



Guide to Educational Programming with Justice-Involved Audiences

Questions & Decisions

Mary Huser and Elizabeth Shaver, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension Human Development & Relationships Institute (HDRI) - July, 2020

As educators consider working with learners in the justice system, it is important that efforts are research-based with a logical theory of change foundation to positively impact learners and their families. **And with vulnerable audiences, adhering to best practices is critical so that efforts do no harm.**

This Guide is designed to help educators make informed decisions about pursuing work with justice-involved audiences and families across such varied settings as jail, probation or parole, alternatives and diversion, and courts. Its purpose is not to be a standalone guide, but to encourage deeper thinking and foster conversations with colleagues involved in outreach work with justice-involved audiences and potential local justice system partners. While some questions can be answered with information found in noted sources, much of the information you will need to seek out locally.

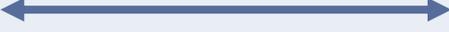


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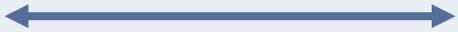
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For conversations and further guidance, please contact:
[Mary Campbell Wood](#), [Heidi Ungrodt](#), or [Pam Wedig-Kirsch](#).

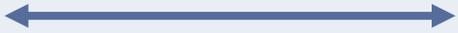
Program Planning

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
<p>1. Who has identified programming with justice-involved families as a local priority? Are they informed, reliable sources of this information? What is the level of local stakeholder support for this program?</p>	<p>There is limited support from local stakeholders for this programming; lack of united support and remaining questions create doubt from key supporters.</p>		<p>At least one or more local stakeholder groups has identified educational programming with justice-involved families as a priority; there is united support from Extension Committee.</p>
<p>2. Have you secured local data from justice partners that defines and justifies the need for programming with justice-involved audiences?</p>	<p>Unconfirmed or conflicting data create questions around need; data is not available or difficult to access.</p>		<p>Reliable data shows increasing demand and need over time.</p>
<p>3. How does programming with justice-involved families fit with the mission of your organization? Does it lend itself to building a comprehensive local program of inputs, outputs and outcomes? Is the focus educational in design or does it carry more of a treatment, service delivery or mandated program emphasis?</p>	<p>The proposed program is a poor fit; it will be an “add-on” and will not complement existing program efforts.</p>		<p>Program will fit well with plan of work; it builds more comprehensive local programming.</p>

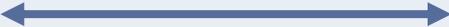
Program Planning

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
<p>4. To what degree do you collaborate with a local Criminal Justice Council (or similar group) and partners from the justice system? Are there opportunities to build relationships with these partners? Is there support from jail and justice system staff for this programming?</p>	<p>There are few opportunities to build relationships and roles; communication is difficult; jail or justice staff show little support for educational efforts.</p>		<p>There are solid relationships, clear roles, and ongoing communication; you have support and buy-in from correctional facility and justice staff for program efforts.</p>
<p>5. How does the proposed program acknowledge the effects of justice involvement on children and families and address their needs? To what extent does research show the educational focus is related to reentry and other positive outcomes?</p>	<p>There is no apparent link to family support; research does not support program focus.</p>		<p>Program content has a direct link to family support; research studies show promising results from similar efforts.</p>
<p>6. What potential exists for justice-involved families to use and apply the educational information you might provide? Can they currently use the information in meaningful ways (i.e., does the jail allow children to visit)?</p>	<p>Learners cannot apply newly learned information and skills; the facility has major restrictions on visitation and contact; long-term confinement limits application of new skills.</p>		<p>Learners can practice skills in meaningful ways despite the context (e.g. jail facility) or are due for release within the near future so they can apply their skills in the “outside” world.</p>

Program Planning

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
<p>7. How will your efforts complement other programs and lend toward building a comprehensive corrections program for justice-involved persons, including academic, vocational, and social support?</p>	<p>The proposed program can be viewed as duplicating services already being provided; turf issues are apparent.</p>		<p>Program avoids duplication or provides necessary reinforcement of learning to complement existing programming.</p>
<p>8. What are the program outcomes for which you will be held accountable? Are these outcomes consistent with key stakeholders' expectations?</p>	<p>The program expectations are beyond the scope of the program and resources available.</p>		<p>Stakeholder expectations are realistic and align with program goals</p>
<p>9. Could this audience and/or their families be reached in other ways through alternative teaching techniques (e.g., printed materials, online classes, recorded videos, tablets, spatial changes, etc.)?</p>	<p>Other instructional methods are not available or not reasonable to implement.</p>		<p>The educational needs of learners could be met via alternative educational methods.</p>
<p>10. Will work in this area contribute to the components of scholarship (creative, intellectual work; reviewed by peers; communicated and shared; valued by learners)?</p>	<p>The proposed work holds little potential for generating new knowledge or contributing to colleagues in the field.</p>		<p>Work in this context will contribute to the field and will be useful for other educators.</p>

