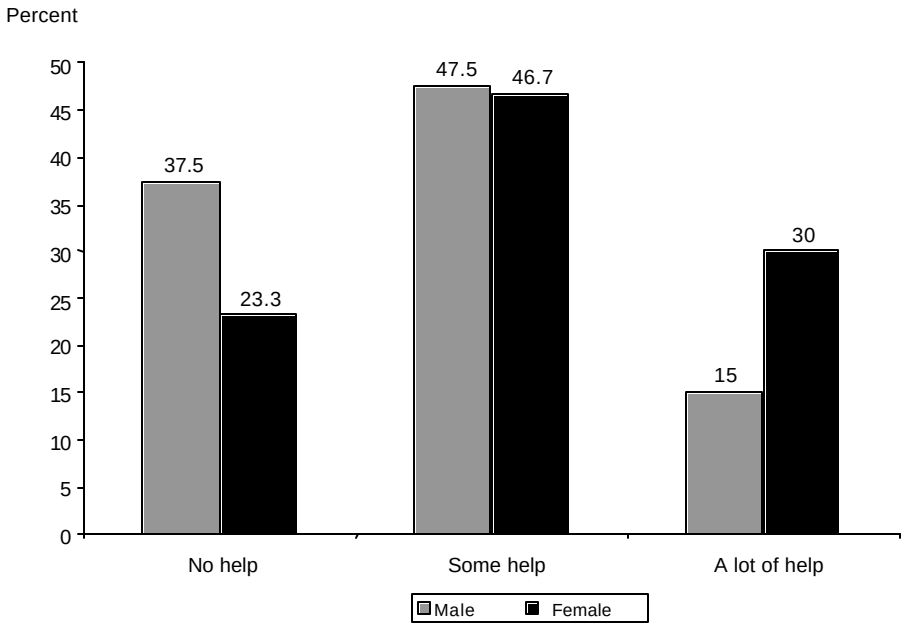
[61] Chi-square significant at .027.

[62] The factors included: having a place to live; having a job; having access to health care; having enough money to support yourself; not using drugs; not using alcohol; getting support from your family; seeing your children; getting support from your friends; and avoiding certain people/situations.

[63] Chi-square significant at .014.

treatment after their release, with 30 percent of females indicating the need for *a lot of help* versus just 15 percent of men (see Figure 4.12).[64]

Figure 4.12 Need for Drug and/or Alcohol Treatment After Release, by Gender (N = 180)



With regard to alcohol use, however, responses were similar by gender; almost half of both male and female respondents indicated that not drinking was an important factor in staying out of prison.

POST-RELEASE EXPERIENCES

Family and Interpersonal Relationships

During the first post-release interview, nine percent of respondents reported living with someone who uses drugs, and seven percent reported living with someone who gets drunk often. Despite this finding, in PR1, an overwhelming 89.3 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement, "I have someone in my family who would provide support with a substance use problem." Nonetheless, this response was not associated with post-release drug or alcohol use. Similar percentages of those agreeing that they have family support regarding substance use reported using drugs or alcohol after release as those who indicated that they did not have such family support (21.4% versus 26.7% respectively).

Employment

While one might assume that drug use is associated with unemployment, those who were employed reported drug use at a similar rate (18.8%) as those who were not employed at the time of the

[64] Chi-square significant at .013.

PR1 interview (20.8%). Thus, it appears that employment does not necessarily deter drug or alcohol use, although substance use may interfere with employment.[65]

Post-Release Drug Treatment

Eighteen percent of PR1 respondents reported participation in AA/NA in the past 30 days, and 12.1 percent reported having had some type of outpatient substance abuse treatment in the past 30 days (N=140). It is likely that access to and/or interest in treatment declines over time, as only 3 percent of PR2 respondents reported having had any inpatient or outpatient treatment in the past 30 days. Likewise, participation in AA/NA among PR2 respondents dropped off significantly as compared to that reported by PR1 respondents; just 8 percent reported having attended AA/NA in the past 30 days.

Drug Use and Drug-Related Criminal Activity

Self-reported drug possession and sales was quite low among respondents in our sample. Just six percent of respondents reported having dealt drugs and nine percent reporting possession of drugs at PR1.[66] Based on self-reported information collected in PR2, these percentages increased marginally, but not significantly, over time (6.8% reported drug possession and 12% reported drug sales). Overall, however, respondents reported significant rates of substance use at PR1, and moderate rates of drug use in the past 30 days at PR2 (see Figure 4.13 below). One-third (33%) of PR1 respondents reported some type of drug use and/or intoxication, with 21.5 percent reporting drug use alone and 16 percent reporting having been intoxicated since their release. At PR2, the survey questions were posed differently, asking respondents about their drug use in the past thirty days. While rates of use are lower in PR2 than PR1 (see Figure 4.14), this is likely the result of how the question was posed, and unfortunately does not enable us to conduct side-by-side comparisons of substance use over time.[67]

[65] About one-third of respondents reported that their drug use prior to incarceration caused them to miss work (36.7%) and/or to lose their jobs (33.0%).

[66] These statistics are derived from questions pertaining to criminal involvement. As such, rates of possession should not be confused with the rates of drug use also reported in this section. [more]

[67] The average time to interview between release and PR1 was 81 days, providing a much greater time window within which to engage in substance use as compared to the 30-day window associated with the question gauging PR2 substance use.

Figure 4.13 Substance Use at PR1 (Ns = 141, 149, and 144, respectively)

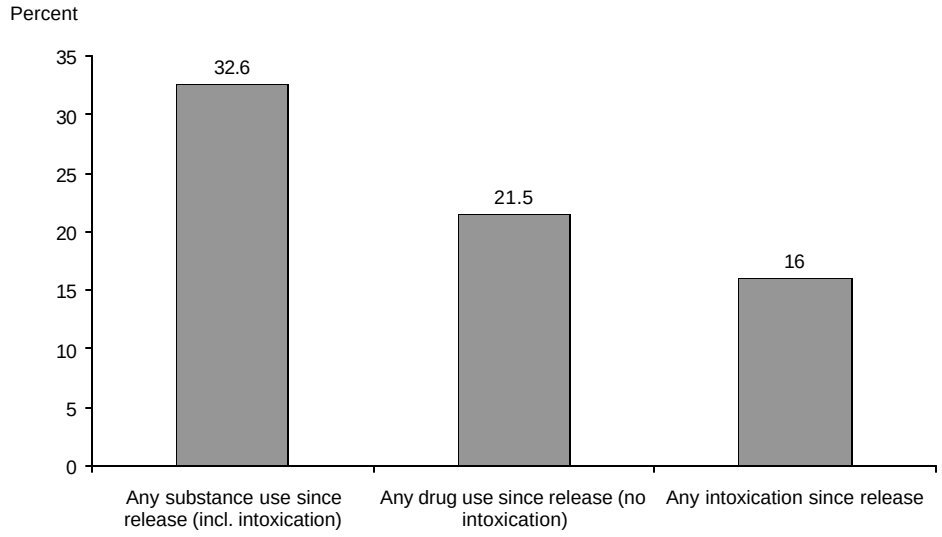
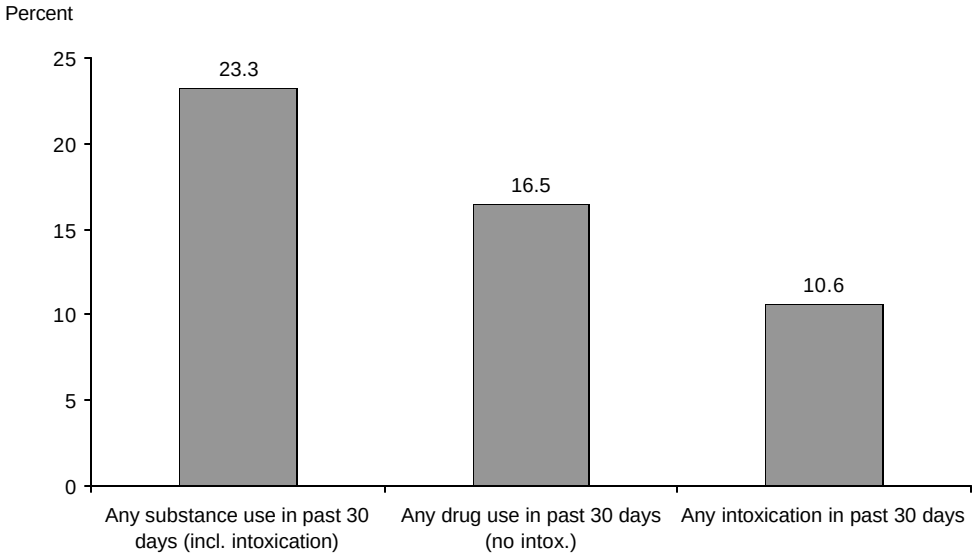


Figure 4.14 Substance Use in Past 30 days at PR2 (Ns = 102, 102, and 104, respectively)



With regard to substances such as cocaine and heroin that seemed to be most problematic for respondents prior to their incarceration, respondents reported relatively low rates of use at PR1 and PR2. As depicted in Figures 4.15 and 4.16 below, the vast majority of respondents reported no heroin or cocaine use at all. While the figures below suggest that there might be a marginal increase in drug use over time (e.g., for example, fewer respondents reported not using heroin or cocaine at PR2 than at PR1), these differences were not statistically significant. It stands to reason, however, that post-prison substance use for some types of drugs may manifest itself over a longer period of time than four to six months after release. It is also likely that there is a certain degree of under-reporting of some types of drug use among those in our sample.

Figure 4.15 Frequency of Cocaine Use at PR1 versus PR2 (N = 151 & 103)

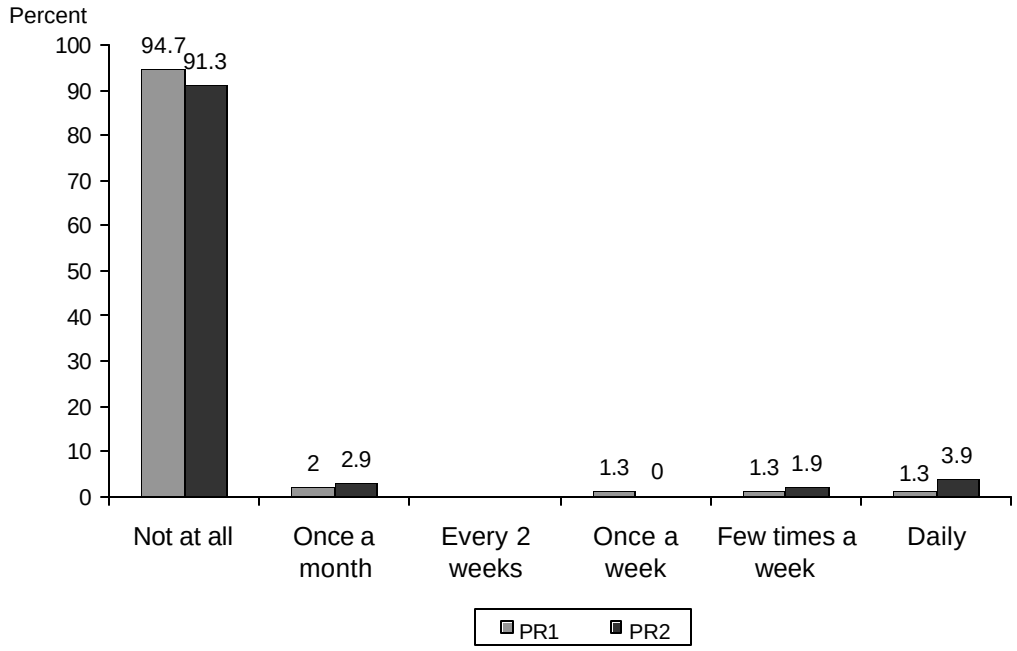
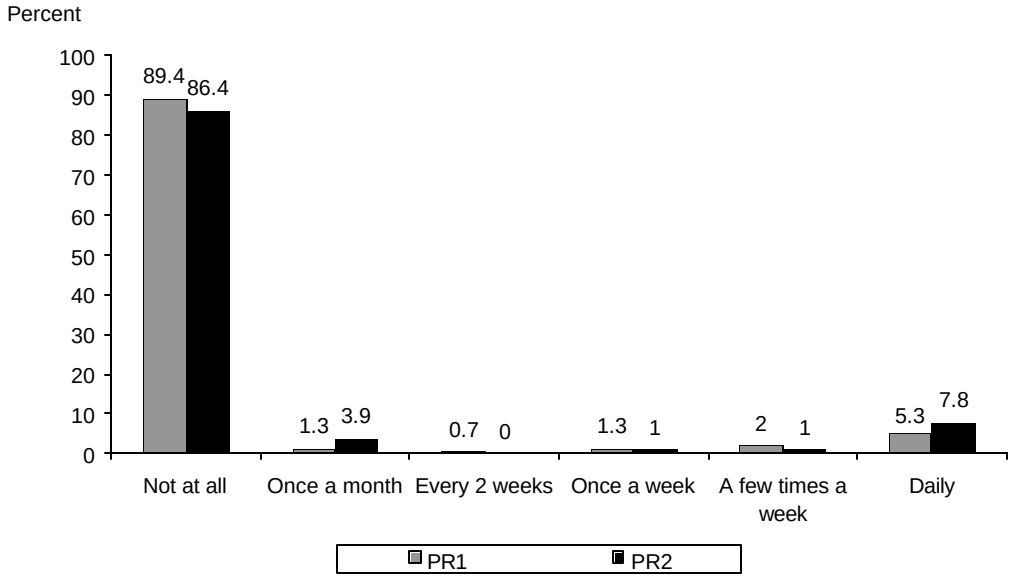


Figure 4.16 Frequency of Heroin Use at PR1 versus PR2 (N = 151 & 103)



FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH POST-RELEASE SUBSTANCE USE

Given the exploratory nature of this pilot study, our sample sizes are too small to engage in extensive predictive analyses (i.e., multivariate analyses that would enable us to hold other variables constant while exploring the effect that an individual characteristic might have on post-release substance use). Nonetheless, it is useful to compare means on such variables across a divided sample based on whether respondents reported any post-release substance use or intoxication at the time of the PR1 interview. Figure 4.17 reports the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining these variables, with the shaded cells indicating those characteristics that had significantly different means, as defined by an F-statistic significant at .10 or lower. A number of interesting findings emerge from this comparison of means, which we divide into subheadings below.

Demographic and Criminal History Characteristics

Characteristics such as the respondent's age, gender, and criminal history, as well as post-prison employment, are likely to have an impact on a variety of reentry outcomes, including post-release substance use. Of these variables, however, only age resulted in a statistically significant finding. We created a dummy variable dividing age into two categories above and below the mean, young (aged 16 to 32) and old (aged 33 to 58), and coded older respondents as "1" and younger respondents as "0." The ANOVA shows that younger respondents were more likely to use drugs after release than their older counterparts. Somewhat surprisingly, however, factors such as whether the respondent had been convicted of a drug crime, number of prior incarcerations, and whether the respondent had been employed after release were not associated with post-release substance use.

Substance Use History and Treatment Factors

It stands to reason that the extent of a respondent's pre-prison substance use activities might be related to post-prison substance use. Likewise, we might hypothesize that those respondents who received substance abuse treatment in prison would be less likely to use drugs after release. Surprisingly, only this latter measure was significant. Those who did use drugs reported roughly equal numbers of problems due to pre-prison drinking and drug use as those who did. However, substance abuse treatment appears to have a significant and positive effect on post-release substance use: those who used drugs after release were much less likely to have participated in AA/NA and/or substance abuse treatment than those who did not. What we are unable to determine, however, is the extent to which self-selection into substance abuse treatment (which may be motivated by an individual's desire to succeed) may be preventing continued substance use, rather than the treatment itself.

Family Context Variables

As described in detail in Chapter 7, the nature of the released prisoner's family can have significant influence on reentry success or failure. For the ANOVA, we examined whether the respondent reported having someone in his or her family to provide support with regard to substance use problems, as well as the number of the respondent's family members who have drug or alcohol problems. Apparently, negative family influences have a greater impact on reentry outcomes than positive ones: while there was no significant difference in family support between those who did and did not use drugs after release, those who did use drugs reported a greater number of family members with substance use problems (2.14 family members) versus those who did not (1.46 family members). However, that little variance existed among respondents with regard to the family support question, with 89.3 percent indicating that they had such family support.

Social and Neighborhood Context Variables

Based on the power of negative family influences on post-release drug use, we would expect that peers would have a similar impact on reentry outcomes. We asked respondents a number of questions about both positive and negative peer characteristics, including the number of the respondent's close friends who use and sell drugs. Both variables were highly significant: those who used drugs at PR1 had significantly greater numbers of peers who both used (1.97) and sold (1.55) than those who did not use drugs after release (1.35 and .98, respectively). Well over half (62 %) of PR1 respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement "Drug selling is a major problem in your neighborhood." When used as a neighborhood context variable in our ANOVA, however, we did not discern any significant differences in responses to this question between those who used drugs after release and those who did not.

Individual Characteristics

Individual characteristics associated with drug and alcohol use include the respondents' assessments of how likely they would use drugs after release from prison (assuming they would not be caught), and whether respondents reported needing help with alcohol and drug problems after release. Perhaps not surprisingly, we found that those who expected to use drugs after their release (assuming they would not be caught) were indeed more likely to do so. Respondents' expressions of need for help with

substance use problems after their release, however, were the same whether or not they had used drugs at PR1.

Figure 4.17 ANOVA—Comparison of Means by Whether or Not R Reported Any Drug or Alcohol Use at PR1

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Demographics & CJ History						
Dummy var. - R's age at time of pre-release interview (0 = 16-32; 1=33-58)	no drug use or intoxication	95	.6526	.4787		
	Used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	45	.4889	.5055		
	Total	140	.6000	.4917	3.447	.066
Dummy var. - R's gender (0=male; 1=female)	no drug use or intoxication	95	.25	.44		
	Used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	46	.17	.38		
	Total	141	.23	.42	1.088	.299
Dummy var.—R incarcerated for drug crime (1=yes; 0=no)	no drug use or intoxication	95	.5158	.5024		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	46	.5652	.5012		
	Total	141	.5319	.5008	.300	.584
Dummy var.—No. of prior incarcerations (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	95	.6105	.4902		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	45	.5556	.5025		
	Total	140	.5929	.4931	.378	.540
Dummy var. - R has worked since release (1=yes; 0=no) (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	93	.6667	.47396		
	Used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	46	.6522	.48154		
	Total	139	.6619	.47478	.028	.866
Substance Use & Treatment History						
No. of problems due to drinking pre-prison (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	45	2.02	2.79		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	31	2.06	2.50		
	Total	76	2.04	2.66	.005	.946
No. of problems due to drugs pre-prison (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	56	4.43	3.76		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	33	4.12	3.10		
	Total	89	4.31	3.51	.158	.692
Dummy var.—R had AA/NA and/or any type of SA treatment (incl. RSAT) in prison (1=yes; 0=no) (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	87	.4138	.4954		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	44	.1364	.3471		
	Total	131	.3206	.4685	11.038	.001
Family Context						
Dummy var.—R has someone in family to support them re: substance use (1=yes; 0=no) (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	92	.9022	.2987		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	46	.8913	.3147		
	Total	138	.8986	.3030	.039	.843

Chart continues

Figure 4.17 ANOVA—Comparison of Means by Whether or Not R Reported Any Drug or Alcohol Use at PR1

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
No. of family members w/ drug/alcohol problems (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	79	1.46	1.73		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	37	2.14	2.07		
	Total	116	1.67	1.86	3.418	.067
Social & Neighborhood Context						
No. of R's close friends who use illegal drugs (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	48	1.35	1.176		
	Used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	33	1.97	1.104		
	Total	81	1.60	1.180	5.631	.020
No. of R's close friends who sell illegal drugs (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	48	.98	1.176		
	Used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	29	1.55	1.152		
	Total	77	1.19	1.193	4.351	.040
Dummy var.—drug selling in R's n'hood (1=yes; 0=no) (PR1)	no drug use or intoxication	91	.6154	.48920		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	44	.6136	.49254		
	Total	135	.6148	.48845	.000	.985
Individual Characteristics						
Dummy var - How likely R would use drugs if not caught (0=unlikely; 1=likely) (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	81	.1111	.3162		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	44	.3415	.4801		
	Total	122	.1885	.3927	10.06	.002
Dummy var.—R needs help w/ alcohol/drug problems (1=yes; 0=no) (pre-release)	no drug use or intoxication	44	.6364	.4866		
	used drugs and/or drank to intoxication	22	.6818	.4767		
	Total	66	.6515	.4801	.130	.720

SUMMARY

This chapter presents some important findings that have implications both for policies and services designed to prevent post-release substance use, as well as for future research on this topic. One of the most noteworthy findings is the extent to which respondents reported past use of drugs and alcohol. Well over half of respondents reported at least some drug or excessive alcohol use, with cocaine and heroin topping the list. And in many cases, such substance use has been going on for a significant amount of time: Lifetime use of heroin, for example, averaged over six years. This pre-prison drug and alcohol use was associated with a variety of problems, including family and relationship issues, employment, and arrests. Developing effective reentry programs in Maryland demands attention to the intersection between substance use and criminal behavior.

Family histories of substance use among respondents were also significant. Over half of respondents reported at least one family member who had a substance use problem. Those who used drugs after their release reported higher numbers of family members with substance use problems than those who did not. In addition, those respondents who reported having substance use problems were

more likely to physically harm family members. Both findings have implications for caseworkers and others providing guidance and advice on appropriate living arrangements for returning prisoners.

We observed significant differences in respondents based upon gender and age. Women, for example, had even more extensive substance use histories than men: they were more likely to use heroin on a daily basis and reported longer lifetime use of both heroin and cocaine than men in our sample. In addition, younger respondents were more likely to use drugs after release than their older counterparts. These findings suggest that "one size fits all" substance abuse treatment may not be appropriate, in that different populations may have unique needs and may respond differently to various treatment options.

This analysis also sheds light on how the social context of reentry may play a role in post-release drug use. Peers seem to have as important an influence on post-release drug use as do substance-using family members: those who reported using drugs after release also reported higher numbers of close friends who both use and sell drugs. This finding has important implications for pre-release counseling sessions in that counselors may want to place more emphasis on clients forming relationships with pro-social peers rather than with those who engage in drug use.

With regard to substance abuse treatment programming, about one-quarter of respondents participated in substance abuse treatment while in prison, with those who had been convicted of a drug crime more likely to participate. However, having a drug conviction alone was not associated with post-release drug use, while participating in AA/NA or specific substance abuse treatment was (i.e., those who participated in these programs were less likely to use drugs). This suggests that such programs work, and that their effectiveness may extend beyond those who were convicted of drug crimes to a broader population of inmates in need of treatment. It is important to note, however, that this finding does not amount to an assessment of a specific drug treatment program. In addition, more research is necessary to determine the role that self-selection might play in producing successful post-treatment outcomes.

Despite these promising findings on the effectiveness of treatment, ultimately, the factors that lead to released prisoners staying drug free may be up to the individual. For example, those who indicated they would use drugs if they knew they would not get caught were more likely to do so after their release. Substance abuse programming that focuses on such attitudes merits further exploration.

The findings outlined above provide useful information about what factors may be influencing post-release drug and alcohol use. We deliberately examined post-release substance use as an intermediate outcome, with the ultimate outcome being reoffending. We will explore the extent to which substance use, along with other intermediate outcomes, such as employment, influence reoffending behavior in Chapter 10.

Chapter 5
Preparation for Reentry and the Moment of Release[68]

Prisons and community organizations often offer programs and services specifically designed to address challenges prisoners encounter upon their release. Such programs, which can include education and job training, substance abuse treatment, counseling, and housing assistance, can take place throughout the term of incarceration, immediately prior to release, or during the transition from supervised to unsupervised living. Nationwide, prisoners are less likely to have participated in prison programming than they were in the past (Lynch and Sabol 2001).[69] While limited historical data exist on prison program participation in Maryland, according to the Maryland Division of Correction, about 17 percent of inmates were involved in educational or vocational programs at any given time in 2001. Over the course of the year, roughly 40 percent of inmates participated in educational or vocational programs. Approximately half of all Maryland inmates had work assignments (e.g., sanitation, food service) within the correctional institutions. However, nearly one-third of all Maryland state prisoners (31%) were classified as idle, which denotes a lack of participation in programming or work. The institutions do not have enough job and program assignments for everyone, so these inmates must wait for program availability.[70]

Although prison programming is not always available to all prisoners, its effectiveness for those who do participate has long been the subject of debate. Prison programming and post-release community services are offered in the hopes of contributing to successful reintegration and lowering recidivism rates, and much research has examined whether prison programming does, in fact, affect post-release outcomes. In the 1970s, many studies suggested that prison programming did not work (Lipton et al. 1975; Martinson 1974; Sechrest et al. 1979; Greenberg 1977; Wright and Dixon 1977; Robison and Smith 1971). By contrast, more recent research and meta-analyses have found favorable results, with treatment groups across programs consistently achieving at least a modest reduction in recidivism versus comparison groups (Lawrence et al., 2002; Gaes et al., 1999; Wilson et al., 2000; Lipsey, 1999; Pearson and Lipton, 1999; Lipsey and Wilson, 1998; Andrews et al., 1990). These positive results may be explained by a selection bias, however. Except in the rare case of controlled experiments or other examples of random assignment to the program, those who are recruited or volunteer to participate in such programs are likely pre-disposed to post-release success.

In addition to considering factors such as prison programming, which may relate to recidivism and intermediate outcomes for ex-prisoners, we are interested in *describing* the immediate experiences of those being released from prison and returning home. Very little is known about the circumstances surrounding the first hours, days, and weeks after a prisoner's release. In this section, we describe the who-what-when-where-and how of the first days out of prison for prisoners returning to Baltimore. What time are they released? Are they met at the prison? Where do they go? How do they get there? Who do

[68] Vera Kachnowski and Jennifer Castro, authors.
[69] Refers to inmates scheduled to be released in the next 12 months.
[70] Maryland Division of Correction.

they see? Do they have any money? Transportation? Identification? These questions were asked of respondents in our sample during the first post-release interview. In addition, we asked follow-up questions during the second post-release interview about challenges they were encountering regarding securing identification and transportation.

We then present analyses relating to the types of programs and services that help prepare prisoners for their release. We describe the types of programming our respondents participated in while they were in prison as well as the kinds of programs and services they accessed after their release. In addition, we describe which services respondents thought had been the most useful to them, as well as those they did not receive but thought would have been helpful.

REENTRY PREPARATION DATA COLLECTED THROUGH *RETURNING HOME*

We were interested in gathering a variety of information on the types of programs respondents were offered and actually participated in during prison. During the pre-release survey, respondents were simply asked how many hours per week they spend in classes or training programs and whether they want to take and/or already have set up classes or training programs for after their release.

At PR1, respondents were asked about their participation in a range of traditional prison programs as well as any programs specifically designed to prepare them for their release. With regard to the former, respondents were asked if they had been offered each of the programs (e.g. GED classes, employment readiness training), whether they had participated, their reasons for participating, and whether they completed the program. They were also asked if they had wanted to participate in any of the programs we named but were unable to do so, as well as the reasons they were not able to participate. Respondents who said they had participated in a pre-release program were asked if their participation was voluntary or required, whether the program was one-on-one or in a group, and how long before their expected release date the program started. In addition, those who had participated were asked about the kinds of information they were provided in the pre-release program, whether they were given referrals to community programs that address similar issues, and whether they had contacted those programs. Respondents were also asked what services have been most important in assisting them since release and what additional services or programs would be useful to them.

At PR2, respondents were asked about accessing programs since their release from prison. Respondents were read a list of programs and for each were asked if the program was available to them, whether they participated, their reasons for participating, and if they were still participating at the time of the interview. Respondents were again asked if they had wanted to participate in any of the programs or classes we listed but were unable to do so, and why they were unable to participate. They were also asked if they had received any services from religious institutions or other organizations to which they belong. As in the PR1 interview, respondents were asked what services have been most important in assisting them since release and what services or programs would be useful to them.

THE MOMENT OF RELEASE

Timing of Release

Anecdotal data has suggested that prisoners are sometimes not told their release dates until the day or week before, leaving little time to arrange post-release plans and inform family members of their return. With regard to the prisoners in our sample, about three-quarters knew their release date at least a

month in advance, with some respondents knowing their release date six months or more in advance (see Figure 5.1). Over a quarter of respondents, however, had only a week's notice or less. Some or all of family members knew the release date for three-quarters (71%) of respondents. However, only 39 percent of respondents were met at the prison by friends or family at the time of their release.

The largest share (56%) of respondents was released in the afternoon, between the hours of 12 noon and 6 pm. Nearly all respondents (91%) were released during daylight hours (see Figure 5.2). This timing is advantageous for released prisoners—they are more likely to be able to meet immediate needs if they are released when parole and social service agencies are open and transportation is more readily accessible.

Figure 5.1 How Far in Advance Respondents Knew Their Release Dates (N=147)

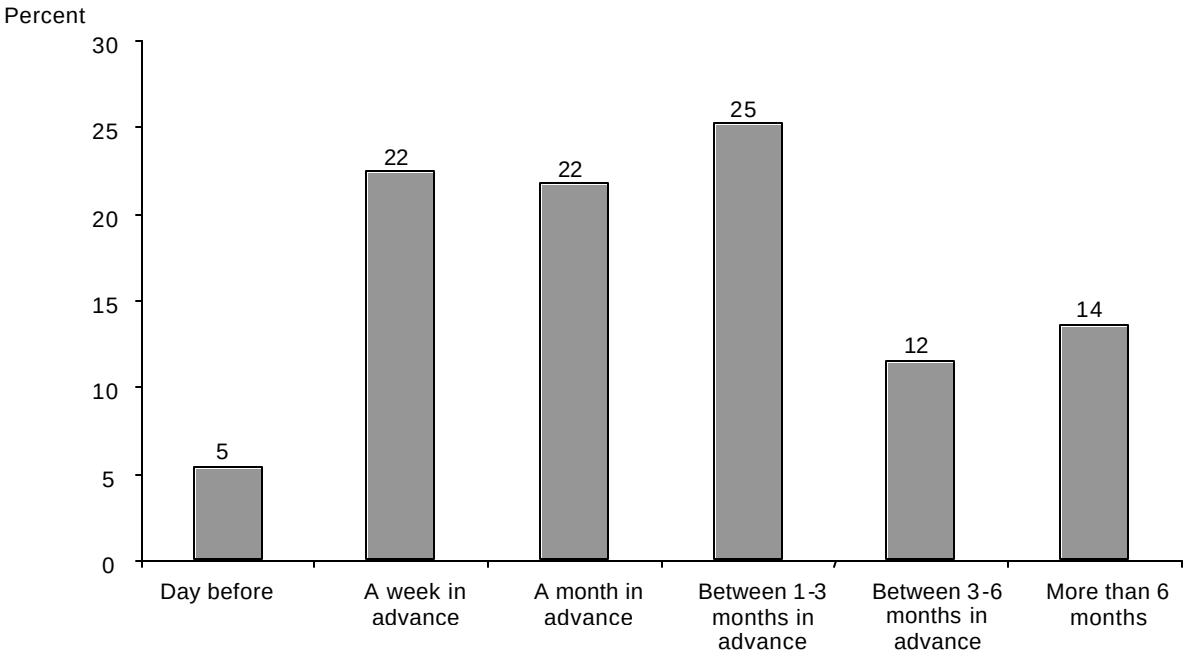
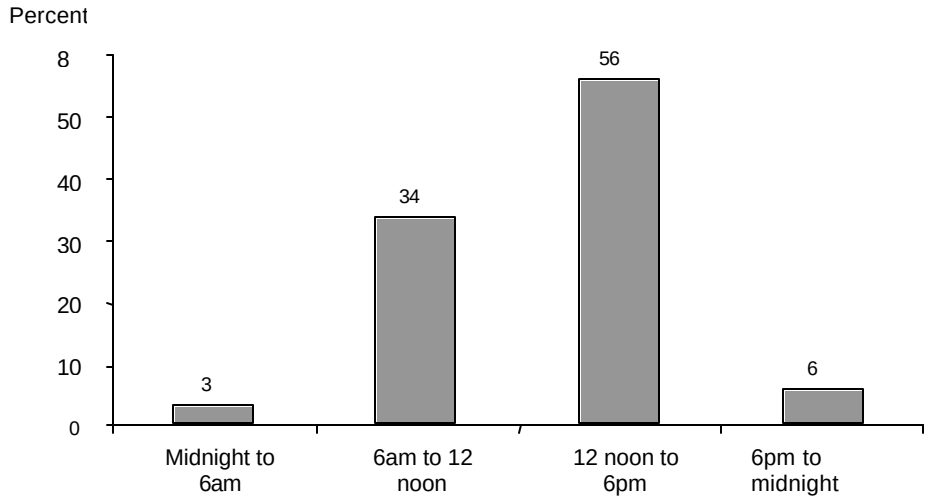


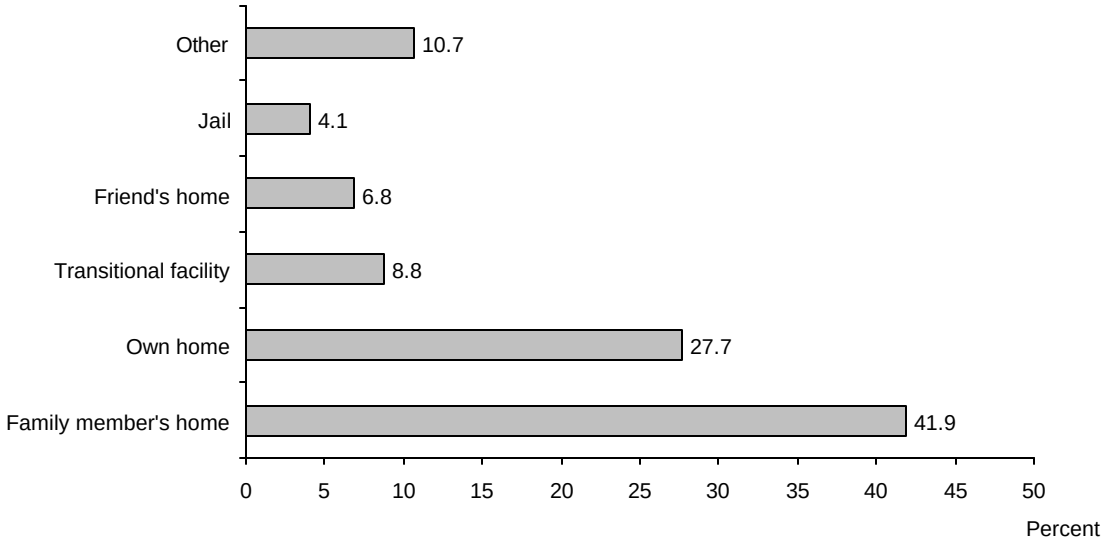
Figure 5.2 Time of Release (N=147)



Where respondents went after release

Where former prisoners go after release may give some insight into what their reentry transition will look like: are they homeless or hanging around on the street? Do they return to old hangouts where they may have gotten into trouble in the past? Do they have a place to stay, and, if so, is it with supportive people? After release, the largest share of respondents in our sample (42%) went to a family member's home, while 28 percent went to their own home (see Figure 5.3). Thirty-nine percent of respondents were picked up at the prison upon release, 20 percent took a bus, 15 percent took a cab, 13 percent walked, and the remainder used other modes of transport to arrive at their location. Only 14 percent of respondents were given a bus ticket or other money for transportation by the Division of Correction at the time of their release. This may be due to the fact that many respondents were released from the Metropolitan Transition Center, a prison located right in Baltimore City, where 87 percent of respondents returned. The largest share of respondents (60%) arrived at their destinations within an hour of their release, with another 25 percent arriving within two hours of release.

Figure 5.3 Where Respondents Went After Release (N=148)



Assets at Time of Release

Released prisoners may have little money or other resources at the time of their release and may depend on what they receive from the prison to sustain them during their first days and weeks back in the community. Some but not all of respondents in our sample were given money, clothes, or other resources from the prison at the time of their release. As mentioned above, just 14 percent of respondents received a bus ticket or money for transportation at the time of their release. Nine percent of respondents reported receiving medication that they had been taking while in prison at their release. Just under a third of respondents (30%) either wore prison clothes or prison-issued street clothes at the time of their release. About half of the respondents (46%) in our sample left prison dressed in clothes they had from before prison. An additional 24 percent wore clothes they had received from their friends or family.

In terms of financial assets, 85 percent of respondents reported having some money at the time of their release. In many cases all of the money Maryland prisoners receive upon release comes from their own accounts, often savings from work release jobs. Some prisoners also receive gate money upon their release, with amounts varying by facility from $0 to a maximum of $50. The total amount of money that respondents reported having from these combined sources upon release ranged from $3 to $2340, with a median of $40.[71]

Identification

Prisoners often return home without identification, which is usually required to obtain housing, apply for jobs, or receive any public assistance. The majority of prisoners in our sample (89%) had some form of photo ID at the time of their release, with nearly three-quarters (73%) holding a department of

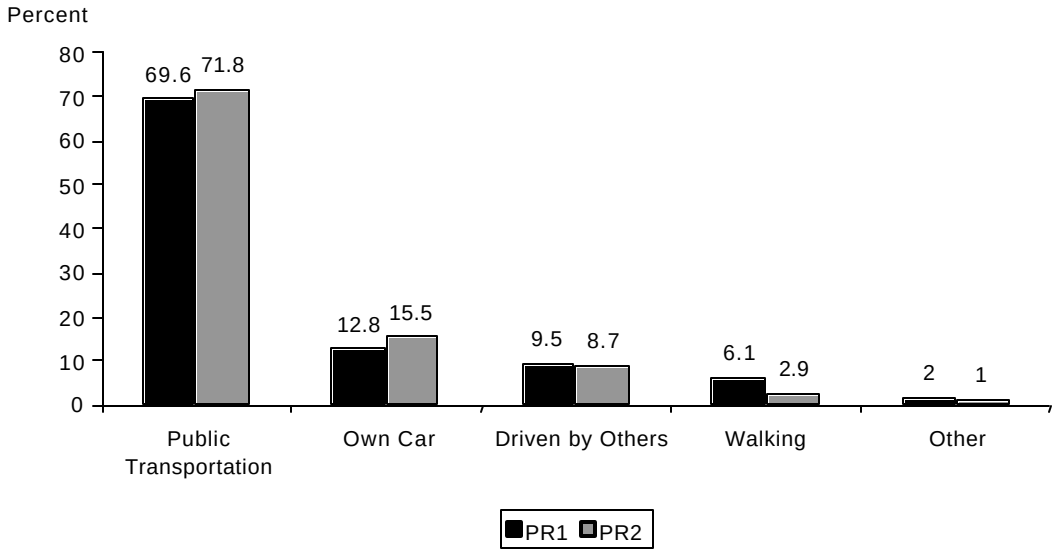
[71] The way the questions were asked in the survey does not allow us to clearly distinguish between gate money and other funds. See Employment and Finances chapter for more information about other financial resources respondents had at the time of release.

corrections ID card. About a quarter (24%) had state ID cards, while just five percent had a driver's license. Between their release from prison and the first post-release interview, 41 percent of respondents obtained some new form of photo ID, including state ID cards (57%) and driver's licenses (23%). By the second post-release interview, the majority of respondents (89%) reported having some kind of photo ID: about two-thirds (64%) of respondents had state ID cards, 21 percent had driver's licenses, and 15 percent had other kinds of identification.

Transportation

Availability of transportation can be a critical factor in allowing released prisoners to obtain jobs and access services. At the first post-release interview, most respondents (85%) reported having transportation available to them when they needed it and that percentage increased to 87 percent at the second post-release interview. Figure 5.4 details the primary modes of transportation respondents reported using at PR1 and PR2. At both data collection points, most respondents (70% and 72% respectively) indicated that public transportation was their primary method of getting around.

Figure 5.4 Primary Mode of Transportation (N=148 and N=103)



Overall, the circumstances surrounding the moment of release for Maryland prisoners appear to be promising. Three-quarters of respondents were told their release dates at least a month in advance, giving time to alert friends and family of their return and begin to plan for their release. Nearly all were released during daylight hours when they could access any necessary social services. No respondents reported being homeless during their first night back. However, in terms of starting to rebuild their lives, respondents were not given much from the prison at the time of release, in terms of money, bus tickets, or other resources.

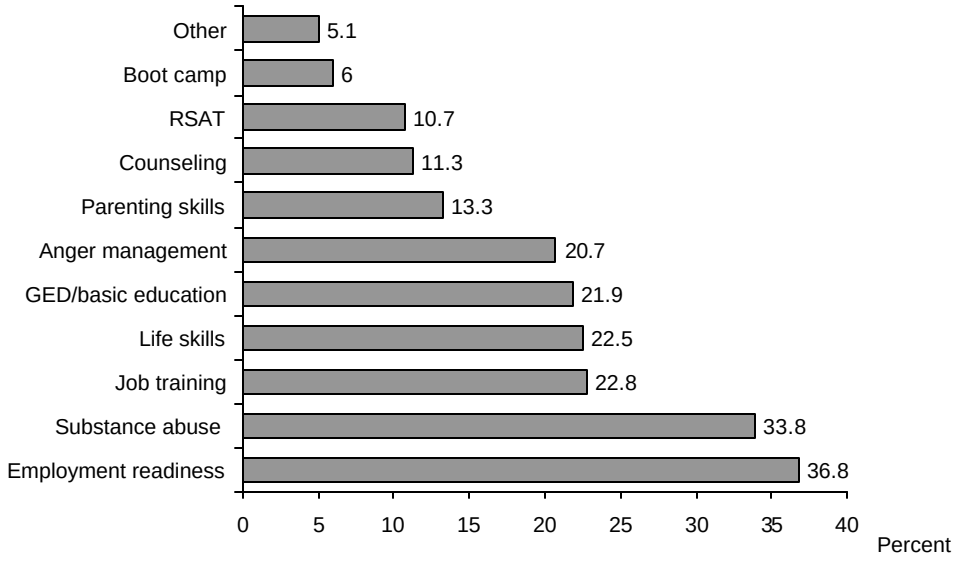
REENTRY PREPARATION

In-Prison Programs

More than two-thirds of our sample (70%) reported participating in at least one program or class while they were in prison. Some programs were designed explicitly to help inmates prepare for release, while others offered general training to address common needs of prisoners (e.g., educational or vocational classes). Of the respondents who participated in an in-prison program, most did so voluntarily, while some were required to do so. Women participated at higher rates than men (91% female participation versus 63% male participation; chi-square significant at .002). Female inmates were also more likely to have been offered at least one program or service. These data may be a reflection of a greater capacity among female prisons to offer services, rather than a greater propensity among female inmates to participate in programming.

The types of in-prison programs in which our sample took part ranged from job training and employment readiness to anger management and substance abuse treatment. Respondents were most apt to report participating in employment readiness classes (37%) and substance abuse treatment (34%). Figure 5.5 illustrates program participation rates for job training and life skills classes, GED/basic education, anger management/violence prevention, and other programs.

Figure 5.5 Share of Respondents who Participated in Each Type of In-Prison Program (N=150)



Respondents who did not participate in any programs or classes during their prison term reported a number of different reasons as explanation. The three most common reasons included not being offered such programs (25%), not being eligible (22%), and not being qualified (18%). None of these reasons

differed significantly between respondents who had prior commitments to prison and those for whom the current incarceration was their first.

We were interested to see if program participants differed from non-participants regarding a number of factors. We ran one-way ANOVAs to compare those who participated in education/ employment programs[72] and substance abuse programs[73] and those who did not (see Figure 5.6). As mentioned above, females were more likely than males to have participated in programs. A number of other differences were found between participants and non-participants for both kinds of programs. Specifically, respondents who participated in education/employment programs were more likely to have been sentenced to longer terms, have served a greater percentage of their sentence, and stayed in prison for longer periods of time than those who did not participate. In addition, education/employment program participants were more likely to be released to supervision and serve more time under post-release supervision. Finally, education/employment program participants reported using a greater number of different drugs on average before their prison term began than non-participants.

Figure 5.6 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Participated in In-prison Education or Employment Programs to Those Who Did Not Participate

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Length of stay in months	Participated in education or employment programs	75	26.54	34.02		
	Did not participate	74	11.65	10.13		
	Total	149	19.16	26.18	11.101	.000
Total sentence imposed (months)	Participated in education or employment programs	72	50.58	45.17		
	Did not participate	72	27.60	20.16		
	Total	144	39.09	36.68	15.574	.000
Months on supervision	Participated in education or employment programs	59	21.55	15.43		
	Did not participate	50	11.97	10.42		
	Total	109	17.15	14.15	13.886	.000

Chart continues

[72] "Participants" are respondents who answered yes to one or more of the following: Did you participated in GED/adult basic education?; Did you participated in an employment readiness program?; Did you participate in trade or job training?

[73] "Participants" are respondents who answered yes to one or more of the following: Did you participate in a substance abuse program?; Did you participate in RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment)? Respondents who reported attending AA or NA meetings were not included in this calculation.

Figure 5.6 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Participated in In-prison Education or Employment Programs to Those Who Did Not Participate

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Number of drugs used pre-prison	Participated in education or employment programs	75	2.05	1.52		
	Did not participate	74	1.45	1.27		
	Total	149	1.75	1.43	7.012	.009
Gender (1=male)	Participated in education or employment programs	77	.70	.46		
	Did not participate	76	.83	.38		
	Total	153	.76	.43	3.498	.063
Released to supervision (1=yes)	Participated in education or employment programs	70	.84	.37		
	Did not participate	70	.71	.46		
	Total	140	.78	.42	3.389	.068
Percent of sentence served	Participated in education or employment programs	64	48.99	14.18		
	Did not participate	63	44.46	13.82		
	Total	127	46.74	14.13	3.327	.071
Hourly pay at main job pre-prison	Participated in education or employment programs	40	12.81	14.17		
	Did not participate	38	17.69	33.41		
	Total	78	15.18	25.38	.718	.399
Any prior commitments (1=yes)	Participated in education or employment programs	77	.58	.50		
	Did not participate	76	.64	.48		
	Total	153	.61	.49	.582	.447
Work for money pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in education or employment programs	74	.68	.47		
	Did not participate	73	.62	.49		
	Total	147	.65	.48	.559	.456
Regular schedule at main job pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in education or employment programs	48	.81	.39		
	Did not participate	46	.85	.36		
	Total	94	.83	.38	.204	.653
Education before prison (categorized)	Participated in education or employment programs	75	3.79	1.39		
	Did not participate	73	3.70	1.27		
	Total	148	3.74	1.33	.162	.688
Convicted for drug offense (1=yes)	Participated in education or employment programs	77	.56	.50		
	Did not participate	76	.53	.50		
	Total	153	.54	.50	.157	.692

Chart continues

Figure 5.6 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Participated in In-prison Education or Employment Programs to Those Who Did Not Participate

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Total number of children when entered prison	Participated in education or employment programs	74	1.86	1.95		
	Did not participate	72	1.89	1.46		
	Total	146	1.88	1.72	.007	.933
Age	Participated in education or employment programs	76	36.96	7.99		
	Did not participate	75	36.69	8.36		
	Total	151	36.63	8.15	.040	.841

The differences between substance abuse program participants and non-participants mirrored those between education/employment program participants and non-participants (see Figure 5.7). Specifically, substance abuse program participants were sentenced to longer terms and stayed in prison longer than non-participants. They were also more likely to be released to supervision and to be required to serve longer periods of post-release supervision than non-participants. Again, participants reported using a greater number of drugs pre-prison than non-participants and were more likely to have used heroin pre-prison than those who did not participate in substance abuse programs.

Figure 5.7 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Participated in In-prison Substance Abuse Programs to Those Who Did Not Participate

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Months on supervision	Participated in substance abuse programs	46	22.19	14.35		
	Did not participate	63	13.47	12.91		
	Total	109	17.15	14.15	11.031	.001
Released to supervision (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	50	.92	.274		
	Did not participate	90	.70	.461		
	Total	140	.78	.417	9.508	.002
Gender (1=male)	Participated in substance abuse programs	54	.63	.49		
	Did not participate	99	.83	.37		
	Total	153	.76	.43	8.841	.003
Total sentence imposed	Participated in substance abuse programs	51	50.74	28.59		
	Did not participate	93	32.70	39.12		
	Total	144	39.09	36.38	8.381	.004
Number of drugs used pre-prison	Participated in substance abuse programs	52	2.10	1.50		
	Did not participate	97	1.57	1.36		
	Total	149	1.75	1.43	4.766	.031
Any heroin use pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	52	.65	.48		
	Did not participate	95	.49	.50		
	Total	147	.55	.50	3.473	.064
Length of stay in months	Participated in substance abuse programs	47	24.39	19.06		
	Did not participate	80	16.08	29.25		
	Total	127	19.16	26.18	3.029	.064
Convicted of drug offense (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	54	.63	.49		
	Did not participate	99	.49	.50		
	Total	153	.54	.50	2.563	.111
Any cocaine use pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	52	.56	.50		
	Did not participate	95	.43	.50		
	Total	147	.48	.50	2.145	.145
Number of family members with drug/alcohol problems	Participated in substance abuse programs	46	1.96	2.20		
	Did not participate	81	1.49	1.58		
	Total	127	1.66	1.83	1.878	.173

Chart continues

Figure 5.7 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Participated in In-prison Substance Abuse Programs to Those Who Did Not Participate

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Any marijuana use pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	52	.52	.50		
	Did not participate	97	.43	.50		
	Total	149	.46	.50	1.006	.318
Severity of drug use pre-prison (scale)	Participated in substance abuse programs	49	2.41	1.61		
	Did not participate	78	2.64	1.54		
	Total	127	2.55	1.56	.667	.416
Any drunkenness pre-prison (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	51	.49	.50		
	Did not participate	95	.43	.50		
	Total	146	.45	.50	.455	.501
Age	Participated in substance abuse programs	54	34.37	7.51		
	Did not participate	97	33.53	8.51		
	Total	151	33.83	8.15	.371	.543
Percent of sentence served	Participated in substance abuse programs	47	47.30	14.41		
	Did not participate	80	46.42	14.01		
	Total	127	46.74	14.13	.114	.736
Any amphetamine use pre-prison (1=yes	Participated in substance abuse programs	51	.04	.20		
	Did not participate	96	.03	.17		
	Total	147	.03	.18	.063	.801
Any prior commitments (1=yes)	Participated in substance abuse programs	54	.61	.49		
	Did not participate	99	.62	.49		
	Total	153	.61	.49	.004	.951

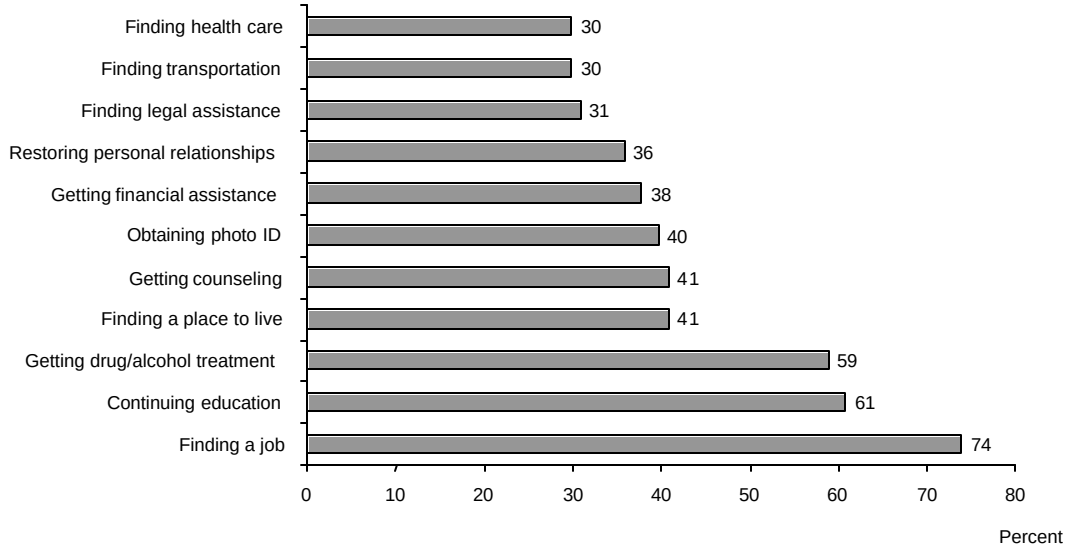
These findings have important implications for reentry preparation. The fact that prisoners sentenced to and serving shorter terms are less likely to participate in programs is particularly significant. Previous analysis of Maryland Division of Correction data revealed that Maryland prisons are home to prisoners serving shorter terms, on average, than in the past (La Vigne and Kachnowski, 2003). The fact that the Maryland prison population is increasingly comprised of "short-termers," many of whom are drug offenders and parole violators, suggests that an increasingly larger share of Maryland prisoners are returning to the community without having the benefit of programming.

Pre-Release Programs

In addition to traditional program types, one-fourth of our sample (27%) participated in pre-release programs designed specifically to help prepare them for reentry into the community. For nearly all respondents who participated in pre-release programs (98%), the program was conducted in a group or

classroom setting rather than a one-on-one session. For about one-quarter of respondents who participated in such programs (22%), the pre-release program began less than a month before their release date. For the remainder, the program began at least a month before with some (37%) reporting the program started more than six months before their release date.

Figure 5.8 Share of Pre-Release Program Participants who Received Information on Specific Topic (N=42)



We asked respondents to tell us about the types of information provided in such programs. Many indicated that they received instruction in how to find a job (74%), how to continue their education (60%), and how to obtain substance abuse treatment (58%). An additional 40 percent received instruction in finding a place to live, obtaining photo identification and financial assistance, and receiving counseling (see Figure 5.8). Nearly all of the respondents who participated in pre-release programming (85%) believed the program was helpful for their transition back to the community.

Post-Release Programs and Services

Accessing programs and services after release can help released prisoners make the transition from prison to home. Of course, being able to take advantage of the services offered by community organizations is contingent upon being aware of their existence. In fact, the most common reason given by respondents who did not participate in a post-release program was that they were unaware of such opportunities.

Over two-thirds of respondents who had participated in a pre-release program were provided referrals to community programs before their release. Sixty-eight percent of pre-release program participants were given one or more referrals to community programs that dealt with the issues listed in Figure 5.8, with an average of three community referrals. Figure 5.9 lists some of the specific community programs respondents were referred. Overall, respondents tried to contact about half (55%) of the organizations to which they were referred.

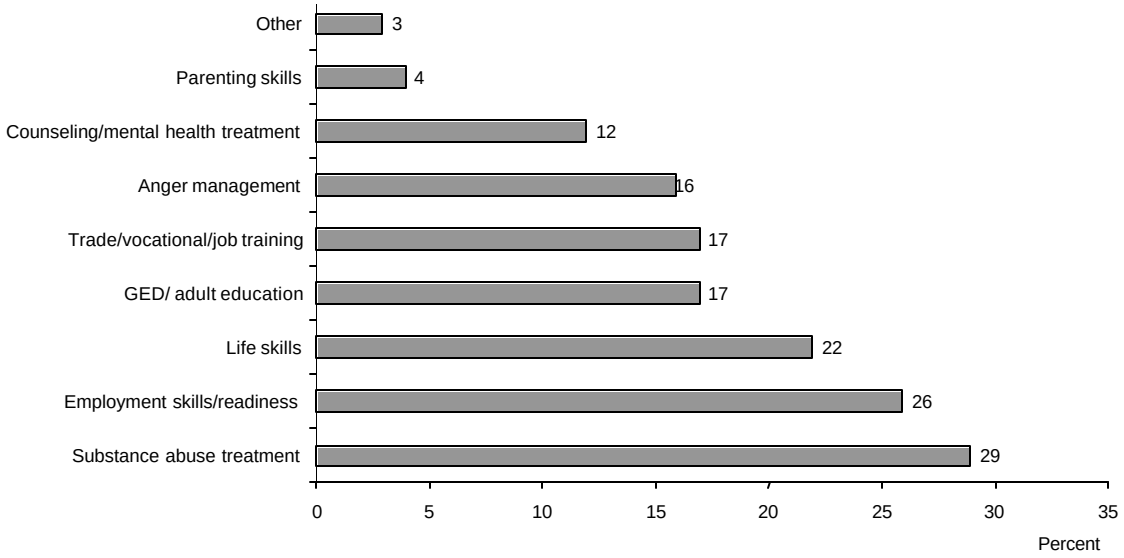
At PR2, 45 percent of those we interviewed reported participating in some program after their release. There were no significant differences in post-release program participation rates between males and females, nor between respondents with previous prison commitments and those for whom the most recent incarceration was their first.

Just as with in-prison programs, the two types of post-release programs in which most respondents participated were substance abuse treatment (29%) and employment readiness programs (26%). Approximately 15 percent of the sample participated in other post-release programs such as GED/adult education classes, job training, life skills classes, or anger management/violence prevention following their release from prison (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.9 Referrals to community programs received by pre-release program participants

- Alternative Directions
- Catholic Charities
- COP
- Dept. of Social Services
- Druid Hill Transitional
- Empower Baltimore Management Corporation
- Empowerment Zone
- I Can't, We Can
- Jones Falls Counseling Center
- Jubilee
- Marion House
- Maryland Rehabilitation
- One Stops
- Prisons Aide
- Rockline Industry
- Second Chance
- Strive
- The Door
- The Yes Network
- Turk House

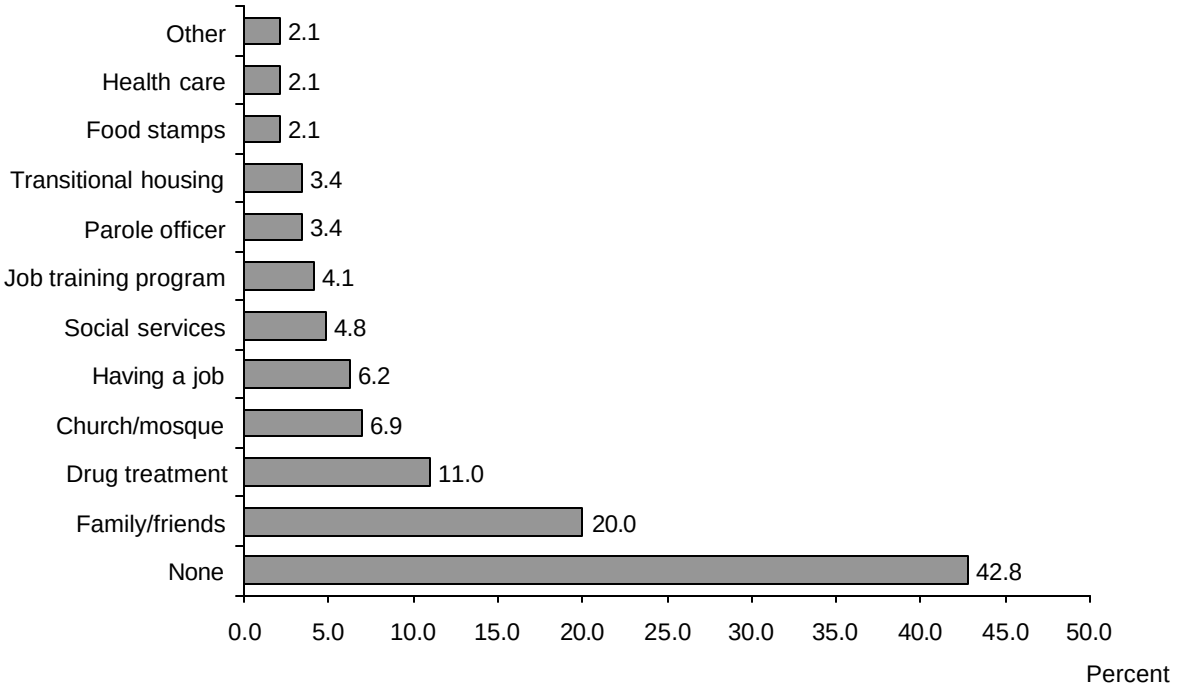
Figure 5.10 Share of Respondents who Participated in Each Type of Post-Release Program (N=100)



Role of Services and Support in Reentry Transition

At the first post-release interview, respondents were asked what kinds of services, programs, or support had been the most helpful to them since their release. The largest share of respondents (43%) said that nothing had been helpful to them. As shown in Figure 5.11, the most common sources of support named by respondents were their family and friends, and drug treatment programs, including Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Some respondents mentioned the role of their church or mosque as beneficial, the importance of having a job, and help from other programs and services.

Figure 5.11 Services, Programs or Support That Have Been Most Useful to Respondents at PR1 (N=145)



Respondents were also asked what kinds of services, programs or support *would* be most helpful to them. The most common responses dealt with employment: twenty-six percent of respondents said they would like job training and 13 percent simply said they wanted a job. Other common responses included housing (11%), education (10%), health care (8%) and drug treatment (6%). Nearly one-fifth of respondents (17%) said they needed no services or program. At the second post-release interview, some of the most common services or support respondents thought would be useful to them again included job training (25%), health care or insurance (13%), drug treatment (9%), and finding a job (8%). At this interview, 12 percent of respondents said they needed no support or services.

SUMMARY

Over two-thirds of respondents at the first post-release interview reported having participated in at least one program while they were in prison, with female respondents being significantly more likely to have reported participation than males. The participation rates for individual programs varied, with the highest share of respondents reporting attending programs pertaining to employment and substance abuse. Some respondents reported that they wanted to participate in a program but were not able to do so, and cited not being offered such programs and not being eligible for certain programs as the main reasons they did not participate.

Prisoners in our sample who were able to participate in programming differed significantly from non-participants in a number of ways: participants were more likely to be female, to have used a greater number of drugs pre-prison, and to be released to supervision. In addition, program participants were significantly more likely to have been sentenced to longer terms and to have completed longer stays in prison than non-participants. This is significant, as the Maryland prison population is increasingly comprised of prisoners serving relatively *short* terms. With fiscal constraints precluding the Maryland DOC from offering programs to all inmates who are interested in participating, many prisoners end up on waiting lists for programs and are often released before they have a chance to participate.[74]

About a quarter of respondents participated in a pre-release program specifically designed to prepare them for release. Of those, two-thirds were given referrals to community programs that specifically address issues of concern to returning prisoners, such as finding jobs or dealing with substance abuse problems, but respondents only followed up on half of those referrals. After their release from prison, about forty-five percent of respondents reported participating in some kind of post-release program, especially substance abuse treatment and employment readiness programs.

While almost half of respondents reported participating in some kind of post-release program, relatively small shares of respondents said programs had been helpful in their post-release transition. In fact, the largest share (41%) of respondents said that nothing had been helpful to them. The next most common response was that family or friends had been helpful in their transition. When asked at the first post-release interview what would be helpful, about 40 percent of respondents—the largest share—mentioned getting job training or finding a job. This suggests that more efforts could be made to direct released prisoners to community agencies that help ex-prisoners improve their work skills and find employment.

[74] In 2001, for example, over 1,500 prisoners were on waiting lists to participate in educational or vocational programming (LaVigne and Kachnowski, 2003).

Chapter 6
Physical and Mental Health[75]

Prisoners nationwide suffer from mental disorders and chronic and infectious disease at greater rates than among the general population. For example, in 1999, the overall rate of confirmed AIDS cases among the nation's prison population was five times the rate in the U.S. general population (0.60% versus 0.12%; Maruschak 2001). Rates of mental health disorders such as schizophrenia/psychosis, major depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder are estimated to be at least twice as high as the rates in the general population (Ditton 1999). Prisoners also report a range of other physical and mental health problems including learning or speech disabilities, hearing or vision problems, and other conditions (Maruschak and Beck 2001).[76]

While in prison, inmates may have access to preventive, standard, and emergency mental health services (Beck and Maruschak 2001)[77] but the chances that treatment will continue after release are often slim. The Maryland DOC does prepare medical discharge plans for some inmates, but these plans are primarily prepared for those who are HIV positive, have serious chronic mental or physical health problems, or are medically paroled.[78] Furthermore, accessing and paying for necessary prescription or over-the-counter drugs can be an issue for many released prisoners. Thus, mental and physical health issues present yet another reentry challenge for some released inmates—one that could significantly affect the ease of transition to life on the outside.

In this section, we describe respondents' perceptions of their overall physical health pre- and post-release. We also describe data collected regarding respondents' psychological health. Frequency of medication use and any difficulties respondents had in obtaining medication after their release are also addressed, as well as any challenges they may have encountered in obtaining health care generally.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH DATA COLLECTED THROUGH *RETURNING HOME*

Respondents were asked about their in-prison health status and expectations for post-release health, as well as about their actual state of health after release. During the pre-release interview, respondents were asked to rate their overall physical health as compared to others their age and were asked if they were taking medication regularly for a chronic condition. They were also asked how easy or hard they thought it would be to stay in good health after release and how much help they would need getting health care and counseling after release.

At the first post-release interview, respondents were again asked to rate their overall physical health and asked if they suffered from a range of health conditions. Respondents were asked what prescribed medications they had been taking regularly while they were in prison, if they were still taking them, why they stopped (if applicable), and what prescribed medications they were taking at the time of the interview. In addition, respondents were administered a few scales related to mental health, including

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[75]Vera Kachnowski, Jennifer Castro, and Sarah Lawrence, authors.

[76]Nearly one-third of state prisoners reported suffering from one or more of these conditions in 1997.

[77]Of Maryland's 26 facilities, 12 screen prisoners for mental illness at intake, 14 conduct psychiatric assessments, 13 provide 24-hour mental health care, 18 provide therapy and counseling, 18 distribute psychotropic medications, 22 report helping released prisoners obtain services, and 2 do not provide any services.

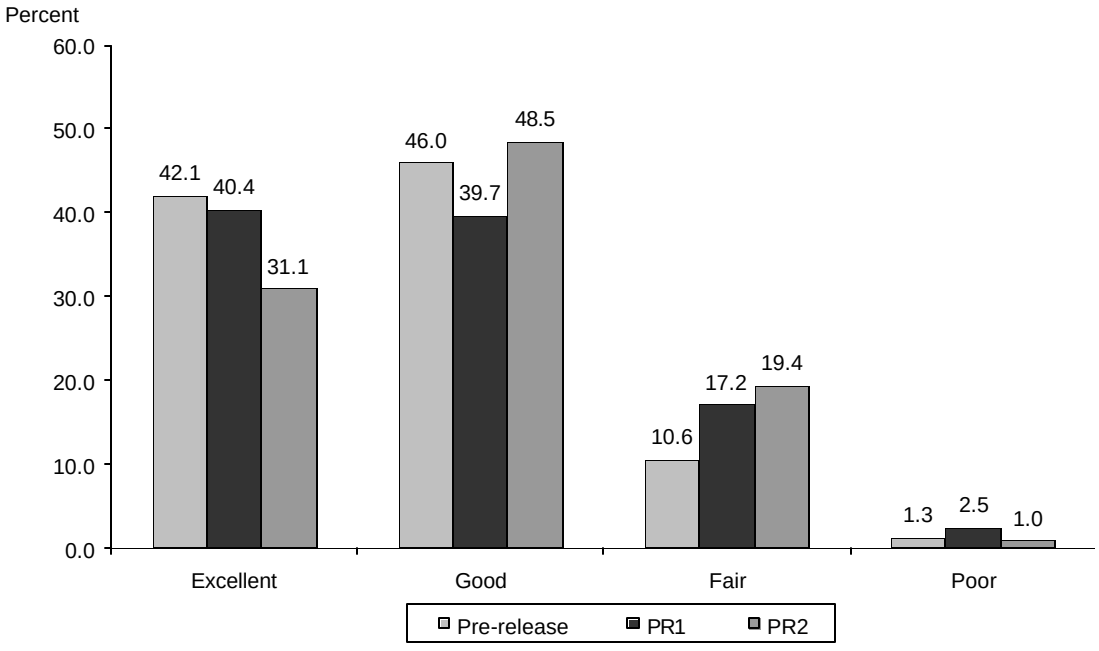
questions about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[79] They were asked whether they receive a pension for a psychiatric or physical disability and what, if any, healthcare benefits they have. Finally, respondents were asked how easy or hard it had been to stay in good health since their release.

At the second post-release interview, respondents were asked the same series of questions about overall health, medical conditions, and medication. In addition, the mental health scales were repeated, as were the questions about health care coverage. At this interview, respondents were also asked how many times they had visited a doctor since their release and the reasons for their visits, how many times they had been hospitalized for physical and mental conditions in the past 30 days, and how many times they had used emergency room services in the past 30 days.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Most respondents expressed positive opinions about their physical health prior to, during, and following their stay in prison. Eighty-eight percent of those interviewed prior to release rated their pre-prison health as *good* or *excellent*, and 80 percent of those interviewed at both post-release reporting periods felt the same way about their health. Nearly all pre-release respondents thought it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to stay in good health following release, and most (87% and 89%) found that to actually have been the case when they were asked at both post-release interviews (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Respondents' Perceptions of Overall Physical Health, Pre-Release, PR1, and PR2 (N=311,N=151, and N=103, respectively)

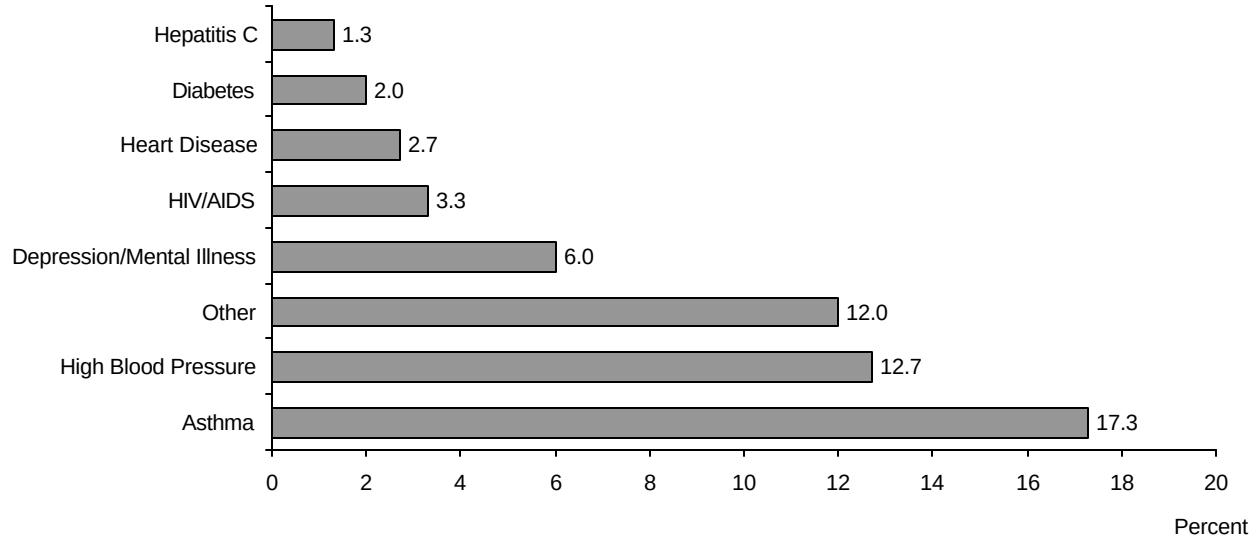


[78]Those who are medically paroled typically are released to a hospital or hospice center.

[79] Survey items were from the *Women's Health Risk Study: Clinical/Hospital Interview* by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1997 draft questionnaire.

The reality of our respondents' overall physical health, however, seemed somewhat different from these positive opinions. Almost 40 percent reported having at least one chronic physical ailment. Furthermore, one-fourth of the respondents were taking medication for a chronic health condition during incarceration, and two-thirds of those individuals (66%) were still taking prison-distributed medications after release. The most common illnesses reported were asthma (17%) and high blood pressure (13%). Sixteen percent of respondents said they had physical problems that limited their work or activity. Less than 5 percent of our sample reported having a serious disease such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, diabetes, or heart disease (see Figure 6.2). The percentage of respondents who reported the above types of physical ailments was similar for those interviewed four to six months post-release as for those interviewed in the first few months following release.

Figure 6.2 Share of Respondents Reporting Each Health Condition at PR1 (N=150)



The fact that many of the prisoners in our sample reported suffering from health conditions has important implications for reentry. Mental and physical health problems create additional burdens for the released prisoner, who may have difficulty obtaining medications and treatment that were available while he or she was in prison. Health problems may affect released prisoners' abilities both to engage in a job search and to hold a job. Infectious diseases in returning prisoners also present an important public health concern for communities. While the rate of Hepatitis C in our sample (1.3%) is lower than national averages for correctional populations (17.0-18.6%)[80], the rate of HIV/AIDS in our sample (3.3%) is higher than the national average (2.1%) (National Commission on Correctional Health Care 2002; Maruschak 2001).

[80] The prevalence of Hepatitis C in correctional populations is estimated to be 9-10 times greater than in the general population nationwide (National Commission on Correctional Health Care 2002).

In the first few months following their release from prison, most respondents had no type of medical coverage or health insurance. Only 10 percent reported having private insurance or belonging to an HMO. Very few respondents (less than 5%) reported receiving a disability pension, being on Medicaid or Medicare, or having Veteran's Administration (VA) health insurance. These limited health care resources confirm the pre-release opinion of three-fourths of our sample that they would need help obtaining health care following release from prison.

A similar picture of health insurance coverage emerged four to six months post-release. Only seven percent of the respondents interviewed had any type of medical coverage whatsoever. In spite of this fact, more than half of the sample (58%) had visited a doctor for a general checkup since their release from prison, and 19 percent had used emergency room services for a heath-related problem. Most of those who had visited a doctor had done so because of an on-going medical condition; less than five percent had seen the doctor because of a mental health or substance abuse problem. Twenty-five percent of the respondents interviewed four to six months after release were taking medications for health-related problems. Of those taking prescription medications, 30 percent reported having problems obtaining such drugs, most often because they lacked insurance coverage and simply could not afford the cost of the drugs.

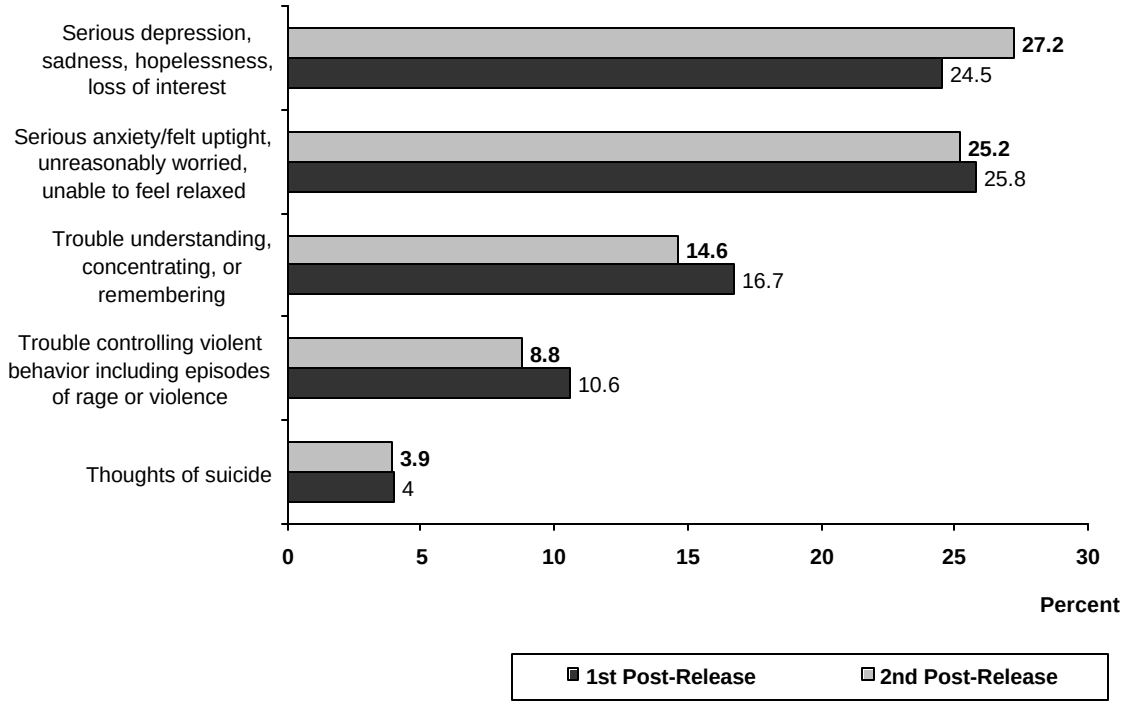
MENTAL HEALTH

With regard to the mental health of those in our pre-release sample, approximately 11 percent completed a general counseling program while incarcerated. Yet prisoners expressed a greater need for treatment when asked about post-release services: exactly half of the respondents indicated a desire for help obtaining counseling following their release from prison, and 30 percent wanted help acquiring mental health treatment. At both post-release interviews respondents were asked about emotional problems that they might have experienced during the last 30 days.[81] About one-quarter of respondents experienced serious anxiety and serious depression at both interviews, as shown in Figure 6.3. Approximately 15 percent experienced trouble understanding, concentrating, or remembering (16.7% at the first post-release, and 14.6% at the second post-release). Roughly one-third of the respondents reported experiencing at least of one of the five symptoms shown in Figure 6.3 during PR1 (37%) and PR2 (34%). Overall, released prisoners were no more or less depressed soon after release than they were several months out; the share of respondents reporting each symptom remained fairly stable between the first and second post-release interviews.

Women, however, were much more likely than men to report experiencing symptoms of depression.[82] For example, 38.2 percent of women said that they experienced serious depression, sadness, hopelessness, or loss of interest in the last 30 days, compared to 20.5 percent of men. They were also more likely to experience trouble understanding, concentrating, or remembering than men (29.4% and 12.9%, respectively).

[81] The questions represent a sub-set of items in the Psychiatric Status section of the Addiction Severity Index (ASI).
[82] Chi-square significant at .017.

Figure 6.3. Measures of Mental Health: Percent Reporting Each Symptom, PR1 and PR2 (N=151 and N=103)



Nationwide, between 13 and 19 percent of state prison inmates are thought to suffer from major depression, as compared to roughly between 2.3% and 4.9% of the general population who suffer from major depression at any given time (National Commission of Correctional Health Care 2002; Depression Clinical and Research Program 2003). The limited number of mental health questions asked of respondents prevents us from making conclusive diagnoses of the rate of depression among sample members. Nonetheless, the fact that over a quarter reported experiencing serious depression and anxiety is significant. The burden of depression could certainly affect the ease of transition from prison to home and may affect respondents' abilities to obtain and maintain employment, as well as to restore relationships with friends and families.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is "the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor,"[83] such as feeling threatened, terrified, and fearful. It often negatively affects family relationships, the ability to function in social environments, and employment status.[84] PTSD is thought to be higher among incarcerated populations than among the general population[85] and could present returning prisoners with yet another barrier to a successful reentry.

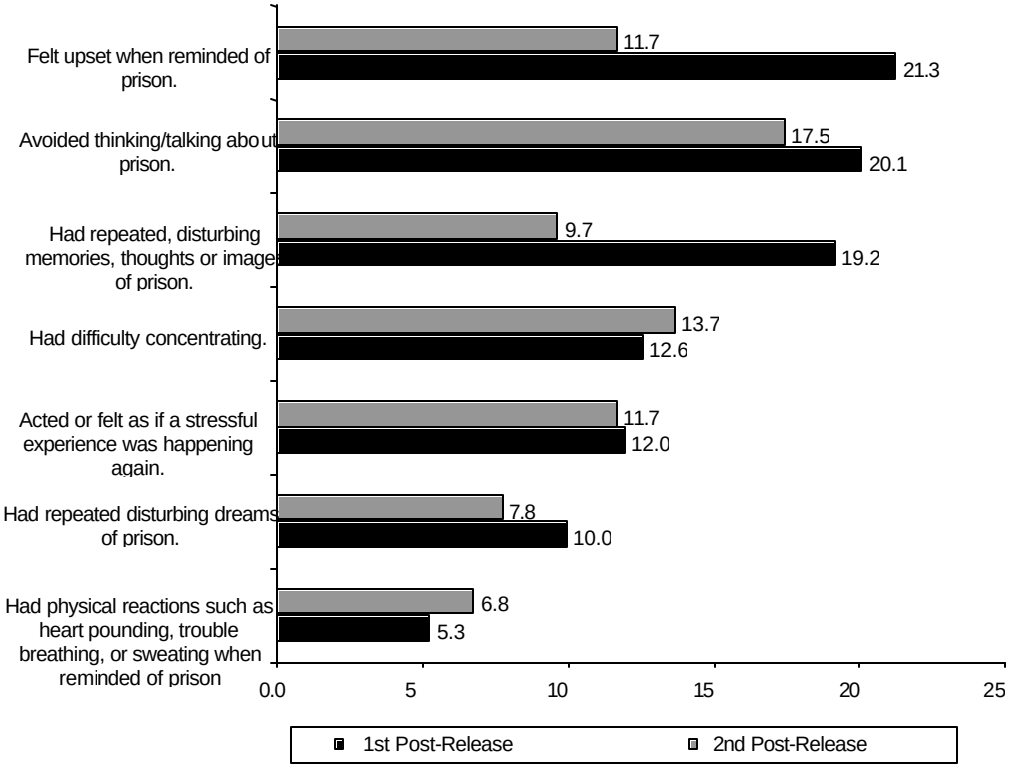
Maryland respondents were asked a series of questions related to PTSD symptoms at the two post-release interviews. Figure 6.4 shows the share of respondents who experienced various PTSD

[83] American Psychiatric Association, "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM IV)." Washington, D.C. 1994.
[84] National Center for PTSD, <www.ncptsd.org> accessed June 26, 2003.
[85] Baker, C. and C. Alfonso, "National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet."

symptoms in the last 30 days.[86] About one-fifth of respondents indicated that they had felt upset when reminded of prison (21.3%), avoided thinking or talking about prison, (20.1%), or had repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of prison (19.2%) at the first post-release interview.[87] Women and men had similar rates of PTSD symptoms.

Between the first and second post-release interviews, the share of respondents who experienced the various PTSD symptoms remained relatively constant. The share of respondents who had repeated, disturbing memories dropped from 19.2 percent soon after release, to 9.7 percent several months after release—a significant decline. Furthermore, during the first post-release interview, 37 percent of the respondents indicated having three or more of the 17 PTSD-related symptoms that were presented during the interview. This percentage declined slightly by PR2, with 30 percent reporting three or more PTSD-related symptoms.

Figure 6.4 Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Percent Reporting Each Symptom, PR1 and PR2 (N=150 and N=103)



[86] Factor analysis of PTSD symptoms resulted in one component with an Eigenvalue of 3.115, accounting for 44.5% of the total variance.

[87] A lack of measures from before prison and in prison precludes us from knowing whether these symptoms existed before prison, developed during incarceration, or developed after release.

Again, while we were not able to conclusively diagnose PTSD among respondents, the share reporting symptoms associated with the disorder is roughly comparable to the share of state prisoners nationwide who are believed to suffer from PTSD (6 to 12%).[88]

SUMMARY

Most respondents in our sample reported their physical health to be *good* or *excellent* compared to others their age, both before and after release. Nonetheless, about 40 percent reported suffering from at least one physical ailment, including asthma and high blood pressure. About one-quarter were taking medication for a chronic health condition before their release and two-thirds of those continued to take prison-issued medication after release.

Once they returned to the community, one of the biggest health-related challenges respondents faced was a lack of insurance. At both PR1 and PR2 virtually no respondents reported having any kind of medical coverage, which caused some difficulties in obtaining prescription drugs. Respondents were able to visit doctors for chronic care and other needs despite their insurance status.

With regard to the mental health status of the men and women we interviewed approximately one-third of the respondents reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with depression at both PR1 and PR2. Women were more likely than men to report experiencing these symptoms. In addition, at both points in time, roughly one-third of the respondents suffered from three or more symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. We were unable, however, to determine the exact shares of respondents who suffer from these conditions given our limited assessment measures.

Even so, the limited health data we did obtain indicate that many returning prisoners have the additional burdens of physical and mental health symptoms, which can have negative effects on their reentry transitions. Physical health needs can limit respondents' abilities to work, and obtaining needed medications after release can create an added financial strain. Although many respondents were able to obtain health care despite a lack of health care coverage, communities may want to evaluate if the most appropriate resources are being utilized. While rates of Hepatitis C are low, and discharge plans are prepared for those suffering from HIV/AIDS, proper monitoring is required to ensure that a continuum of care truly exists for these individuals. Respondents who suffer from symptoms associated with depression and PTSD may have increased difficulty in locating employment and restoring family relationships, and may be at an increased risk for substance abuse relapse. Referrals to counseling and support in the community are key for helping these individuals during their return to the community.[89]

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[88] The lifetime prevalence among adult Americans is estimated to be around 8 percent (National Center for PTSD).

[89] For more information about the health needs of returning prisoners nationwide, please see National Commission of Correctional Health Care. 2002. *The Health Status of Soon-to-be-Released Inmates. A Report to Congress. Volumes 1 and 2*. In addition, the Urban Institute is launching a special *Returning Home* health substudy examining the physical and mental health needs of prisoners returning to Cincinnati. We expect that this research will provide us with more detailed information about the health issues of released prisoners, including the extent to which released prisoners with mental and physical health care needs have access to and take advantage of community referrals.

Chapter 7
Family[90]

The effect of family factors on the criminal behavior of individuals has been the subject of criminological research for decades. Criminological theory suggests that both family history and current family relationships can facilitate or inhibit a released prisoner's propensity to re-offend. A person who has family members who have also engaged in crime, or who has a history of abuse and neglect by family members, is likely to be at greater risk of re-offending because criminal behavior has been learned, often from an early age (Sampson and Laub 1993). Research also provides strong support for the idea that families that provide emotional and economic support for released prisoners contribute to the social control of these individuals, helping to reduce the risk of re-offending (Sampson and Laub 1993). Furthermore, some research suggests that prisoners who have meaningful contacts with their families while imprisoned have more positive post-prison adjustment experiences than those who do not (Bayse, Allgood, and Van Wyk 1991, Hairston 1988, Hairston 1991, Sampson and Laub 1993).

Contrary to the relatively extensive research findings on the role of family factors on criminal behavior described above, the effects of family relationships on post-prison adjustment and on post-release reintegration into the family and the larger community have not been well documented. Furthermore, we were unable to identify any published research on how prisoners' expectations about the emotional and tangible support they will receive from family—both while they are in prison and after their release—may differ from what their family members expect, as well as from what the ex-prisoners actually experience. This potential disconnect between prisoner expectations and post-release realities may have an impact on the process of successful reintegration. Thus, the role of family in the reentry process is perhaps more complex than previously understood, and poses important questions about the extent to which family histories, relationships, support, and expectations affect the experiences of released prisoners as they attempt to surmount the challenges of reentry.

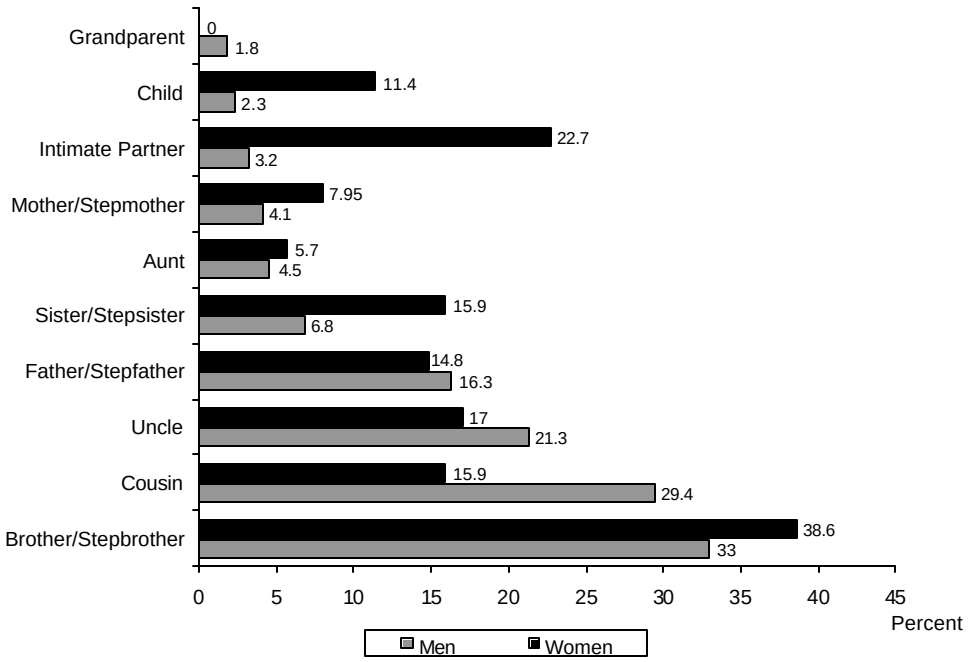
This chapter explores the influence of family dynamics and family support on reentry outcomes. The analyses will include an exploration of pre-prison, in-prison, and post-prison family relationships and support, prisoner and family expectations for these factors after release from prison, the congruence of prisoner and family expectations, and the effects of these factors on post-prison adjustment and reintegration. We begin with an exploration of the family circumstances of our respondents, especially any family criminal activity substance use and abuse, as well as family composition. The chapter then examines the closeness of family relationships, spanning from before the respondent's prison term began to six months after his or her release, measuring self-reported levels of family support received at different points along the continuum of the study. We analyze the relationships between the factors discussed above—family circumstances, family relationships and support, and prisoner and family expectations—and intermediate outcomes, such as finding and keeping a job, and remaining drug free. We conclude with a descriptive analysis of family members' experiences with the reentry process based on surveys with a small sub-sample of released prisoners' family members.

[90]Rebecca Naser and Jill Farrell, authors.

FAMILY CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

The majority of men and women who participated in our study had family members with histories of involvement in the criminal justice system. For example, nearly two-thirds of respondents—58 percent of men and 65 percent of women—had someone in their family who had been convicted of a crime. Figure 7.1 provides the percentages of male and female respondents who indicated that specific family members had been convicted of a crime.[91] Brother or stepbrother was the most frequently cited relative by both men and women, with 39 percent of all female respondents and 33 percent of males reporting having a brother or stepbrother who had been convicted. As Figure 7.1 illustrates, additional family members who were frequently cited varied between male and female respondents. Considerably larger percentages of female respondents were involved in intimate partner relationships with someone who had been previously convicted of a crime: nearly one-quarter (23%) of women respondents were involved in intimate relationships with such a person as opposed to only three percent of their male counterparts. Also noteworthy is the larger percentage of female prisoners who reported having a child who had been convicted of a crime, with 11 percent of women reporting this during the pre-release survey, as compared to only 2 percent of men.[92]

Figure 7.1 Percentage of Respondents with Family Member Convicted of a Crime (N = 309)



[91] When interpreting these findings, it is important to point out that respondents can have multiple types of certain relatives, such as siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, and may have just one—or none—of others, such as a spouse or parent. Thus, we would expect that brothers, cousins, and other such relatives would be reported at higher rates.

[92] Sixty-three percent of male respondents and 75 percent of female respondents reported having at least one child when they entered prison.

During the pre-release interview, respondents were also asked if there was anyone in their family currently serving time in prison. Forty-two percent of female respondents and 38 percent of male respondents reported having at least one relative who was currently serving time. When asked which relatives were currently serving time, both men and women most frequently cited cousins and brothers or stepbrothers. Eighteen percent of men and 10 percent of women reported having a cousin in prison, and 16 percent of women and 14 percent of men reported having a brother or stepbrother who was serving time. Six percent of the female respondents had an intimate partner serving time in prison, while none of the male respondents did.

These findings support prior research, which documents that many individuals involved in the criminal justice system have backgrounds characterized by familial criminal histories. As will be discussed throughout the chapter, the findings of this study suggest that family support and family relationships play an important part in released prisoners' reentry experiences. While not explored in this pilot study, these findings about the fairly extensive familial criminal histories of our sample suggest that the challenges of reentry may be greater for those released prisoners returning to families that are encumbered with other members who have criminal histories or are involved in crime, than for those who do not.

FAMILY EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE

Previous research has also tied a history of family emotional and physical abuse to increased risk of criminal activity (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986, Laub and Sampson 1988). While the participants in this study reported overall strong feelings of closeness and support within their families, 12 percent reported being threatened or harassed by a family member, and 6 percent reported being physically hurt by a family member, in the year before their prison term began. When asked by whom they were threatened, harassed, or physically hurt, of those who reported abuse, half indicated it was by a non-spouse partner, and just over a quarter (27%) indicated it was by a mother or stepmother. Women respondents reported much greater frequencies of abuse by intimate partners; nine percent of those who reported being victims of abuse reported being threatened, harassed, or physically hurt by their husband, and 65 percent of those respondents reported being victimized by a non-spouse intimate partner. No male respondents reported being threatened, harassed, or physically hurt by their intimate partner. Interestingly, other than non-spouse partners, female respondents reported the greatest frequencies of abuse from female family members—17 percent of those reporting abuse reported abuse by mothers or stepmothers and an equal percent reported abuse by aunts.

Correspondingly, 12 percent of respondents reported that they physically hurt a family member before their prison term. A greater percentage of female respondents reported being the perpetrator of physical abuse; 18 percent of female respondents reported that they physically hurt someone in their family or household before prison, as compared to 9 percent of male respondents. When asked whom they physically hurt, non-spouse partner was the most frequently cited response, with 62 percent of males and 50 percent of females who reported being perpetrators of abuse reporting physically abusing their non-spouse partner.

Respondents' expectations for the likelihood of abuse in their relationships with friends or family after their release were in accordance with the family victimization they reported having occurred before entering prison. In the pre-release interview, when asked how likely it is that family or friends will threaten them after their release, 11 percent indicated this was *likely* or *very likely*, and 4 percent thought

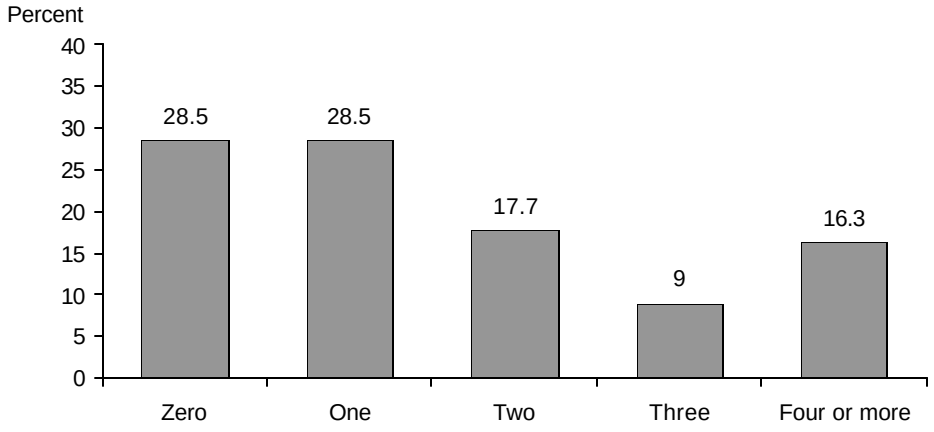
it was *likely* or *very likely* a family member or friend will hurt them. Similar to the pre-prison experiences they reported, female respondents reported the likelihood of threats or physical abuse after their release at slightly higher frequencies than their male counterparts, 14 percent of females versus 9 percent of males indicated threats were *likely* or *very likely* and 5 percent of females versus 4 percent of males indicating the same for physical violence.

It appears that family and intimate partner violence—both on the part of the prisoner and his or her family members—is a reality for a small but important segment of our sample. As such, we might expect that those with such domestic violence histories face yet another challenge in the reintegration process. Are living arrangements with certain family members not an option, or at least a dangerous one, for some returning prisoners? Do such barriers to housing displace returning prisoners to shelters or, worse yet, the street? To what extent are these family violence issues related to substance use or abuse on the part of both the returning prisoner and his or her family? While these questions are beyond the scope of this analysis, they raise important issues that should be explored in future research.

FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE HISTORY

Substance abuse is another risk factor associated with family dysfunction and recidivism (Beck 2000 and Mumola 1999). While 70 percent of respondents reported that remaining drug-free would be an important factor in staying out of prison, and half (52%) felt that not using alcohol would be an important factor, a number of these prisoners returned to families in which drug and alcohol use are serious problems, thus burdening these returning prisoners with an additional challenge. As illustrated in Figure 7.2, nearly two-thirds of respondents (71.5%) reported having at least one family member with a drug or alcohol problem, and about 16 percent of respondents listed four or more family members with histories of such problems.

Figure 7.2 Number of Family Members with Drug or Alcohol Problems (N = 277)



In addition, as referenced in the Substance Use chapter in this report, those returning prisoners with more extensive substance use histories were much more likely to have engaged in domestic violence than those who reported little or no drug or alcohol use. It perhaps comes as no surprise that issues of

criminal behavior, substance use, and domestic violence—both on the part of returning prisoners and their families—are interrelated. Nonetheless, these co-existing factors make it difficult to disentangle the effects of each individual indicator on reentry outcomes.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the effects of family relationships on post-prison adjustment and on post-release reintegration into the family and the larger community have not been well documented. While there has been research on the effects of in-prison contact on recidivism, in general, it is not known how family relationships and support facilitate the reentry process. Nor is it clear whether a difference in prisoners' expectations versus actual experiences pertaining to the quality and quantity of contact with family members has an effect on the reentry process.

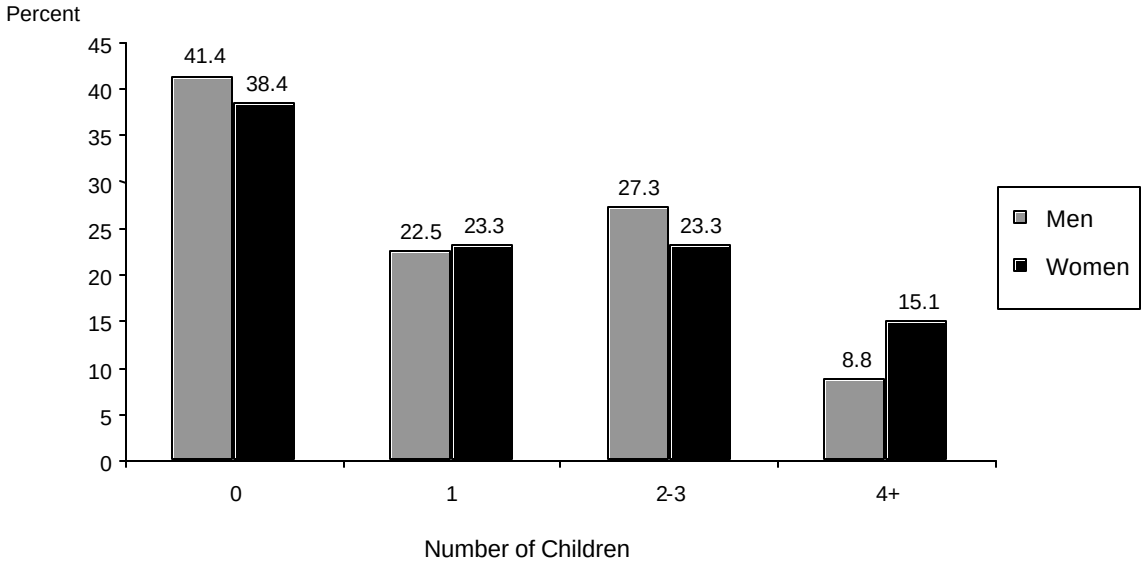
To begin to explore these issues we asked respondents a series of questions prior to their release from prison about their relationships with family[93] prior to their incarceration, their current relationships with family, and their expectations for the future of these relationships, including the extent of both emotional and tangible support they expected to receive from friends and family after their release. A similar series of questions was included in the two individual post-release interviews (PR1 and PR2), as well as in interviews with a small sample of 41 family members of our prisoner sample. We begin with a brief discussion of the family composition of the 324 prisoners included in our sample.

Family Composition

The majority of Maryland prisoners included in this study were single, and over half were parents. Sixty-eight percent were single and never married before incarceration, while 15 percent were married or lived with someone as married at the time they entered prison. Fifty-nine percent of male respondents and 62 percent of female respondents had children under 18 at the time they entered prison. Of those with children, 41 percent of males and 56 percent of females had minor children who lived with them immediately prior to their incarceration. At the time the pre-release survey was administered, of those respondents with minor children, 54 percent had at least one minor child in the formal custody of someone else. Figure 7.3 presents the percentages of respondents who reported having minor children upon beginning their prison term.

[93] As described in the research design chapter, "family member" is defined as blood or legal relative, someone with whom the prisoner has a child in common, or a significant other or guardian our respondent lived with prior to his or her incarceration or plans to live with after he or she is released from prison.

Figure 7.3 Number of Minor Children When Respondent Entered Prison (N=313)



The family composition of respondents changed little during their prison term. Two percent of respondents reported getting married during their terms. The number of respondents classifying themselves as divorced, just prior to their release, as opposed to when they entered prison, increased by one percent. Six percent of respondents experienced an addition to their family while serving their prison term, with seven percent of men and three percent of women reporting having at least one new child while serving their current term.

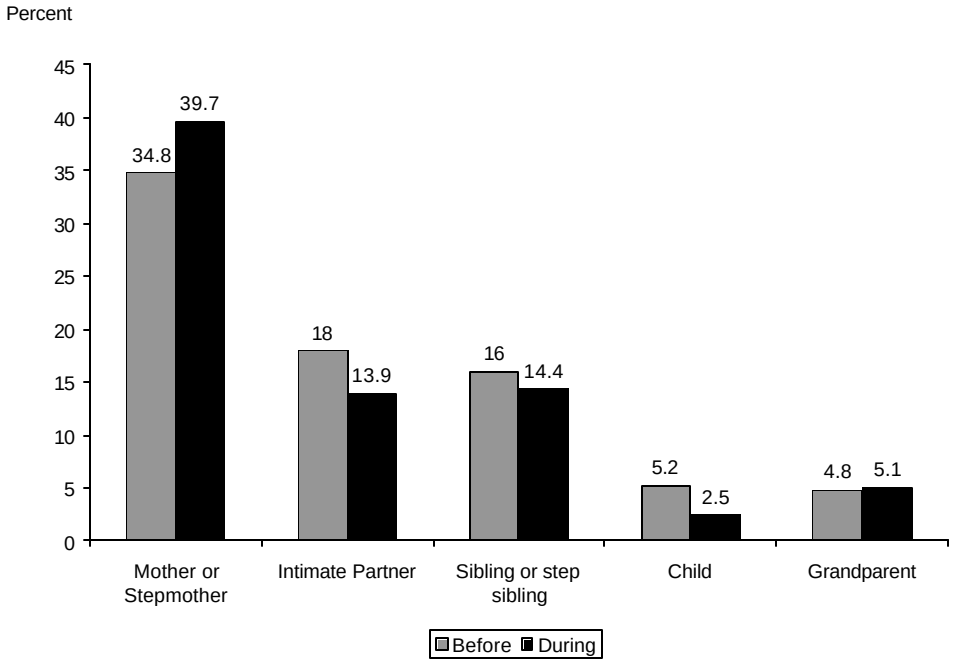
The fact that roughly half of our sample left children behind upon entering prison has important implications, both for the children of these prisoners as well as for the challenges of family reunification upon the parent's release from prison. As is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, while respondents were very optimistic about renewing relationships with their children after prison, they did not have the frequency of contact with their children that they had anticipated. The answers to why this occurred are beyond the scope of this study. Was it by choice? Were there financial constraints or other challenges that limited the time returning prisoners could spend with their children? These questions pose many areas of interest for future research.

Family Relationships

Respondents reported close family relationships throughout the course of the study. Forty percent of respondents reported that they had a close relationship with four or more family members before and during their incarceration. Fourteen percent of respondents reported no close family relationships before prison with that percentage decreasing to 12 percent of respondents during prison. Eighteen percent reported having only one close family relationship prior to prison and that percentage decreased to 14 percent of respondents during prison. Figure 7.4 provides the types of family members most frequently cited when respondents were asked to whom in their family they felt closest before and during their

prison term.[94] Maternal figures played an important role in the lives of returning prisoners. Mother or stepmother was by far the most frequently cited family member for both male and female respondents.

Figure 7.4 Close Family Relationships, Before and During Prison (before prison N = 250, during prison N = 237)



Respondents were asked a series of questions to obtain information about the level and frequency of contact with family members in the last six months of their prison term, as compared to the first six months. The level and frequency of reported contact with family during prison are consistent with respondent statements that their family relationships remained close during their prison term. Over half of all respondents had daily or weekly contact of some kind—mail, telephone, or in-person visits—with family while in prison.

Interestingly, while certain kinds of contact—specifically phone and in-person visits—can be quite costly, the frequency of all three kinds of contact remained constant or increased for over 80 percent of respondents from the first six months to the final six months of their prison term. This finding was somewhat surprising, as we had hypothesized that the frequency of in-prison contact with family members would diminish over time due to the costs, time, and effort associated with staying in touch. However, this finding may also reflect a priority of the Maryland Department of Corrections to transfer some prisoners who are returning to Baltimore to facilities in and around the city in the months prior to release. For more on this topic, see the section on Family Experiences and Expectations for Prisoner Reentry later in this chapter.

[94] Responses to the questions on closest family relationships before and during prison had high levels of missing data, with 23 percent and 27 percent missing data, respectively. It is unclear why these high levels of missing data occurred. Percentages are reported for respondents who identified to whom in their family they felt closest.

Data collected at the post-release interviews suggest that family relationships remained close after the respondents were released from prison. Forty-nine percent of respondents at the PR1 interview reported having close family relationships with four or more family members, while 10 percent and nine percent reported having no close family relationships and only one close family relationship respectively. Ninety-three percent or respondents at the PR1 and PR2 reported having contact with some family member in the past 30 days.

Respondents expressed similar optimism about their relationships with their children. Overall, prisoners who reported being parents were very optimistic about renewing relationships with their children, and expected to resume active parenting roles. Seventy-nine percent of respondents with children indicated they thought it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to renew relationships with their children. Over two-thirds of these respondents (69%) planned to see their children daily and approximately the same percentage (66%) planned on one or more of those children living with them after their release. Perhaps not surprisingly, a higher percentage of female respondents than males expected to live with at least one minor child (83% and 58%, respectively). Correspondingly, 81 percent of female respondents and 60 percent of male respondents with minor children expected to regain legal custody of one or more child after their release.

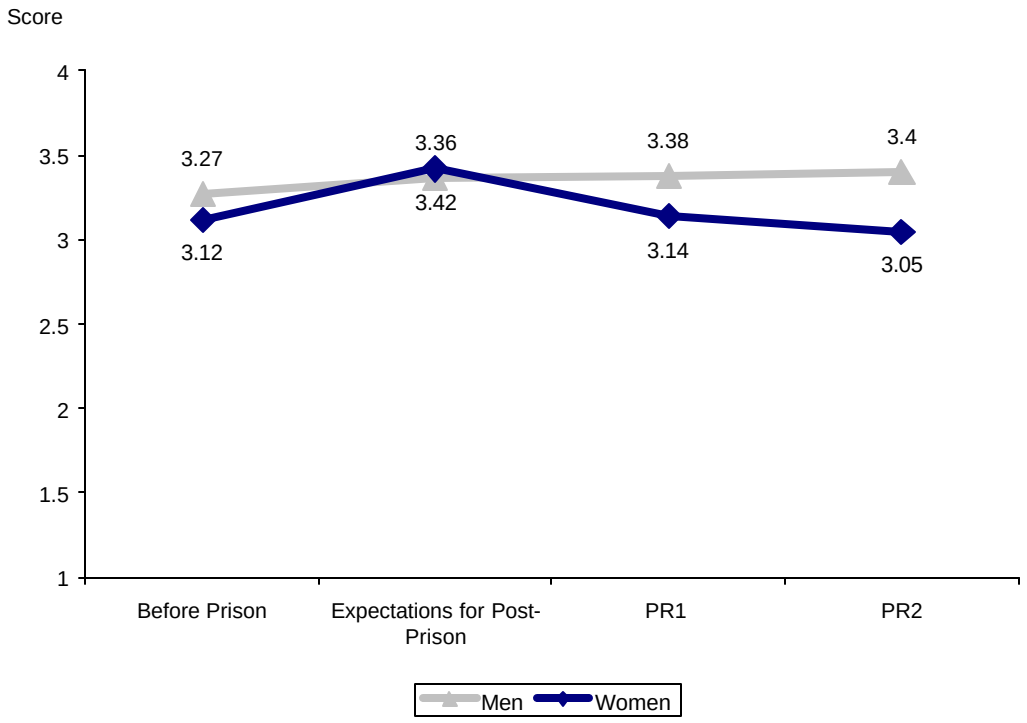
Expectations for the ease with which respondents would renew relationships with their children were exceeded after their release from prison. However, respondents did not have contact with their children as frequently as they had expected. At the second post release interview, 94 percent of respondents with children indicated it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to renew their relationships with them. At the PR1 interview, 58 percent of ex-prisoners with children were in contact with them daily, and by the PR2, the percentage having daily contact with their children decreased to just over half (51%).

Family Relationships Quality

To assess the quality of the relationships that respondents had with family members, a Family Relationship Quality Scale was developed. The Family Relationship Quality Scale consists of 11 items that measure concepts such as whether the respondent felt close to his/her family, whether there was someone in the respondent's family s/he can talk to and spend time with, and whether there was someone in the family who understood his/her problems. For each item on the scale, respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*. The Family Relationship Quality Scale was repeated four times over the course of the project, twice in the pre-release survey—first regarding relationships before prison and again regarding their expectations for these relationships after their release and in each of the post release interviews.

Figure 7.5 provides the mean scores for the Family Relationship Quality Scale at each time it was administered for male and female respondents. Family Relationship Quality Scale mean values range from one to four, one representing distant family relationships and four representing close family relationships.

Figure 7.5 Family Relationship Quality Scale, Mean Scores (before prison N = 296, expectations for after prison N = 288, PR1 N = 147, PR2 N = 100)



Overall, respondents indicated that they had close family relationships, rating their family relationships as more close than distant, with mean scores exceeding three at every data collection point. Respondents were also optimistic about renewing their relationships with family after their release: Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) expected it to be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to do so. In addition, most respondents—over 85% on most measures—had high expectations for their post-release family relationships. They felt they had family members who would love them, listened to their problems, and with whom they could have a good time. As Figure 7.5 illustrates, respondents' expectations of positive relationships with their families after release were notably higher than their reports of those relationships before incarceration.[95]

These higher expectations could be due to a number of factors. First, it is possible that family relationships just prior to the respondent's incarceration were characterized by stress due to increasingly destructive behavior on the part of the respondent (e.g., more frequent drug or alcohol use leading up to the incident that prompted their incarceration). Thus, compared to the tumultuous days leading up to their incarceration, respondents could be assuming that their relationships with family members—at least in the first few months after release—are likely to be better than before. It is also possible that relationships

[95] The difference between the before-prison mean score and expectations for after-prison mean score is statistically significant at .05 for the total sample, men, and women.

with family while the respondent is in prison are less likely to result in disagreements because contact is less frequent and occurs in a controlled setting. This might lead the respondent to believe that the relationship will remain as strong after their release.

It should be noted that there are considerable differences between male and female respondents' mean scores and the direction of changes in those scores on the Family Relationship Quality Scale. Generally, men rated their family relationships as closer than women did, but women respondents were more optimistic about having close family relationships after their release from prison than men. Men reported higher mean scores than women at each of the three data collection points when they were asked questions about their *actual* relationships with family—before prison, at the PR1 interview, and at the PR2 interview. When asked about *expectations* for relationships with family after release from prison, women's mean score increased considerably from their pre-prison mean score and was greater than the men's mean score at both points. Further interpretation of Figure 7.5 could lead one to conclude that male respondents' expectations for post-prison family relationships were realized, if not exceeded, while women's expectations were not. During the two post-release interviews, male respondents' mean score continued to increase, indicating increasing levels of closeness within family relationships, while women's mean score decreased sharply. By the second post release interview, women were reporting that their family relationships were more distant than they were before they left for prison. The difference between male and female Family Relationship Quality Scale scores at the PR1 and PR2 are both statistically significant ($p<=.05$).

Intimate partner relationships also appear to have remained close after release from prison. Respondents reported supportive intimate partner relationships, yet also reported moderate levels of negative dynamics, such as arguing and working hard to avoid conflict within these relationship. Forty-nine percent and 60 percent of respondents reported having someone that they considered an intimate partner at the PR1 and PR2 interviews, respectively. Two partner relationship scales were created, the Positive Partner Support Scale and the Negative Partner Support Scale that are intended to measure the quality of respondents' intimate partner relationships. Each scale is comprised of six items and for each; respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*. Scale values range from one to four, with one representing low levels of positive support and four representing high levels of positive support on the Positive Partner Support Scale and one representing low negative relationship dynamics and four, high levels of negative dynamics for the Negative Partner Support Scale.

At the PR1 interview, respondents' mean Positive Partner Support Scale score was 3.45, indicating positive, supportive intimate partner relationships. Their mean Negative Partner Support score was 2.27 indicating moderate levels of negative dynamics within these relationships. From the PR1 to the PR2 interviews, mean positive partner support decreased slightly to 3.39, however, the negative dynamics in these intimate partner relationships also appears to have reduced, with the mean Negative Partner Support score decreasing to 2.18. The difference between both mean scores from PR1 to PR2 was not statistically significant.

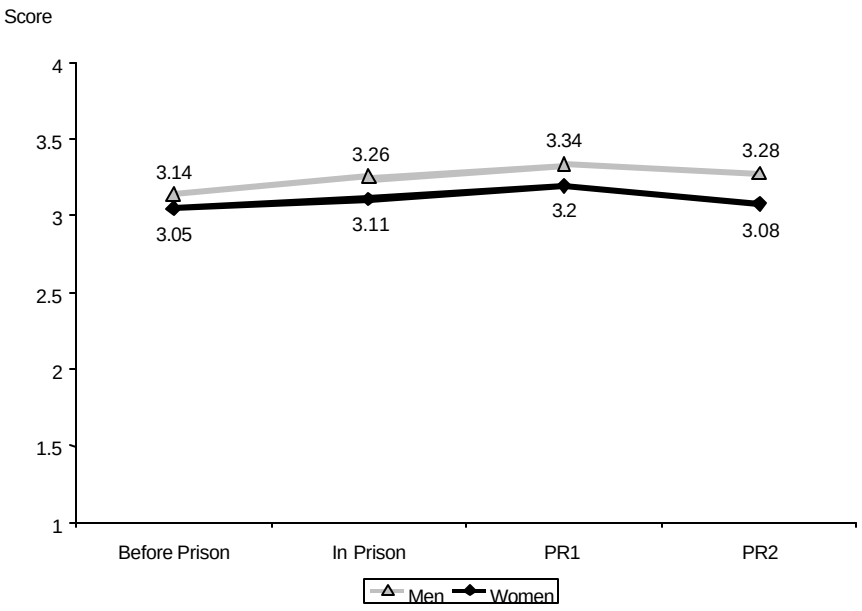
Family Support

The support of family members is likely to be an important component of the reintegration process of recently released prisoners. Family can play a critical role in providing tangible, financial, and

emotional support. In order to measure family support, we created a Family Support Scale to gauge both prisoner's and family member's assessments of the supportiveness of their family. The scale consists of four items that measure concepts such as whether respondents wanted their family involved in their life and whether they considered their family a source of support. For each item, respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed* or *strongly disagreed.* For the inmate respondents, the Family Support Scale was administered four times over the continuum of the project, twice in the pre-release survey—first regarding the family support they gave and received before prison, and again during prison—and in each of the post release interviews.[96] Figure 7.6 provides the mean score for the Family Support Scale, at each time it was administered for male and female prisoner respondents. Family Support Scale mean values range from one to four, with one representing low levels of perceived support and four representing high levels.

Overall, respondents indicated that before their incarceration, they felt close to their family members, considered family a significant source of support, and also felt they served as a source of support for their family. Eighty-nine percent of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they wanted their family involved in their life before entering prison and over three-quarters of respondents (77%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they felt close to their family prior to entering prison.

Figure 7.6 Family Support Scale, Mean Values (before prison N = 301, in prison N = 302, PR1 N = 149, PR2 N = 102)



As illustrated in Figure 7.6, respondents reported high levels of family support at each data collection point, with men reporting slightly higher levels of family support than their female

[96] The Family Support Scale was also administered to a small sample of 41 family members who were referred by members of the prisoner sample. These findings are briefly discussed at the end of this chapter.

counterparts. Respondents' assessments of the supportiveness of their families gradually increased from before prison, through their prison term and up to the PR1 interview. Their assessment of the supportiveness of their family declined slightly from the PR1 to the PR2 interview for both men and women, although the differences are not statistically significant.

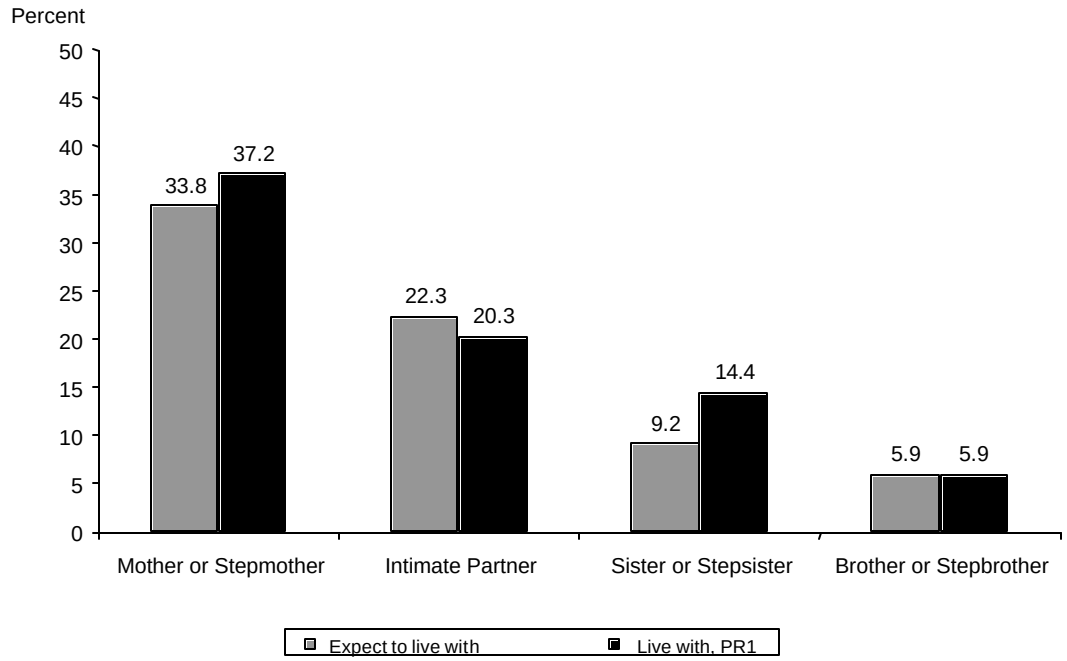
Respondents' expectations for support from their families after release from prison varied depending on the kind of support. For example, they had relatively moderate expectations about the levels of financial support they would receive from family: of the 85 percent of respondents who identified any expected source(s) of financial support after their release from prison, 50 percent of female and 39 percent of male respondents identified family as such a source of support during the first month after release. Only four percent expected financial support from family and friends to exceed six months.

Both male and female expectations for family financial support were met, if not exceeded. At the PR1 interview 64 percent of males and 56 percent of females reported that family was a current source of financial support and 90 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had someone in their family to provide them with financial support. By the PR2 interview, 82 percent of male and 69 percent of female respondents reported that they had received financial support from their families since their release from prison, and 93 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had someone in their family to provide them with financial support.

With regard to employment, slightly higher percentages of respondents planned on using relatives as a potential source of assistance in getting a job after their release than those who planned on relying on family for financial support. Of those who expected to be looking for a job (or who did not already have one lined up) 61 percent of female and 52 percent of male respondents planned on talking to relatives as a means of finding a job. Nonetheless, during the first few months after release from prison, respondents did not find themselves relying on family as a source of job assistance to the degree they had anticipated. At the PR1 interview, 48 percent of female and 47 percent of male respondents indicated they had talked to family as a means of finding employment.

In terms of housing, respondents had relatively high expectations for family. Approximately two-thirds of all respondents (75 percent of females and 63 percent of males) expected to live with family members after their release from prison. When asked whom respondents planned to live with after their release, mothers or stepmothers and intimate partners were the most frequent responses, by far. These expectations for living with family members were, for the most part, realized: Nearly half of all respondents (49%) slept at a family member's home their first night out of prison, and greater than 80 percent of respondents reported living with a family member at both the PR1 and PR2 interviews. Figure 7.7 provides the percentage of respondents who expected to live with certain family members after their release and the percentage of respondents who were living with certain family members at the PR1 interview. As they expected, most respondents found themselves living with mothers or stepmothers and intimate partners.

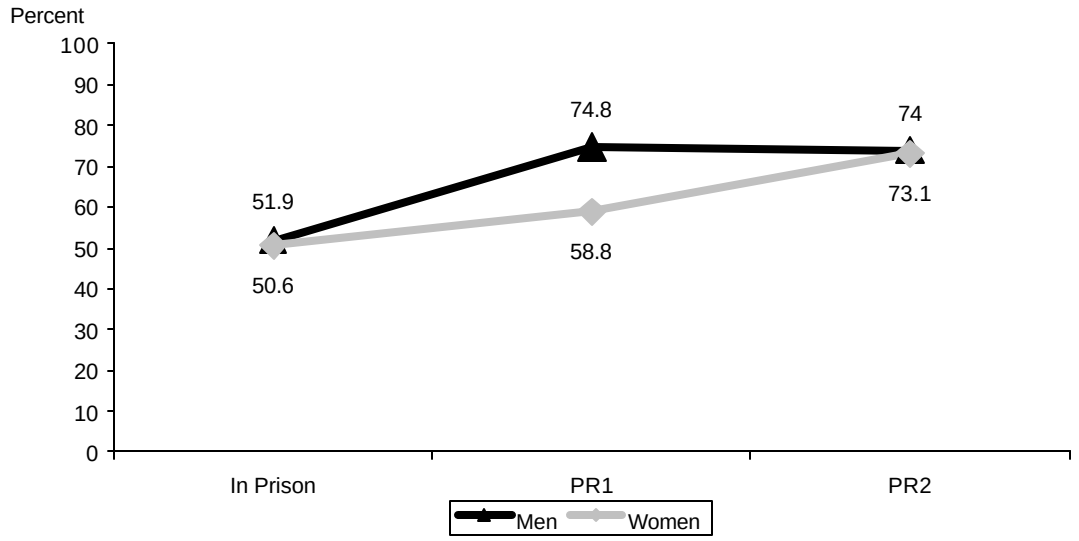
Figure 7.7 Living Arrangements after Release: Expectations for and Reality at PR1 (expectations for after prison N = 305, PR1 N = 153)



For the ex-prisoners included in our sample, expectations for family support overall (both emotional and tangible) appear to have been realized after their release from prison. At the PR1 interview, 89 percent of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their family had been supportive since their release and 82 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their family had been as supportive as they had hoped. At the PR2 interview those percentages increased to 94 percent and 89 percent respectively.

Interestingly, while the vast majority of respondents rated both expected and actual support at very high levels for the measures of family support described previously, we found much more variation in response to the pre-release interview question about how important family support would be as a factor in helping respondents stay out of prison. Just over half of all prisoners surveyed (51%) at the pre-release interview indicated that family support was going to be an important factor in helping them to stay out of prison. As Figure 7.8 illustrates, the percentage of respondents indicating that family support was important to staying out of prison increased as they transitioned from prison back to their families and communities, but at different rates for male and female respondents. By the PR2 interview, nearly three-quarters of both male and female respondents indicated family support was important to staying out of prison.

Figure 7.8 Percentage of Respondents Believing Family Support is Important in Staying Out of Prison (in prison N = 297, PR1 N = 151, PR2 N = 103)



Throughout the different areas of exploration included in this study we found that prisoners were optimistic about life after release from prison. Whether it be in securing employment, reunifying with family, or staying out of prison, generally respondents felt they would be able to achieve these things. Perhaps respondents underestimated some of the challenges of reentry and, once released, realized the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead. Or while in prison, perhaps prisoners failed to remember the importance of family in their lives. While this pilot study does not allow us to definitively address why the importance of family increased for released prisoners as their time on the outside increased, these factors may help explain the increase in the percentage of respondents who felt that family was an important factor in staying out of prison—from the pre-release interview to the PR1 and the PR2.

These questions bring us back to our original areas of inquiry: How do different family dynamics, quality of family relationships, and levels of family support influence the reentry process for recently released prisoners? While our small sample size inhibited our ability to perform extensive predictive analysis, we explored the relationships between family support, intimate partner and family relationships and the intermediate reentry outcomes of employment and staying drug and alcohol free, by comparing means on a number of variables across a divided sample.

Figure 7.9 provides the results of a one-way ANOVA comparing Family Relationship Quality Scale scores, Family Support Scale scores and Positive and Negative Partner Support Scales scores for respondents who reported working since release with those who had not worked since release at the PR1 interview. We created a dummy variable, dividing the PR1 respondents into those who had worked since release (coded 1) and those who had not (coded 0). Shaded cells indicate scale mean scores for which there is a statistically significant difference at .10 or lower between those who had worked at least one week since release and those who had not.

Close family relationships and strong family support after release from prison appear to have a positive impact on employment after release. Respondents who worked since release reported closer family relationships (as measured by higher mean scores) and stronger family support (as measured by

higher mean scores) than those who had not worked, at all points of measurement except for the pre-release measures of both scales. Both Family Relationship Quality Scale scores and Family Support Scale scores at the PR1 were statistically significantly different between the two groups. Respondent's expectations for family relationships after their release and their assessment of family support while in prison were not associated with whether or not they were employed by the PR1 interview, nor were Family Relationship Quality Scale scores and Family Support Scale scores before prison. Higher levels of negative intimate partner support appear to be associated with lack of employment. Respondents who had not worked since release had higher mean scores on the Negative Partner Support scale, and the difference in mean scores between those who had worked and those who had not was statistically significant at .09.

Figure 7.9 One-way ANOVA comparing Family Relationship Quality Scale scores, Family Support Scale scores, and Positive and Negative Partner Support Scales scores for respondents who had and had not worked since release at PR1

		N	Mean	Significance
Family Relationship Quality Scale Pre-Prison	Worked since release	86	3.29	
	No work since release	47	3.39	
	Total	133	3.33	.418
Family Relationship Quality Scale Expectations for Post-Prison	Worked since release	85	3.51	
	No work since release	49	3.34	
	Total	134	3.45	.172
Family Relationship Quality Scale PR1	Worked since release	94	3.41	
	No work since release	50	3.20	
	Total	144	3.34	.036
Family Support Scale Pre-Prison	Worked since release	90	3.20	
	No work since release	48	3.21	
	Total	138	3.21	.930
Family Support Scale In-Prison	Worked since release	89	3.33	
	No work since release	49	3.24	
	Total	138	3.30	.494
Family Support Scale PR1	Worked since release	94	3.39	
	No work since release	52	3.20	
	Total	146	3.32	.055
Positive Partner Support Scale PR1	Worked since release	51	3.51	
	No work since release	25	3.36	
	Total	76	3.46	.256
Negative Partner Support Scale PR1	Worked since release	51	2.21	
	No work since release	25	2.41	
	Total	76	2.79	.092

A similar analysis was conducted to assess whether intimate partner and family relationships and support affected drug and alcohol use after release from prison. Figure 7.10 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA comparing Family Relationship Scale scores, Family Support Scale scores, and Positive and Negative Partner Support Scales scores for respondents who reported not using drugs since release

with those who used drugs since release at the PR1 interview.[97] Again, we created a dummy variable, dividing the PR1 respondents into those who had not used drugs (coded 1) and those who had (coded 0). Shaded cells indicate scale mean scores for which there is statistically significant difference at .10 or lower between those who had not used and those who had used drugs since release.

Respondents who had not used drugs since their release reported higher mean Family Relationship Quality Scale scores, Family Support Scale scores, and Positive Partner Support Scale scores at all points of measurement, thus indicating closer family relationships and stronger family support. Those who had not used drugs also had lower Negative Partner Support Scale scores. One family measure, family relationship quality after release from prison, was significantly related to drug use, as those who had not used drugs reported significantly higher Family Relationship Quality Scale scores at the PR1 than those who had used drugs since release (statistically significant at .07).

[97] A similar analysis was conducted in which we divided respondents into those who had not used drugs or alcohol and those who had used drugs or alcohol since release. There were no statistically significant findings when the use of alcohol was included in the analysis.

Figure 7.10 One-way ANOVA comparing Family Relationship Quality Scale scores, Family Support Scale scores, and Positive and Negative Partner Support Scales scores for respondents who used drugs and those who had not since release at PR1

		N	Mean	Significance
Family Relationship Quality Scale Pre-Prison	No drug use	107	3.31	
	Drug use	28	3.28	
	Total	135	3.30	.834
Family Relationship Quality Scale Expectations for Post-Prison	No drug use	106	3.46	
	Drug use	29	3.31	
	Total	135	3.43	.295
Family Relationship Quality Scale PR1	No drug use	113	3.39	
	Drug use	31	3.18	
	Total	144	3.34	.070
Family Support Scale Pre-Prison	No drug use	111	3.22	
	Drug use	29	3.04	
	Total	140	3.18	.227
Family Support Scale In-Prison	No drug use	109	3.31	
	Drug use	30	3.18	
	Total	139	3.28	.338
Family Support Scale PR1	No drug use	115	3.35	
	Drug use	31	3.20	
	Total	146	3.32	.196
Positive Partner Support Scale PR1	No drug use	62	3.48	
	Drug use	16	3.34	
	Total	78	3.45	.350
Negative Partner Support Scale PR1	No drug use	62	2.23	
	Drug use	16	2.45	
	Total	78	2.27	.105

While our limited sample size did not allow for extensive predictive analysis, these findings certainly suggest that there is a relationship between family support and family relationships—particularly within the first few months of release—and positive reentry outcomes. It stands to reason that staying off drugs and getting a job are important factors in successful reentry.

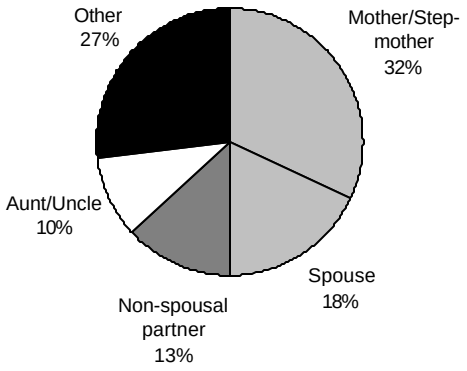
The returning prisoners in our sample expressed optimism about the future, their family relationships, and the support they would receive from family. If in fact returning prisoners rely on family for the variety of tangible and emotional supports that this pilot study suggests they do, it is important to recognize the role of family in the reentry process, suggesting we consider the role of family as we do other factors, such as education, job training, and substance abuse treatment. Further exploration of the obstacles and challenges that families of returning prisoners confront, as they attempt to support the reintegration of their family member into the community is warranted. Providing families of returning prisoners with the necessary assistance and services that help them to support a family member returning from prison, may prove to be a support network that can serve as a powerful tool in navigating

the many challenges of successful reentry. Clearly, further exploration of the role of families in reentry, and the challenges and obstacles that these families confront, is warranted.

FAMILY EXPERIENCES & EXPECTATIONS FOR PRISONER REENTRY

The returning prisoner's family can have a profound effect on his or her post-prison adjustment and the prisoner's return can have a profound effect on his or her family. In an effort to better understand how families experience a family member's return from prison, we interviewed a small sample of 41 individuals about their relationships with their imprisoned family members and their experiences throughout the reentry processes. Prior to release and in the first post-release interview, respondents were asked to provide us with the names of up to three family members[98] who we could interview.[99] Figure 7.11 describes the composition of the family sample. One-third of the respondents were the prisoners' mothers or stepmothers and another one-third were intimate partners. On average, the respondent had known the prisoner for approximately 24 years. Just over half (54%) of the respondents had lived with the prisoner during the year before he/she was incarcerated.

Figure 7.11 Composition of Family Respondents[a] (N = 41)



[a]The category "Other" includes: father, stepfather, sister, stepsister, brother, stepbrother, grandparent, and friend.

[98] As described in the research design chapter, "family member" is defined as a blood relative, someone with whom they have a child in common, or a significant other or guardian they lived with prior to their incarceration or plan to live with after they are released from prison.

[99] Our intent in drawing the family sample was to include family members who were well informed about the prisoner's life and could speak to his/her daily activities and experiences. While our family sample is primarily comprised of the same family members that were most frequently cited by prisoners as their closest family relation, we were concerned that prisoners were referring family members they felt were most likely to speak positively about them, rather than family members who were most informed about their lives and could best speak to their experiences. In the Maryland Pilot we asked the prisoners to refer three family members that could tell us about their experiences. After the Maryland Pilot we modified this procedure. As a part of the first post-release interview we asked respondents which family members they have had contact with in the last 30 days. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer referred back to the list of family members they'd been in contact with, explained the family interview, and asked the ex-prisoner for permission to contact these family members to see if they were interested in participating in the study. If the ex-prisoner granted permission, the interviewer then completed the family referral contact sheet for all family members listed.

Sample Characteristics

The sample of family members was mostly female (76%) and black (80%). The average age was 47 years old. Two-thirds of the respondents had obtained the equivalent of a high school diploma or higher, which is substantially higher than the corresponding finding in the sample of ex-prisoners (42%). Furthermore, approximately 56 percent of the family members interviewed were employed at the time of the interview.

Individuals with family members who engage in deviant or criminal activity are more likely to engage in criminal activity themselves (Sampson and Laub 1993). Thus, we thought it would be useful to learn about the family member's substance use history and involvement in the criminal justice system. Ninety-seven percent of the family members we interviewed reported that they never use illegal drugs, and 85 percent responded that they never drink to drunkenness. In terms of their contact with the criminal justice system, 39 percent had been arrested and 15 percent had previously served time in jail or prison. While our prisoner respondents reported backgrounds characterized by familial criminal histories, emotional, physical, and substance abuse, these family members did not exhibit these characteristics. Given what we have learned about the extent to which returning prisoners planned on relying on family support, the importance of family relationships, and the importance returning prisoners assigned to family in staying out of prison, these may be promising findings—particularly if the released prisoner had a close relationship with the family respondent they referred to us.

In-Prison Contact

Previously we discussed the importance of family relationships to prisoners while they were in prison. In light of their responses, we were interested in measuring contacts with family while in prison to determine how easy or difficult it may be for families to maintain physical contact with their imprisoned relative. We learned that all family respondents had been in contact with the prisoner during the prison term, and 62 percent visited him/her during the term. We asked respondents to identify the two biggest difficulties in staying in touch with their family member while he/she was in prison. The most common reason given was a lack of transportation (21%), followed by the perception that prison was just not a nice place to visit (15%) and that it was located too far away (15%). Of those who visited the prison, it took family members a little over an hour (72 minutes), on average, to travel from home to the prison, and they spent an average of $13.50 to complete the visit.

Generally speaking, phone calls and visits to imprisoned family members are costly. In addition, the visits appear to consume a considerable amount of the family member's time, which could pose problems in terms of work schedules, childcare, or other obligations. In light of our findings on the importance of family relationships and support, these factors should be considered as they relate to telephone, mail, and visitation regulations and state and federal policies dealing with where individuals are imprisoned. Barriers that discourage family members from visiting or having contact with imprisoned relatives could have a negative effect on family relationships and ultimately the reentry process.

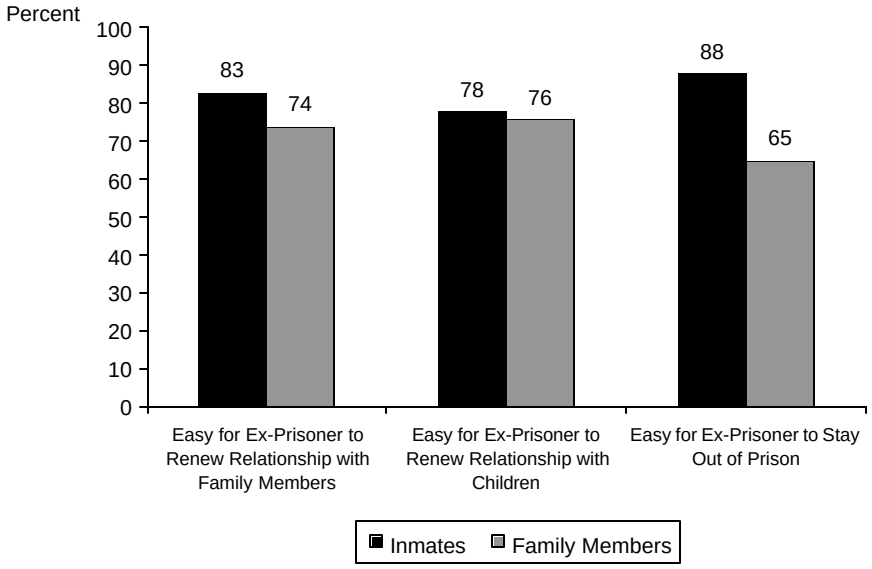
Post-Release Experiences and Expectations

Within the small sample of family members we surveyed, there was a great deal of optimism about their family member's return from prison. They were both supportive of the returning prisoners and optimistic about their abilities to reintegrate into their families and communities. During the post-

release family interview, 95 percent of the family sample reported that it had been *pretty easy* or *very easy* to adjust to having the released prisoner back in the community and 85 percent thought it was *pretty easy* or *very easy* to provide emotional support to the returning prisoner.

Figure 7.12 compares the prisoners' expectations for how easy they thought it would be to do certain things after their release with family respondents assessments of how easy it actually was for them to do these things.[100] Prisoner expectations were slightly more optimistic than family members' assessments, but high percentages of both prisoner and family members rated tasks associated with renewing relationships with family and children and with staying out of prison as *pretty easy* or *very easy*.

Figure 7.12 Post-Release Expectations[a]
(prisoner N's = 40, 27, and 40) (family member N's = 38, 21, and 40)



[a]Responses of *pretty easy* and *very easy* are grouped together.

Family Support Scale

Family member respondents were also asked the same four items that comprise the Family Support Scale that were asked of prisoners before, during, and after prison.[101] Figure 7.13 provides the mean Family Support Scale scores for the 41 prisoners and their family members for three different time periods.[102] Again, Family Support Scale mean values range from one to four, with one representing low levels of perceived support and four representing high levels.

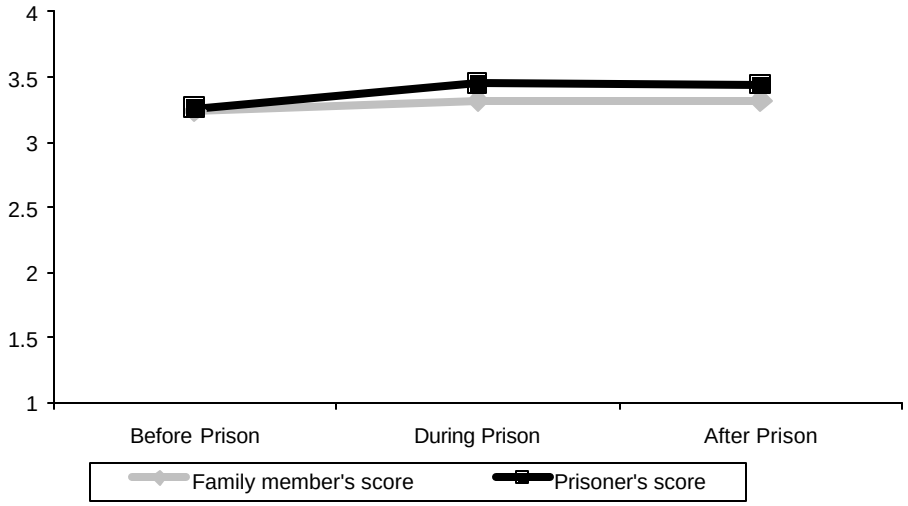
Overall, both prisoners and their family members reported high levels of family support at all three points. Figure 7.13 demonstrates different trends for ex-prisoners and family members after the prisoners' release. The prisoners' average score for the Family Support Scale increased while they were in prison and declined slightly when they returned to the community, while the family members' average

[100] Due to the small sample size, we were not able to run tests for statistically significant differences.
[101] The family members' measures of family support before, during, and after prison were collected in one interview after the prisoner's release. Thus, it is possible that their responses were subject to telescoping or other forms of biases associated with retrospective questioning.
[102] Inmate After Prison scores are from the PR2 interview.

score steadily increased during and after prison. These trends are interesting given what we learned about ex-prisoners' intentions to rely on family for a variety of tangible and emotional needs once released from prison and the high frequency of returning prisoners who indicated family was as supportive as they had hoped they would be. However, our sample size is too small to draw any definitive conclusions about these differences.

In terms of both expectations for how easy or hard it would be for the returning prisoners to accomplish certain things associated with reintegration into their family and community and assessed levels of family support, our prisoner sample and family sample gauged these situations quite similarly. Both groups expressed high levels of optimism and support.

Figure 7.13 Family Support Scale, Mean Scores for Family Members and Prisoners (prisoner N's = 41, 40, and 17, family member N's = 38, 39, and 40, respectively)



Additional questions were asked of family members about specific support they may or may not have provided to the returning prisoner. In this smaller sample, 38 percent of the prisoner respondents were living with the family respondents upon release.[103] Thirty-nine percent of the family members reported that they helped the ex-prisoner find a job and 64 percent reportedly helped the ex-prisoner find housing. While almost 80 percent of the family respondents stated that they have provided some level of financial support to the ex-prisoner since he/she was released, only 55 percent thought that is was easy to provide this type of assistance.

Additional Family Views about the Reentry Transition

Finally, family members were asked a series of open-ended questions that explored the respondent's feelings about the prisoner's reentry transition. For the most part, family members expressed positive feelings about their post-release relationships with the ex-prisoners. In a handful of cases, the

[103] In addition, it is possible that the inmate was living with a family member other than the one we interviewed.

respondents indicated that their relationships were lacking in "closeness." When asked about the kinds of hardships they have faced as a result of the prisoner returning home, more than half of the respondents reported no difficulties. Of those who identified hardships associated with a prisoner's return, drugs, employment, and social contacts were mentioned most frequently.

The scope of this study does not allow for more than this narrow exploratory analysis of the views and experiences of 41 family members of recently released prisoners. Although it barely scratches the surface of the many dynamics pertaining to the role of family in the reentry process, this brief analysis raises many questions that will lay the groundwork for more in-depth analyses with larger sample sizes in other Returning Home states.

SUMMARY

This chapter presents an exploratory look into the family relationships and dynamics of prisoners returning to Baltimore. We document the family composition and family histories of respondents, considering factors such as criminal history, emotional and physical abuse, and substance use. We also examine how these returning prisoners characterize their family relationships, and the support they expected and received from family in a number of tangible and emotional areas.

Our findings support prior research, which documents that many individuals involved in the criminal justice system have backgrounds characterized by familial criminal histories, emotional, physical, and substance abuse. The majority of men and women who participated in our study had family members with histories of involvement in the criminal justice system. Nearly two-thirds of respondents had someone in their family who had been convicted of a crime. Twelve percent of respondents came from families in which emotional and physical abuse were factors. Over two-thirds of prisoners reported having at least one family member with a drug or alcohol problem, and 16 percent of respondents listed four or more family members with histories of such problems. It stands to reason that dysfunction and discord within a family could limit the degree to which family can support one of their members who has recently been released from prison. Therefore, while not explored in this pilot study, these findings may further suggest that the challenges of reentry may be more complex for those released prisoners returning to families that have other members who have criminal histories, drug or alcohol problems, or are involved in crime, than for those who do not.

The findings of this study also suggest that family relationships and family support are important factors in released prisoners' reentry. Respondents reported close family relationships before, during, and after prison: Over 40 percent of respondents reported having four or more close family relationships at every data collection point. Furthermore, respondents were optimistic about renewing relationships with children and resuming active parenting roles, although post-release reality did not quite meet their expectations with regard to their children. Ex-prisoners with children had less frequent contact with their children after their release than they had expected.

Respondents expected to rely on family for a wide variety of tangible and emotional support and assistance. Respondents' expectations for support from their families after release from prison varied depending on the kind of support. They had relatively moderate expectations about the levels of financial support they would receive from family. With regard to employment, slightly higher percentages of respondents planned on using relatives as a potential source of assistance in getting a job after their release than those who planned on relying on family for financial support. In terms of housing, respondents had relatively high expectations for family.

Generally, prisoners' expectations for family support overall—both emotional and tangible—were realized after their release from prison. Several months after release, 89 percent of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their family had been supportive since their release and 82 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their family had been as supportive as they had hoped. These findings support the view held by some practitioners that the natural support network of family plays a very important role as ex-prisoners navigate the many challenges of prisoner reentry (Shapiro and Schwartz, 2001).

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is that family relationships and support appear to have significant effects on intermediate reentry outcomes, such as employment and staying off drugs. Close family relationships and strong family support after release from prison appear to have a positive impact on employment after release from prison. Respondents who worked since release reported closer family relationships and stronger family support than those who had not. On the other hand, higher levels of negative intimate partner support appear to be associated with lack of employment. Family relationships also appear to have a positive impact on returning prisoners staying off drugs. Respondents who had not used drugs since their release reported closer family relationships.

This analysis of returning prisoners' relationships with and expectations for their families highlights the importance of family in the reentry process. Given the central role that the family plays as a source of both emotional and tangible support for these ex-prisoners, further exploration of factors impacting the family members of prisoners is warranted. Furthermore, the fact that roughly half of our sample left children behind upon entering prison has important implications both for the children of these prisoners as well as for the challenges of family reunification upon the parent's return to the community. Exploration of issues such as how family ties during imprisonment can be maintained and strengthened, and whether resources and support that would aid prisoners and their families, could facilitate successful reentry for returning prisoners is certainly warranted.

Chapter 8
Community and Housing[104]

Dating back to the Chicago School of the 1920s and 1930s, researchers have been examining the relationships between community characteristics and criminal behavior (see, among others, Park and Burgess 1925; Shaw and McKay 1942; Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). This line of research has largely focused on offending patterns. Only recently, with the surge of interest in prisoner reentry, are a growing number of researchers beginning to investigate the impact that the community has on ex-prisoners and vice versa (see Clear 2002; Clear, Rose, and Ryder 2001; and Young, Taxman, and Byrne 2001). That is, how does the community help or hinder the reentry process? And how do returning ex-prisoners affect their surrounding environment?

A diverse set of community conditions and services are likely to be critical to a returning prisoner's transition, including job availability, social service delivery, crime and illegal drug patterns, and community social capital. Prior findings have shown that a large proportion of ex-prisoners return to disadvantaged communities, which are less likely to have these types of resources and opportunities (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003; La Vigne and Mamalian 2003; Richie 2001; Clear et al. 2001). Recent research has also shown that prisoners who return to communities with higher levels of concentrated social and economic disadvantage have higher rates of recidivism (Baumer 2003). Likewise, neighborhoods affected by high levels of incarceration and reentry experience higher crime rates than would be expected (Rose et al. 2000). Some researchers studying these issues propose that disadvantaged communities experience destabilized informal networks of social control, which in turn lead to increases in offending, or in this case, reoffending (Lynch and Sabol 2001; Rose and Clear 1998; Rose et al. 2000).

Upon reentering the community, housing may also present a substantial challenge to returning prisoners. Research has shown that ex-prisoners have an increased risk for homelessness once they reenter society, since they may be cut off from their families due to their prior criminal involvement (Richie 2001). Furthermore, even if housing is secured upon reentry, ex-prisoners may experience higher levels of residential mobility (e.g., how often released prisoners move) than average citizens. Relationships can become strained with family members and partners, causing household disruption (Richie 2001).

This chapter describes the community context of prisoner reentry from a variety of perspectives, as well as ex-prisoners' experiences with housing. First, we provide an overview of prisoner reentry in Baltimore, as summarized from the recent UI report, *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland* (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003). Next, we map and analyze the communities to which released prisoners in our sample returned and examine the demographic characteristics of these communities. Then, based upon both pre- and post-release surveys, we describe respondents' views of the neighborhoods in which they lived prior to prison and to which they returned after their release. Such measures examine whether the neighborhood is safe; is a good place to find employment; has drug dealing; and is characterized by people who can work together to solve neighborhood problems. We also examine issues related to subsequent housing, such as residential mobility, transportation access, and

[104]Jill Farrell and Vera Kachnowski, authors.

service and employment mismatch issues. In addition, we consider the issue of community context from the perspective of residents who live in neighborhoods to which large numbers of prisoners return. This chapter closes with a summary of the results of focus groups conducted in two such neighborhoods, exploring perceptions of how prisoner reentry affects communities, as well as the extent to which community members are willing to assist returning prisoners in the reintegration process.

PRISONER REENTRY IN BALTIMORE CITY—AN OVERVIEW

In 2001, the majority of Maryland prisoners in state correctional facilities (59%) returned to the city of Baltimore. Not only did Baltimore City have the most returning prisoners in absolute numbers (4,411 men and women in 2001), but it also represented the highest per capita returns in the state, at 6.8 released prisoners for every 1,000 residents. Additionally, Baltimore is an extremely small geographic area compared with Maryland counties. For example, covering just 81 square miles, Baltimore City is less than one-seventh the size of surrounding Baltimore County (Census 2000). Thus, the city is home to the most densely concentrated geographic distribution of returning prisoners in the state.

Baltimore City is not likely to be an easy place for returning prisoners to surmount the challenges of reentry, especially with regard to finding employment and supporting oneself financially. The 651,154 residents of Baltimore City face many economic and social disadvantages compared with other areas in Maryland. The median household income in Baltimore City is $30,078—well below the statewide median household income of $52,868—and is the second-lowest median income in the state, when compared by county. The unemployment level in Baltimore City (8%) is nearly double the statewide average of 4 percent, and almost a quarter (23%) of Baltimore's residents live below the poverty line. This is much higher than the statewide average of 9 percent and is the highest level of poverty in the state, by county. In addition, female-headed households account for 25 percent of the households in Baltimore City—much higher than the statewide average of 14 percent (Census 2000; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2000).

In addition, abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs is highly problematic in Baltimore. A recent survey conducted by the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) for the Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA) estimated that 58,316 Baltimore residents are in need of treatment for alcohol or drug abuse—approximately 9 percent of the city's population (Yacoubian, Hsu, and Wish 2002; Census 2000). Heroin use is especially problematic in Baltimore. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the Baltimore City residents who were treated for substance abuse in FY 2001 reported heroin use.[105] Thus, in addition to coping with the economic challenges present in many Baltimore communities, released prisoners also face the pressures of a prominent drug scene.

PRISONER REENTRY IN BALTIMORE COMMUNITIES

Given the high concentration of Maryland prisoners returning to Baltimore, we intended to sample only prisoners who were returning home to Baltimore City upon release. According to post-prison analyses, however, a small portion of the sample ultimately returned to communities outside of Baltimore. Of the 324 releasees in our sample, almost 89 percent returned to Baltimore City. Another 10 percent returned to other Maryland counties, and less than 1 percent returned to other states, including

[105] Per Vickie Kaneko of the State of Maryland's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration, March 18, 2002.

Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Ex-prisoners who did not return to Baltimore City are excluded from the subsequent community analysis that appears below.

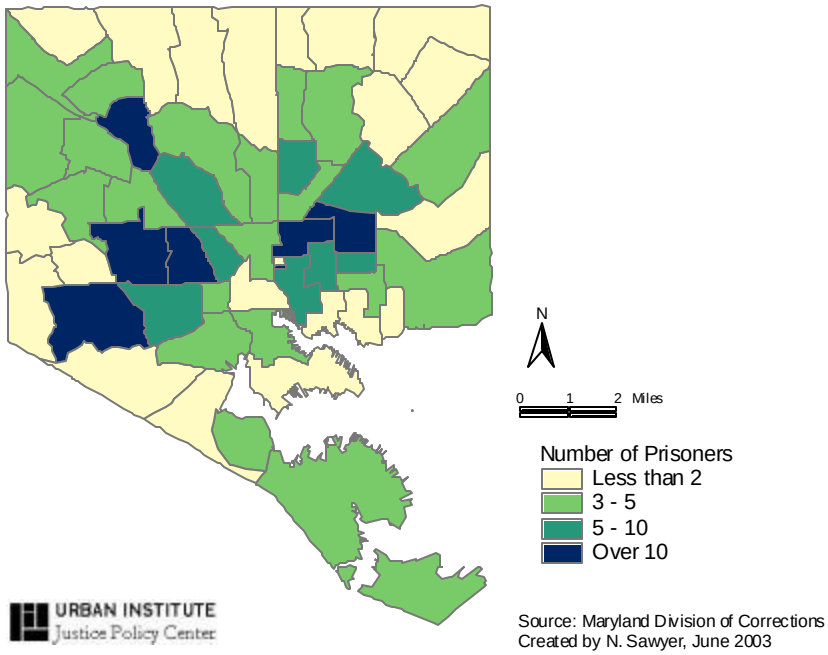
The majority of the prisoners in our sample who returned to Baltimore were male (78%), and the average age at the pre-release interview was 34 years old. Most were black (86%); 7 percent were white, and 7 percent were of other races.[106] By way of comparison, the majority of Baltimore's residents are black (64%), whites comprise 32 percent of the residents, and other racial groups make up the remaining 4 percent of the residents.

In our sample, returning ex-prisoners were concentrated in a few communities in Baltimore (see Figure 8.1). Only 6 out of 55 Baltimore communities[107] accounted for almost 36 percent of prisoners returning to the city from our sample of releasees. These communities include: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park (8.2%), Greenmount East (7.4%), Southern Park Heights (5.9%), Allendale/Irvington/South Hilton (5.1%), Greater Rosemont (5.1%), and Clifton-Berea (4.3%). High rates of prisoner returns are not unusual for these communities. These same communities each received a substantial number of released prisoners in 2001, ranging from 145 in Allendale/Irvington/South Hilton to 265 in Greater Rosemont —these numbers are higher than the number of prisoners returning to some entire counties in Maryland (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003).

[106] This reflects a slightly different racial distribution than that of all released prisoners returning to Baltimore in the *2003 Portrait* (89% black, 9% white, 2% other).

[107] Baltimore is a city with more than 260 neighborhoods. Since the boundaries for most of these neighborhoods do not fall along census tract lines, gathering demographic information on each of these neighborhoods is not possible. Fortunately, the Baltimore City Planning Department and the Family League of Baltimore City have created clusters of Baltimore neighborhoods along census tract lines to form 55 broad communities about which statistical data can be reported. The Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Alliance (BNIA) has a range of data on these 55 clusters. (See BNIA website: http://www.bnia.org/ for more information.)

Figure 8.1 Distribution of 283 Released Prisoners who Returned to Baltimore City, by Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Area, 2003



In addition to being home to large numbers of returning prisoners, these high-concentration areas are among the Baltimore communities most affected by poverty, crime, and other indicators of disadvantage. Figure 8.2 lists the 6 communities that received the highest number of returning prisoners from our sample and presents key demographic data for each community, as well as the percent differences from the citywide means.[108] As Figure 8.2 shows, these communities are generally higher than the city average for each of these demographics. Specifically, unemployment rates, percent female-headed households, and percent families living below poverty level are greater than the city means for all six communities. Some of the communities, however, fare slightly better than the citywide mean for a few of the indicators. In terms of vacant housing, only Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, Greenmount East, and Clifton-Berea have substantially larger percentages of unoccupied housing units than the city average. And only two communities have higher percentages of high school graduates than the city mean. Furthermore, four out of the six communities have lower Part I Index crime rates than the average rate for the city. Despite these exceptions, these 6 communities can be characterized as areas of concentrated disadvantage.

[108] The communities are listed from highest to lowest numbers of returning inmates.

Figure 8.2 Demographic Characteristics of 6 High-Concentration Areas Among 55 Baltimore Communities

Community Area	Vacant Housing	Renter-Occupied Housing	High School Graduates	Unemployment	Female-Headed Households	Families Below Poverty Level	Part I crime rate (per 1,000 residents)
Sandtown-Winchester/ Harlem Park	30.7%	67.6%	60.0%	18.5%	38.9%	32.4%	116.4
% Different from city mean	117.7	36.0	-12.7	74.5	55.6	106.4	11.5
Greenmount East	26.6	63.3	62.0	20.7	37.3	32.3	137.4
% Different from city mean	85.8	27.4	-9.8	95.3	49.2	105.7	31.6
Southern Park Heights	16.4	56.0	64.0	15.5	40.1	27.1	72.2
% Different from city mean	16.3	12.7	-6.8	46.2	60.4	72.6	-30.8
Allendale/Irvington/ South Hilton	9.2	43.2	75.0	13.6	33.2	19.4	65.2
% Different from city mean	-34.8	-13.1	9.2	28.3	32.8	23.6	-37.5
Greater Rosemont	13.6	43.4	70.0	18.2	37.4	23.0	86.7
% Different from city mean	-3.5	-12.7	1.9	71.7	49.6	46.5	-17.0
Clifton-Berea	20.8	48.8	60.0	18.1	41.2	28.8	85.1
% Different from city mean	47.5	-1.8	-12.7	70.8	64.8	83.4	-18.5
City average	14.1%	49.7%	68.7%	10.6%	25.0%	15.7%	104.4

Prisoners' Pre-Release Perceptions and Post-Release Experiences in the Communities to Which They Return

The demographic characteristics of these Baltimore communities suggest that releasees in our sample are facing disadvantaged environments as they reenter society. To get a sense of how releasees characterize their "home" environments, during pre- and post-release interviews we asked respondents a series of questions regarding the communities from which they came, as well as those they went to upon release. In general, these questions inquired about perceptions of safety, comfort, and the types of opportunities available in areas to which respondents returned.

Eighty-five percent of our sample had lived in Baltimore prior to serving time in prison. According to their responses in the first post-release interview, 50 percent of our respondents were living in the same neighborhood that they lived in during the six months before they went to prison. As indicated by their responses to an open-ended question, the majority of these individuals returned to the same neighborhood because they would have a place to live in that area. Of those who did not return to

the same neighborhood, most indicated that they no longer had a place to stay there or that they were trying to avoid getting into trouble.

Prisoners' expectations of the neighborhoods to which they plan to return may not match their post-release experiences. Prisoners may have more favorable expectations of their neighborhoods during prison due to their desire to be back in the community. On the other hand, they may not be able to return to their intended community due to housing arrangements or other restrictions. Overall, respondents' pre-release expectations and post-release experiences were very similar with respect to their perceptions of staying out of trouble in their neighborhood and in terms of looking forward to seeing certain people there (see Figure 8.3). Less than one-third *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it was "hard to stay out of trouble in this neighborhood" and approximately half of the respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they "looked forward to seeing certain people in this neighborhood" at all three interviews.

In terms of community safety, however, a substantially smaller percentage of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their community was a safe place to live at PR1 (62%) than during prison (70%). That percentage increased significantly[109] once they had been in the community for a while longer at PR2 (75%). Interestingly, respondents who were residing in a different neighborhood after release than where they lived before prison were significantly[110] more likely to *agree* or *strongly agree* that their current neighborhood was a safe place to live (74%), as compared with releasees who returned to the same neighborhoods (59%). This may be related to the reasons for choosing a different neighborhood upon release (e.g., ex-prisoners may choose different, but safer environments, so they are less likely to get into trouble). In addition, the share of respondents who were "nervous about seeing certain people in this neighborhood" decreased significantly[111] between the pre-release interview (24%) and at PR2 (14%).[112]

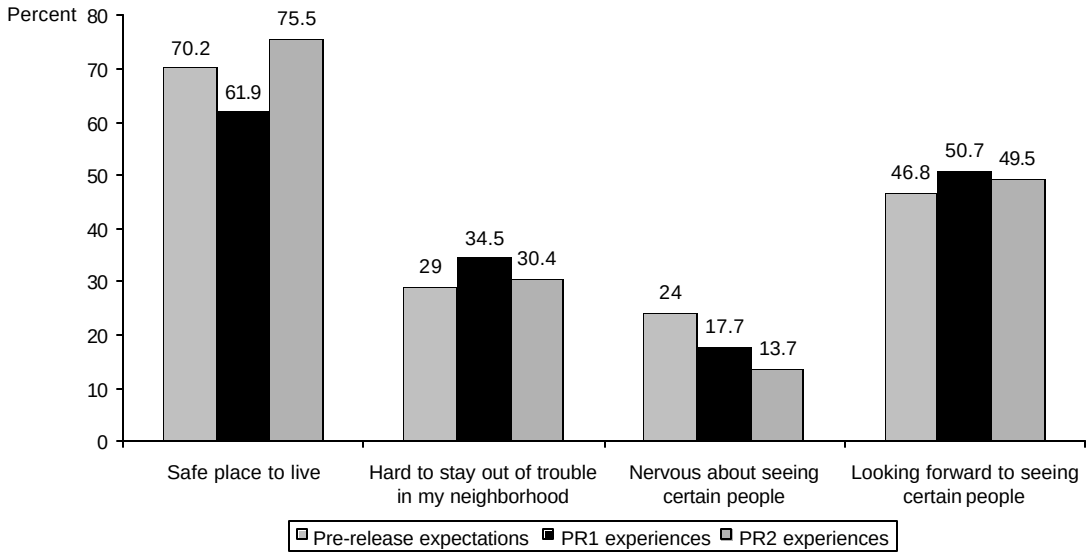
[109] $p = .028$

[110] Chi-square significant at .008.

[111] $p = .023$.

[112] As explained in Chapter 2, only a small group of respondents were interviewed at PR2; hence, less weight should be given to these findings as compared to the responses at the PR1 interview.

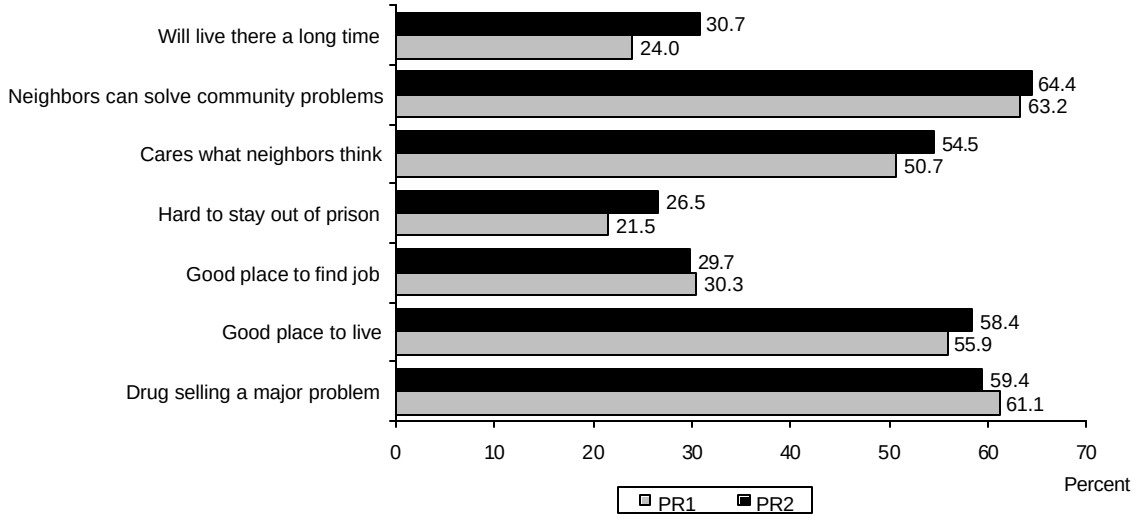
Figure 8.3 Perceptions of Neighborhood Safety and Comfort during Pre-Release, PR1, and PR2: Percent *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* (Ns= 250, 147, and 102 respectively)



After their release from prison, respondents were asked a series of other questions regarding the circumstances in their neighborhoods (see Figure 8.4). There were no significant differences between the average responses at PR1 and PR2. As of PR2, almost 60 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their neighborhood was "a good place to live," while 60 percent also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that 'drug selling was a major problem' in their neighborhood. Of those who did not think their neighborhood was a good place to live, 95 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that drug selling is a major problem in their neighborhoods.

Respondents were also asked a series of questions about collective efficacy in their neighborhoods. "Collective efficacy" is a term coined by Sampson and colleagues (1997) to reflect the "social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good" (p.918). In terms of this construct, almost two-thirds of the sample (64%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that "if there was a problem in their neighborhood, the people who live there could get it solved." Fifty-five percent of the total sample *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they "cared about what their neighbors thought of their actions." Although opinions regarding community circumstances and collective efficacy were positive overall (with the exception of those regarding drug selling), only 24 percent of the respondents at PR1 and 31 percent of respondents at PR2 expected to live in their neighborhood for a long time.

Figure 8.4 Perceptions of Neighborhood Circumstances, PR1 and PR2: Percent *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* (Ns= 146 and 102, respectively)



One of the reasons why respondents do not intend to stay in these neighborhoods may involve limited access to job opportunities and other resources. Of the respondents who did not think their neighborhood was a good place to live, almost all (95%) a*greed* or *strongly agreed* that their neighborhood was not a good place to find a job. In total, only 30 percent of the respondents a*greed* or *strongly agreed* that their community was a good place to find a job. With few job opportunities nearby, these ex-prisoners must travel at least some distance if they want to secure employment. For those who were employed during PR1, the average time spent traveling to work was 49 minutes, and the average distance from their home to workplace was 13 miles (see Chapter 3). Some ex-prisoners might find this daily travel to be costly and discouraging, and it may affect their desire to maintain a particularly distant job.

Another related barrier presented by the community may be inadequate access to transportation, or a lack of transportation altogether. Certain jobs and treatment programs that are receptive to ex-prisoners may be located in remote areas of the city or even outside city limits. Without sufficient access to transportation, releasees may be closed off from these opportunities. However, only 12 percent of the respondents indicated that they do not have access to any transportation when they need it. The majority (71%) use public transportation to get around their communities, followed by driving themselves (16%), and being driven by others (9%). Furthermore, none of the respondents suggested that distance or lack of transportation was a reason for not attending post-release programs.[113]

Overall, respondents reported that they feel safe and regard their communities as good places to live once they are released from prison. However, many also conveyed the belief that drug selling was problematic in their communities and that their neighborhoods are not good places to find jobs. While the small sample size in this study prevents us from further understanding how these factors may affect subsequent criminal behavior, these results suggest that future investigations are warranted. In any case, the findings from this section demonstrate that ex-prisoners tend to return to certain areas based on

[113] See Chapter 5 for more information about transportation.

housing considerations (i.e., where their families live). Accordingly, in the next section of this chapter, we examine issues related to prisoner reentry and housing.

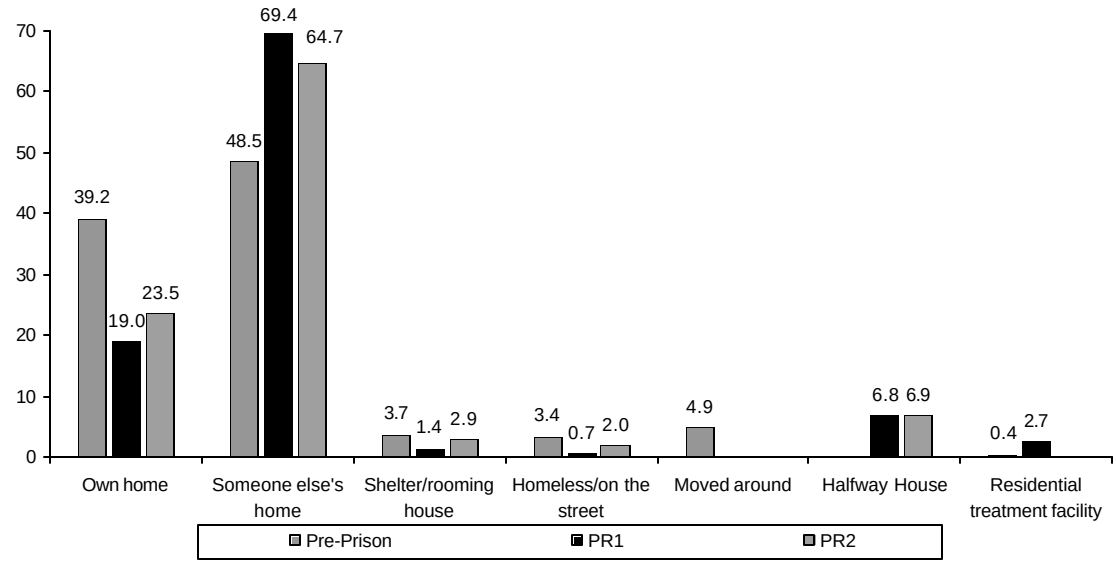
HOUSING

Finding a place to live is one of the most important needs an ex-prisoner must address upon his or her release, but securing housing is often a significant challenge for a number of reasons. At the time of their release, many prisoners do not have enough money to rent or buy an apartment. In addition, their criminal records may exclude them from access to both private and public housing. In Maryland, private landlords are able to obtain criminal history information and the Baltimore Public Housing Authority (PHA) considers criminal history as part of its admission criteria. Individuals who have been convicted of drug-related and violent crimes can be barred from public housing in Baltimore (Legal Action Center 2002). These regulations can present a problem for ex-prisoners who are looking to find public housing on their own or who plan to reside with family members who live in public housing.

In this section, we describe our respondents' pre-release expectations for housing and compare these expectations to their post-release experiences. We asked them about the ways that they look for subsequent housing, with whom they intended to live, with whom they ended up living, and how long they expected to reside at these locations. According to responses to open-ended questions mentioned in the previous section, family plays an important role in where the respondent lives after release from prison. Therefore, we asked several questions pertaining to family as related to housing circumstances. In addition, we inquired about our respondents' experiences with residential mobility under the notion that stability will foster a smoother transition back into society.

Before entering prison this time, nearly half of the respondents in our sample (49%) lived in someone else's house or apartment. Another 39 percent lived in their own home, and the rest of the respondents had more transient housing arrangements, such as sleeping in shelters/rooming houses, living on the street, or moving around from place to place (see Figure 8.5).

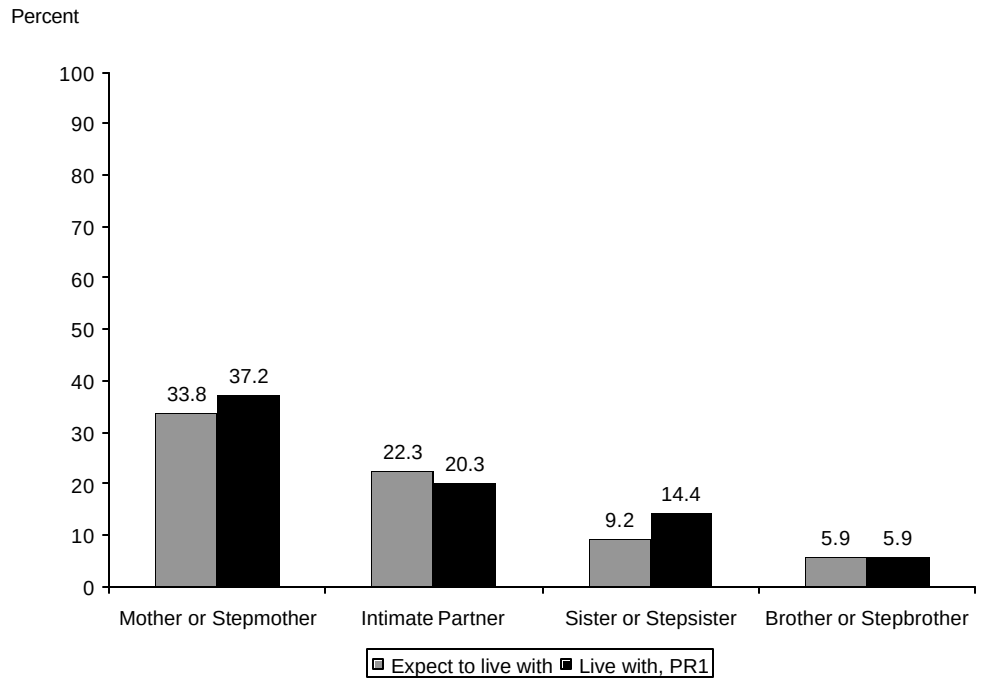
Figure 8.5 Housing Arrangements before Prison, at PR1, and at PR2 (Ns = 268, 147, and 102 respectively)



Approximately two-thirds of all respondents (75 percent of females and 63 percent of males) expected to live with family members after their release from prison. When asked whom respondents planned to live with after their release, mothers or stepmothers and intimate partners were the most frequent responses, by far. These expectations for living with family members were, for the most part, realized (see Figure 8.6). About 71 percent of respondents expected it to be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to find a place to live after their release, though roughly the same share (72%) expected to need *some help* or *a lot of help* to do so. A significantly greater share of women (90%) than men (65%) expected to need *some help* or *a lot of help* in order to find housing.[114]

[114] Chi-square significant at .009.

Figure 8.6 Living Arrangements after Release: Expectations for and Reality at PR1 (expectations for after prison N = 305, PR1 N = 153)



In terms of finding housing after release from prison, 68 percent of respondents reported already having a place to live lined up at the time of their pre-release interview. Most of the respondents who did not have housing lined up before their release expected to use one or two different methods to find housing after their release, including: family members (38%); the newspaper (34%); a referral from a service or program (26%); a shelter (19%); friends (14%); and government programs (12%). Significantly more women (52%) than men (19%) expected to use a referral from a service or program to find housing after their release.[115]

At the first post-release interview (an average of 81 days after release), the majority of respondents had secured housing in their own or someone else's home. Most (82%) said they were living where they had expected to live. The largest share of respondents, more than two-thirds (69%), were living at someone else's house or apartment at PR1. Just less than one-fifth (19%) were living in their own home, while 7 percent were living in transitional housing, and 3 percent were in a residential treatment facility. One respondent reported being homeless. Approximately 60 percent reported that they were paying money to live in their current housing arrangement.

As mentioned earlier, many respondents indicated that they moved back to a particular community to live with their families. As of PR1, over one-third (37%) were living with their mother or stepmother, while 20 percent were living with an intimate partner (see Figure 8.6). This distribution is similar to their pre-release expectations. Overall, one quarter of respondents were living with someone

[115] Chi-square significant at .003.

else who had been in prison at some point and approximately 9 percent were living with someone who uses illegal drugs. Not only is contact with ex-offenders and users of illegal drugs usually prohibited by parole stipulations, but it may also increase the releasee's risk of reoffending.

Respondents' housing arrangements were relatively stable during the time between their release and the PR2 interview. The majority (65%) of respondents continued to live in someone else's home (see Figure 8.5). Likewise, most (91%) were still living with family or their intimate partners. When asked which family member(s) they lived with the most since their release from prison, the majority (63%) indicated their parents. Two respondents were homeless and living on the streets. Furthermore, about 89 percent of respondents reported having lived at their current location for more than a month. Nearly all (97%) reported feeling safe where they currently lived.

Nevertheless, as of PR2, many respondents viewed their housing situations as temporary and planned to live elsewhere in the near future. More than half of the respondents (52%) said they would only live at their current location for a few more weeks or months. Further, only 47 percent said they hoped to still be living in the same place in a year. This is not surprising, as many PR1 respondents indicated they would like to eventually live on their own or with their partners and/or children. It appears that temporary housing may be the only option for most returning prisoners as they regain control over their lives.

In sum, unlike prior research that suggests many ex-prisoners are faced with significant challenges surrounding housing upon reentry, the respondents in this study fared well overall. The majority had secured housing prior to their release from prison, largely with help from family members. Most were able to live at the same location during the two post-release reporting periods. Despite this temporary stability, the majority hoped to eventually move out of these places.

No matter where ex-prisoners eventually reside, their successful reintegration requires that they once again become members of the communities in which they live. In these neighborhoods, however, their mere presence could have a potentially negative impact on the attitudes of community members. Community acceptance and support of returning prisoners are crucial components to successful reintegration (Clear 2002). To examine this issue, the final section of this chapter addresses the attitudes of residents in communities where large numbers of prisoners are returning.

RESIDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS RETURNING PRISONERS IN TWO BALTIMORE NEIGHBORHOODS

Prisoner reentry is difficult and burdensome, not only for the returning individual and for family members, but for the community at large. Preliminary research has found that, in areas with high rates of incarceration and returning prisoners, relationships among residents become precarious, families experience higher stress levels, the image of the community is harmed, and financial investment in the community declines (Rose and Clear 1998). As mentioned earlier, these same communities tend to experience higher crime rates than would be expected in the long run (Rose et al. 2000). Taken as a whole, the most current research suggests that reentry will be a difficult transition for both ex-prisoners and the community.

To this point, most of the discussion in this chapter has focused on the perceptions of returning prisoners. Yet, when discussing the impact that the community has on prisoner reentry, some of the most important voices belong to the community members themselves. One recent study, which explored community members' views on incarceration, revealed that residents are confronted with a complex

situation: they support incarceration as a means for making their streets safer, yet they recognize the negative impact that mass removal has had on their environment (Clear, Rose, and Ryder 2001). Given these competing interests, understanding how community members perceive and respond to the prisoners reentering their neighborhoods is useful.

In April and May 2003, researchers at the Urban Institute conducted focus groups with residents of two neighborhoods in Baltimore that had large numbers of returning prisoners. The overall objective of these focus groups was to understand the effects that returning prisoners have on the community, as well as to explore the role that community members play in the successful reintegration of those returning from prison (Refer to Appendix A for a more detailed account of these focus groups).

Focus group participants were drawn from residents of two neighborhoods in the city of Baltimore: Sandtown/Winchester and Park Heights. Both of these communities were featured in *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland* (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003). Data collected by the project show that each of the neighborhoods have disproportionately large numbers of returning prisoners, high crime rates, and generally rank poorly on indicators of socio-economic status. In total, eight residents participated in the Park Heights focus group (four male and four female) and fifteen residents participated in the focus group in Sandtown/Winchester (six male and nine female). All of the focus group participants were black and all received $20 to $25 for their participation.

As mentioned above, the overall objectives of the focus groups were to gain insight into how reentry affects the community and its residents, and how residents respond to returning individuals. Focus group members were asked about:

- Their individual experience with returning prisoners, and their perspective on the effects of prisoner reentry on their community;

- The community's collective opinion on how receptive the community has been toward returning prisoners, and how returning prisoners have affected the community;

- The role of the community, public agencies, and other institutions in facilitating an effective transition.

In general, residents were conversant on issues surrounding prisoner reentry, and deeply concerned about the effects of returning prisoners on public safety and on community stability. Overall, residents of both neighborhoods were in general agreement that:

- Crime and disorder caused by returning prisoners present major challenges for their communities;

- Drug trafficking was largely to blame for their community's struggles;

- Younger returning prisoners, especially those that have served relatively short sentences, are the most disruptive and are the most difficult segment of the population to assist. Residents are much more sympathetic toward prisoners returning after longer prison sentences; and,

- The police have not done enough to address the concerns of the community.

While there was substantial agreement among residents about the consequences of returning prisoners, there was less of a consensus within and across the groups about what could and should be done to alleviate the problems associated with returning prisoners. For example, there was substantial disagreement about the availability of services and the related ability of public agencies to serve the needs of ex-prisoners. Residents of Park Heights were much more likely to believe that sufficient resources to facilitate the transition were available in the community. For this group, solving the problem of reintegration requires better parenting, better education, and more intensive policing. In contrast, residents of Sandtown/Winchester believed that there are few opportunities and few services available to ex-prisoners. Residents of this community believe that public agencies, especially the corrections system, must do more to prepare prisoners for their return home.

Residents also disagreed about the extent to which any intervention can affect the behavior of ex-prisoners. Some of the residents believed that returning prisoners receive little or no programming while incarcerated, or any support once released, and could therefore not be expected to pursue more pro-social activities. Other residents insisted that returning prisoners are responsible for their own futures, and unless they are motivated to avoid future criminal activities, there is little the system can do.

Overall, few of the residents expressed much hope that the problems experienced by ex-prisoners, and the problems caused by ex-prisoners, would improve significantly in the near future. However, they were in agreement that the community should continue to work to find ways of addressing the needs of ex-prisoners. The residents were generally very supportive of any new or additional programs that would facilitate the reintegration process.

These findings are optimistic in light of the recent interest in community-oriented reentry programs that aim to involve the community in the prisoner reintegration process (Young, Taxman, and Byrne 2002). These types of programs require substantial resident support, as well as considerable insight into the reentry challenges that ex-prisoners face. The community at large could potentially offer ex-prisoners some of their most valuable support structures, including social networks and social capital (Clear 2002). Understanding the extent to which communities are both interested in and capable of helping released prisoners is imperative to improving the process of successful prisoner reentry.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented both community and housing issues related to prisoner reentry. While the Baltimore sample was small, the findings from this study point to some very important issues in need of attention when discussing and planning for prisoner reentry. More importantly, high concentrations of ex-prisoners are returning to a small number of communities. Almost 60 percent of Maryland prisoners return to Baltimore each year, and of this group, reentry is further concentrated in a few communities. Specifically, 36 percent of our sample returned to only 6 of the 55 Baltimore communities. In addition, these communities, which have high rates of returning prisoners, are socially and economically disadvantaged. All six of the featured communities have above-average rates for unemployment, percent female-headed households, and percent families living below poverty level. Resources for released prisoners and their families should be targeted to these disadvantaged communities, which exhibit the greatest need for additional support.

Contrary to our expectations, half of the prisoner sample did not return to their old neighborhoods. This was largely due to new family addresses or to avoid the risk of trouble. This

suggests that criminal justice officials need to keep in mind that "home" may not be the safest place for returning prisoners, and thus, they should be somewhat flexible about post-release housing plans.

Our respondents generally felt safe and comfortable in the communities to which they returned. However, less than one-third thought that their neighborhood was a good place to find a job. And of those who were employed, most had a lengthy commute to work. This could eventually become a barrier to successful reintegration if the ex-prisoner becomes frustrated with spending long periods of time traveling to work each day. In addition, 60 percent agreed that drug selling was a problem in their neighborhood. These factors (i.e., an active drug market and lack of job opportunities) may increase the risk of reoffending. Reentry resources should focus on job training and gaining access to convenient job opportunities. Furthermore, resources should help with issues related to substance abuse, especially in the communities with drug trafficking problems.

Most of our respondents reported living with someone else after their release from prison. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (68%) reported that they had a place to live before they were released from prison, and the majority of those interviewed within three months of their release were living with family members or their partners. Few of our respondents were homeless or in transitional facilities. However, less than half planned to stay at their current location for more than a few months. Many of those who intended to move hoped to eventually live on their own or with their partners and/or children. While we could not determine whether families of our respondents resided in public housing, it was clear that many ex-prisoners reside with their families upon release. Furthermore, these housing situations seemed relatively stable, albeit as short-term arrangements, suggesting that any policies that would restrict ex-prisoners from living with their family members should be considered carefully.

And finally, as told in our neighborhood focus groups, community members are discouraged by the problems presented by prisoner reentry. Specifically, they are worried about the crimes committed by releasees and the lack of police response. They also have less sympathy for younger ex-prisoners, who they find to be particularly disruptive. Opinions varied between communities about the level of service available to returning prisoners, but most felt that the community should help with the prisoner reentry process. The criminal justice system and other governmental organizations should work with residents to maintain community safety and to reduce fear of victimization. Furthermore, they could engage citizens as mentors for releasees, as a means of increasing community support and investment into their returning citizens.

Making broad changes at the community level is a challenging task. Most of the policy recommendations stemming from this chapter would involve additional programming and resources, and would also require significant resources and community cohesion. While the neighborhood focus group participants indicated that community members were generally interested in helping towards these ends, we must also remember that these depleted communities are struggling with several other societal issues (i.e., poverty, deficient educational system, etc.) that may weaken their capacity to provide the level of support that these ex-prisoners need.

Chapter 9
Attitudes and Expectations[116]

In previous chapters, we explored a variety of factors that might influence the post-release success or failure of the respondents in the *Returning Home* study. These aspects clearly play an important role in the prisoner reentry process, yet we have only touched upon the attitudes and expectations that underlie these influences and outcomes. For instance, prisoners with higher levels of motivation may be more likely to secure employment post-release. And it is possible that prisoners who feel in control of their lives will be less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol upon release. In fact, with the exception of Maruna (2001), the reentry literature to date has largely neglected prisoner attitudes and expectations for post-release experiences. In light of this absence, it remains to be seen how these attitudinal characteristics influence the reentry process. In this chapter, we describe the attitudes and post-release expectations that *Returning Home* respondents held about themselves, their criminal behavior, and their reentry experiences. In the first section, we examine respondents' attitudes about oneself, including level of self-esteem, readiness to change, and sense of control over life. Specifically, we investigate whether or not these attitudes change during the reentry process, and also whether they differ according to certain individual characteristics. Next, we explore respondents' opinions about societal institutions, including legal cynicism, views on local police and parole, and religion. We then report the expectations that respondents had about life after prison and the extent to which pre-release expectations were consistent with actual post-release experiences. We conclude this chapter with an examination of pre-release attitudes and their relationship to post-release employment and drug and alcohol use outcomes.[117]

DATA RELATED TO ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS

During the in-prison and post-release interviews, we asked *Returning Home* participants a series of questions related to their attitudes, expectations for life after prison, and actual reentry experiences. In the pre-release survey, we asked questions designed to shed light on prisoners' attitudes. We used principal components analysis to combine interrelated questions into scales for each attitude. Some scales were derived from previous research, while others were adapted for use in the *Returning Home* study. Some attitudinal measures, such as those related to law enforcement, were only collected during the pre-release survey because we did not expect respondents' responses to change upon reentry. Others were collected at three time points—pre-release, first post-release, and second post-release—because we anticipated changes in these attitudes after release from prison. For example, we measured respondents' sense of control over their life in each of the three interviews in order to identify any changes that occurred during the process of reentry.

The pre-release survey also included questions about post-release expectations, including perceived challenges and obstacles, anticipated need for post-release assistance, and factors considered important to staying out of prison. Responses from the pre-release questions allowed us to identify areas

[116] Sarah Lawrence and Jill Farrell, authors.
[117] Post-release criminal behavior is examined in Chapter 10.

of greatest concern for soon-to-be-released prisoners, and whether these concerns varied based on respondent characteristics.

The post-prison interviews incorporated many questions about the respondents' experiences after release that paralleled questions about their pre-release expectations. This design allowed us to compare responses over time and to examine the extent to which pre-release expectations concurred with post-release experiences. While some reentry issues were more difficult than respondents had expected, other issues were not as complicated as they had anticipated. These mismatches between pre-release expectations and the reality of life after release helped us to identify specific areas for which prisoners may need more pre-release preparation.

ATTITUDES ABOUT ONESELF

According to Maruna (2001), attitudes about oneself are especially relevant for returning prisoners because they affect ex-prisoners' abilities to successfully reintegrate within their family and community. In this section, we assess respondents' overall attitudes toward self, including level of self-esteem, readiness to change negative behaviors, and sense of control over life. Specifically, we measure these constructs while the participants were incarcerated and during the post-release follow-up periods to assess for stability or change during the reentry process.[118] Additionally, we explore whether these attitudes differ with regard to certain respondent characteristics in order to identify potentially vulnerable groups.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to a favorable evaluation of oneself. While self-esteem has long been a popular construct in prison research (e.g., Bukstel and Kilmann 1980), findings are mixed as to whether prison influences levels of self-esteem. And little is known about levels of self-esteem as prisoners return to their communities. Nonetheless, self-esteem research generally suggests that higher levels of self-esteem are related to successful outcomes in academic achievement (e.g., Liu, Kaplan, and Risser 1992) and occupational success (Judge and Bono 2001), as well as improved coping and self-regulation skills (e.g., Greenberg et al. 1999). Therefore, we may expect that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem will be more likely to have successful transitions back into their communities (e.g., will be more likely to secure employment).

To measure self-esteem we asked a series of six questions that were combined to create a Self-Esteem Scale.[119] The scale items measured concepts such as feelings of failure, satisfaction with self, and respect for self. For each item, respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agreed*, *agreed*, *disagreed*, or *strongly disagreed.* Figure 9.1 provides the mean score for the Self-Esteem Scale at all three reporting periods. The scale ranges from one to four, with four representing high levels of self-esteem.

In general, *Returning Home* respondents reported moderate to high levels of self-esteem, which were stable throughout the three reporting periods. Although there was a slight increase in average scores from the pre-release survey to the first post-release interview, this average decreased, again slightly, by the PR2 interview. However, none of these differences were statistically significant.

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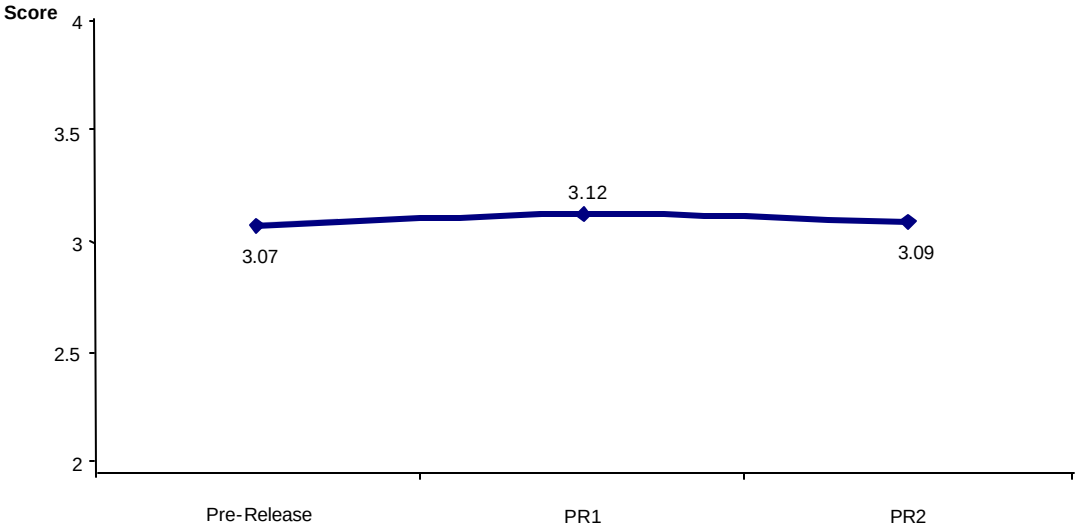
[118] We only assessed readiness to change during incarceration.

[119] The alphas for the Self-Esteem Scale were .727 (Pre-Release), .790 (PR1), and .844 (PR2).

Figure 9.1 Average Self-Esteem Scale Score at PR, PR1, and PR2 (Ns = 303, 146, and 102)



Although overall levels of self-esteem were relatively stable and suggest favorable results for our sample, it was possible that self-esteem may have varied by certain respondent characteristics. These distinctions become important for policymakers and corrections officials in considering which groups are most in need of programming. We compared self-esteem scores by the following characteristics: gender, age, race, education, employment in the six months prior to prison, use of more than one drug at a time, use in the six months prior to prison, and prior confinements to prison. Figure 9.2 reports the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining these variables, with shaded rows indicating those characteristics that had significantly different means, as defined by an F-statistic significant at .10 or lower. ANOVAs were only computed for the pre-release responses due to small sample sizes in the subsequent reporting periods.

Figure 9.2 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Self-Esteem Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	217	3.09	.55		
	Female	86	3.04	.57		
	Total	303	3.07	.56	.536	.465
Age	16-32 years old	137	3.14	.54		
	33-58 years old	164	3.02	.57		
	Total	301	3.08	.56	3.268	.072
Race	Black	248	3.10	.55		
	Non-Black	50	2.96	.60		
	Total	298	3.07	.56	2.491	.116
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	132	3.16	.58		
	No	169	3.00	.52		
	Total	301	3.07	.55	6.224	.013

Chart continues

Employed pre-prison	Employed	196	3.10	.55		
	Unemployed	101	3.02	.55		
	Total	297	3.07	.55	1.361	.244
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	188	3.11	.56		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	110	3.03	.54		
	Total	298	3.08	.55	1.603	.206
Prior commitments	One or more	182	3.05	.57		
	None	99	3.15	.53		
	Total	281	3.09	.56	2.036	.155

Overall, only age and whether the respondent had a high school education yielded significantly different self-esteem score averages. Younger respondents (ages 16-32) had higher levels of self-esteem than older respondents (ages 33-58), which is consistent with current literature showing that self-esteem tends to decline from young adulthood through midlife and old age (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, and Robins 2003). Respondents with at least a high school education had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than those without a high school diploma. This research is also consistent with self-esteem research that suggests a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (e.g., Liu, Kaplan, and Risser 1992).

Control Over Life

Control over life, or locus of control, is also widely examined in criminal justice research (e.g., Goodstein, MacKenzie, and Shotland 1984; Pugh 1994). Simply stated, people who have an internal locus of control feel that they have control over the events that happen to them, while those with an external locus of control feel as though their lives are controlled by external forces, as opposed to their own actions (Rotter 1966). This construct becomes important to prisoner reentry since research has shown that prisoners who do not feel in control of their lives may experience higher levels of subjective stress, fail to use effective problem-solving abilities, and tend to believe that action will not influence event outcomes (MacKenzie and Goodstein 1986)—all of which may contribute to a negative reentry transition. Although our respondents' self-esteem levels yielded encouraging findings, prisoners possibly have a diminished sense of control over their lives during prison and/or while they are under post-release criminal justice supervision. Control over life might also change as they make the transition from prison to their communities, such that control over life might increase as ex-prisoners begin to regain their freedom. Further, certain groups of prisoners may struggle with control over life more than others. Identifying and helping prisoners who have a diminished sense of control over life may ease their reentry transition.

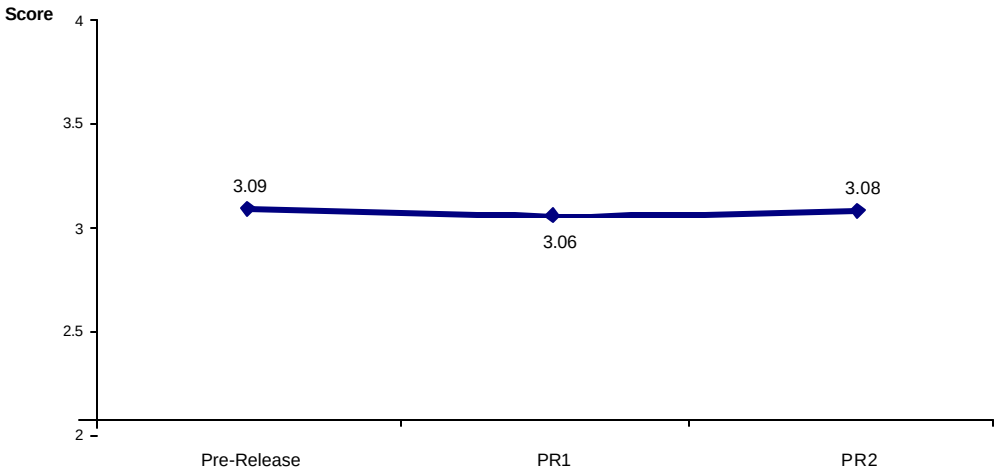
Respondents' sense of control over their lives was measured at each of the three interviews. The Control Over Life Scale[120] was created from nine questions,[121] which included constructs such as perceptions of being pushed around, capacity to solve problems, and ability to change important things in

[120] The alphas for the Control Over Life Scale were .783 (Pre-Release), .829 (PR1), and .845 (PR2).
[121] One of the nine components was not measured in PR2.

life. For each item in the scale, respondents were asked to indicate whether they *strongly agreed*, *agreed*, *disagreed*, or *strongly disagreed.* The scale ranges from one to four, with four representing the highest perception of control over life.

According to our participants' responses, the average perception of control over life remained stable from incarceration through the post-release follow-up interviews (see Figure 9.3).[122] These results are somewhat surprising given the substantial changes that ex-prisoners experience during the reentry transition. However, it should also be recognized that even ex-prisoners are still being supervised by the criminal justice system and are subject to many restrictions through parole conditions.

Figure 9.3 Average Control Over Life Scale Score at PR, PR1, and PR2 (Ns = 308, 147, and 101)



Once again, we ran a one-way ANOVA to identify groups who reported significantly different perceptions of control over life. Interestingly, female respondents reported having a lower sense of control over their lives than male respondents (see Figure 9.4). In addition, respondents who did not start their prison terms with a high school education had a lower average score for control over life than respondents who had a high school education. Somewhat surprisingly, factors such as prior drug use and prior commitments were not significantly associated with perceptions of control over life.

[122] These data do not permit us to evaluate whether control over life was stable during the length of incarceration.

Figure 9.4 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Control Over Life Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	220	3.14	.51		
	Female	88	2.96	.46		
	Total	308	3.09	.50	9.016	.003
Age	16-32 years old	139	3.12	.55		
	33-58 years old	167	3.07	.46		
	Total	306	3.09	.50	.831	.363
Race	Black	251	3.10	.51		
	Non-Black	51	3.03	.45		
	Total	302	3.09	.50	.841	.360
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	134	3.24	.51		
	No	171	2.97	.47		
	Total	305	3.09	.50	22.806	.000
Employed pre-prison	Employed	200	3.12	.48		
	Unemployed	102	3.04	.52		
	Total	302	3.09	.49	1.697	.194
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	190	3.12	.47		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	112	3.06	.55		
	Total	302	3.10	.50	1.230	.268
Prior commitments	One or more	184	3.12	.48		
	None	101	3.05	.57		
	Total	285	3.10	.51	1.413	.236

Readiness to Change

Research has shown that prisoners with higher levels of motivation are more likely to successfully reintegrate into their community after prison (Maruna 2001). While many factors are involved in the actual process of change (Littell and Girven 2002), getting a sense of inmates' readiness to change could help identify those prisoners who are more or less likely to succeed during the reentry transition.

We measured our respondents' readiness to change as the extent to which individuals acknowledged that they had problems and stated a willingness to work on such problems. More specifically, the Readiness to Change Scale[123] was created from four items in the pre-release interview, to which respondents indicated whether they *strongly agreed*, *agreed*, *disagreed*, or *strongly disagreed*. The Readiness to Change Scale ranges from one to four, with four representing the highest degree of readiness to change.

Overall, respondents reported a mean score of 3.30 on the Readiness to Change Scale. Of the individual items they responded to, it is interesting to note that almost all respondents *agreed* or *strongly*

[123] The alpha for this scale was .548.

agreed that they wanted to get their lives straightened out (97%) and wanted to give up hangouts and friends that got them in trouble (87%). While these findings suggest that prisoners in general are interested in changing their negative behaviors, in terms of programming, identifying groups of offenders who are most apt to express readiness to change would be more useful.

Figure 9.5 presents the results from a one-way ANOVA examining whether readiness to change differed by selected respondent characteristics. Indeed, the results from these additional analyses revealed a number of characteristics that show significant differences in readiness to change. Women, older respondents, those with a high school education, and those who used more than one drug at a time prior to prison were significantly more likely to report a readiness to change than their counterparts. In some respects, these findings are not surprising. Prior research has shown that older respondents are less likely to recidivate upon release (Gendreau, Little, and Goggin 1996). And, as we recall from Chapter 4, respondents who used illegal drugs prior to prison also reported several other personal problems related to their drug and/or alcohol use. Therefore it is possible that these respondents reported a higher degree of readiness to change, simply because they had experienced more life problems prior to prison than those who had not been heavy users of drugs or alcohol. These findings are also troubling, however, in that a large share of the prison population is young, male, and lacking a high school education. While these groups would be the most obvious targets for changing negative behaviors on a large-scale basis, the results from this analysis indicate that they are less likely than their counterparts to be ready for such change.

Figure 9.5 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Readiness to Change Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	204	3.27	.51		
	Female	81	3.40	.54		
	Total	285	3.31	.52	4.097	.044
Age	16-32 years old	131	3.23	.56		
	33-58 years old	153	3.37	.49		
	Total	284	3.31	.52	4.597	.033
Race	Black	233	3.30	.54		
	Non-Black	46	3.28	.47		
	Total	279	3.30	.53	.055	.814
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	127	3.37	.53		
	No	156	3.25	.51		
	Total	283	3.30	.52	4.286	.039

Chart continues

Employed pre- prison	Employed	183	3.33	.49		
	Unemployed	94	3.28	.57		
	Total	277	3.31	.52	.581	.447
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	177	3.38	.50		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	106	3.18	.54		
	Total	283	3.30	.52	9.523	.002
Prior commitments	One or more	170	3.34	.51		
	None	93	3.23	.54		
	Total	263	3.30	.52	2.339	.127

A second scale related to readiness to change measured respondents' intent to commit crimes or use drugs.[124] This scale included opinions on the likelihood that respondents would use drugs or commit a crime after release from prison; this measure was only constructed for the pre-release reporting period. We created the scale from a series of four questions, to which respondents were asked to indicate whether the behavior was *very likely*, *likely*, *unlikely*, or *very unlikely*. The scale ranges from one to four, with four representing the highest degree of intent to commit subsequent crimes or use drugs.

On average, respondents demonstrated low intentions to commit crimes or use drugs after prison (mean = 1.59). However, this average may mask certain group differences in intent, which would be useful for prison programming considerations. Figure 9.6 reports the one-way ANOVA results for the Intent to Commit Crime/ Use Drugs Scale by respondent characteristics. Notably, males had an average score that was significantly higher than females. This result complements the findings from the Readiness to Change Scale, which suggested that females expressed greater readiness to change than males. But respondents' intent to commit crimes or use drugs did not vary by their age, education, prior employment, prior drug use, or prior commitments.

Figure 9.6 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Intent to Commit Crimes/Use Drugs Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	194	1.65	.73		
	Female	79	1.45	.64		
	Total	273	1.59	.71	4.447	.036
Age	16-32 years old	120	1.64	.71		
	33-58 years old	152	1.56	.70		
	Total	272	1.59	.71	.813	.368
Race	Black	221	1.58	.72		
	Non-Black	46	1.67	.69		
	Total	267	1.60	.71	.569	.452

Chart continues

[124] The alpha for this scale was .778.

High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	121	1.56	.66		
	No	150	1.62	.74		
	Total	271	1.59	.71	.544	.462
Employed pre-prison	Employed	178	1.58	.72		
	Unemployed	91	1.63	.70		
	Total	269	1.60	.71	.305	.581
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	171	1.63	.72		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	98	1.52	.69		
	Total	269	1.59	.71	1.452	.229
Prior commitments	One or more	162	1.64	.74		
	None	90	1.52	.69		
	Total	252	1.60	.72	1.561	.213

ATTITUDES ABOUT SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS

Research has shown that a person's views about an institution play a role in the success or failure of his or her interaction with that institution (Fetzer 1999; Tyler 1984, 1988). For instance, views about legal institutions often indicate whether one is likely to obey the law (Tyler 1984, 1988). To examine this issue, *Returning Home* participants responded to a series of statements representing attitudes about the legal system and societal rules, and regarding law enforcement in the neighborhood in which they had lived before their current incarceration. In addition, we inquired about respondents' attitudes toward religious institutions and spirituality, which also may influence their decision to take a positive course after their release.

Overall Legal System

According to Sampson and Bartusch (1999), "legal cynicism" is the extent to which "neighborhood residents consider laws or societal rules not binding." These researchers were interested in whether legal cynicism varied by neighborhood contexts, and so they did not evaluate the impact of this attitude measure on deviant behavior. Nonetheless, understanding the legal cynicism of prisoners may contribute to behavior reform efforts. For instance, prisoners who score lower on this measure may be more receptive to prison and post-release programming, which may in turn lead to a successful reentry transition. And while it would not be surprising if prisoners reported low scores on this type of measure, we did expect that there may be variations by respondent characteristics, which may be useful for correctional programming.

The Legal Cynicism Scale[125] incorporated statements such as "laws were made to be broken" and "it's okay to do anything you want as long as you don't hurt anyone." We included a total of five items in the pre-release survey and asked respondents to *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* with each statement. The final scale ranges from one to four, with four representing high legal cynicism. Results from the entire *Returning Home* sample suggest that respondents' average legal cynicism was only moderate to low. This was an encouraging finding, but certain groups could still possibly score

[125] The alpha for the Legal Cynicism Scale was .741.

higher on this scale than others. In fact, Figure 9.7 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA analysis for the Legal Cynicism Scale by the same respondent characteristics used in the previous ANOVAs. We found that younger respondents had significantly higher legal cynicism scores than older respondents, and respondents who did not have a high school education upon entering prison had a significantly higher score than those with a high school education.

Figure 9.7 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Legal Cynicism Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	219	2.34	.68		
	Female	87	2.36	.63		
	Total	306	2.35	.66	.089	.765
Age	16-32 years old	138	2.53	.73		
	33-58 years old	166	2.20	.57		
	Total	304	2.35	.67	18.994	.000
Race	Black	251	2.34	.67		
	Non-Black	50	2.42	.61		
	Total	301	2.35	.66	.624	.430
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	133	2.22	.65		
	No	171	2.44	.66		
	Total	304	2.34	.67	8.663	.003
Employed pre- prison	Employed	197	2.32	.66		
	Unemployed	103	2.41	.64		
	Total	300	2.35	.65	1.495	.222
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	189	2.32	.69		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	112	2.38	.64		
	Total	301	2.34	.67	.547	.460
Prior commitments	One or more	183	2.31	.68		
	None	101	2.45	.66		
	Total	284	2.36	.67	2.625	.106

Local Law Enforcement

We were also curious about respondents' attitudes toward the police in their communities. Negative attitudes toward police may signify disrespect for the law and suggest that police presence will not deter acts of criminal behavior. Additionally, negative attitudes toward police likely contribute to adverse encounters with police once prisoners return to their communities.

Respondents were asked about their views regarding police in the neighborhood where they had lived prior to their current incarceration. The Police Satisfaction Scale[126] consisted of five items in the pre-release survey that inquired about perceptions of police brutality, police effectiveness, and racist

[126] The alpha for the Police Satisfaction Scale was.723.

attitudes. Respondents were asked to *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* with a series of statements incorporating these concepts. The scale ranges from one to four, with four representing the highest degree of satisfaction with police.

The average Satisfaction with Police score was 2.31 across the *Returning Home* sample. Close to half of the respondents reported that the police in their neighborhoods were racist (49%) and that they brutalized people in the neighborhood (62%).

Satisfaction with police also varied with respondent characteristics (see Figure 9.8). Male respondents' views about the police were significantly more negative than those of female respondents. Furthermore, younger respondents reported less satisfaction with police than older respondents. Once again, these groups are highly vulnerable in terms of criminal recidivism upon release; addressing their attitudes toward police may ease subsequent encounters with law enforcement officials.

Figure 9.8 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Satisfaction with Police Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	216	2.20	.59		
	Female	86	2.59	.53		
	Total	302	2.31	.60	28.204	.000
Age	16-32 years old	136	2.21	.62		
	33-58 years old	164	2.39	.58		
	Total	300	2.31	.60	7.275	.007
Race	Black	245	2.29	.59		
	Non-Black	52	2.42	.63		
	Total	297	2.31	.60	1.947	.164
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	132	2.34	.57		
	No	168	2.29	.62		
	Total	300	2.31	.60	.501	.480
Employed pre-prison	Employed	194	2.33	.55		
	Unemployed	102	2.24	.65		
	Total	296	2.30	.59	1.630	.203
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	184	2.29	.57		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	113	2.34	.64		
	Total	297	2.31	.60	.444	.506
Prior commitments	One or more	181	2.26	.60		
	None	100	2.37	.60		
	Total	281	2.30	.60	2.279	.132

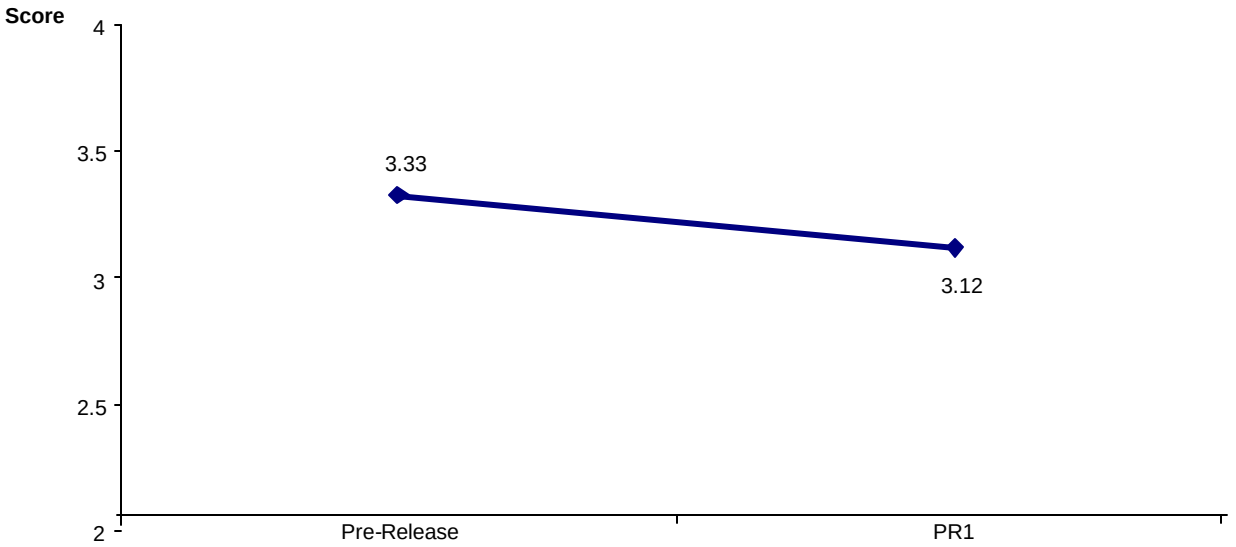
Religion and Spirituality

Religious and spiritual beliefs are important sources of strength for many people, and research indicates that a person's well being may be enhanced by certain dimensions of spirituality (Ellison 1991). Likewise, being a spiritual person might be beneficial for a prisoner facing the challenges of reentry. For

example, Fetzer (1999) contends that highly religious people are less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol than less religious people. And in a meta-analysis of the relationship between religion and crime, Baier (2001) found that religious beliefs and behaviors exert a moderate deterrent effect on individuals' criminal behavior. Likewise, Bradley (1995) suggests that religious groups can be important emotional and tangible support systems.

At all three interviews we asked a series of questions about the respondents' spiritual beliefs and practices. Specifically, six questions were used to create a Spirituality Scale,[127] so we could evaluate any changes in spirituality upon release from prison, as well as explore group differences. Respondents either *strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed,* or *strongly disagreed* with four items about their spiritual beliefs, and indicated how often they pray/meditate and read the bible/religious literature. The resulting scale ranged from one to four, with four representing the highest degree of spirituality. Figure 9.9 shows that the average Spirituality score among our sample participants decreased from the pre-release survey to PR1 (significant at the .000 level).

Figure 9.9 Average Spirituality Scale Score at PR and PR1 (Ns = 304 and 149)



We also evaluated the pre-release spirituality scores to determine if there were any significant differences by respondent characteristics. As shown in Figure 9.10, older respondents, black respondents, and those who were employed in the six months prior to prison had significantly higher average spirituality scores than their respective counterparts. If religion and spirituality contribute to greater well being and serve as a deterrent to anti-social behaviors, these groups may fare better during the reentry process. However, given the significant drop in spirituality upon release, it is also likely that spirituality/religion will not have the potential impact that pre-release attitudes might imply.

[127] This scale was adapted from a similar scale created by Fetzer (1999). The alphas for our Spirituality Scales were .846 (Pre-Release) and .824 (PR1). A valid scale could not be created for PR2 due to missing items.

Figure 9.10 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents' Average Spirituality Scores by Select Sample Characteristics (Pre-Release)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	219	3.30	.70		
	Female	85	3.41	.59		
	Total	304	3.33	.67	1.561	.212
Age	16-32 years old	139	3.12	.75		
	33-58 years old	163	3.51	.54		
	Total	302	3.33	.67	6.373	.000
Race	Black	247	3.37	.62		
	Non-Black	51	3.13	.80		
	Total	298	3.33	.66	5.543	.019
High school graduate/ Hold GED	Yes	135	3.37	.65		
	No	166	3.29	.68		
	Total	301	3.33	.67	1.114	.292
Employment pre-prison	Employed	197	3.40	.61		
	Unemployed	100	3.18	.76		
	Total	297	3.32	.67	6.922	.009
Drug use pre-prison	Used more than one drug at a time	185	3.36	.67		
	Did not use more than one drug at a time	111	3.25	.68		
	Total	296	3.32	.67	1.707	.192
Prior commitments	One or more	182	3.35	.67		
	None	100	3.25	.71		
	Total	282	3.32	.68	1.388	.240

Indeed, despite relatively high scores of spirituality, respondents were not necessarily involved with a religious organization after their release. Seventy-four percent of PR1 respondents and 69 percent of PR2 respondents said that they did not belong to a religious organization. This suggests that no more than one-third of released prisoners could receive post-release support services (emotional and tangible) from *their own* religious institution. In fact, only 3 percent of the respondents reported that they received support or services from *any* religious institution at the first post-release interview. In terms of prisoner reentry, these findings are somewhat disheartening, considering the range of support that religious institutions could offer returning prisoners.

PRE-RELEASE EXPECTATIONS

In their study of prison inmates, Zamble and Porporino (1988) found that most of their imprisoned sample had post-release plans that were "vague, unclear, or unrealistic." These expectations for post-release experiences could influence ex-prisoners' subsequent reentry successes or failures, particularly those that are unrealistic. To investigate this supposition, we collected data regarding our respondents' expectations for their post-release experiences. In the section that follows, we compared

these expectations to actual post-release realities. But first, we provide a description of *Returning Home* prisoners' expectations.

During the pre-release survey, we asked a series of questions regarding various reentry challenges, such as securing employment and renewing relationships. We also asked whether respondents thought they would need help with these challenges. Finally, we asked respondents to rate which aspects of reentry were important to staying out of prison. Overall, *Returning Home* respondents were optimistic about their transition back into society. Respondents thought that most aspects of reentry would not be difficult to deal with, although they anticipated needing some assistance with most of these undertakings. They also tended to concur on which issues were central to keeping them out of prison. The following sections cover these findings in more detail.

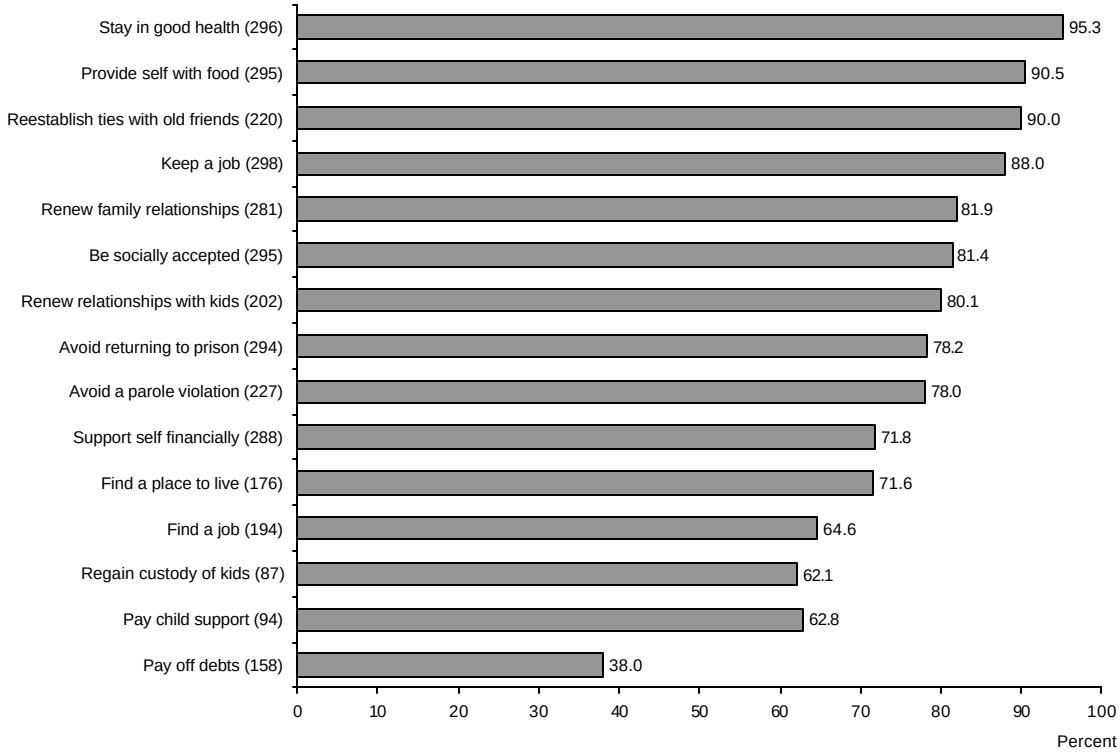
Degree of Difficulty

Soon-to-be released prisoners in our sample reported the extent to which they expected dealing with 15 specific reentry issues would be *very easy, pretty easy, pretty hard,* or *very hard* (see Figure 9.11). In general, respondents believed that dealing with these issues would not be difficult. Well over half of our sample stated that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to deal with 14 of the 15 issues.[128] The largest share of respondents reported that staying in good health would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* (95%),[129] followed by providing oneself with food (91%). Respondents were generally optimistic about renewing personal relationships, with more than 80 percent reporting that they expected it to be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to re-establish contact with old friends (90%), renew family relationships (82%), and renew relationships with children (80%).

[128] Respondents had the option of stating that an issue was not applicable to them for some of the issues, such as those with no children, or those who already had a place to live. Non-applicable responses were not included in this analysis.

[129] For more information regarding respondents' health conditions refer to Chapter 6.

Figure 9.11 Pre-Release Views on Degree of Difficulty for Reentry Issues: Percent reported *Pretty Easy* or V*ery Easy*, (Ns in parentheses)



On the other hand, respondents were much less confident about reentry issues related to their personal finances. Three of the four lowest ranked reentry items that respondents regarded as *pretty easy* or *very easy* involved money: finding a job (65%), paying child support (63%), and paying off debts (38%). Only 13 percent of the respondents in our sample had a savings account to draw from once they left prison. As for the rest, financial independence represented an immediate challenge, especially for those who intended to stay out of prison and planned to avoid using criminal means of financial support.

While there has been some speculation on whether men and women face unique reentry barriers, few studies have successfully examined a sufficient number of both men and women to discern any remarkable distinctions. In fact, Maruna (2001) suggested that the needs and problems of returning male and female respondents might not be all that different. Similarly, in the *Returning Home* sample, men and women did not differ significantly in terms of their expectations of how easy or hard it would be to manage the reentry issues shown in Figure 9.11.

On the other hand, prior involvement with the criminal justice system, as measured by having one or more prior incarcerations, did influence respondents' assessments of some reentry issues. Those who had previously experienced the reentry process were more likely to expect that some reentry issues would be difficult to handle. Specifically, respondents with prior incarcerations thought it would be harder to be

socially accepted[130] and harder to support themselves financially[131] compared to respondents with no prior incarcerations. Yet, surprisingly, there were no differences between those who had and those who had not experienced reentry in the past for 13 of the 15 issues. In other words, respondents who had been released from prison at least once before did not think it would be any easier or harder than first-time releasees to do such things as find a job, support themselves financially, and find a place to live.

Extent of Help Needed

While our *Returning Home* respondents expressed overall optimism concerning expected reentry challenges, they may nonetheless require assistance with these challenges. For example, we know that respondents were confident about keeping a job, but did they think they would need help obtaining employment? The following sections examine respondents' expressed needs for subsequent assistance as they reenter society.

Not all reentry issues were applicable to certain groups of respondents (see Figure 9.12). For example, at the time of the pre-release interview, more than half of the respondents said that they already had a place to live (52%), and one-third (31%) said that they already had a job lined up after release, and, therefore, would not need help finding a job. While these findings indicate that some respondents in our sample were on the right track for a smooth reentry transition, others suggest preparatory shortcomings: only 10 percent of the returning prisoner sample did not want additional educational instruction and very few (11%) did not want additional job training. Hence, respondents apparently did not feel adequately prepared to reenter the workforce.

Figure 9.12 Personal Situations For Which Help Would not Be Needed: Percent from pre-release reporting a situation would not apply (N=324)

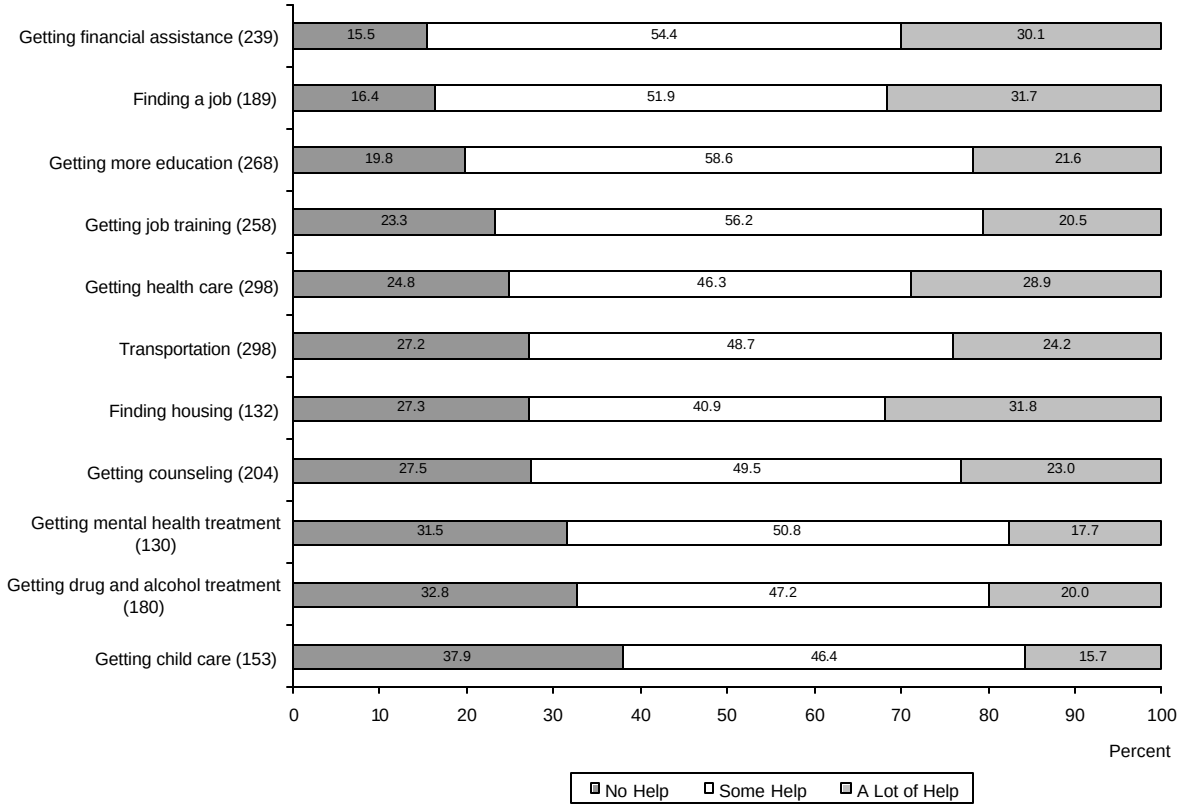
Already have a place to live	51.5
Don't want mental health treatment	51.2
Don't need childcare	43.8
Don't want drug or alcohol treatment	36.1
Already have a job lined up	31.1
Don't want counseling	28.1
Don't want financial assistance	18.2
Don't want additional job training	11.4
Don't want additional education	9.6

In terms of issues that were applicable to personal situations, respondents generally stated that they would need help after release. Two-thirds or more of respondents thought that they would need *some help* or *a lot of help* for all of the reentry issues listed in Figure 9.13.[132] Getting financial assistance (85%) and finding a job (84%) yielded the largest share of respondents who reported that they would need help. This is consistent with our earlier finding that indicated our respondents expected finance-related issues would be particularly challenging.

[130] Chi-square significant at .038.
[131] Chi-square significant at .050.
[132] Results in Figure 9.13 do not include respondents for whom an item did not apply.

Women were much more likely than men to express a need for post-release assistance. A significantly larger percentage of women indicated a need for help regarding 6 of the 11 issues: getting housing, transportation, health care, counseling, financial assistance, and drug or alcohol treatment.[133] These differences were substantial for some items: 88 percent of women compared with 66 percent of men indicated that they would need help finding housing; and 96 percent of women versus 79 percent of men reported needing help getting financial assistance. These results were somewhat surprising considering that we did not find any gender differences on perceptions of difficulty for these items.

Figure 9.13 Pre-Release Views on Help Needed After Release (Ns in parentheses)



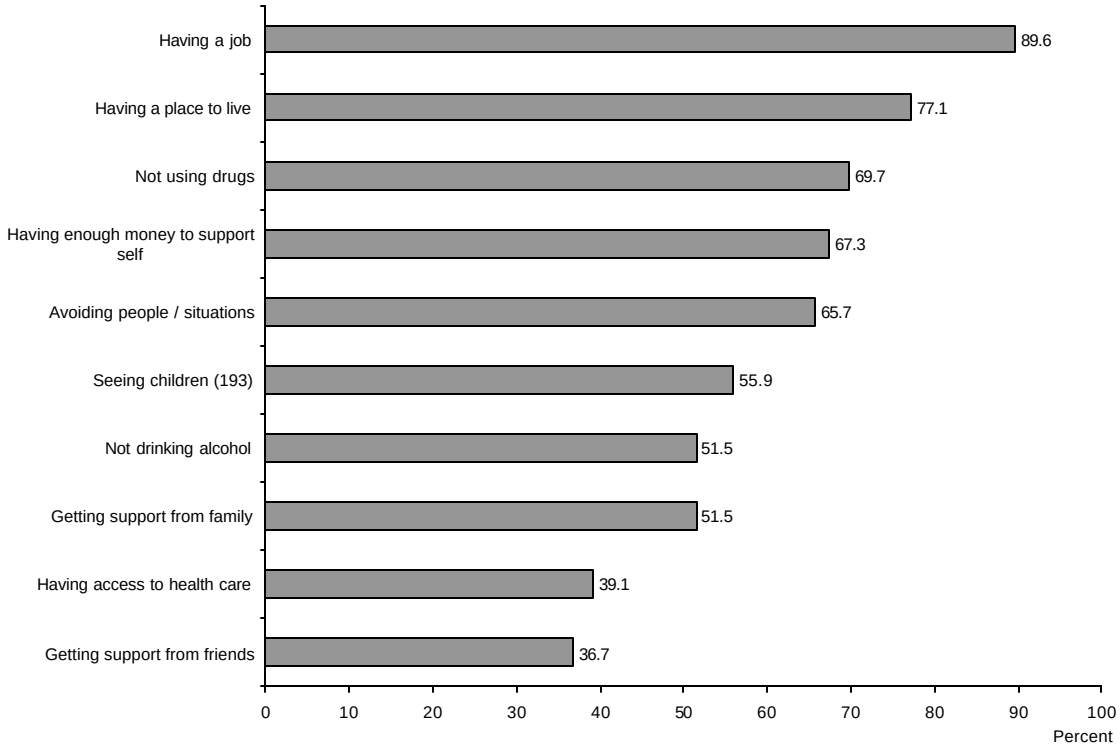
Factors Important to Staying Out of Prison

Realistic reentry expectations can help soon-to-be-released prisoners prepare for the challenges that await them on the outside. Yet, planning a successful reentry experience also entails consideration of the factors that will keep them out of prison. Accordingly, we asked respondents in our sample to identify the reentry issues they considered important to staying out of prison (see Figure 9.14). Overall, it appears that respondents were more likely to rate the importance of tangible items, such as having a job (90%) and finding housing (77%), over factors that were largely related to relationships, such as support from friends (37%), support from family (52%), and contact with children (56%). It is also possible that

[133] Chi-squares significant at.028, .013, .027, .015, .003, and .031 for six items, respectively.

respondents selected these items based on parole expectations (e.g., that unemployment or indefinite housing might provoke a parole violation, while a lack of supportive relationships would not). There was only one significant gender difference among these items: women (80%) were more likely than men (66%) to state that not using drugs was important to staying out of prison.

Figure 9.14 Pre-Release Views on Factors Important in Staying Out of Prison (N=297 unless otherwise noted in parentheses)



ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS COMPARED TO POST-RELEASE REALITY

This section assesses the extent to which respondents' pre-release expectations matched their post-release experiences. Specifically, we explored whether certain reentry challenges were more or less difficult than respondents expected. Furthermore, we examined whether respondents' attitudes and beliefs influenced their reentry experiences, as related to employment and substance use outcomes.

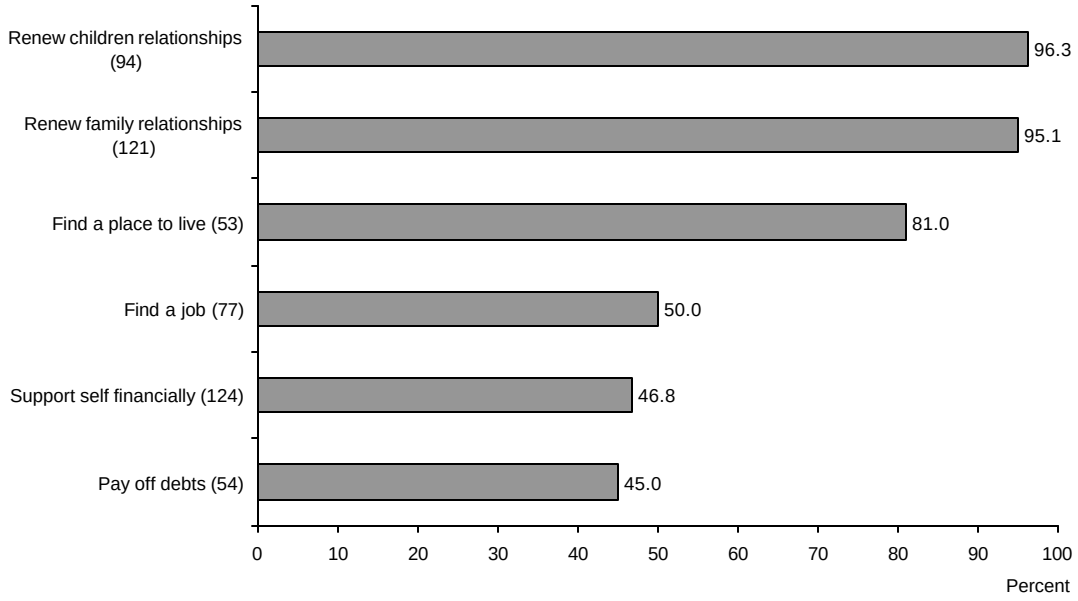
Reentry Challenges: Expectations and Experiences

Recall that prior to release respondents generally felt that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to confront the reentry issues presented to them (refer to Figure 9.11). However, the extent to which pre-release expectations lined up with post-release experiences was mixed. Expectations regarding the renewal of relationships and finding somewhere to live largely corresponded to ex-prisoners' post-release experiences at PR1. As shown in Figure 9.15, 96 percent of respondents who had anticipated that renewing relationships with their children would be easy prior to release felt that it had been easy after

release. In other words, less than four percent of respondents who expected this issue to be easy changed their opinions and thought that it was actually *pretty hard* or *very hard* by the first post release interview.

Three reentry items did not turn out to be as easy as some respondents had expected. Half of the pre-release respondents who thought that finding a job would be easy changed their opinion at the first post-release interview and reported that it actually had been *pretty hard* or *very hard* to find a job. Supporting oneself financially and paying off debt (for those who claimed to have debt) were other reentry issues in which more than half of respondents changed their opinion from easy to hard between the pre-release interview and the post-release interview.

Figure 9.15 Views of Expectations Compared to Views of Experiences: Expected to Be Easy and Was Easy. Percent of who reported *pretty easy* or *very easy* at PR1 (Ns are in parentheses)



Attitudes and Intermediate Outcomes

We analyzed the previously described pre-release attitude scales to determine whether they were related to differences in certain post-release experiences reported at PR1. Specifically, we explored whether attitudes reported at the beginning of this chapter (e.g., self-esteem, readiness to change, intent to commit crimes/use drugs, control over life, legal cynicism, satisfaction with police, and spirituality) differed significantly by whether ex-prisoners reported substance use and by employment status. Substance use was measured by whether the respondent had used any illegal drugs or drank alcohol to the point of intoxication since release, and employment was measured by whether the respondent had been employed for more than one week since release. Given the small sample size in this pilot study, we were limited to simple comparisons of means to further our understanding of prisoner attitudes and post-release experiences.

Surprisingly, only the scale measuring respondents' pre-release intent to commit crimes or use drugs yielded a significantly different result between *Returning Home* respondents who used substances

post-release and those who did not (see Figure 9.16). Respondents who reported use of drugs and/or alcohol by PR1 had a higher average score (1.84) on the Intent Scale than those who did not report use of these substances (1.44). However, those who reported use of drugs and/or alcohol had similar scores for self-esteem, control over life, spirituality, satisfaction with police, legal cynicism, and readiness to change as those who reported no substance use after release (legal cynicism approached statistical significance at .106).

Figure 9.16 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Reported Any Drug or Alcohol Use at PR1 to Those Who Had Not

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Self-Esteem Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	45	3.09	.53		
	No drug or alcohol use	86	3.17	.53		
	Total	131	3.15	.53	.652	.421
Legal Cynicism Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	45	2.39	.62		
	No drug or alcohol use	88	2.20	.66		
	Total	133	2.27	.65	2.642	.106
Readiness to Change Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	42	3.36	.38		
	No drug or alcohol use	83	3.30	.53		
	Total	125	3.32	.49	.542	.463
Intent to Commit Crime or Use Drugs When Released	Reported drug or alcohol use	40	1.84	.80		
	No drug or alcohol use	79	1.44	.63		
	Total	119	1.57	.71	8.952	.003
Control Over Life Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	47	3.05	.52		
	No drug or alcohol use	87	3.16	.52		
	Total	134	3.12	.52	1.618	.206
Spirituality Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	46	3.29	.69		
	No drug or alcohol use	87	3.40	.60		
	Total	133	3.37	.63	.643	.424
Satisfaction with Police Scale	Reported drug or alcohol use	43	2.24	.57		
	No drug or alcohol use	87	2.35	.55		
	Total	130	2.31	.55	1.003	.319

In terms of employment status, there were statistically significant differences in the mean levels of legal cynicism, intent to commit crimes/use drugs, and control over life (see Figure 9.17). Those who were employed for at least one week after release had previously reported more positive views of the legal system and lower intentions to commit crimes and/or use drugs, and they felt more in control of their lives than those who were not employed. Taken as a whole, the results from this section suggest that certain attitudes, particularly intent to commit crimes and/or use drugs and legal cynicism, are related to ex-prisoners' subsequent successes or failures in the reentry process and should be addressed prior to release from prison.

Figure 9.17 One-way ANOVA Comparing Respondents Who Had Worked for At Least One Week at PR1 to Those Who Had Not

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Self-Esteem Scale	Worked for at least one week	91	3.13	.52		
	Had not worked	48	3.14	.55		
	Total	139	3.14	.53	.001	.977
Legal Cynicism Scale	Worked for at least one week	92	2.16	.62		
	Had not worked	49	2.47	.67		
	Total	141	2.27	.65	7.422	.007
Readiness to Change Scale	Worked for at least one week	86	3.29	.48		
	Had not worked	46	3.40	.48		
	Total	132	3.33	.48	1.527	.219
Intent to Commit Crime or Use Drugs When Released	Worked for at least one week	83	1.49	.62		
	Had not worked	44	1.75	.84		
	Total	127	1.58	.71	4.006	.047
Control Over Life Scale	Worked for at least one week	92	3.17	.51		
	Had not worked	50	2.99	.55		
	Total	142	3.11	.53	3.915	.050
Spirituality Scale	Worked for at least one week	91	3.45	.60		
	Had not worked	50	3.28	.65		
	Total	141	3.39	.62	2.353	.127
Satisfaction with Police Scale	Worked for at least one week	90	2.31	.55		
	Had not worked	48	2.31	.55		
	Total	138	2.31	.55	.005	.945

SUMMARY

The results presented in this chapter shed light on prisoners' attitudes and expectations related to the reentry process, both prior to and after release. Specifically, we were interested in exploring potential ways that prisoners' attitudes might influence reentry success or failure. Overall, *Returning Home* respondents' attitudes were predictable in some respects, yet surprising in others. And while their post-release expectations were sometimes accurate, some had experiences that were more difficult than anticipated. Further, we found that certain attitudes were related to some important reentry outcomes. Having a better understanding of how prisoners view their reentry experience has practical implications in terms of in-prison programs, content and structure of pre-release planning, and support services after release.

Prior to release, we found that respondents in our sample had fairly positive attitudes about themselves. Levels of self-esteem were high and stable from incarceration through the reentry transition. Despite being incarcerated, the majority of respondents also believed that they had control over their lives. And almost all indicated that they were ready to change and wanted to get their lives straightened out. In short, low levels of self-confidence, which could hinder successful reintegration, were generally not relevant to the respondents in our sample. In fact, the opposite may have been true. Prisoners' attitudes about themselves might have been overly optimistic.

In general, members of the *Returning Home* sample had negative views about the legal system and local law enforcement. This distrust in the law and specifically in police authority poses an interesting community challenge as prisoners reenter their neighborhoods. And these findings are particularly troubling in terms of efforts that attempt to involve the police in the reentry process.

In terms of religion, ex-prisoners at PR1 were significantly less spiritual than they reported in prison. Furthermore, their beliefs and personal practices did not necessarily translate into participation in organized religion after release from prison, with only about one-third reporting that they belonged to a religious organization. More importantly, only three percent of our respondents reported receiving services from religious organizations during their post-release transition. We were unable to assess whether these services actually existed in respondents' communities or whether such services are likely to improve reentry outcomes. Nevertheless, we found that most respondents were not currently turning to community faith-based organizations for services to help with their reintegration.

Furthermore, respondent characteristics were related to each of the attitudes described above. These findings suggest that certain groups, such as females or older respondents, may have different programming needs than their counterparts. For instance, our findings suggest that female respondents had lower perceptions of control over life than males. Given the evidence that this mindset has a negative relationship with subsequent substance use (discussed below), this type of programming curricula is especially important for female respondents. With limited prison programming resources, it is important to identify which attitudes contribute to a successful reentry and also the groups who are deficient in these attitudes in order to focus correctional attention where it is most needed.

Returning Home respondents generally thought that individual reentry issues, such as finding a place to live, would not be difficult. Two-thirds or more of respondents thought that 14 of 15 reentry-related issues would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to deal with upon release. The largest share of respondents expected difficulty in issues related to personal finance, and in particular, paying off debts. These findings could be useful when developing pre-release curricula (e.g., budgeting, paying off debt, and accessing financial assistance services).

Despite high expectations for a smooth transition in most facets of reentry, most pre-release respondents indicated a desire for help with many of these issues. For example, more than two-thirds expected that finding a job would be *pretty easy* or *very easy*, and at the same time, 70 percent of those who would be looking for work said they would like some help finding work. While we acknowledge that accessing and participating in assistance are very different from expressing a desire, it is encouraging to know that respondents were willing to consider post-release assistance.

Some reentry issues considered before release actually turned out to be easier than anticipated. Renewing relationships with family, children, and friends were expected to be relatively easy, and based on post-release interviews, this turned out to be the case. However, finding a job, supporting oneself financially, and paying off debts were more likely to be described as *pretty hard* or *very hard* after release than they were expected to be prior to release. Pre-release programming could help prisoners adjust their expectations to help reduce the frustration and anxiety that ex-prisoners are likely to experience as they reenter society.

Finally, certain attitudes and beliefs appear to affect a successful transition from prison back into society. Specifically, a high level of intent to commit crimes and use drugs was related to post-release substance use. Moreover, greater intentions to commit crimes and use drugs, legal cynicism, and a lower

sense of control over life were related to subsequent unemployment. Again, pre-release programming could help soon-to-be-released prisoners adopt more pro-social beliefs and develop more confidence in their overall capacity to control their own lives. While this pilot study could only examine a limited number of attitudes and reentry outcomes, future research can expand on this line of work to further inform programming objectives and enhance programming outcomes.

Chapter 10
Criminal Involvement[134]

The extent to which prisoners terminate or reduce their criminal activity is a key measure of the success or failure of their reentry into the community, and a sizeable portion of those released from prison nationwide are not successful in this regard. A recent Bureau of Justice Statistics study estimated that over two-thirds (68%) of released prisoners were arrested for a new crime and almost one-half (47%) were convicted for one or more new crimes within three years. Ultimately, nearly fifty percent of released prisoners ended up back in prison within three years, with half of the returns resulting from new crime convictions and the other half resulting from violations of release conditions (Langan and Levin 2002).

The *Returning Home* study followed individuals released to Baltimore City from Maryland prisons for approximately six months and found that one in three of our respondents were rearrested, one in ten were reconvicted, and eight percent were reconfined to prison or jail following this new conviction. An additional seven percent had their parole revoked for a technical violation or following a new crime arrest. Collectively, 16 percent of the sample was reconfined to prison or jail during the six months following their release.[135]

This chapter describes respondents' involvement with the criminal justice system, beginning with their criminal histories and current prison sentences, continuing with their expectations about drug use and crime following release, and concluding with their actual criminal offending after release. In addition to the criminal justice factors associated with future crime, this chapter also examines the role of employment, family support, and personal expectations with regard to post-release criminal activity. Overall, we identify several factors that are significantly associated with ex-prisoner recidivism—namely, age, gender, criminal history, education, negative partner relationships, substance use, neighborhood job opportunities, attitudes toward the legal system, and spirituality.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Most of the respondents in the *Returning Home* study were involved with the criminal justice system before their current prison term: 84 percent reported at least one previous conviction, and those who were convicted before had extensive criminal histories, with 42 percent reporting four or more prior convictions. Over two-thirds (68%) of the respondents had served time in prison before. Men and women in the study had similar levels of prior criminal involvement.

The prisoners in our sample began their criminal careers at an early age. Over half (56%) were first arrested before reaching the age of eighteen, and over one-quarter (28%) reported spending time in a juvenile correctional facility. Men tended to become involved with the criminal justice system at an earlier age than women; on average, men were first arrested at age 17 while women were first arrested at age 21.[136]

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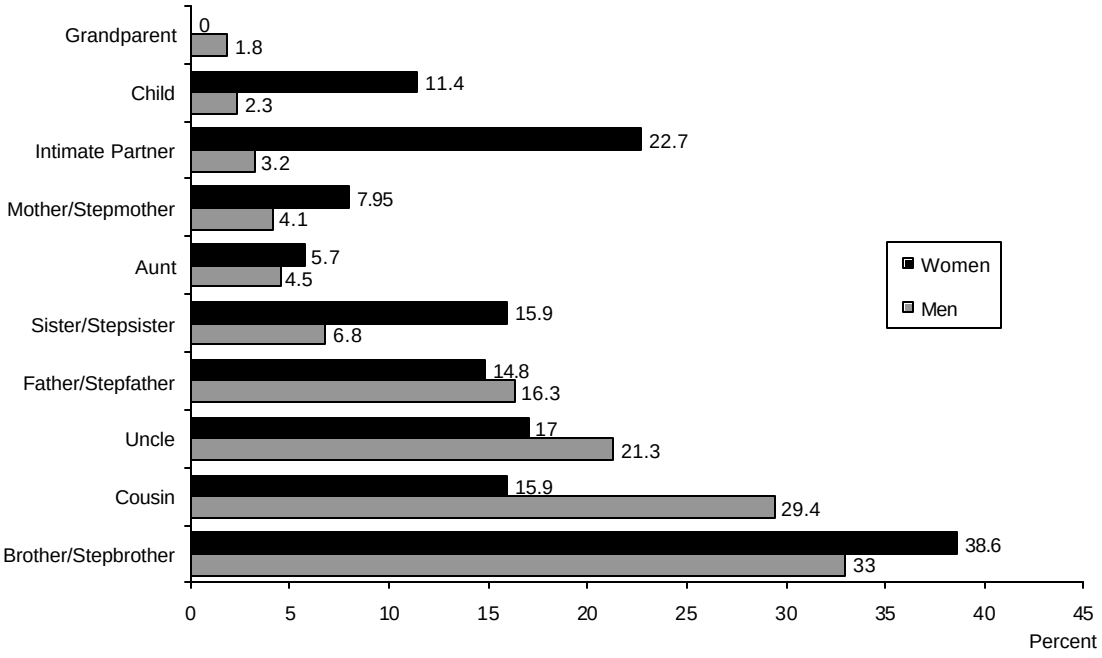
[134] Kamala Mallik Kane and Jennifer Castro, authors.

[135] Arrests and convictions were assessed using official records obtained from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Parole revocations were assessed using data from the Division of Correction.

[136] The difference in mean age at first arrest was statistically significant with a p-value<0.0001.

This early onset of criminal behavior may not be surprising in light of many respondents' family and social backgrounds. Respondents were often not the first in their families to be involved in crime. Nearly two-thirds (60%) had at least one family member who had been convicted of a crime, and 40 percent had a family member who was serving a prison sentence at the same time. Brothers, cousins, uncles, and fathers were the family members mentioned most often (Figure 10.1). Over one-third (35%) of all respondents reported that one of their brothers had been convicted of a crime, and close to one-fifth (16%) reported that their father or stepfather had been convicted.[137] For women in the study, their sisters, intimate partners, and children also figured prominently among convicted family members. Nearly one-fourth of the women reported having a spouse or partner who had been convicted compared to less than 4 percent of the men.

Figure 10.1 Prisoners With One or More Family Members Convicted of a Crime (N=309)



CURRENT PRISON TERM

At the time of the pre-release interview, most of the prisoners in the *Returning Home* study were serving their current term as new court commitments; according to records from the Division of Correction,[138] only 11 percent had been released from their original sentence and returned to prison on a supervision violation. Half (49%) of the prisoners we interviewed had a drug offense as their most serious charge. One-fifth (22%) of the respondents were serving time for violent offenses such as assault

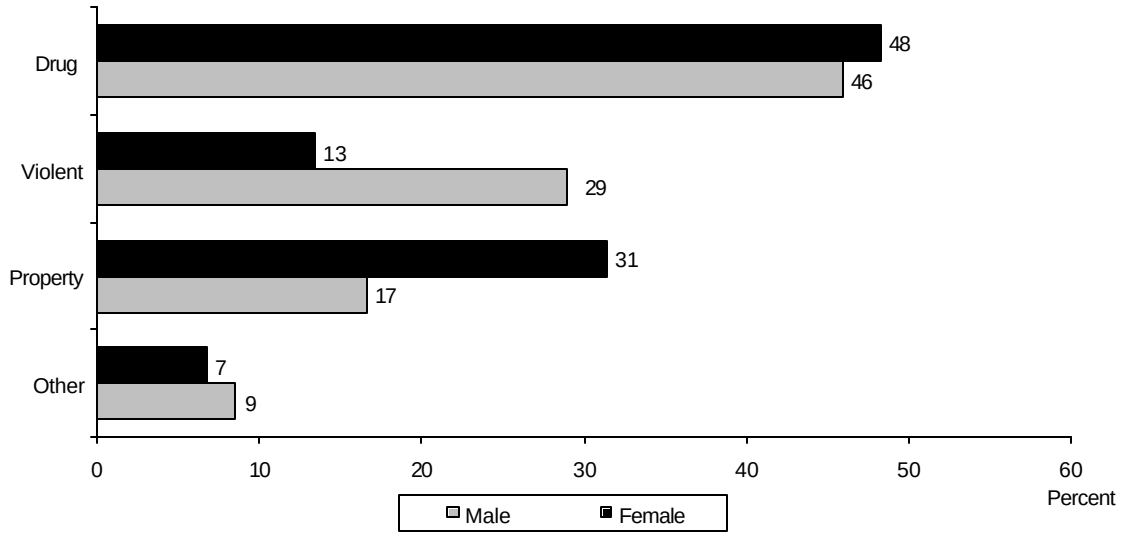
[137] The difference between brothers and fathers who have been convicted is not as great as it might seem. The probability of a respondent's brother or cousin having been convicted is higher than the probability of a respondent's father being convicted simply because a person could have multiple brothers or cousins, but typically only one father or stepfather.

[138] Official data from the DOC were analyzed for 295 of the 324 prisoners who participated in the pre-release interview. The remaining 29 were excluded from the analysis because of data quality concerns.

and robbery, and another fifth (21%) were in prison for property offenses such as burglary and theft. The remaining 8 percent were incarcerated for various other offenses, including weapon, traffic, public order, and nonviolent sex offenses.

Although equal proportions of men and women were in prison for drug offenses, men were twice as likely as women to report drug dealing rather than drug possession as their primary offense.[139] Figure 10.2 illustrates other gender differences in the major conviction offense. A higher proportion of men were in prison for violent offenses (29 percent compared to 13 percent of women), but a higher proportion of women were serving time for property offenses (31 percent compared to 17 percent of men).[140] The proportions of men and women serving time for other offenses were similar at 9 and 7 percent, respectively.

Figure 10.2 Most Serious Conviction Offense, by Gender (N=295)



Source: Maryland Division of Correction, Offender Based State Correctional Information System

As we mentioned earlier, the vast majority of respondents in the pre-release survey were serving their original court sentences (as opposed to having been released and returned to prison for a supervision violation). When they were eventually released, most had served under two years in custody before their first release from prison (82%), and over half (57%) served less than one year; only a small proportion (5%) served more than five years in prison (Figure 10.3).[141] Respondents typically served slightly less

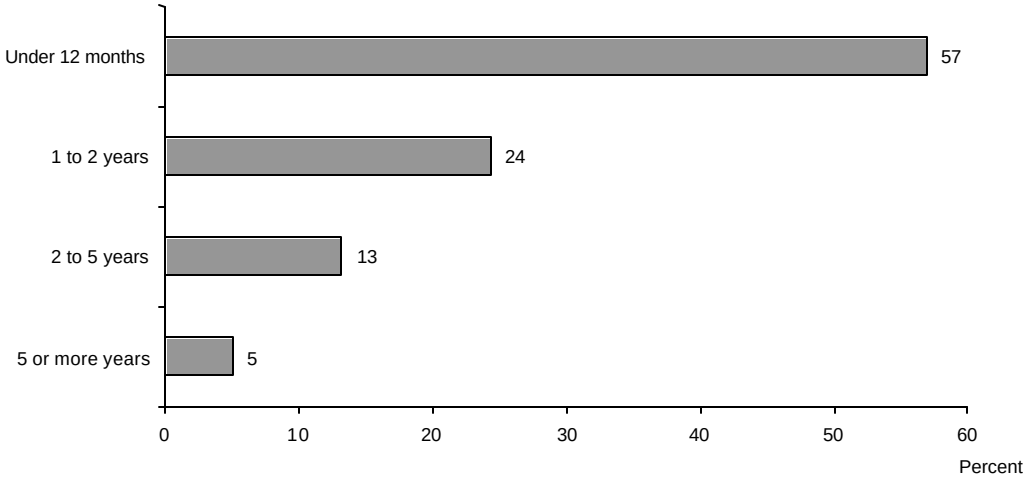
[139] Odds ratio=2.28, with a 95% confidence interval from 1.03 to 5.07.

[140] Chi-square was statistically significant with a p-value=0.002.

[141] The analysis of time served was restricted to new court commitments because it was not possible to accurately compute the amount of time served by those who were released and subsequently returned to prison on violations. To ensure consistent comparisons, the analysis of sentences imposed, percentage of sentence served, duration of supervised release shown in Figure 10.4 also excludes returns to prison.

than half of their imposed sentences before their first release; the average prisoner served 46 percent of a two-year sentence, resulting in a prison term of 11 months.[142]

Figure 10.3 Time Served in Prison Until First Release, New Court Commitments Only (N=249)



Source: Maryland Division of Correction, Offender Based State Correctional Information System

For the most part, men and women in the study served similar amounts of time in prison; their median prison terms were 10 and 11 months, respectively, meaning that half of the men served 10 months or less in prison and half of the women served 11 months or less. However, the average time served by men (19 months), was significantly greater than the 15 months served, on average by women, suggesting that among those with longer terms, men served more time than women. This is likely a reflection of the different types of crimes for which men and women were sentenced. Figure 10.4 shows prisoners' sentences according to their most serious conviction offense. Prisoners convicted of violent crimes were sentenced to the longest prison terms, 48 months, while prisoners sentenced for property crimes had the shortest sentences imposed, 26 months. Since men were more likely than women to be in prison for violent offenses, it follows that their sentences were longer than those for women, who were more likely to be convicted of property offenses. Further analysis within each offense group (e.g., comparing male prisoners with a violent conviction to female prisoners with a violent conviction) did not show any significant gender differences in imposed sentences or time served.

[142] In this example, averages are represented by the median because the mean was heavily influenced by the small proportion of prisoners with very long sentences.

Figure 10.4 Sentence Lengths for New Court Commitments, By Most Serious Conviction Offense (Ns = 259, 249, 249, and 193, respectively)

		Violent	Property	Drug	Other	Significance (P-value)
Sentence Imposed (months)	*Mean*	48	26	35	36	0.009
	Median	36	18	24	35	N/A
Time Served Until First Release (months)	*Mean*	28	13	16	20	0.003
	Median	12	9	10	15	N/A
Percent of Sentence Served	*Mean*	49	47	45	52	Not Sig.
	Median	47	45	44	55	N/A
Period of Supervised Release (months)	*Mean*	20	12	18	15	0.065
	Median	17	9	10	11	N/A

Source: Maryland Division of Correction, Offender Based State Correctional Information System

EXPECTATIONS FOR RELEASE

When we asked *Returning Home* prisoners to describe their expectations for post-release supervision, 71 percent expected to be on parole, 21 percent thought they would not be on parole, and 8 percent did not know. Division of Correction data obtained after the pre-release interviews showed that 77 percent of respondents were subsequently released to parole supervision. Most (83%) of the respondents who expected to be on parole were correct in their expectation. However, the majority (61%) of respondents who reported they would not be on parole after their release were mistaken; for these prisoners, parole supervision may have come as a surprise, perhaps engendering negative feelings toward their parole officers and supervision conditions from the start. Overall, almost one-third (31%) of respondents had mistaken expectations regarding post-release supervision, suggesting that discharge planning could be improved in this area.

Despite extensive criminal histories, respondents were optimistic about their chances of staying out of prison following their release. Most (78%) thought it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to stay out of prison and, similarly, most (78%) of the respondents who expected to be on parole thought it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to avoid a parole violation; this was true even of respondents who had been released and subsequently returned to prison while serving their current sentences. Most respondents (87%) also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they would give up friends and hangouts that got them into trouble. However, when asked about things they might do if they knew they would not get caught, one-fifth (21%) said they would use drugs and 16 percent said they would commit crimes. Some respondents were not deterred by the prospect of rearrest—13 percent intended to use drugs and 9 percent reported they would commit a crime even if they knew it would result in an arrest.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AFTER RELEASE

Upon leaving prison, many respondents returned to a social environment that would challenge their ability to stay out of prison. When we interviewed them at the first post-release interview, most (88%) reported having given up troublesome friends and hangouts, but many simultaneously reported close friendships with people who had a history of illegal drug use (49%), drug dealing (38%), assault (32%), and theft (29%). Almost half (45%) reported having a close friend who had been in prison, and one-quarter (25%) had lived with another ex-prisoner since release. Some respondents (14%)

acknowledged the influence that friends can have on their behavior, *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that friends convinced them to do things they should not do. Yet, respondents also had some positive influences in their lives. Roughly two-thirds reported having close friends who were employed (63%) and close friends with whom they could hang out and not get in trouble (64%). For a sizable share of respondents, however, the issue of peer influence may be less important: 31 percent reported having no close friends at all following their release from prison.

Regardless of the criminal involvement of their friends, respondents remained optimistic in the first months after prison: 89 percent thought that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to stay out of prison and, similarly, 88 percent of those on parole felt that it would be *pretty easy* or *very easy* to avoid a parole violation. These optimistic expectations did not necessarily translate into expectations for staying crime-free: roughly one-fifth admitted it was *likely* or *very likely* that they would use drugs (22%) or commit crimes (15%) if they felt they would not get caught.

In the remainder of this chapter, we describe our respondents' actual experiences after release. First, we examine post-release supervision, showing the extent to which those on parole complied with their parole conditions and the proportion who had their parole revoked within the first six months out. The chapter concludes with an analysis of post-release recidivism, describing the extent to which those in our sample were arrested and convicted for new crimes after prison, and which factors influenced their post-prison criminal activity.

POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION

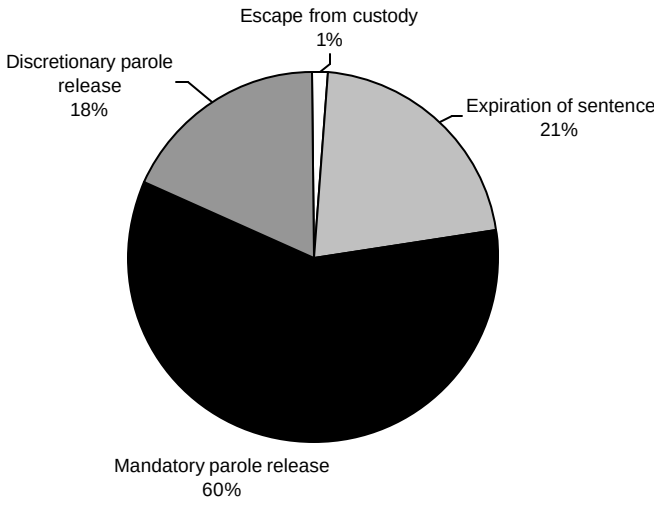
By the time this analysis was conducted in the spring of 2003, 96 percent of our pre-release sample had been released from prison.[143] Over three-quarters (77%) were released to parole supervision; one-fifth (21%) completed their sentences and were released with no further supervision or conditions; and one percent escaped from custody (Figure 10.5).[144] For those under supervision, the average period of supervision was 17 months for prisoners being released for the first time from their current sentences. For those who had been released and subsequently returned to prison, the average supervision term was shorter by four months, at 13 months.[145]

As with the *Returning Home* pre-release sample of prisoners, the majority of parolees were male, but interestingly, women comprised a slightly larger proportion of the supervised release population (31%) than of the prisoner population (28%).[146] This is probably because men were three times as likely to "max out" of their sentences; 25 percent of men were released because their sentences expired as opposed to 9 percent of women.[147] The average time on supervision—17 months—however, was similar for both men and women, with half of all parolees being supervised for 11 months or less. The average time under supervision varied according to the most serious conviction offense, with violent convictions having the longest term at 20 months, and property convictions having the shortest term at 12 months (see Figure 10.4 above). Since prisoners generally served slightly under half of their imposed sentences

[143] While we sampled based on those prisoners scheduled to be released within 30 to 60 days, in many cases estimated release dates were pushed further into the future, and in some cases delayed indefinitely.
[144] The four prisoners who escaped from custody were classified as "walk-offs," who absconded from a low-security environment such as work release.
[145] Statistically significant difference with a p-value=0.062.
[146] Chi-square was statistically significant with a p-value=0.002.
[147] Odds ratio=3.27, with a 95% confidence interval from 1.38 to 8.95.

regardless of the offense, this variation in supervision terms is a logical extension of offense-related variation in sentences imposed.

Figure 10.5 Type of Release from Prison (N=282)



Source: Maryland Division of Correction, Offender Based State Correctional Information System

Two major types of parole release are exercised in Maryland: discretionary and mandatory. Of those respondents released to parole, about one-fourth (24%) were conditionally released to parole, meaning that a parole board reviewed prisoners' individual cases and deemed them ready for release. The other 76 percent were mandatory releases to parole, meaning that a parole board did not evaluate individual prisoners' fitness for release, but rather a term of supervised release was specified by statute. Recent research (Hughes, Wilson, and Beck 2001) suggests that the type of parole that prisoners receive might have an impact on future recidivism, and that discretionary parolees might be less likely to recidivate. There were several significant differences between the two types of parolees in our sample. Comparing discretionary releases to mandatory paroles, discretionary releases were more often female (44 percent compared to 27 percent)[148] and drug offenders (67 percent versus 42 percent).[149] Interestingly, discretionary and mandatory releases in our sample had served similar amounts of time in prison, because those released through discretionary parole had served a significantly shorter percentage of a longer imposed sentence. Comparing the average prisoner released by discretionary parole with the average prisoner released by mandatory parole, the average imposed sentence for discretionary release was 57 months, well over a year (15 months) longer than the average sentence imposed for a mandatory parolee.[150] However, the discretionary parolee served 37 percent of his or her sentence compared to the

[148] Odds ratio=2.20, with a 95% confidence interval from 1.10 to 4.41.
[149] Chi-square was statistically significant with a p-value=0.012.
[150] Statistically significant difference with a p-value=0.0107.

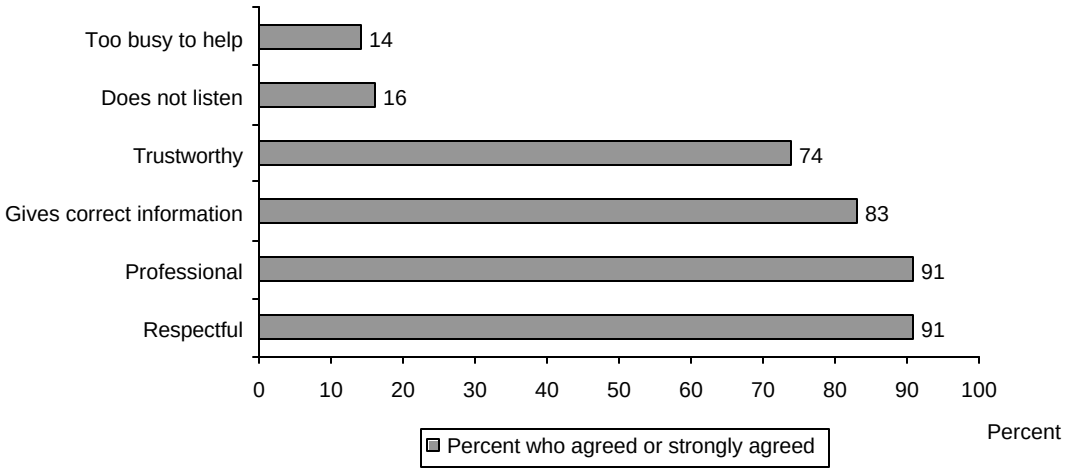
50 percent served by a mandatory parolee.[151] This resulted in both types of prisoners spending roughly 21 months in prison. Still, because discretionary parolees were let out earlier from longer sentences, their term of supervision was twice as long at 30 months compared to 12 months.[152]

Parole Experiences

Prisoners released on parole are required to meet with their parole agents shortly after leaving prison. We asked *Returning Home* respondents about their parole experiences at each of the two post-release interviews. Of those on parole, over half (60%) reported meeting with their parole officer within 24 hours of their release, and almost all (94%) reported meeting with their parole officer within one week of their release. After the initial meeting, most reported to their parole agents two to three times per month and met with them for 30 minutes or less each time. Notably, about eight percent reported having never seen their parole agent, even at four to six months after release.

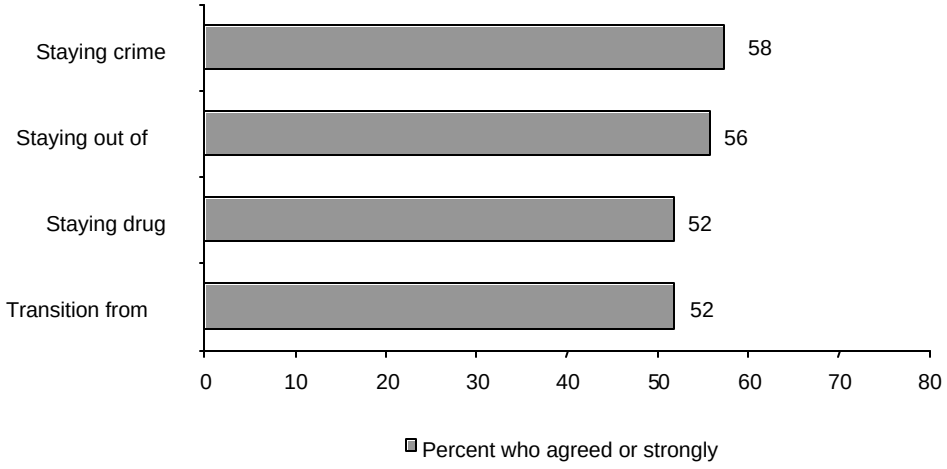
Shortly before release, 82 percent of the prisoners who anticipated being on parole expected their parole officers to be helpful in their transitions back to the community. However, although parolees generally gave high marks for the professionalism of their parole agents, they were divided on the usefulness of their supervision. Figures 10.6 and 10.7 show the perceptions of respondents who were interviewed one to two months after their release; their responses were similar when we asked the same questions four to six months after release. About 90 percent thought their parole agent acted professionally and treated them with respect, and over 80 percent felt they were listened to and given correct information, yet only half thought their parole agent was helpful with their transition from prison. Similarly, only slightly more than half of parolees thought that supervision would help them to stay out of prison, refrain from drug use, or prevent them from reoffending.

Figure 10.6 Released Prisoners' Perceptions of Their Parole Agents (Ns = 118, 117, 117, 117,119, and 117 respectively)



[151] Statistically significant difference with a p-value<0.0001.
[152] Statistically significant difference with a p-value<0.0001.

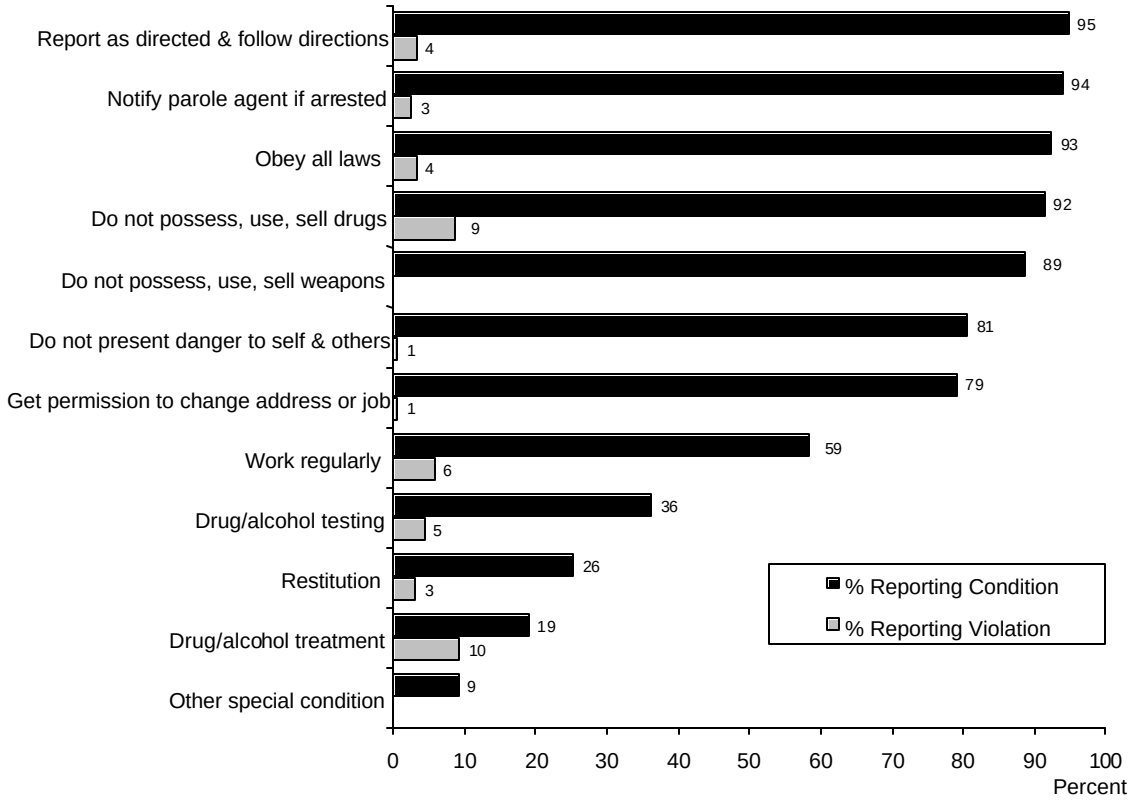
Figure 10.7 Released Prisoners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Parole Supervision (Ns = 120, 118, 117, and 119, respectively)



Parole Conditions and Violations

Figure 10.8 shows the conditions that our respondents under supervision were required to meet and the extent to which they reported compliance with those conditions. Ex-prisoners under supervised release are typically required to obey all laws, report as directed, work regularly, get permission to change jobs or move, and notify their parole agent if they are arrested. In our post-release interviews, respondents were given a list of supervision conditions and asked which of those conditions applied to them. *Returning Home* respondents who were under supervision were generally aware of the standard parole conditions. However, about one-fifth did not know that they had to get permission from their parole agent to change jobs or residences, and about 40 percent did not know they were required to work regularly. Other supervision conditions are imposed on a case-by-case basis. Of these, the most commonly reported were drug or alcohol testing (36%), treatment (19%), and payment of restitution to victims (26%). Ten percent reported other special conditions, such as having to comply with a stay-away order, receive mental health treatment, participate in an anger management program, or participate in a domestic violence program.

Figure 10.8 Self-Reported Parole Conditions and Violations One Month Post-Release (N=120)[153]



Many respondents had a history of parole violations: at the time of the pre-release interview, 27 percent of respondents reported having had their parole revoked in the past. One to two months after release, most of the respondents under supervision reported being in compliance with their parole conditions, but one-fifth (21%) reported violating at least one. As shown in Figure 10.8, the most frequently violated conditions were attending drug treatment (10%), staying away from drugs (9%) and working regularly (6%). When we interviewed respondents again, four to six months post-release, the self-reported violation rate was similar at 17 percent. This time, 10 percent reported they had not stayed away from drugs, 10 percent reported violating the condition to work regularly, and six percent violated the condition to obey all laws (data from the second post-release interview are not shown).

In addition to respondent self-reports, we obtained records from the Division of Correction to measure the extent to which respondents were returned to prison for violating conditions of their release. We found that 10 percent of all *Returning Home* respondents were returned to prison within six months for violating conditions of their release. Of those who were sent back to prison, 45% were returned for technical violations,[154] 26% were returned following an arrest for a new crime, and 26% were returned

[153] In general, 120 respondents answered these questions about parole supervision. The actual Ns for each question varied slightly and are available from the authors upon request.

[154] We defined technical violations as returns to prison that were not preceded by an arrest. The DOC data did not provide any further information about the behavior underlying the violation.

following a conviction for a new offense.[155] Very few prisoners were returned to prison within the first three months after release. The overwhelming majority of returns to prison occurred in the fourth, fifth and six months after release, with about three percent of the study sample being returned in each of these months.

In the next and final section of this chapter, we examine respondent arrests, convictions, and confinements for new offenses committed after their release. We describe the types of crimes respondents committed and the average length of time between release and rearrest, and we model the factors hypothesized to predict post-release recidivism.

POST-RELEASE RECIDIVISM

From both a public safety and an economic cost perspective, the high likelihood that ex-prisoners will reoffend is one of the most important reentry issues facing policymakers today. A number of factors are thought to be related to post-release recidivism, including such intermediate outcomes as employment and education, drug and alcohol use, reentry preparation programs, and family relationships. In this section of our final data analysis chapter, we attempt to relate these intermediate outcomes to the ultimate outcome of interest—post-release recidivism.

We begin by describing the extent of recidivism among *Returning Home* participants. Using both self-report and official data, we identify the percentage of reoffenders and describe the types of crimes they committed. We then discuss individual rates of reconviction and reconfinement—both of which are present in our sample despite the limited observation period of six months post-release. Next, we construct a profile of recidivists by comparing means across key variables identified in previous chapters. Finally, we employ regression analyses to identify the most significant predictors of recidivism among our sample of Baltimore ex-prisoners.

Sources of Recidivism Data

We assessed the extent of post-release recidivism among *Returning Home* participants using respondent self-reports of new offenses, as well as official arrest records obtained from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).[156] Each measure of recidivism was intended to cover the six months following each respondent's release from prison. While official recidivism was observed for a period of exactly six months, self-reported recidivism was observed for a period averaging four to six months post-release—depending on when respondents completed their final post-release interview.

Official recidivism data were available for 299 of the 324 survey respondents.[157] Official records included information on the type and number of arrest charges filed, whether or not the arrest resulted in reconviction, and whether reconvictions resulted in sentences of reconfinement to prison or jail. Self-

[155] Additionally, one respondent was returned after escaping from custody and one respondent was returned for undetermined reasons.

[156] The DPSCS database of arrest records contained information on new criminal arrest charges and excluded parole violations. This differs from the Division of Correction database on prison returns that we analyzed previously for our discussion of parole revocations.

[157] Official recidivism data were missing for 25 respondents for one of the following reasons: (1) their prison release date occurred too recently to allow a six-month observation period, or (2) their state identification number was either missing or incorrect, meaning that the DPSCS could not link the respondent to his or her official record.

reported recidivism data were available for the 152 respondents who completed at least one post-release interview, which excludes one respondent for whom such data were not ascertained. In the post-release interviews, we asked respondents whether they participated in any illegal activity after being released from prison and how many times they had been rearrested.

Self-Reported Recidivism

According to respondent self-reports, 20 percent of the *Returning Home* sample committed at least one new offense within the six months following release from prison, and 15 percent reported being arrested for a post-release offense. Most of the new offenses involved drug possession or distribution: 13 percent of the sample possessed illegal drugs[158] and nine percent dealt drugs. Only 5 percent of respondents reported committing violent crimes—including robbery, assault, and homicide—and 2 percent reported other crimes. Most surprising was that less than 1 percent of the sample reported committing a new property crime (e.g., burglary, theft, car theft, fraud, forgery). See Figure 10.9 for a visual depiction of self-reported recidivism compared with official recidivism (reported shortly).

A comparison of male and female self-reported recidivism yielded no statistically significant differences ($p>0.10$). Overall, men and women were equally likely to report a new crime post-release, and there were no significant differences with regard to individual crime types. Male and female respondents were also equally likely to self-report being arrested post-release.

Official Recidivism

The official arrest data describe somewhat different levels of post-release criminal activity than respondent self-reports (see Figure 10.9). According to DPSCS records, 32 percent of the *Returning Home* respondents were rearrested for at least one new crime in the six months following release from prison.[159] This percentage is 7 points higher than the self-reported reoffending rate by respondents present in both the self-report and official record datasets.[160] Also in contrast to respondent self-reports, 8 percent of the sample was rearrested for property crime in the six months following release (compared to the less than one percent who self-reported engaging in property crime).[161] Some of this discrepancy may be due to the shorter average reporting period for self-reports of offenses versus the six-month period, which was imposed on official records.

Consistent with self-reports, most of the sample was rearrested for crimes of drug possession or distribution after being released (13% for drug possession and 7% for drug dealing).[162] Also consistent with self-reports, 9 percent of respondents were rearrested for a violent crime. Although there were no significant gender differences with regard to specific crime types, 10 percent of the male respondents were rearrested for violent crimes compared to only 5 percent of female respondents. Finally, 4 percent

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[158] This statistic differs from the percentage of ex-prisoners who reported drug use post-release.

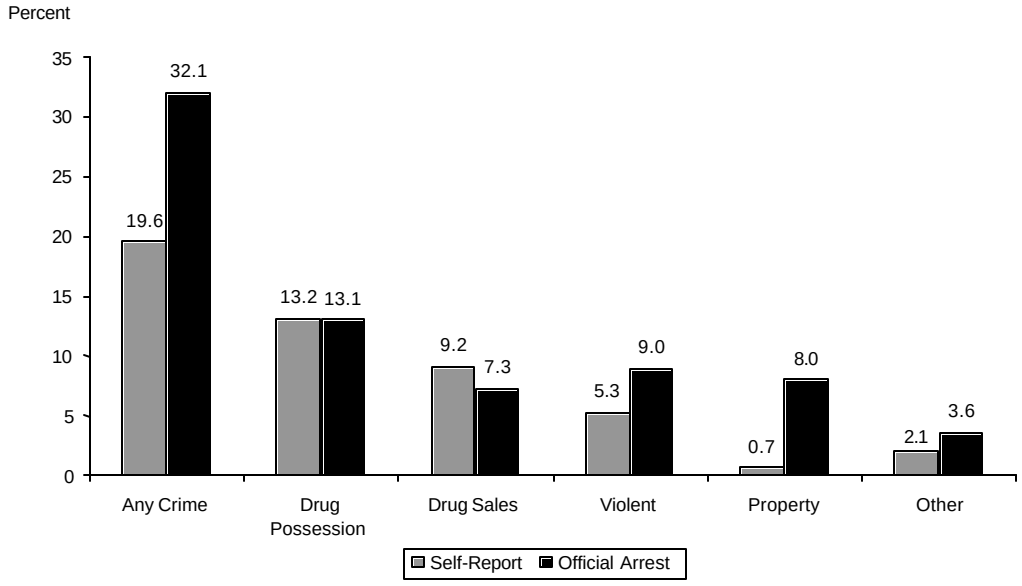
[159] Of the 96 respondents with official records of rearrest, most (70%) were arrested only once, 21% were arrested twice, and 9% were arrested three or more times.

[160] Of the 148 respondents for whom both self-reported and official recidivism data were available, 26 percent were rearrested while only 19% self-reported reoffending.

[161] Because each arrest could result in multiple charges, we classified arrests according to the most serious charge filed. Charge seriousness was assessed using the following ranking: violent, property, drug sales, drug possession, and other charges.

of the sample was rearrested for other offenses such as weapons charges, traffic violations, and non-violent sex offenses.

Figure 10.9 Self-Reported and Official Recidivism Six Months Post-release (Ns =152 and 299)



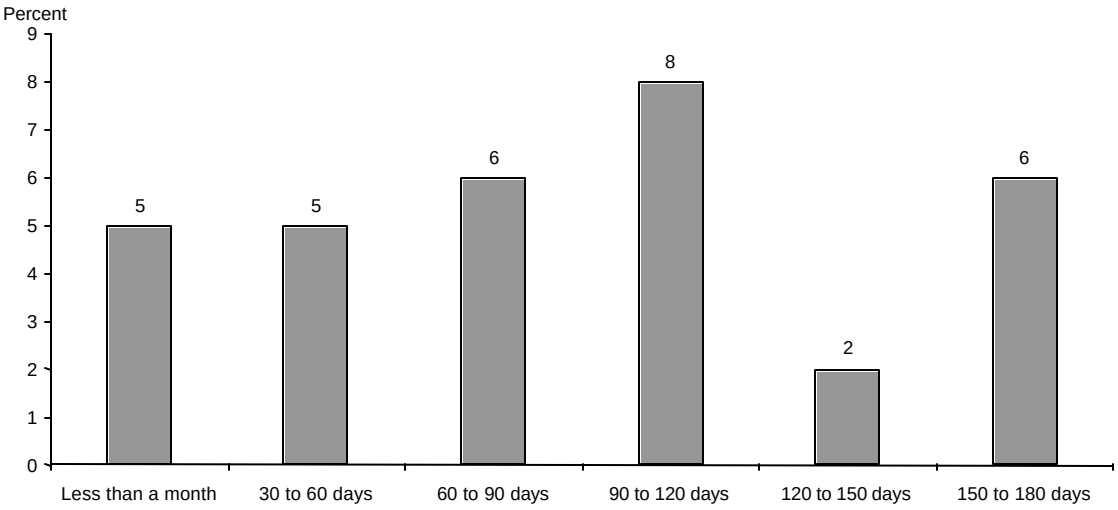
Source of Official Arrest Data: Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Using official records, we also examined the question of how long released prisoners remained in the community before being rearrested. Some *Returning Home* respondents were rearrested in each of the six months of our follow-up period (Figure 10.10). Five percent were rearrested within 30 days of release, including a few individuals who were rearrested in their very first week out of prison. Approximately five percent were rearrested in each month thereafter, except in the fourth and fifth months, when the incidence of rearrest rose to eight percent and then fell to two percent. While it was not possible for us to determine the average time to rearrest because the majority of our sample had not been not rearrested during the six month follow-up period, we were able to estimate that one-quarter of prisoners released to Baltimore would be arrested between four and six months after leaving prison.[163]

[162] Drug possession also included other non-distribution-related drug charges. Drug dealing included distribution and/or manufacturing.

[163] Twenty-five percent of respondents were arrested within 138 days of release. The 95% confidence interval ranged from 106 to 173 days.

Figure 10.10 Time to First Arrest After Prison Release (N=299)



Source: Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Analysis of gender differences revealed that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to have been rearrested in the six months following prison release. Thirty-five percent of male respondents were rearrested compared to 23 percent of female respondents.[164] Males tended to be rearrested sooner than females, although this finding is somewhat limited by the small number of rearrested female respondents (N=17). While 20 percent of male respondents were rearrested within four months, it took six months for a similar proportion of female respondents to be rearrested.[165] With regard to specific crime types, however, there were no significant gender differences in rearrests.

Comparison of Self-Reported and Official Recidivism

Theoretically, official arrests comprise a subset of all self-reported offenses, as some fraction of crimes are not detected by the police. Consistent with this idea, only half (48%) of the respondents who reported committing any crime post-release were officially rearrested. However, of the respondents who self-reported no post-release criminal activity, one-fifth (20%) were rearrested.

To test the significance of differences between respondent self-reports and official arrests, we calculated mean rates of recidivism for the 148 respondents present in both datasets (see Figure 10.11). We then compared these percentages using paired samples t-tests and found no significant overall difference in the percentage of respondents who self-reported committing any crime and those rearrested for any crime. We also found no significant differences between self-reported and official recidivism for the specific crimes of violence, drug possession, and other offenses. With regard to property crime, however, respondents were rearrested for significantly and substantially more acts than they reported

[164] Statistically significant difference with a p-value=0.066.

[165] Twenty percent of men were rearrested within 99 days of release compared to 20 percent of women rearrested within 164 days. The difference is significant at p=0.0564 using the Log-Rank test and p=0.0476 using the Wilcoxon test.

engaging in.[166] The opposite was true with regard to drug dealing: respondents engaged in significantly more drug sales than for which they were rearrested.[167]

Figure 10.11 Percentage of Self-Reported and Official Recidivism (N=148)

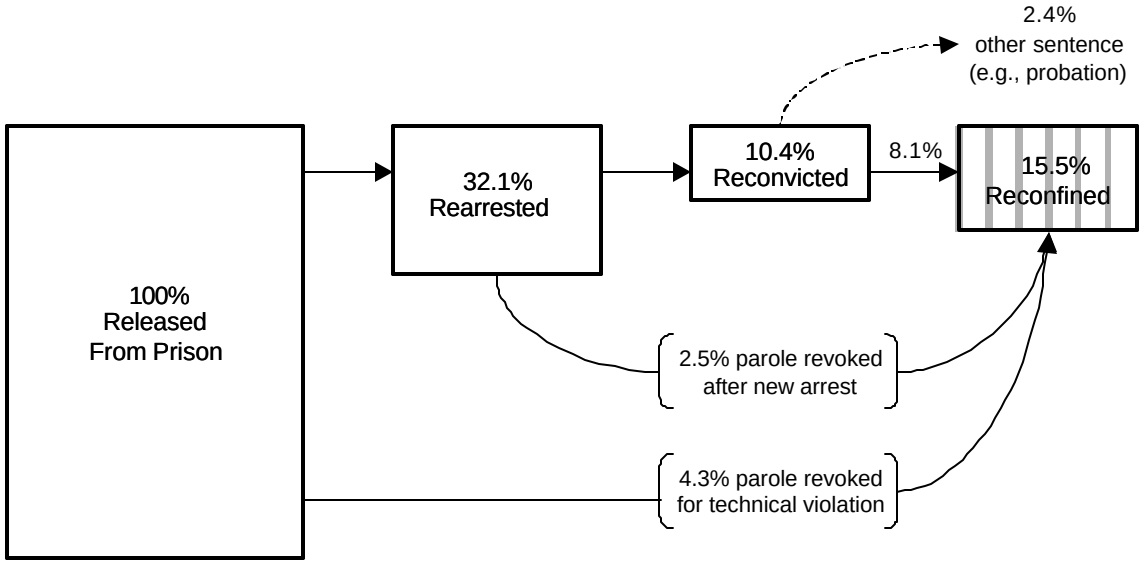
CRIME TYPE	Self-Reported Reoffending	Official Rearrest	Significance
ANY CRIME	19.4	25.9	0.140
Violent	4.7	6.1	0.565
Property	0.7	4.7	0.033
Drug Dealing	9.5	3.4	0.029
Drug Possession	13.5	12.8	0.848
Other	2.2	3.7	0.482

Reconviction and Reconfinement

The official arrest records we obtained also allowed us to examine respondent reconvictions and reconfinements to prison or jail following release from prison. It is important to note that the typical time between arrest and sentencing nationwide is about 5 months,[168] and our time frame for observing recidivism was limited to six months. In spite of this caveat, 10 percent of the *Returning Home* sample was reconvicted within the six months following prison release, and 8 percent were reconfined to prison or jail following this new conviction. An additional 7 percent had their parole revoked for a technical violation or following a new crime arrest. Collectively, 16 percent of the sample was reconfined to prison or jail within six months post-release.[169] Figure 10.12 provides a diagram of sample recidivism according to both DPSCS and DOC data.

[166] Statistically significant difference with a p-value=0.033.
[167] Statistically significant difference with a p-value=0.029.
[168] Durose and Langan 2003, p.8. The authors estimated this time using felony charges; in our data we examine both felony and misdemeanor charges.
[169] This percentage also includes one respondent who was returned to prison after escaping from custody and one returned for undetermined reasons.

Figure 10.12 Diagram of Sample Recidivism Six Months Post-Release (N=297)



Source: Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Division of Correction

Of the 144 post-release arrests accumulated by *Returning Home* recidivists, nearly half (44%) resulted in non-convictions, because the cases were either not prosecuted[170] (28%), placed on an inactive stet docket[171] (15%), or the defendants were acquitted (1%). On the other hand, more than one-quarter (28%) of post-release arrests resulted in guilty verdicts signifying reconviction. The disposition status for the remaining quarter (28%) was still pending at the time we received the DPSCS data in June 2003.

Respondents who were reconvicted in the six months following release from prison were found guilty on a variety of different charges (see Figure 10.13). Of the 53 charges resulting in guilty verdicts, slightly more than half were for drug possession (38%) or drug dealing (13%). The remaining charges were for types of property crime (19%), violent assault (9%), and other crime (21%).

Figure 10.13 also displays information on charges for which reconvicted respondents were returned to prison or jail. The largest group (42.5%) was reconfined for drug possession and drug distribution. Twenty-five percent of the charges resulting in reconfinement were for property crimes and 10 percent were for crimes of violence (specifically, assault). The final 22 percent were for other crimes, such as trespassing and prostitution.

Confinement sentences ranged from 21 days to three years for the twenty-two respondents who were reconfined for a new conviction.[172] The average length of reconfinement was for a period of 12

[170] Cases not prosecuted are essentially dismissed, and a disposition of "nolle prosequi" is entered in the defendant's record (see Maryland Court Rules. Title 4, Criminal Causes: Chapter 200. Pretrial Procedures: Rule 4-247. Amended Nov. 1, 1991, effective Jan. 1, 1992.)

[171] Cases placed on a court's inactive stet docket remain there for a period of one year. During that time, the state may (but rarely does) request that the case be returned to the active trial docket (see Maryland Court Rules. Title 4, Criminal Causes: Chapter 200. Pretrial Procedures: Rule 4-248. Amended Jan. 8, 2002, effective Feb. 1, 2002.)

[172] Length of confinement was calculated as actual time to be served; time suspended by the court was not counted.

months (or one year). Some reconvicted respondents received probation time instead of or in addition to prison or jail time. The average length of probation time received was 18 months, and the total range of probation sentences was three months to three years.

Figure 10.13 Charges Resulting in Reconviction and Subsequent Reconfinement (Ns = 53 and 40)

CHARGE	Percent of Reconvictions	Percent of Reconfinements
VIOLENT	**9.4**	**10.0**
Assault Second Degree	9.4	10.0
PROPERTY	**18.9**	**25.0**
Attempt Theft Less $500	1.9	2.5
Burglary Fourth Degree	3.8	5.0
Malicious Destruction Property	1.9	2.5
Theft Less Than $500	5.7	7.5
Theft $500 Plus Value	3.8	5.0
Unauth Use Livestock MV Etc	1.9	2.5
DRUG DEALING	**13.2**	**10.0**
Attempt CDS Manufacture/Distribute	7.6	5.0
CDS Manufacture/Distribute/Dispense	1.9	—
CDS Unlawful Mfg Et	1.9	2.5
CDS Possess w/Intent Mfg	1.9	2.5
DRUG POSSESSION	**37.7**	**32.5**
CDS Unlawful Possession	3.8	5.0
CDS Possession Marijuana	3.8	2.5
CDS Possession Paraphernalia	5.7	—
CDS Possession Not Marijuana	24.5	25.0
OTHER	**20.8**	**22.5**
Deadly Weapon Intent Injure	1.9	2.5
Disorderly Conduct	1.9	2.5
Failure to Obey Law Officer	1.9	2.5
False Statement to Officer	1.9	2.5
Perverted Practice	1.9	—
Prostitution-General	1.9	2.5
Resisting Arrest	1.9	—
Trespass Posted Property	1.9	2.5
Trespass Private Property	5.7	7.5
TOTAL	**100.0**	**100.0**

PROFILES OF *RETURNING HOME* RECIDIVISTS

Using personal characteristics and intermediate outcomes derived from previous chapters, we now present a profile of *Returning Home* recidivists. For several reasons, we identify recidivists in the analyses that follow using two official measures of recidivism (rearrest and reconviction) rather than self-reported reoffending. Our first and primary reason was that official measures of recidivism were

available for the full sample of *Returning Home* respondents, while self-report measures were only available for the subsample that had participated in at least one post-release interview. In addition, only with the official recidivism data could we be certain that the time period for observing recidivism was identical for each respondent—exactly six months following release from prison.

In the analysis of these recidivism data, we used simple comparisons of means and ratios to determine which variables differed significantly across recidivists and non-recidivists. The variables we assessed relate to respondent demographics, criminal history, education and employment, financial obligations, substance use, reentry preparation, post-release supervision, family, peers, neighborhood, and attitudes.[173] Figure 10.14 presents the results of our analyses.

Figure 10.14 Comparison of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists (means and ratios)

VARIABLE	SOURCE[174,175]	REARREST		RECONVICTION	
		Recidivists (N=96)	Non-Recidivists (N=203)	Recidivists (N=31)	Non-Recidivists (N=268)
DEMOGRAPHICS					
Age	DOC	32.72*	34.77	32.23	34.33
Race = Black	DOC	0.90	0.90	0.87	0.90
Gender = Male	DOC	0.82*	0.72	0.77	0.75
CRIMINAL HISTORY					
Age at First Arrest	PR	16.66***	18.87	16.90	18.33
Number of Prior Arrests	DPSCS	12.50***	9.69	12.26	10.42
Number of Prior Convictions	PR	4.25**	3.03	4.07	3.35
Number of Prior Confinements[176]	DOC/PR	1.80**	1.43	1.45	1.56
EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT					
High School Grad/GED	PR	0.41	0.45	0.29*	0.45
Improved Education In-Prison	PR	0.11	0.11	0.07	0.12
Worked Pre-Prison	PR	0.62	0.67	0.67	0.65
Worked Post-Release by PR1	PR1	0.61	0.67	0.82	0.64
Worked Post-release by PR2	PR2	0.74	0.76	0.86	0.74
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS					
Had Debts Post-release	PR1/PR2	0.82	0.72	0.80	0.75

Chart continues

[173] See the appendix for a description of all scales and reliabilities.

[174] Sources of data: DOC = Division of Correction (N=324); DPSCS = Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (valid N=299) PR = Pre-release interview (N=324); PR1 = First post-release interview (N=153); PR2 = Second post-release interview (N=104).

[175] The number of valid cases analyzed in each comparison varies by the variables being compared. The exact distribution of missing cases is available upon request.

[176] Possible values included 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 or more.

Figure 10.14 Comparison of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists (means and ratios)

VARIABLE	SOURCE[174,175]	REARREST		RECONVICTION	
		Recidivists (N=96)	Non-Recidivists (N=203)	Recidivists (N=31)	Non-Recidivists (N=268)
SUBSTANCE USE					
Substance Use Pre-prison	PR	0.88*	0.79	0.94*	0.81
Used More Than One Drug at Same Time Pre-prison	PR	0.63	0.61	0.71	0.61
Substance Use Post-release	PR1	0.41***	0.17	0.55**	0.21
Used More Than One Drug at Same Time Post-release	PR1	0.26**	0.09	0.30	0.12
REENTRY PREPARATION					
Pre-release Program In Prison	PR1	0.30	0.26	0.18	0.28
Education/Job Training Program In Prison	PR1	0.55	0.49	0.58	0.50
Substance Abuse Treatment In Prison	PR1	0.27	0.38	0.25	0.36
Work Release Job In Prison	PR1	0.32	0.33	0.36	0.33
POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION					
Released to Supervision	PR	0.70*	0.80	0.70	0.77
Parole Was Mandatory Not Discretionary		0.84	0.75	0.79	0.78
FAMILY					
Married or Lived Together as Married	PR	0.16	0.15	0.10	0.16
Number of Children	PR	1.45	1.72	1.55	1.64
Number of Convicted Family Members	PR	1.68	1.43	1.56	1.50
Pre-prison Family Support	PR	3.09	3.13	3.04	3.12
Pre-prison Family Relationship Quality	PR	3.20	3.25	3.19	3.24
Post-release Family Support	PR1	3.22	3.35	3.34	3.32
Post-release Family Relationship Quality	PR1	3.36	3.34	3.57	3.33
Positive Partner Support	PR1	3.36	3.49	3.76[177]	3.43
Negative Partner Support[178]	PR1	2.37	2.22	2.59*	2.23
PEERS					
Number of Close Friends While In Prison	PR	1.98	2.03	1.97	2.02
Had No Close Friends Post-release	PR1	0.33	0.29	0.27	0.30
Number of Close Friends Post-release Who Have Been to Prison	PR1	1.48	1.18	1.25	1.25
Number of Close Friends Post-release Who Have Committed Crime [179]	PR1	1.36	0.96	1.61	0.99

Chart continues

[177] Difference approached significance (p=0.109).
[178] Included arguments and conflict with partners.
[179] Included assault, theft, and drug dealing.

Figure 10.14 Comparison of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists (means and ratios)

VARIABLE	SOURCE[174,175]	REARREST		RECONVICTION	
		Recidivists (N=96)	Non-Recidivists (N=203)	Recidivists (N=31)	Non-Recidivists (N=268)
NEIGHBORHOOD					
Job Opportunities in Neighborhood[180]	PR1	2.05*	2.33	1.73**	2.31
Hard to Stay Out of Trouble in Neighborhood[181]	PR1	2.97	2.77	3.00	2.80
Drug Dealing in Neighborhood[182]	PR1	2.38	2.28	2.27	2.31
Returned to Same Neighborhood	PR1	0.59	0.48	0.64	0.50
ATTITUDES					
Dissatisfaction with Police	PR	2.76	2.67	2.65	2.71
Legal Cynicism	PR	2.45*	2.30	2.48	2.34
Intend to Commit Crime or Use Drugs When Released	PR	1.69	1.56	1.67	1.58
Readiness to Change	PR	3.29	3.31	3.28	3.30
Control Over Life	PR	3.05	3.11	2.98	3.10
Spirituality	PR	3.19***	3.43	3.29	3.34
Self-Esteem	PR	3.01	3.11	3.03	3.08

* Mean is significantly different from that for non-recidivists at p≤.10.

** Mean is significantly different from that for non-recidivists at p≤.05.

*** Mean is significantly different from that for non-recidivists at p≤.01.

Demographic Characteristics

From virtually all previous research associating demographic characteristics with criminal activity, we expected recidivists in our sample to be younger, more apt to be male, and more apt to be black when compared to non-recidivists. We found just that with regard to age and gender. *Returning Home* recidivists were relatively younger (p=0.052) and more likely to be male (p=0.066) than non-recidivists. While this finding held true for rearrested respondents, the differences were not statistically significant for reconvicted respondents. Using either rearrest or reconviction, we found no significant racial difference between recidivists and non-recidivists; however, the extent to which racial characteristics could have varied across recidivism was limited—less than 10 percent of the overall sample was non-black.

Criminal History

As expected, respondents who were rearrested during the six months following release from prison had more extensive criminal histories than non-recidivists. Rearrested individuals were first involved with the criminal justice system at a younger age (p=0.006), and they had significantly more prior arrests (p=0.001), convictions (p=0.040), and confinements (p=0.040) than non-recidivists.

[180] Ranges from 1=strongly disagree (no job opportunities) to 4=strongly agree (many job opportunities).
[181] Ranges from 1=strongly disagree (not hard) to 4=strongly agree (very hard).

Although these criminal history measures differed similarly using reconviction as a measure of recidivism, the differences were not statistically significant.

Education and Employment

Characteristics related to offender education and employment have been found to be associated with recidivism in previous studies (see Sampson and Laub 1993). Of these variables, only pre-prison education differed significantly between recidivists and non-recidivists in our sample, and this was only true for reconviction-defined recidivism. Reconvicted respondents were significantly less likely to have graduated high school or obtained their GED than respondents with no post-release convictions (p=0.086). Most noteworthy, however, was that none of the other education and employment variables varied significantly between recidivists and non-recidivists. Both groups were equally likely to have worked prior to prison, improved their education while incarcerated, and worked for at least one week in the first few months following prison release.

Financial Obligations

From a rational choice perspective,[183] respondents with serious financial obligations may be more likely to commit economically motivated crime after release than those with no financial obligations. Toward this end, we assessed differences between recidivists and non-recidivists using a simple measure of respondent debt. Although a larger percentage of rearrested and reconvicted respondents had debts post-release (compared to non-recidivists), neither difference was statistically significant. Rather, the majority of all respondents had financial obligations following release from prison.

Substance Use

Given the high number of pre- and post-release drug offenders in the *Returning Home* sample, one of the most important intermediate outcomes that we expected to affect post-release recidivism was respondent substance use. In our sample, by either measure of recidivism—rearrest or reconviction—a higher percentage of recidivists had used drugs before prison (p =.059 and .092) and a higher percentage used drugs post-release (p=.005 and .017). Respondents who were rearrested or reconvicted within six months following their release were more likely to have used illegal substances before prison, and they were more likely to have used drugs after prison than non-recidivists. Rearrested respondents were also significantly more likely to have used two or more substances at one time after being released from prison (p=0.016).

Reentry Preparation

To assess the effectiveness of respondent participation in prison programs designed to help prepare them for reentry, we analyzed differences between recidivists and non-recidivists using four measures of reentry preparation. These measures indicated whether respondents had participated in any: (1) pre-release program; (2) education or job training program; (3) substance abuse treatment; or (4) work release job during their incarceration. Across these four measures, we found no significant differences in

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[182] Ranges from 1=strongly disagree (no drug dealing) to 4=strongly agree (much drug dealing).

[183] A criminological perspective based on microeconomic theory, purporting that offenders weigh the costs and benefits of committing crime (Cornish and Clarke 1986).

the percentage of recidivists and non-recidivists who participated. Respondents who took part in a reentry preparation program or held a work release job while imprisoned were equally likely to have been rearrested or reconvicted following prison release. However, previous analyses (see Chapter 4) showed that substance abuse treatment reduced the likelihood of post-release substance use, and in the present analyses, we found that lower levels of substance use (post-release) were associated with a reduced likelihood of recidivism. Collectively, these findings suggest that substance abuse treatment can have an impact on post-release recidivism, but only if such treatment is effective at reducing post-release substance use.

Post-Release Supervision

We expected that prisoners released to supervision would be less likely to reoffend, and in our comparison of *Returning Home* recidivists and non-recidivists, we found just that with regard to rearrest. Respondents who were rearrested for a new crime were significantly less likely to have been under post-release supervision ($p=0.081$). Although respondents who were reconvicted for a new crime were also less likely to have been supervised post-release, this difference was not statistically significant.[184]

Among those under post-release supervision, we expected that discretionary parolees would be even less likely to recidivate than mandatory parolees, because a parole board had evaluated their fitness for release and had the ability to block that release. Also, a recent study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that nearly half of all discretionary parolees completed their supervision successfully compared to one-quarter to one-third of mandatory parolees (Hughes, Wilson, and Beck 2001, p.11). In our sample, we found no significant difference between type of supervision and the likelihood of recidivism. However, both relationships were in the predicted direction (discretionary parolees were somewhat less likely to be rearrested or reconvicted than mandatory parolees, although these differences were not statistically significant).

Family

Families can function as sources of informal social control inhibiting ex-prisoner recidivism. Respondents with close family relationships and strong familial support may be less likely to recidivate than respondents who lack such protective factors. Additionally, respondents with criminal or deviant family members may be more likely to recidivate. However, in our assessment of differences across pre-prison and post-release measures of family presence, criminality, and attachment, we found virtually no significant differences between recidivists and non-recidivists. Respondents who were rearrested or reconvicted and those who were not were equally likely to be married and to have children, and they had similar numbers of family members who had been convicted of a crime. Both recidivists and non-recidivists were also similarly likely to have come from close and supportive families and to have positive partner support. The one statistically significant difference we observed was that reconvicted respondents with partners reported higher levels of negative partner support (e.g., arguments and conflict with partners) than non-recidivists.

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[184] To account for the possibility that parolees could be revoked for technical reasons rather than rearrested, we conducted a separate analysis using an expanded definition of recidivism—one that included revocation as well as rearrest. We found no significant association between supervision status and the combined outcome of rearrest or revocation.

Peers

Nearly all criminological studies that have examined the issue have found that deviant peers are significantly associated with the likelihood of individual offending. The exact nature of this association has yet to be definitively established; nevertheless, the presence of a significant relationship is virtually undisputed. Our analyses, however, differ in an important way from many previous studies. We assess the extent to which criminal peers influence the likelihood of *re*offending by persons already identified as offenders. We found no significant differences between recidivists and non-recidivists with regard to having close friends while in prison, having no close friends post-release, or having close friends post-release who had been to prison or committed a crime.

Neighborhood

Criminological researchers are increasingly turning to neighborhood-level explanations of offender recidivism. Communities characterized by higher levels of social and economic disadvantage, and often by correspondingly high-crime rates, have been found to be associated with higher rates of ex-offender recidivism (see Baumer 2003). In our assessment of differences across three measures of neighborhood characteristics, we found that recidivists reported having significantly fewer job opportunities in their post-release neighborhoods than non-recidivists. This finding was true of both rearrested ($p=0.079$) and reconvicted ($p=0.026$) respondents. However, we found no significant differences in the presence of drug dealing or difficulty staying out of trouble within respondents' post-release neighborhoods.

For most released prisoners in our sample, their choice of neighborhood depended on where they could find a place to stay. Half returned to a neighborhood that differed from the one in which they had lived before prison, and many who returned to a different neighborhood stated that they did so hoping to avoid getting into trouble. Interestingly, we found no significant variation in the likelihood that recidivists lived in the same (or different) neighborhoods than they had prior to prison. Although higher percentages of rearrested and reconvicted respondents returned to the same neighborhood (compared to non-rearrested and non-reconvicted respondents), these differences were not statistically significant.

Attitudes

Our final assessment of differences between *Returning Home* recidivists and non-recidivists related to respondent attitudes toward the police, the legal system, their criminal behavior, and themselves. Although respondents who recidivated reported greater intentions of committing crime or using drugs post-release and slightly lower indications that they were ready to change (i.e. improve) their lives, neither of these differences was statistically significant. Also insignificant were differences in recidivist and non-recidivist dissatisfaction with police, control over life, and self-esteem. The two significant differences we found were that respondents who were rearrested post-release had previously expressed greater legal cynicism than non-recidivists ($p=0.091$) and lower levels of spirituality ($p=0.012$). Before their release, future recidivists were more inclined to believe that laws were meant to be broken, and they were less likely to have been guided by religious or spiritual values.

Profile Summary of *Returning Home* Recidivists

We can now summarize the results of our means comparisons between recidivists and non-recidivists (see Figures 10.15 and 10.16). With regard to rearrest in the six months post-release, *Returning Home* recidivists were significantly younger, more apt to be male, and had more extensive criminal histories than non-recidivists. Perhaps most importantly, rearrested respondents were more likely to have used drugs pre-prison and post-release, and they returned to neighborhoods where it was difficult to find legitimate employment. Finally, they were more inclined to have been cynical about the legal system before release, less apt to have been supervised post-release, and somewhat less likely to feel guided by spiritual values. With regard to reconviction, recidivists were again more likely to have used drugs pre-prison and post-release, and the neighborhoods in which they lived post-release had fewer job opportunities. Reconvicted respondents were also less likely to have graduated from high school or obtained a GED, and they experienced higher levels of partner conflict.

A number of other factors that we hypothesized would function as intermediate outcomes affecting ex-prisoner recidivism had no statistically significant effects; these factors included post-release employment, participation in reentry preparation or work release programs while in prison, and family/peer-related influences. Some of these statistically insignificant effects may be related to the reduced sample size in this pilot study.

Figure 10.15 Profile of Rearrested Respondents (N=96)

- Younger Current Age
- Male
- Younger at First Arrest
- Higher Number of Prior Arrests, Convictions, and Incarcerations
- Used Drugs Pre-Prison and Post-Release
- Used More Than One Drug at Same Time Post-Release
- Lower Likelihood of Post-Release Supervision
- Fewer Job Opportunities in Post-Release Neighborhood
- Less Likely to Believe in the Legal System
- Less Spiritual

Figure 10.16 Profile of Reconvicted Respondents (N=31)

- Less Likely to Have Graduated High School or Obtained GED
- Used Drugs Pre-Prison and Post-Release
- Experienced Negative Partner Support (e.g., arguments, conflict)
- Fewer Job Opportunities in Post-Release Neighborhood

MODELING RECIDIVISM

The last step in our analysis of *Returning Home* recidivism was to identify the most substantively important predictors of ex-prisoner recidivism by statistically controlling for confounding effects. Toward this end, we first used bivariate logistic regression to identify variables that significantly predicted the likelihood of rearrest and reconviction in the six months post-release (we expected these variables to be the same ones identified in our means comparisons).[185] Then, we used multivariate regression to test whether these predictors remained significant when confounding effects were controlled.

Bivariate Regressions Predicting Recidivism

Each of the bivariate regression models we estimated included one predictor variable (e.g., age at first arrest) and one dependent variable (e.g., rearrest). As expected, the results from these regressions confirmed our findings from the means comparisons reported previously. Variables that significantly predicted the likelihood of rearrest within six months post-release included: age, gender, criminal history, pre-prison and post-release substance use, post-release supervision, neighborhood job opportunities, legal cynicism, and spirituality. Variables that significantly predicted reconviction included: education, pre-prison and post-release substance use, negative partner support, and neighborhood job opportunities.

Multivariate Regressions Predicting Recidivism

Model Limitations

Before estimating each multivariate regression model, we anticipated and subsequently confirmed that several variables would be highly correlated with one another. To reduce problems associated with multicollinearity (e.g., unreliable and unstable parameter estimates), we selected only the most significant and/or theoretically relevant predictors among those that were highly correlated. For example, we chose to include current age and exclude age at first arrest as they were highly correlated. We also chose to include number of prior arrests as our primary measure of criminal history, and we excluded number of prior convictions and confinements. To test the susceptibility of our results to different variable selections, we ran several other models including and excluding various correlated variables. We found some changes in parameter estimates and significance levels for certain variables; however, the results we present here constitute the most parsimonious models. Future analyses in other *Returning Home* sites will attempt a more complex modeling of the recidivism process.

Also, after several attempts to model recidivism using both pre-release and post-release predictors, due to sample size limitations we were forced to run a model containing only pre-release characteristics assessed for the full sample of *Returning Home* participants. When we added post-release variables to this model, the number of cases dropped substantially (from 244 to 111) due to problems of sample attrition and missing data.[186] We do, however, want to note that in several models we ran, respondent engagement in post-release substance use remained a significant predictor of rearrest. We believe that

[185] Even though bivariate regressions do not control for confounding effects, they allowed us to minimize the number of cases lost due to missing data and attrition.

[186] Although there are means of statistically correcting for attrition bias and/or imputing missing values, the available complete data on *Returning Home* participants was not sufficiently rich to allow modeling this process with any confidence.

post-release factors are likely to affect recidivism and other outcomes, and we plan to explore which factors are most important when the Maryland data are merged with similar data from other *Returning Home* states.

Results

Figure 10.17 presents results from our final multivariate regression models predicting *Returning Home* recidivism. In the model predicting rearrest, we included seven significant bivariate predictors of rearrest—age, gender, number of prior arrests, pre-prison substance use, released to supervision, legal cynicism, and spirituality. Three variables remained significant predictors in the multivariate model. Younger respondents were significantly more likely to have been rearrested in the six months following release (p=0.035), males were nearly twice as likely to be rearrested (p=.085), and respondents with many prior arrests were more likely to have been rearrested than respondents with few or no prior arrests (p=0.006). With these variables included in the model, pre-prison drug use, post-release supervision, legal cynicism, and spirituality no longer significantly influenced the likelihood of post-release arrest.

Figure 10.17 Multivariate Regression Analyses Predicting Rearrest and Reconviction (N = 244 and 242)

VARIABLE	REARREST		RECONVICTION	
	Odds Ratio	Significance	Odds Ratio	Significance
Age	0.96	0.035	0.97	0.279
Gender = Male	1.89	0.085	1.08	0.884
Number of Prior Arrests	1.07	0.006	1.02	0.539
Substance Use Pre-prison	1.89	0.140	6.93	0.066
Released to Supervision	0.64	0.193	0.91	0.855
Legal Cynicism	1.12	0.641	0.96	0.902
Spirituality	1.36	0.167	0.97	0.924
High School Grad/GED	—	—	0.50	0.142
Pseudo R-square[187]	0.106		0.041	

In the model predicting reconviction, we included the same variables that significantly predicted rearrest in bivariate regressions.[188] We also included the one pre-release variable that was significantly associated with reconviction in previous regressions—namely, whether respondents had graduated from high school or obtained their GED. Interestingly, the results of our multivariate regression predicting reconviction yielded one significant predictor: pre-prison substance use. Respondents who had used drugs pre-prison were nearly seven times more likely to be reconvicted of a new offense than non-pre-prison drug users.[189] None of the other bivariate predictors had a significant multivariate effect on post-

[187] Cox and Snell R-square statistic reported by SPSS statistical software.

[188] Even though these pre-release characteristics had no significant bivariate associations with reconviction, they were in the expected direction and we anticipated that the low number of respondents reconvicted influenced the probability that these relationships did not attain statistical significance.

[189] Given the small number of reconvicted respondents, the extremity of this parameter's size is likely due to unbalanced and low cell counts. However, the fact that pre-prison drug use had a significant relationship with

release recidivism. It is likely that the process of reconviction is driven by many other factors not captured at the individual respondent level. It is also possible that because of a highly unbalanced sample (a sample dominated by non-reconvicted respondents), the overall sample size would need to be much higher to reliably detect additional significant effects.

Overall, we can conclude from the multivariate regressions that age, gender, and criminal history were significantly related to the likelihood that *Returning Home* ex-prisoners would be rearrested in the six months following release from prison. Being cynical about the legal system, expressing lower levels of spirituality, having used drugs pre-prison, and being released to supervision no longer had significant effects on post-release arrest once these former characteristics were controlled. However, pre-prison drug use was significantly related to the likelihood of reconviction. Although we did not present results from a model including post-release characteristics, we also believe it noteworthy that post-release drug use remained a significant predictor of rearrest in several models we ran (models that included and omitted pre-release characteristics).[190]

SUMMARY

This chapter examined *Returning Home* participants' involvement in crime, both before they went to prison and after they were released. Respondents had extensive criminal backgrounds within their families and as individuals: nearly two-thirds came from families where at least one other person had been convicted of a crime, more than half were themselves arrested before they turned 18 years old, and more than one-quarter had served time in a juvenile correctional facility. Considering that the average respondent was 33 years old and already had at least three prior convictions, the data indicate that Maryland prisoners in our sample had spent half their lives revolving in and out of the criminal justice system. Our findings provide some indication, however, as to what factors might be important in slowing down this cycle.

We found that most respondents spent a relatively short amount of time in prison. The majority spent less than one year in prison, and over 80 percent were released before they had served two years.[191] On average, *Returning Home* prisoners served slightly under half of their imposed sentences in prison, and over three-quarters were subsequently released to about one year of parole supervision.[192] These findings seem to contradict popular notions about how long certain inmates are removed from society and how long they are under criminal justice supervision. For prisoners who are incarcerated less than two years, perhaps reintegration efforts should be directed more at preventing them from returning to old habits than on replacing human capital lost during time away.

Illegal drugs played a significant role in the criminal involvement of *Returning Home* participants. Half of the men and women in the *Returning Home* study were serving their most recent

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reconviction in both the bivariate and multivariate models lends qualitative support to the relationship. It is also noteworthy that when we re-estimated the multivariate model excluding pre-prison drug use, no other predictor emerged as significant.

[190] This finding was only true of models predicting rearrest. In all models including any post-release predictors of reconviction, we failed to achieve convergence (most likely due to the small numbers of persons reconvicted in an already small sample).

[191] The median time served by *Returning Home* respondents (11 months) was not substantively different from the median time served by all Baltimore prisoners released in the previous year (16 months).

[192] The remaining one-fifth "maxed out" and were released with no further supervision.

prison term for drug offenses,[193] and half of the reconviction charges that *Returning Home* recidivists accumulated were for drug offenses. Most of the sample (83%) reported illegal drug use before prison, and well over half (62%) had used two or more drugs at the same time, an indication of the severity of their drug use. Yet only one-third (35%) of the respondents received some sort of substance use treatment during their incarceration. These prisoners were less likely to use drugs after their release (see Chapter 4), and this lower drug use was in turn associated with a lower likelihood of rearrest or reconviction. This finding suggests that drug treatment in prison could help prisoners decrease their criminal behavior once they reenter the community, but only if such treatment is effective at reducing drug use.

Most respondents were placed under parole supervision after release. Only about one-fifth of respondents were released without supervision, having "maxed-out" from their sentences. Disturbingly, one-quarter of those who were ultimately released to parole supervision did not expect to be on parole at the time of the pre-release interview, suggesting that discharge planning could be improved in this regard. Nevertheless, shortly after leaving prison, those respondents on parole were generally knowledgeable about and compliant with their parole conditions. Most had reported to their parole officers within a week of their release, and reported meeting with them regularly. Respondents thought highly of their parole officers, agreeing that they were trustworthy and respectful, and that they gave correct information to them. However, respondents were divided as to whether parole was actually helpful in transitioning back to life outside of prison, and only half thought that parole supervision would help them stay away from drugs and crime.

Many respondents left prison with high and perhaps unrealistic expectations of not coming back, yet most returned to the same types of environments they had come from. Within one or two months after leaving prison, many reunited with friends who were dealing and using drugs, as well as committing thefts and assaults. Furthermore, between one-third and one-half of respondents had a family member who was also in prison at the same time as they were. At best, this indicates a family whose resources for helping the ex-prisoner were strained and, at worst, it suggests a family environment where criminal behavior was the norm. Nevertheless, one to two months after prison, most ex-prisoners remained optimistic that it would be easy to stay out of prison.

For many, these expectations proved to be unattainable: during the six months following their release, one-third of the study participants had been arrested again and ten percent had been convicted of a new offense. Given that there is typically a time lag of about five months between arrest and conviction, the latter are individuals who reoffended very shortly after release. More than half of the new convictions were for drug offenses, which mostly consisted of drug possession. Another fifth of the new convictions were for violent offenses, and the remainder were for property and various other offenses. Overall, 16 percent of respondents found themselves back in prison (or in jail) within 6 months of being released: in addition to those who were convicted of new offenses, 3 percent had their parole revoked after being arrested, and 4 percent had their parole revoked for technical violations.

Acknowledging that six months is a relatively short follow-up period, we nevertheless examined the impact on recidivism of personal characteristics and intermediate factors such as education, employment, substance use, family support, and neighborhood attributes, that one would expect to influence the process of reentry. Of the personal characteristics we analyzed, young age, male gender, extensive

[193] Another third of the men were convicted of violent offenses, whereas a third of the women were convicted of property offenses.

criminal history, low educational attainment, legal cynicism, and lower spirituality were associated with recidivism. Of the intermediate factors we analyzed, four significantly predicted recidivism: poor employment opportunities in the neighborhood to which prisoners returned, negative partner relationships, and *both* pre-prison and post-release substance use. Considering the six-month follow-up period, it is important to remember that we were evaluating that portion of ex-prisoners who recidivated soon after being released. Future studies in the other *Returning Home* states will allow for a longer period to follow respondents, enabling us to more fully explore how the process of reentry affects future recidivism.

CHAPTER 11
Policy Implications[194]

This report has presented findings from *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*, the first research project in the country to document the experiences of individuals released from prison, their families, and the communities to which they return. In many respects, these findings have confirmed conventional wisdom about the challenges posed by the experiences of incarceration and reentry. Yet, in a number of ways, this empirical examination of those experiences has yielded results that challenge established notions about policy interventions designed to ensure that returning prisoners will find jobs, stay away from crime and drugs, find housing, secure health care, and reunite with families.

The following section of the report examines the main findings through a policy lens, using the data to draw some lessons that can shape the development of policies by the state, the city, and the vast array of private entities serving this population. Our hope is that this research will inform the design of strategies that will improve reentry outcomes for everyone involved, including the general public.

CRIMINAL HISTORY AND REOFFENDING

It is sobering but not surprising to learn that most of the individuals returning to Baltimore from Maryland's prisons have a long history of involvement in crime and, once released, fairly quickly return to crime and prison. With regard to prior criminal history, over half the respondents in our study were first arrested before reaching the age of eighteen, and over one-quarter reported spending time in a juvenile correctional facility. Most of the individuals we interviewed in prison reported at least one previous conviction, and those who were convicted before had extensive criminal histories, with 42 percent reporting four or more prior convictions and over two-thirds having previously served time in prison. Half of the prisoners we interviewed had a drug offense as their most serious charge for their current prison term, while one-fifth were serving time for violent offenses such as assault and robbery, and another fifth were in prison for property offenses such as burglary and theft.

Within six months of their release from prison, roughly one-third (32%) of our sample had been rearrested for at least one new crime,[195] ten percent had been reconvicted, and sixteen percent were returned to prison. It should be noted that our limited six-month follow-up period likely prevented us from identifying a significant number of additional cases of reconvictions and reconfinements.[196] Most of these new arrests, convictions, and confinements accumulated by our sample were for drug-related charges. If public safety is a high priority, then the overarching policy challenge is to find ways to slow down this revolving door.

One place to start is to focus squarely on the high levels of drug and alcohol abuse reported by prisoners themselves. The data are compelling. Forty-one percent of the prisoners interviewed for this study reported that they used heroin on a daily basis for at least six months before entering prison. Thirty

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[194] Jeremy Travis and Nancy La Vigne, authors.

[195] Based on an N of 299, representing the number of respondents for whom official record recidivism data were available.

[196] In fact, almost one-third of our respondents' post-release charges were still pending as of June 2003.

percent used cocaine daily. Twenty-seven percent drank alcohol daily. A quarter used marijuana daily. Women had even more extensive substance abuse histories than men. On average, the prisoners in our sample had used heroin for six years. Perhaps most importantly, two-thirds of our respondents who had used drugs during the six months before their prison term reported that their drug use had led to arrests.[197]

According to these findings, a significant portion of Baltimore's prisoners comes from a deeply embedded drug culture where drug use is intertwined with criminal behavior. To reduce crime rates, and to keep these prisoners from going back to prison, policymakers must develop and implement effective strategies to reduce the levels of drug addiction and alcohol abuse.

SUBSTANCE USE

This report sheds light on the phenomenon of drug and alcohol use among individuals released from prison. Almost a third of respondents reported at least some drug use or intoxication during the first couple of months out; of those, one fifth had engaged in drug use alone. Younger ex-prisoners in our sample were more likely to use drugs after release than their older counterparts. Those who received drug treatment in prison were more successful at avoiding subsequent drug use than those who did not. Those ex-prisoners who associated with friends who used or sold drugs were more likely to return to drug use than those whose peer groups were not involved in drugs. In addition, those respondents who used drugs after release were more likely to have family members with substance abuse problems, creating a potential conflict for returning prisoners who may want to stay away from antisocial influences and yet hesitate to sever ties with family members whom they otherwise consider to be supportive. Reflecting these findings, a comprehensive strategy to reduce drug use would include enhanced efforts to reach younger offenders, provide extensive drug treatment in prison, and offer programs to substitute negative peer group and family influences with positive peer group and family connections. Because some under reporting is to be expected in this kind of survey research, the actual relapse and drug-related offending rates may be higher than documented here.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND FINANCES

The men and women interviewed in this study, who averaged 34 years of age, had very weak attachments to the world of work. Although almost two-thirds of respondents were employed right before going to prison, their employment histories were characterized by high turnover rates and poor job records. Nearly half of them had never held a job for longer than two years, and about the same share had been fired from a job at least once. Their educational levels were also quite low, less than half had a high school or GED diploma, and those who were re-convicted were less likely to hold such a degree.[198] Given these deficits, one could ask whether the time spent in prison was used to increase the chances that returning prisoners could enter the employment market.

Here the record is quite mixed, but with some encouraging signs. About a third of the prisoners interviewed said they participated in employment readiness programs while in prison. About a quarter participated in a job-training program. Thirteen percent increased their education level while in prison. And one third held a job in prison. Although these levels of program participation are similar to national

[197] The way the question was posed does not enable us to distinguish whether such arrests were for drug-related crimes or other types of crimes.

[198] Based on a bivariate analysis.

averages, there is certainly significant room for improvement in providing training, education, and work programs to prisoners in Maryland, suggesting these additional investments in prison programs would be productive.

Of particular interest are the findings on Maryland's work release programs. One-third of the respondents indicated they held a work release job while they were incarcerated. The average number of weeks that respondents held these work-release jobs was 17, and two-thirds had jobs with 40-hour work weeks. Analysis of the post-release interviews shows that respondents employed after release were much more likely to have held work release jobs while incarcerated. Maryland has clearly had some success at integrating work release programs into correctional planning for some prisoners.[199] Expanding these programs could further increase the employment rates of returning prisoners.

The experiences of prisoners in finding work also hold lessons for policymakers. When interviewed in prison, the respondents had high expectations that they would be able to rely on their wages to support themselves. When interviewed again a month or more after release, reality had caught up with these expectations. Half of them said it was hard to support themselves financially. For 20 percent, their average monthly debts exceeded their average monthly income. Yet, the report shows a high degree of resourcefulness within the population of prisoners returning to Baltimore. Overall, they reported high levels of job satisfaction, were getting along well with co-workers, and would be happy to be in the same job a year from now, yet jobs were hard to find in the prisoners' neighborhoods. Many of those interviewed said they would be willing to travel great distances to get a job. Those who found jobs were more likely to use referrals of friends and family members, rather than newspaper advertisements or job placement agencies. The picture that emerges is that returning prisoners with solid social networks—friends, family members, former employers—fared better than those without those networks. This speaks to the importance of ensuring that family connections are maintained during the period of incarceration. Organizations working to improve employment outcomes for this population should look carefully at those employers already willing to hire persons with criminal records, while dealing creatively with the spatial mismatch between the locations of jobs and the residences of those prospective employees.

Another route to employment could be greater job placement assistance by parole officers. Well over one-third of respondents expected their parole officers to provide assistance in their job searches. Yet parole officers were not as helpful as had been hoped. One-third of respondents who had not worked since release sought job placement advice from their parole officers, compared to nine percent of those who were successful at securing employment. Given their frequent contact with released prisoners, parole officers could play an influential role in helping men and women released from prison to find employment.

HEALTH

Our report's findings on the health status of returning prisoners also highlight opportunities for improved coordination beyond the prison walls. The prison population has a number of serious health concerns. A quarter of respondents were taking medication for chronic health conditions while in prison. Forty percent reported a physical ailment. Thirty percent thought they would need mental health services and half of the respondents indicated a desire for help obtaining counseling following their release from

[199] In Maryland, only inmates who are classified at a "pre-release" security level are eligible to participate in work release programs.

prison. Very few (10 %) had private insurance, and even fewer (5 %) were on a disability pension, Medicaid, Medicare, or Veterans Administration health insurance. Yet returning prisoners make significant use of the city's health care system within the first few months after release: more than half visited a doctor for a check-up or in connection with an ongoing medical condition, and one in five went to an emergency room for medical attention. Of those taking medication, 30 percent reported difficulties getting the medications they needed. In addition, roughly a quarter reported symptoms associated with depression, and between 15 and 20 percent reported symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These men and women are likely to experience greater challenges in finding employment, reconnecting with family and avoiding substance abuse.

These findings point to the need for better coordination between prison health services and community health services. In particular, efforts should be made to establish eligibility for health benefits for this population well before they leave prison, so that they can continue to get necessary medications after returning home. Special efforts to provide appropriate health care services to the mentally ill, those with communicable diseases, and those prisoners suffering from trauma in connection with their imprisonment, could yield significant public health and public safety benefits.

ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS

Individuals' attitudes and expectations can also play a role in reentry success or failure, and this study captures such viewpoints using comprehensive systematic methods. We learned, for example, that despite the fact that we were surveying an incarcerated population with a history of criminal justice involvement, extensive substance use, and spotty work experience, measures of self-esteem were relatively high. Moreover, those who reported that they were less likely to have been guided by religious or spiritual values were more likely to be rearrested.

Negative attitudes during incarceration were generally related to some important reentry outcomes. Many in our sample expressed negative views toward the law and the criminal justice system—what researchers term "legal cynicism." While the fact that incarcerated populations have relatively high levels of legal cynicism is not unexpected, we found that the extent of that cynicism matters. Respondents who had been rearrested after release had more negative views of the legal system than those who had not. And those who found employment following their release had lower legal cynicism scores than those who were unemployed. Moreover, respondents who said they were likely to commit crimes and use drugs after release were more likely to be unemployed and engaging in substance use once home. Programs preparing prisoners for release might benefit from a greater focus on understanding the basis for these attitudes and developing strategies for improving them.

The vast majority of respondents expressed a desire for help after release on a variety of reentry challenges. This fact suggests that prisoners would be more open and responsive to both pre- and post-release assistance than one might believe. In addition, most of the prisoners in our sample also expected that personal finances would be a significant challenge to them, and this belief was confirmed during post-release interviews. Reentry programming should therefore include a focus on personal finances, including estimating monthly living costs and managing debts.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

One of the most striking findings from this report, and its predecessor report entitled *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland* (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003) is that a small number of communities

in Baltimore are home to the largest number of returning prisoners. The majority (59%) of prisoners released from Maryland's prisons returned to the city of Baltimore, totaling 4,411 men and women in 2001. These released prisoners were further concentrated within a small number of neighborhoods. Out of Baltimore's 55 communities, six accounted for 30 percent of the returning prisoners—Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park; Greenmount East; Southern Park Heights; Southwest Baltimore; Greater Rosemont; and Clifton-Berea. Each of these communities received more than 150 released prisoners in 2001. The sample of returning prisoners interviewed for this study revealed a similar geographic distribution, with 36 percent returning to a similar mix of disadvantaged communities.[200]

Our interviews with returning prisoners revealed important new insights about the flow of prisoners back into Baltimore's neighborhoods. For example, interviews with former prisoners showed that, within six months of release, only half returned to the community in which they lived before being sent to prison. Of those who moved to a new neighborhood, some said they did so because their families had moved there. Others indicated that they were trying to avoid getting into trouble and needed to leave behind the risks of the old neighborhood. Slightly more than half of those who stayed in their old neighborhoods thought the community was safe. By contrast, three-quarters of those who moved thought their new neighborhood was safe, suggesting that they chose a new home in part because it presented fewer risks. Nonetheless, only 31 percent expected to live in that new neighborhood for a long time. Many ex-prisoners were residing with family members upon release and expressed the desire to eventually live on their own or with their children.

These findings challenge the conventional thinking that most released prisoners go back to the same community they came from. Many do not, and find greater safety in their new surroundings. Corrections departments, parole agencies, and community organizations should not assume that prisoners return to their former addresses. On the contrary, for some, starting over somewhere else may be a wiser course of action, although within our sample we did not find this factor to be statistically significant with regard to recidivism.

The returning prisoners interviewed in this study had mixed views of their neighborhoods. Most thought their community was a safe place to live and believed that community members could solve many of the community's problems. But 60 percent also felt that drug selling was a major problem in their neighborhood. Only 30 percent thought their community was a good place to find a job, and those who did not were more likely to be rearrested. Their views of the police were troubling, but were consistent with those of blacks nationwide (The Harris Poll 2000): Close to half said that the police in their neighborhoods were racist and that the police did not respond well to the needs of crime victims. About 60 percent felt the police did not do a good job of preventing crime. A similar percentage thought the police brutalized people in their neighborhood.

This complex picture of community life poses a number of serious policy challenges. The juxtaposition of a general feeling of safety in the neighborhood with the notable exception of a robust drug market is striking, and underscores the importance of finding effective strategies for reducing drug sales. Similarly, the prisoners' views of their neighbors as generally effective at collective action stands in stark contrast to the views of more than half of respondents that the police are ineffective, racist, and

[200] The six communities to which 36 percent of our sample returned included the five identified in the *Portrait*: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park; Greenmount East; Southern Park Heights; Greater Rosemont; and Clifton-Berea; plus Allendale/Irvington/South Hilton.

brutal. The community thus presents assets and challenges—the assets of community cohesion, and the challenges of promoting respectful and effective police services. In particular, these findings accentuate the need for a better mutual understanding between former prisoners and the police.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Our interviews with returning prisoners also highlight the importance of family in the reentry process. Most prisoners characterized their family relationships as very close, and 85 percent had high expectations that those relationships would be strong after they got out of prison. When they were still in prison, about two-thirds of the prisoners interviewed said they expected to live with their family after release. In fact, nearly half slept at the home of a family member their first night out of prison. Over the next few months, more found their way to a family residence and by the time of subsequent interviews, more than 80 percent of those we were able to locate and interview were living with a family member.

Given the central role of families as a source of housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall stability, policymakers would be well advised to spend time and resources strengthening these family ties during the period of incarceration. This natural network of support may be as important to a successful reentry as other more formal interventions, but has not traditionally been the focus of attention by the criminal justice system. Furthermore, given what we have learned about the importance of the support that families provide to recently released prisoners, policymakers should consider efforts to provide these families with resources and services that will help them best support the returning prisoner. This may prove to be a particularly worthy investment in the few communities that are home to large number of returning prisoners, as these areas are characterized by disproportionately high poverty rates and unemployment.

This report also shows that, while families can serve as an important source of support, they may also present a multitude of risks and shortcomings. Particularly striking is the extent to which the prisoners' families are deeply involved in crime and substance use. About 40 percent of the prisoners, both men and women, had at least one relative currently serving time in prison. Nearly two-thirds reported having at least one family member with a substance use or alcohol problem. One in six respondents listed four or more family members with histories of substance use. Finally, the interviews revealed a troubling level of violence within the family. Twelve percent of the respondents reported being threatened or harassed by a family member—and six percent reported being physically hurt—in the six months before going to prison. The levels of harassment and physical harm were much higher for the women in the study.

Clearly, the family network presents risks as well as supports. Effective family interventions, such as pre-release family conferencing sessions, should be able to discern both dangers and opportunities in the family landscape, and to assist the returning prisoner in navigating between them effectively. In some cases in which family violence has been present, corrections and law enforcement agencies may need to develop specific safety plans, including orders of protection and secure living arrangements, so that the return from prison does not occasion a return to abuse and violence.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

Finally, the report also documents the preparation for the moment of release and the experience of walking out of the prison gates. One-quarter of the prisoners returning to Baltimore reported participating in a pre-release program designed to help them get ready for their return home. When they left prison,

almost a third wore prison clothes or prison-issued street clothes. Half left in the very same clothes they had brought to prison. Three quarters of them had an identification card issued by the Department of Corrections. A quarter had state-issued ID cards and only 5 percent had drivers' licenses. Friends or family met 39 percent at the prison gates. Only 62 percent received gate money—some of it from their own prison accounts—with an average of $25. Other than these funds, more than half had no other money when they left prison.

In addition to pre-release programming, some prisoners had participated in education, employment, and substance abuse programs during the course of their prison terms. It is noteworthy, however, that prisoners who participated in such programs were significantly more likely to have been sentenced to longer terms and to have completed longer stays in prison than non-participants. This is notable because the Maryland prison population is increasingly comprised of prisoners serving relatively *short* terms. With fiscal constraints precluding the Maryland DOC from offering programs to all inmates who are interested in participating, many Maryland prisoners end up on waiting lists for programs and are often released before they have a chance to participate.[201]

These findings suggest several very practical reforms that could ease the immediate transition period. Pre-release reentry programming should be made available to all inmates about to leave prison, not just a quarter of them. To the extent that corrections budgets allow, other in-prison programming should be made available to "short-term" prisoners, who represent a large share of the total prison population, in addition to those who serve longer terms. Many states have implemented simple "check lists" of items that every released prisoner should have, including state-issued identification cards, street clothes, adequate gate money, and, in the best of circumstances, someone to meet them at the door. Community groups, faith institutions, and volunteers could be involved in providing transition services for those who have no family or friends or need additional support. The Reentry Partnership program of the Enterprise Foundation is a national leader in developing this role for community organizations, and the expansion of this program under the new federal reentry initiative is promising.

CONCLUSION

This report is the second product of the *Returning Home* study in Maryland. The first, *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*, documented the trends in incarceration and reentry rates in the state, and the changing policy environment regarding sentencing and parole supervision. Where that report was broad, this one has been deep, describing the process of leaving prison and returning home through the lens of the experiences of 324 soon-to-be-released prisoners. The perspectives of prisoners have spotlighted a number of factors that have been considered conventional wisdom. They typically come to prison with significant prior involvement in crime and drug and alcohol abuse. They typically have family members who themselves are incarcerated or using drugs or alcohol. They typically have low levels of education and poor work histories. And after they return home, they are rearrested at high rates and sent back to prison.

This report has added important details and nuances to these widely-shared beliefs about the realities of prisoner reentry. Several new insights found in this study are very provocative. Families

[201] In 2001, for example, over 1,500 prisoners were on waiting lists to participate in educational or vocational programming (LaVigne and Kachnowski, 2003).

matter in ways that have not been documented before. Peer influences are significant, especially with regard to drug use after release. Communities are both more and less important than previously thought. Many prisoners move into new communities, seeking environments that are better suited to their successful reintegration. Many view their communities as safe and resourceful, but plagued by drug markets and poor police service. In addition, returning prisoners are burdened by a large number of health concerns—some quite serious—and health care is poorly coordinated beyond the prison walls.

This report is intended to provide a foundation for policy conversations at the federal, state, and local level about ways to improve the chances for successful reintegration for prisoners coming home to Baltimore. Listening to the experiences of those prisoners—and members of the communities to which they return—should point the way to policy innovations that are empirically grounded, pragmatic, and reflective of the realities of reentry.

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APPENDIX A.

Focus Group Report: Resident Attitudes Towards Returning Prisoners in Two Neighborhoods in Baltimore[202]

STUDY OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

In April and May 2003, researchers at the Urban Institute conducted focus groups with residents of two disadvantaged neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland. The purpose of these neighborhood focus groups was to further understand the effect that returning prisoners have on the community, as well as to explore the role that community members play in the successful reintegration of those returning from prison. Discussion and concerns from these initial focus groups will be used to assist the project in developing hypotheses to guide future research about the effect of prisoner reentry on the community.

Each focus group used the same broad guidelines for discussion. Focus group members were asked about:

- Their individual experience with returning prisoners, and their perspective on the effects of prisoner reentry on their community;
- The community's collective opinion on how receptive the community has been toward returning prisoners, and how returning prisoners have affected the community;
- The role of the community, public agencies, and other institutions in facilitating an effective transition.

While there was substantial agreement among residents about the consequences of returning prisoners, there was less of a consensus within and across the groups about what could and should be done to alleviate the problems associated with returning prisoners. Overall, residents of both neighborhoods were in general agreement that:

- Crime and disorder caused by returning prisoners present major challenges for their communities;
- Younger returning prisoners, especially those that have served relatively short sentences, are the most disruptive, and are the most difficult segment of the population to assist. Residents are much more sympathetic toward prisoners returning after longer prison sentences; and,

[202] John Roman, author, with Jill Farrell.

- The police have not done enough to address the concerns of the community.

However, residents of these neighborhoods did not concur in terms of:

- The availability of services and the related ability of public agencies to serve the needs of ex-prisoners; and,

- The extent to which any intervention can affect the behavior of ex-prisoners.

Overall, few of the residents expressed much hope that the problems experienced by ex-prisoners, and the problems caused by ex-prisoners, would improve significantly in the near future. However, they were in agreement that the community should continue to work to find ways of addressing the needs of ex-prisoners, and the residents were generally very supportive of any new or additional programs that would facilitate the re-integration process.

PRISONER REENTRY AND THE COMMUNITY: PRIOR FINDINGS

Prisoner reentry is difficult and burdensome, not only for the returning individual and for family members, but for the community at large. Research has found that, in areas with high rates of incarceration and returning prisoners, relationships among residents become precarious, families experience higher stress levels, the image of the community is harmed, and financial investment in the community declines (for a discussion, see Rose and Clear 1998). These same communities also experience higher crime rates than would be expected in the long run (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003; La Vigne and Mamalian 2003; Rose et al. 2000). Moreover, prior findings have shown that a large proportion of ex-prisoners return to disadvantaged communities, which are less likely to have the types of resources and opportunities that are thought to be useful for successful reentry transitions (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2003; La Vigne and Mamalian 2003; Richie 2001; Clear, Rose, and Ryder 2001). Taken as a whole, the most current research suggests that reentry will be a difficult transition for both ex-prisoners and the community.

When discussing the impact that the community has on prisoner reentry, some of the most important voices belong to the community members themselves. One recent study, which explored community members' views on incarceration, revealed that residents are confronted with a complex situation: they support incarceration as a means for making their streets safer, yet they recognize the negative impact that removing large numbers of community residents to prison has had on their environment (Clear, Rose, and Ryder, 2001). Given these competing interests, it is useful to understand how community members perceive and respond to the prisoners reentering their neighborhoods. Within this context, *Returning Home* conducted focus groups with community members from some of the disadvantaged neighborhoods highlighted in this report to obtain their perspectives on prisoner reentry.

METHODS

Description of the Focus Group Neighborhoods

Focus group participants were drawn from two distinct neighborhoods in the city of Baltimore, Sandtown/Winchester and Park Heights. Both of these community areas were

featured in *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland* (2003). Data collected by the project suggests that these neighborhoods have proportionately large numbers of returning prisoners, high crime rates, and generally turn out low scores on socio-economic status indicators.

In 2001, 250 prisoners returned to the Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park community, which has a total population of 17,495 (14.3 prisoners per 1,000 residents). The Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park community includes the following neighborhoods: Bridgeview/Greenlawn, Easterwood, Harlem Park, Midtown-Edmonson, and Sandtown-Winchester. The population in this community is 98 percent black. Female-headed households account for 39 percent of the households in this community. Nineteen percent of the households in this community are TANF recipients. In 2000, there were 2,036 reported Part 1 crimes in this community (116 per 1,000 residents).[203]

In 2001, 174 prisoners returned to the Southern Park Heights community, which has a total population of 15,761 (11 prisoners per 1,000 residents). The Southern Park Heights community includes the following neighborhoods: Central Park Heights, Cylburn, Greenspring, Park Heights, Park Circle, Parklane, Towanda-Grantley, and Lucille Park. The population in this community is 97 percent black. Female-headed households account for 40 percent of the households in this community. Twenty percent of the households in this community are TANF recipients. In 2000, there were 1,138 reported Part 1 crimes in this community (72 per 1,000 residents).[204]

Participant Recruitment

Focus group participants were ultimately selected using two different recruitment methods. In Park Heights, the original research protocol utilizing a random selection model yielded eight focus group participants. In Sandtown/Winchester, however, this approach did not yield any participants. Here, focus group participants were eventually recruited through direct solicitation from a neighborhood advocate with close community ties. More detailed descriptions of the recruitment approaches are presented below.

The original research plan employed a random selection model to recruit residents from each of the two communities. The initial solicitation protocol was identical in each neighborhood. Resident addresses were identified in each community using GIS mapping software. Once all addresses in each community were identified, a random number generator program was run to randomly select addresses. In total, 300 resident addresses were selected in both the Park Heights and Sandtown/Winchester communities. A reverse phone directory was used to identify resident phone numbers to be used in focus group recruitment. Of the 300 addresses identified in each community, 101 phone numbers were located in Park Heights and 44 phone numbers were located for Sandtown/Winchester residents.

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[203] Based on Urban Institute analysis of 2001 Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Division of Correction data; Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA). Sources for data accessed from BNIA website (www.bnia.org): U.S. Census, Baltimore City Police Department, University of Baltimore Jacob France Center/Maryland Department of Human Resources.

[204] Ibid.

Phone solicitations were then made describing the objectives of the focus group, and a follow-up recruitment letter was sent to each contacted resident. Participants were informed of the time and location of the meeting, the stipend for participation, and confidentiality was assured. The recruitment solicitation stressed that the focus group represented an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns regarding prisoner reentry in their neighborhood. Participants were eligible for participation if they were over 18 years old and had lived in the designated community for at least two years. All of the residents attending the Park Heights focus group were recruited as a result of this phone solicitation; however, this approach was not effective in Sandtown/Winchester.

While it is unclear why random focus group recruitment was more difficult in Sandtown/Winchester, it is possible that structural characteristics of the neighborhood were barriers to participant recruitment. In particular, it is striking to note that the rate of phone numbers produced per address was about one-half in Sandtown/Winchester of those in Park Heights. While reverse phone number locators can fail to locate a phone number for a particular address if that address has multiple dwelling units (such as an apartment building), in this case it appears that the difficulty identifying phone numbers was the result of high vacancy rates in Sandtown/Winchester. Furthermore, repeated calls to residents with phone numbers produced no recruits for the focus group. Ultimately, participants for this focus group were recruited using a neighborhood advocate, who directly solicited community members to take part in the group.

Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

Each focus group was convened in their respective communities. The Park Heights focus group session was held on the second floor of a recreation center in the Park Heights community, a large, mostly empty room running the length of the community center. Non-participants entering the room did not interrupt the group. A playground and basketball court was located just outside, and sounds were audible throughout the session, although this did not present a major distraction. Chairs were arranged in a circle with the moderators seated alongside the participants. All participants read and signed the informed consent information and participants agreed to have the session tape recorded. Eight community residents participated in the focus group. The four men and four women were African Americans and ranged in age from their mid-twenties to early seventies. All eight of the participants contributed to the discussion, and none dominated, although two or three were more vocal. Participants discussed issues more when prompted than on their own and many of their comments were directed toward the moderators rather than each other. In general, focus group participants were in overall agreement on the reentry topics covered in the discussion.

The Sandtown/Winchester focus group was held in a community center in Sandtown/Winchester, in an easily accessible section of the community. Participants and moderators sat in a circle in a large, quiet meeting room. Each participant read and signed the informed consent information and they agreed to have the session tape-recorded. Fifteen community residents partic ipated in the focus group. The six men and nine women were African Americans and ranged in age from their mid-twenties to mid-sixties. Most of the participants contributed to the discussion, but two or three occasionally dominated. In general, there was a

good deal of give and take among focus group participants with less structure required from the moderators, and the discussion was occasionally animated.

Focus Group Content

The focus group discussions were structured in order to gain insight into how reentry affects the neighborhood and its residents, and how residents respond to returning individuals. Following accepted focus group methodology, researchers developed a set of discussion topics, which follow the general framework of an opening question, transition questions, and key questions (Morgan, 1998). Each focus used the same broad guidelines for discussion. Topics included perceptions about:

- How returning prisoners affect the neighborhood from economic, social, family, and public safety perspectives;
- Why some individuals reintegrate successfully and others do not;
- How willing residents are to provide support to those returning; and
- In what ways successful reentry can be increased.

While we had created a series of specific focus group questions pertaining to each of these topics, participants were also encouraged to elaborate on the issues that concerned them most.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Generally speaking, residents were conversant in issues surrounding prisoner reentry, and deeply concerned about the effects of returning prisoners on public safety and on community stability. Both groups expressed serious concerns about police responsiveness to community problems. In addition, both groups attributed much of the blame for their community's struggles to drug trafficking and the perception of many younger residents that there is easy money to be made from the drug trade. Residents of both communities highlighted the appeal of expensive shoes as a metaphor for the allure of illegal activities. However, the two groups of residents had notably different perceptions of the appropriate responses to these problems.

The specific discussion topics are presented with supporting participant quotations in the subsequent sections. While the Park Heights and Sandtown/Winchester resident responses are combined to convey a more encompassing community perspective of prisoner reentry, we also highlight any differences in their collective opinions that distinguish each neighborhood.

Community Relationships with Returning Prisoners

Participants in both neighborhoods could readily identify with the topic of prisoner reentry. All of the participants stated that they knew at least one former prisoner who has come back to their neighborhood and the majority of participants knew more than one. In some cases, participants had family members who were ex-prisoners. As one Sandtown/Winchester participant noted:

"…an ex-offender can be anybody--your brother, your mother…" (SW)

Whenever possible, focus group participants were asked to reflect on the experiences of someone they know who returned home from prison to help anchor their responses.

Employment

Employment-related issues generated a lot of discussion in both focus groups, but opinions varied by neighborhood. A recurring theme in Park Heights was the notion that jobs are abundant for returning prisoners. Participants stated that jobs are available for ex-prisoners who seek them, although they noted that many of these jobs are low paying. The participants maintained that with lower pay and lower prestige, many former prisoners return to illegal activities.

"I have had them tell me, 'why should I work for 'chump change' when I can go out in one night and make five or six hundred dollars.'" (PH)

"…Plenty of jobs…[these are] low paying jobs, but [there are] plenty of them… no one wants to start at the bottom…" (PH)

In Sandtown/Winchester, on the other hand, residents believed that there are few jobs available in general, and fewer still for anyone with a criminal record.

"Sometimes it is hard to get a job whether you have been [in prison] one time or a thousand times. You look on the application and they tell you to tell the truth [regarding prior convictions]…They see your application and they put it in the trash can or at the bottom of the pile of applications…" (SW)

Participants in Park Heights suggested that the decision to seek a legal employment is critical to determining the outcomes for returning prisoners. While taking a job may lead to a lower income and lower status among peers, the refusal to accept these life changes leads ex-prisoners to seek illicit income (drug dealing was the offense most often mentioned). Participants expressed little to no sympathy for ex-prisoners who might have difficulty in making the adjustment to legal employment.

"[Coming out of prison] has a whole lot of affect because a lot of them [are] not working, and if they are not working you know [what] they are going to do…going to go back into the same thing. Going to commit more crimes." (PH)

"You are mentally different when you come back. Therefore, like she was saying, there are no job opportunities and you working below that level, then you are going to be judged by your community anyway--especially, if you go back on that corner because that was what sent you where you were at in the first place. So, first thing one of us would think when you come home, 'oh well, OK, once you get home you going right back on that corner'…." (PH)

The Sandtown/Winchester participants suggested that much of the recurrent problems of crime and violence in their neighborhood were attributable to the lack of assistance for returning prisoners and the inadequate role prisons have played in preparing prisoners to return. Residents suggested that education and, in particular, employment programs would be particularly helpful for prisoners as they looked for work.

> *"Some of them go back to [a criminal] lifestyle because they are not equipped to handle what is out there…they don't have the tools... if they are in the system why aren't they tested or screened to provide them with the tools they need?…" (SW)*

> *"Quite a few have come through the prison system and come out with their degree, but, the thing is, once they get out, they don't have a realistic ability to apply what they know…[for example,] if an employer asks, 'where did you do your internship?' How is a prisoner going to answer?" (SW)*

> *"If we are going to imprison them…why doesn't our government see to it that time is used constructively? Why don't they have a job skills program while they are incarcerated?…Why doesn't our government prepare them to weave their way back into the community? And, when they come back out here, why don't we have a job skills or a job readiness program set up for them?…Why don't they have something constructive to do?" (SW)*

Public Safety and Perceptions of Criminal Offending

Most participants expressed fear of victimization in their own neighborhoods. Returning prisoners perpetuate this fear, since residents believe that ex-prisoners contribute to the criminal activity in the neighborhood.

> *"A lot of them when they come out, they don't spend much time in there anyway. Most are arrested on [drug] possession so they only stay in there a couple of months--there's no rehabilitation in that. And soon as they come out they go back to what they was doing to make the money. It has a real bad effect on the neighborhood…they are tearing down the neighborhood and people are moving away because they are afraid…" (SW)*

> *"…Some areas are worse because of the youngsters…[In some parts of Sandtown/Winchester], people don't get involved, didn't do anything. People are afraid and that's how they take over." (SW)*

> *"You can't pay me to walk to the store…I will not walk up the street…" (SW)*

> *"There are people on my block that are scared…scared of what the people might do to them…they don't want to get involved." (PH)*

Participants in both groups expressed dissatisfaction with the police in their neighborhoods.

> *"[Drug dealers] don't even think about the police…[Drug dealers] have guns just like the police…I think the police are afraid…Their hands are somewhat tied…There is a saying in Pimlico [near Park Heights], I don't know how true it is, that when [the police] ride through they roll their windows up…" (PH)*

> *"Even myself, it took three phone calls and forty minutes before the police came and they came with attitude…" (SW)*

Corrections

Participants also conveyed their dissatisfaction with the prison system, especially as an effective approach toward rehabilitation. Some of the residents believed that returning prisoners receive little or no programming while incarcerated or any support once released, and therefore ex-prisoners not be expected to pursue more pro-social activities. Other residents insisted that returning prisoners are responsible for their own futures, and unless they are motivated to avoid future criminal activities, there is little the system can do. This group also believed that for some offenders, prison was a means of accessing basic life needs and that others have little fear of going to prison. Moreover, participants thought that having served time in prison is perceived of as an achievement for some ex-offenders.

> *"Prison doesn't mean anything to them because they know that they are going to be there for a short period of time…they go through prison and they have not been rehabilitated, prison doesn't mean anything to them." (PH)*

> *"Some guys see prison as a badge of honor. They say, 'Is that all the time you did? That's nothing.'" (PH)*

> *"If they go to prison in the wintertime, they know they can get three meals a day…a roof over their head…then they come back out in the summer and it is warm and they can hang on the corner." (PH)*

While the prevailing sentiment of the Sandtown/Winchester focus group participants was that the corrections system should have primary responsibility for prisoner rehabilitation, participants also noted the importance of motivating ex-prisoners to take responsibility for their own actions.

> *"What do you do if they don't want to…There may be 25% that know they have options for [taking a] job program, while there are 50 or 65% [who] are not aware that they have the options…but it doesn't make any difference if they don't want to go…" (SW)*

> *"You come out of there…I may shelter you…but why do I have to do the leg work for you?…They should know what to expect before they come out on the street…They have to get up out of the house to fill out applications*

for jobs and housing…I feel applications for jobs and housing should be filled out before they come out on the street." (SW)

When discussing ways that prisons might make the transition easier for prisoners, participants suggested individualized assessments and programming to determine participant readiness and help prisoners prepare to reenter the community.

"I don't believe the state offers this--they should be screened maybe by a psychotherapist before they get out [to find out if] this person [is] going to come back and do this same thing" (PH)

"…There should be some kind of a program where their mind can be renewed. That if you make mistakes sometimes you have to start back down at the bottom and come back up to the top and I don't think that they want to accept that because of the fact that it is a drug-infested neighborhood, and they just cannot understand, without their mind being renewed, why they have to take a job for minimum wage, but they can go right back on the corner, sell drugs and make big money…it is not a 3-month thing or a 6-month thing, but long-term. They need long-term treatment." (PH)

Long Term vs. Short Term Prisoners

The moderators asked focus group participants whether a distinction should be made between those who had served long terms and those serving relatively brief sentences. Overall, participants felt that longer sentences make the transition more difficult and participants more readily empathized with older returning prisoners. Some of the participants observed that prisoners serving long terms may develop a 'prison mentality' that is difficult to counter. They were not generally sympathetic to these prisoners.

"My kid's father went away for eleven years. If they stay anything past five years, they get this certain "prison mentality" where they want to preach to you, criticize, judge when they do get out. So he's lost due to the fact he was not in his child's life all of those years. So now you want [your son] to want to love you, be your friend, hang out with you…so the transition to jump back into his life does not mean anything to his son. So I tell him, 'you need counseling.' Other than that, you cannot jump on him like that you got to be his friend first…" (PH)

"Everything they know is not here anymore…some people try to make it [outside of prison], but with few job opportunities he's going back to prison…" (SW)

"Why doesn't the state have a transitional center that give them a sense of transitioning? It helps them to get prepared from being in [their] cell all day, every day…teaches them to deal and cope with societal change, change that was not there when you first went in…" (SW)

Residents acknowledged that not all of the prisoners returning to the community were drug dealers with access to criminal networks. Rather, when asked if they thought that ex-prisoners returning from longer sentences left prison with the intention of getting their lives on track, the participants were unanimous in their belief that many prisoners were sincerely trying to get their lives in order. The difficult part for many returning prisoners is gaining acceptance in the community:

> *"I said I didn't come in contact with them that much, but I do. Because the majority of our members that have come into our church, like the minister in our region, they are coming from prison and it is hard for them to adjust coming out of prison. They cannot help but think that they are not being accepted…that people just don't trust them…" (PH)*

When asked whose responsibility it was to assist returning prisoners with longer sentences and no family and friends support networks, participants stated that it was the community's responsibility to help those prisoners:

> *"Even though I don't do it, it is my responsibility to try [to help returning offenders]" (PH)*

> *"If his parents can't help him, it is the responsibility of the city, state, and church to help him." (PH)*

On the contrary, the focus group participants had little compassion for younger prisoners. Participants proposed harsh sentences as the solution to the problems of youthful prisoners. They expressed little optimism that youthful prisoners cycling in and out of jail sought any pro-social activities, or could be enticed to do so.

> *"When [prisoners] leave [jail], they have a sign in the back that says 'Never Again'. They might as well take that sign down." (SW)*

> *"When the governor says 'zero tolerance', I want 'zero tolerance'. I don't want you slapping that juvenile on the hand just because he's 15 or 16 years old…" (SW)*

> *"Instead of being homeless, they'd rather go back to jail…I'd go back to jail too, especially if it's cold. If I can lay in a bed and watch movies and get three hot meals a day…three hots and a cot as they say…" (SW)*

> *"Going to prison is just another notch on their belt…" (SW)*

> *"…I get off of the bus stop and cannot even get off the bus…The benches, that's what they use now, the benches and the bus stops…It used to be storefronts…Unless you are a perfect person you cannot help to have a little animosity…They use all types of language and they don't respect anybody…They have no home training…It's sad." (PH)*

The Role of the Community in Re-integration

While Park Heights participants were supportive of the community role in reintegrating long-term prisoners, they were less inclined to provide assistance to younger ex-prisoners. Participants in the Sandtown/Winchester focus group, however, did not consistently address the issue of community involvement. Rather, participants thought the best way to assist returning prisoners was by altering government programs to suit the needs of this population. For example, participants discussed transitional housing as a means to bridge the gap between the government and the community to help ex-prisoners. Participants envisioned transitional housing as a temporary dwelling where returning prisoners could receive assistance finding permanent housing and jobs. When asked the question of whether they wanted a center located within three blocks of their home, participants offered mixed feelings. Four participants were against the idea of transitional housing in their neighborhood.

> *"…Six month prior to their release they have to live in a transitional house…a lot of communities don't [like] them because the transitional housing and those people will bring drugs and crime into their community…One lady said that she didn't want to have transitional because 'they would have to build a building so large, it would block out the sun.'" (SW)*

Yet, eleven out of the fifteen participants thought that having transitional housing near their home was a good idea. Some of the participants noted that this would be a good opportunity for volunteerism and other positive acts assisting former prisoners.

> *"…Hey, I don't have a problem with it. I don't have a problem with it. At least I know what's going on and maybe I can help…I have an empty lot near my house…I want to get involved…" (SW)*

> *"…I'll even volunteer my services to help…Once you put it up there you will see who will get involved…" (SW)*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results from the focus groups suggest that the effects of ex-prisoners on fragile communities can be pervasive. There was overall agreement between the two focus groups about the importance of reintegration on neighborhood life. However, the two groups had very different hypotheses about how to address these problems. Residents of Park Heights were much more likely to believe that the ultimate success of any individual ex-prisoners will be determined by the attitudes and beliefs of that person, and that sufficient resources to facilitate the transition are available in the community. For this group, solving the problem of reintegration requires better parenting, better education, and more intensive policing. In contrast, residents of Sandtown/Winchester believed that there are few opportunities and few services available to ex-prisoners. Residents of this community believed that public agencies, especially the Corrections system, must do more to prepare prisoners for their return home.

Participants in Park Heights also believed that there is a critical distinction between young offenders cycling through the prison system and older prisoners returning from lengthier

prison terms. For the former, anti-social behaviors are attributed to poor parenting and a lack of self-control. For this group, residents expressed little sympathy, and less hope. Conversely, they were more sympathetic to, and felt more responsibility for, older ex-prisoners returning from longer commitments.

By contrast, residents of Sandtown/Winchester were more sympathetic overall toward returning prisoners, but had a decidedly negative opinion of the performance of public agencies. They believed the correctional system does little to identify and address problems that lead to re-offending. In their opinion, prisoners return to Sandtown/Winchester unprepared to pursue any lifestyle other than the one that led to their incarceration. There are few available services, not enough drug treatment options, scarce employment opportunities, too little affordable housing units and too many illegal temptations. However, they believed their community is willing to help those who seek to reintegrate into the community, to the extent that the majority of residents expressed willingness to have a transitional housing facility located within three blocks of their home.

However, there was general agreement across focus groups that the community should continue to work to find ways of addressing the needs of ex-prisoners. And residents were generally very supportive of any new or additional programs that would facilitate the re-integration process. These reactions are at least encouraging in light of the recent interest in community-oriented programs (Young, Taxman, and Byrne 2002) that aim to involve the community in the prisoner reintegration process. These types of programs require substantial resident support, as well as considerable insight into the reentry challenges that ex-prisoners face. The community at large could potentially offer ex-prisoners some of their most valuable support structures, including social networks and social capital (Clear 2002). Understanding the extent to which communities are both interested in and capable of helping released prisoners is imperative to improving the process of successful prisoner reentry.

APPENDIX B.

Scale Key[205]

SCALE	ITEMS	SOURCE	RELIABILITY[206]		
			Pre-release (PR)	1st post-release (PR1)	2nd post-release (PR2)
Family Support	Felt close to your family.	UI	Pre-prison .799 In-prison .880	Post-prison .849	Post-prison .835
	Wanted your family to be involved in your life.	UI			
	Considered yourself a source of support for your family.	UI			
	Family was a source of support for you.	UI			
Family Relationship Quality	Someone you could count on to listen to you when you needed to talk.	MOS- Emotional support	Pre-prison .962 Post-prison expectation .983	Post-prison .967	Post-prison .977
	Someone to talk to about yourself or your problems.	MOS- Emotional support			
	Someone whose advice you really wanted.	MOS- Emotional support			
	Someone to share your most private worries and fears with.	MOS- Emotional support			
	Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.	MOS- Emotional support			
	Someone who understood your problems.	MOS- Emotional support			
	Someone to love you and make you feel wanted.	MOS- Affectionate support			
	Someone to have a good time with.	MOS- Positive social interaction			
	Someone to get together with to relax.	MOS- Positive social interaction			
	Someone to do something enjoyable with.	MOS- Positive social interaction			
	Someone to spend time with to help you get your mind off things.	MOS- Positive social interaction			

[205] Most items are in the form of statements with a 4-point, Likert-type response set (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree). Full source citations are provided at the end of the document.
[206] Cronbach's alpha.

SCALE	ITEMS	SOURCE	RELIABILITY[206]		
			Pre-release (PR)	1st post-release (PR1)	2nd post-release (PR2)
Positive Partner Support	You could turn to your [partner] for advice about problems.	Pierce	N/A	Post-prison .944	Post-prison .921
	You could count on your [partner] to help you if a family member close to you died.	Pierce			
	Your [partner] plays a positive role in your life.	Pierce			
	If you wanted to go out and do something, your [partner] would be willing to do something with you.	Pierce			
	You would miss your [partner] if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month.	Pierce			
	Your relationship with your [partner] plays a significant role in your life.	Pierce			
Negative Partner Support	You often need to work hard to avoid conflict with your [partner].	Pierce	N/A	Post-prison .778	Post-prison .782
	Your [partner] wants you to change a lot of things about yourself.	Pierce			
	You want your [partner] to change a lot of things about him/herself.	Pierce			
	Your [partner] makes you angry a lot.	Pierce			
	You argue with your [partner] a lot.	Pierce			
	Your [partner] often tries to control or influence your life.	Pierce			
Control Over Life	I have little control over the things that happen to me.	TCU-Self efficacy	Pre-release .783	Post-prison .829	Post-prison .845
	What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.	TCU-Self efficacy			
	There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.	TCU-Self efficacy			
	My life has gone out of control.	TCU-Desire for help			
	There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.	TCU-Self efficacy			
	I can do just about anything I really set my mind to.	TCU-Self efficacy			

SCALE	ITEMS	SOURCE	RELIABILITY[206]		
			Pre-release (PR)	1st post-release (PR1)	2nd post-release (PR2)
Control Over Life (cont.)	Sometimes I feel like I'm being pushed around in my life.	TCU-Self efficacy			
	I often feel helpless dealing with the problems of life.	TCU-Self efficacy			
	My life seems without meaning.	UI			
Readiness to Change	I think I will need help in dealing with my problems and challenges after I'm released from prison.	TCU-Desire for help	Pre-release .548	N/A	N/A
	I will give up friends and hangouts that get me in trouble after I'm released.	TCU-Desire for help			
	I am tired of the problems caused by the crimes I committed.	TCU-Desire for help			
	I want to get my life straightened out.	TCU-Desire for help			
Intention to Commit Crime/Use Drugs	How likely is it, if you thought you would not get caught, that you would use drugs in the next 6 months.	Paternoster	Post-prison expectation .778	N/A	N/A
	How likely is it, if you thought you would not get caught, that you would commit a crime in the next 6 months.	Paternoster			
	If you thought you would be arrested for it, how likely is it that you would use drugs in the six months after release.	Paternoster			
	If you thought you would be arrested for it, how likely is it that you would commit a crime in the six months after release.	Paternoster			
Self Esteem	I have much to be proud of.	TCU-Self esteem	Pre-release .727	Post-prison .790	Post-prison .844
	I feel like a failure.	TCU-Self esteem			
	I wish I had more respect for myself.	TCU-Self esteem			
	I feel I am basically no good.	TCU-Self esteem			
	In general, I am satisfied with myself.	TCU-Self esteem			
	I feel I am unimportant to others.	TCU-Self esteem			

SCALE	ITEMS	SOURCE	RELIABILITY[206]		
			Pre-release (PR)	1st post-release (PR1)	2nd post-release (PR2)
Spirituality	How often do you pray or meditate?	Fetzer	Pre-release .846	Post-prison .911[207]	N/A
	How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?	Fetzer			
	You find strength in your religion or spirituality.	Fetzer			
	You feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.	Fetzer			
	Your faith helps you know right from wrong.	Fetzer			
	Your spiritual beliefs help define the goals you set for yourself.	Fetzer			
	The church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious institution you attend matters a great deal to you. [*Item not asked at PR*]	Fetzer			
	If you were ill, the people in your church, synagogue, or mosque would be willing to help out. [*Item not asked at PR*]	Fetzer			
	If you had a problem or were faced with a difficult situation, the people in your church, synagogue, or mosque would provide you comfort. [*Item not asked at PR*]	Fetzer			
	If you needed to know where to get help with a problem you were having, the people in your church, synagogue, or mosque would be willing to help out. [*Item not asked at PR*]	Fetzer			
Legal Cynicism	Laws are made to be broken.	Sampson	Pre-release .741	N/A	N/A
	It's okay to do anything you want as long as you don't hurt anyone.	Sampson			
	To make money, there are no right and wrong ways, only easy and hard ways.	Sampson			
	Fighting with friends or families is nobody else's business.	Sampson			

[207] Post-prison alpha is .824 for the six items asked at PR.

SCALE	ITEMS	SOURCE	RELIABILITY[206]		
			Pre-release (PR)	1st post-release (PR1)	2nd post-release (PR2)
	These days a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.	Sampson			
Satisfaction with Police	The police were doing a good job in dealing with problems that really concerned people in my neighborhood.	Sampson	Pre-prison .723	N/A	N/A
	The police were not doing a good job in preventing crime in my neighborhood.	Sampson			
	The police did a good job in responding to people in my neighborhood after they had been victims of crime.	Sampson			
	The police in my neighborhood were racist.	Sampson			
	The police were not able to maintain order on the streets and sidewalks in my neighborhood.	Sampson			
	The police brutalized people in my neighborhood.	Sampson			
Job Satisfaction	You like the work you are doing.	UI	N/A	Post-prison .698	Post-prison .771
	You are not happy with the amount you are paid for the work you do.	UI			
	You don't get along with the people you work with.	UI			
	You'd be happy if you were at this job one year from now.	UI			
	You think this job will give you better opportunities in the future.	UI			
	You get along with the people you work for.	UI			
	The people you work for don't treat you fairly.	UI			