Educator Skill, Comfort Level & Safety Concerns

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
11. Before beginning any program, will you participate in professional development that provides insight and information about the educational needs and learning styles of justice-involved learners?	There are no plans to participate in relevant professional development or seek input from colleagues.		You have participated and plan to participate in opportunities to increase expertise; help and input is available from colleagues working in this context.
12. Is there training that jail or justice system staff will provide you before you begin teaching in the correctional facility or setting?	There is no guidance from facility staff on personal safety.		In-house training will be provided by facility; there is familiarity with personal safety measures.
13. What is your comfort level when thinking about working with justice-involved audiences? Do you have anxiety about direct teaching in this setting? Could you put aside any pre-conceived notions about those involved with the justice system?	You are extremely anxious regarding programming in this setting; you have difficulty saying “no” to learner’s requests for help or favors; you have strong pre-conceived notions about the audience.		You have few reservations; your doubts and comfort level won’t interfere with programming; you have an open and realistic opinion regarding working with justice-involved individuals.
14. What facilities will be used for direct teaching? How does the facility protect your safety ? What safety measures would be in place to ensure a safe learning environment?	Safeguards are not in operation in the facility and the room where you will be teaching (e.g. guards in the classroom and/or cameras, etc.)		Safeguards are in operation in the facility (e.g. guards in classroom and/or cameras, etc.)

Program Design, Content & Evaluation

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
<p>15. How does the proposed program utilize a family systems approach? Are there additional subgroups, beyond the individual in jail, with whom you could target programming (i.e. their children, the caregivers of these children, additional family)?</p>	<p>Program is directed to one individual in the family with little or no reach to other family members; access to specific subgroups will be difficult to the degree of impeding program success.</p>		<p>The effort reaches multiple family members and those with whom they frequently interact; access to specific subgroups exists and would be a viable program audience.</p>
<p>16. What are the unique educational needs and learning styles of this audience? How will you identify these needs and learning styles?</p>	<p>Little or no information exists to inform about learner needs and learning styles.</p>		<p>A needs assessment has been done to identify learner needs; others who work with the audience have been consulted (colleagues, facility staff, other providers).</p>
<p>17. Do you have access to effective educational resources (e.g. curricula, written materials) designed or adapted to meet the unique needs of justice-involved learners? How is research on educational programs with this audience incorporated into these materials?</p>	<p>There is little or no access to (or awareness of) resources designed for justice-involved audiences; materials lack research base and references.</p>		<p>There is ready availability of curriculum and other resources designed for justice-involved audiences; materials reflect current and pertinent research.</p>
<p>18. Is there evaluation evidence that the program has already been effective and holds promise for success with this audience? How sound is the evidence?</p>	<p>Evaluation is weak in design and effect; shows little to no benefit in indicators of parenting and family relationships.</p>		<p>Data shows evidence of effectiveness with audience, especially regarding indicators of parenting and family relationships.</p>

Program Design, Content & Evaluation

Considerations	Low Readiness Examples	Your Program Readiness (Low) (High)	High Readiness Examples
19. Is the planned program of enough intensity and duration to result in beneficial changes among justice-involved individuals?	Programs presented in piecemeal with overly broad goals; minimal number of sessions to show impact.	←————→	Program content presented in multi-sessions that build on prior learning
20. How will you ensure that your proposed program does no harm to participants/families? What are the possible risks of participation?	Educator and partners are unaware of possible risks of participation. Program is assumed to have positive effects on all participants. Planners have not walked through possible scenarios/outcomes.	←————→	Educator and partners have thoroughly explored and addressed possible risks of participation to individuals, children, and families. Consideration is taken for privacy emotional well-being, justice impacts, and other factors, in both the short- and long-term. Adequate procedures are in place to protect privacy (e.g. media release forms, secure file storage, etc.)
21. What is the process for fair selection of participants for the program? Who will be involved in selecting participants (correctional system staff, educator, participants self-select)?	Unfair restrictions are placed on who can and cannot participate in the program.	←————→	All potential learners have equal access to participate in the program; if space is limited, criteria to choose learners is fair and unbiased.
22. As you plan program evaluation and/or research, have you taken appropriate steps for human subjects protection? If you report to an Institutional Review Board (IRB), have you obtained approval?	IRB approval (or exemption) is not sought or granted for the work you propose.	←————→	IRB approval is being sought or you have consulted with IRB staff to determine that your project is exempt from IRB review.

Planning for a Successful Program

After reviewing the questions on the preceding pages, you may decide either that you are ready to continue exploring programming with justice-involved audiences or that the necessary support, capacity or other readiness factors are not present at this time. Your decision about whether to move forward may still not be absolutely clear, but you should be more aware of the many considerations involved.

Do you need more information before making a decision? Do you think you should pursue the programming effort as planned, revise it, or perhaps not pursue it? If you decide to move ahead, consider the additional resources available throughout this document as well as on the [UW-Madison Division of Extension Parenting website](#) and [The Literacy Link website](#). These tools will help you navigate educational programming with justice-involved audiences.

Make note of the following as you plan your next steps:

Areas of High Readiness:

Areas of Low Readiness:

Action Steps Needed: