

Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline

An Examination of the Educational Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Women

by

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ABSTRACT

The United States accounts for only 4% of the world's female population, but it is home to more than 30% of the world's incarcerated women, the majority of whom will eventually attempt a successful reentry into society. Almost half of the incarcerated women in the United States have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalency, and only 31% have attempted some college, compared to 58% among the general public (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011). There is ample evidence of the impact of a post-secondary degree on reducing recidivism and increasing reentry success. However, the Arizona Department of Corrections reports that of the more than 40,000 people incarcerated in November of 2019, only 5,333, or 12.5%, were involved in any type of educational programming while incarcerated (2019).

Few studies have looked closely at the barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated individuals, and even fewer have focused on women. The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to examine the educational experiences of formerly incarcerated women through the lenses of critical social theory (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Freire, 1970) and possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) in an effort to more fully understand low educational attainment in this population and use this knowledge to develop an effective, participant-informed intervention and provide recommendations for university outreach programs. Study participants were formerly incarcerated women and individuals who work with this population. Data were collected from in-depth semi-structured interviews and materials created during the College After Prison Workshop which was developed for this project.

Interviews revealed that the women in this study crave a sense of belonging, feel regret over their lost possible selves, experience a fear of standing still or going backward, and have a strong desire to help others. Findings suggest that colleges and universities can support formerly incarcerated women in the post-secondary system by curating a community of scholars and demonstrating a clear path forward for formerly incarcerated women by reducing systemic barriers.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Adam, for being the Sam Seaborn to my Toby Ziegler during this process, and to my son, Tabor, for being awesome.

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CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Prisons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings.

—Angela Davis, *Color Lines*, 1998

Introduction

Kelly was 52-years old when she went to prison. She had a 10th grade education and felt as if she was not capable of more because she had spent much of her life believing she was not smart enough for college—a belief that was reinforced by her family, the educational system, and the society in which she lived. While she was incarcerated, she knew that she wanted something different, but with little education, no knowledge of how to pursue college if she obtained her GED, and the added stigma of having been in prison, she worried that something different was out of her reach.

Kelly’s story is not uncommon in the United States, a country which accounts for less than 5% of the world’s population, but it is home to almost 25% of the world’s prisoners (Walmsley, 2016). Incarceration rates in America have risen sharply in the last three decades with the overall prison population growing 340% between 1980 and 2013, and, in that same time, the federal prison population has grown by 786% (Galston & McElvein, 2016). Women are the fastest growing segment of the incarcerated population, with the number of women in state prisons rising by more than 800% in the last four decades (Sawyer, 2018). By contrast, the total United States population from 1980 to 2013 only rose by 30% (Census.gov). Decades of “tough on crime” policies such as Three Strikes and mandatory minimum sentences, coupled with a failed war on drugs, have led to America holding the dubious distinction of having the highest incarceration

rate in the world (Alexander, 2014; Kearney & Harris, 2014; Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014).

Regardless of one's feelings about the crime or the person, the simple fact is that 95% of inmates in state prisons will eventually be released from prison and returned to their communities (Hughes & Wilson, 2017). The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that more than 600,000 people were released from state or federal prison in 2015 (Carson, 2018), and statistics show that within five years, almost two-thirds of these former inmates will be re-convicted (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). The reasons for re-offending are many and go well beyond the scope of this study, but education has been shown repeatedly to interrupt this cycle of incarceration and re-incarceration (Aos & Drake, 2013; Duwe & Clark, 2014).

It is easy to think that the problems of the prison industrial complex are far removed from society as a whole. Someone is convicted of a crime, they are punished, end of story. What this fails to take into account is that prison does not solve society's ills, it only hides them away. As Angela Davis (1998, n.p.) wrote: "Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages." Davis further explains that "prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear human beings. And the practice of disappearing vast numbers of people from poor, immigrant, and racially marginalized communities has literally become big business." She illustrates the need to look beyond the surface and unpack the explosion in incarceration and understand the systems that lead to a disproportionate number of justice-involved individuals being persons of color.

This is evident in both men and women, and as the rate of incarceration for women has risen, so has the racial disparity. If you are a woman born in 2001, there is a 1 in 56 chance that you will be imprisoned at some point in your life (Bonczar, 2003). However, this number is misleading because the carceral system affects communities of color on a much greater scale than the 1 in 56 number suggests. A White woman's chances of imprisonment are 1 in 111, but, if you are Latinx it is 1 in 45, and if you are a Black woman, the likelihood of incarceration is a dramatically different 1 in 18. Although this gap has been closing in recent years, Black women are still twice as likely than White women to be imprisoned (Bronson & Carson, 2019).

Socio-economic status is also a factor in the lives of justice-involved women. The majority of incarcerated women had an income below \$22,500 per year before entering prison (Rabuy & Kopf, 2015). This is important to understand in a system where cash bail is routinely used as a mechanism to imprison people without trial. Unlike their male counterparts, who are more likely to be in prison than in jail, there are more women in local jails than in state prisons, and 60% of these women have not been convicted of a crime (Kajstura, 2019). Many of these women simply lack the ability to secure bail and return to their families and communities.

Women in the carceral system also face challenges that differ from justice-involved males. Women are more likely to be the primary caregivers of children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2009; Sawyer & Bertram, 2018), to have come from abusive relationships or experienced physical, sexual, or mental abuse in their lifetime (Benedict, 2014; Messina, Calhoun, & Braithwaite, 2016), and to report a higher rate of mental health

issues (James & Glaze, 2006). All of these additional challenges decrease the chances of a successful reentry into the community and increase the chances of recidivism.

The cycle of incarceration and reincarceration tears apart communities without addressing the issues of systemic inequality and poverty that both create and define crime (Alexander, 2012; Lofstrom, & Raphael, 2016) or contending with the societal issues that often accompany these individuals both before and after incarceration (Urban Institute, 2006). This lack of useful, sustainable, system-wide intervention is expensive to the larger society not only monetarily, as the costs for incarceration continue to rise (Bureau of Prisons, 2018), but in terms of our humanity.

One of the many challenges facing formerly incarcerated individuals is post-prison employment (Duwe & Clark, 2014; Pager, 2003; Varghese, 2012). Employment, or lack of employment, is a significant predictor of recidivism, and education is a significant predictor of post-prison employment (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2016; Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, 2013; Lockwood, Nally, Knutson, & Ho, 2012). In a recent analysis of census and IRS data, The Brookings Institute reported that out of 2.9 million formerly incarcerated individuals, only 55% reported earnings in the first few years out of prison, and the majority of that group made less than \$15,000.00 (Looney & Turner, 2018). This matters both because employment is one of the leading predictors of recidivism, and, in regard to this study, because education level can affect your ability to earn a living wage (Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010). In 2018, the median weekly earnings for someone with less than a high school diploma was \$553. This was more than double for bachelor's degree (\$1,198), and, at \$1,434, almost triple for a master's degree (Torpey, 2019). Of course, these data do not reflect the effect that incarceration has on

the ability to get a job at any education level, but they do demonstrate that in our society more education equates to a higher wage.

However, almost half of incarcerated women in the United States have not completed high school or obtained a GED, and only 31% have attempted some college, compared to 58% among the general public (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011). According to the Arizona Department of Corrections, an average of 60% of incoming Arizona inmates do not meet the 8th grade functional literacy standards (2011), but, of the more than 40,000 people incarcerated in November of 2019, only 5,333, or 12.5%, were involved in any type of educational programming while incarcerated (ADOC, 2019).

What this indicates is that there is not only a need for change, but room for educators and post-secondary institutions to fill in this education gap by providing targeted programming and outreach to formerly incarcerated women. This work has already started in states like California, where the community college system actively seeks out formerly incarcerated students (Corrections to College, 2019). In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education released the *Beyond the Box Resource Guide* that provides information to colleges and universities about the ways in which they can facilitate entry into college for justice-involved individuals. These include providing academic and career guidance, informing students of available support services and information on financial aid, establishing partnerships with the community, and incorporating student feedback when determining support services for justice-involved students. The aim of the study, and the College After Prison (CAP) workshop, is to fulfill this mission by working with formerly incarcerated women to provide information and support, not only on the college process but on the barriers they have experienced. Further, this study engaged this

population in conversation about what services are needed as I worked with community stakeholders to expand the workshop and its reach.

Guiding Concepts

Standpoint Theory

Standpoint theory posits that in order to understand any social system, we must see it through the eyes of the people who are marginalized within that system (Collins, 1986, Haraway, 1988). Harding (1991) believes that social science research must center on knowledge gained by those who are marginalized within a system because this knowledge provides the ability to examine phenomena with greater objectivity. Wylie (2003) continues this by stating that “those who are subject to structures of domination that systematically marginalize and oppress them may, in fact be epistemically privileged in some crucial respects” (p. 339). Those who exist in the margins may be more capable of examining social systems critically because they have access to experiences that the dominant center does not.

Historically, the majority of carceral system research, and, specifically, prison and post-prison experiences, has been conducted on men or approached through an androcentric lens (Chesney-Lind & Morash, 2013; Garcia & Ritter, 2012). As a result, the voices of incarcerated women are often unheard. This silencing ensures that a group that has been marginalized because of their status as “ex-convicts,” as well as their gender, race, and socioeconomic status, never have a chance to speak from the margins and shine light on the systemic inequalities that plague our system and have largely defined their lives (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1989).

The carceral and educational systems need to be seen through the lived experiences of these women, because it is only through their voices that we will truly begin to understand not only their own histories but the ways in which the dominant narrative has shaped those histories (Harding, 2004). Because of this, this project used a standpoint approach which gathered data from in-depth interviews with formerly incarcerated women and activities they completed in the College After Prison (CAP) Workshop to gain understanding of the ways in which their experiences with education and the carceral system have informed their sense of what is possible and their expectations for a college education.

Possible Selves

Though the reasons for not attending college either during or after incarceration are myriad and complicated, research indicates that perceived barriers to college, low academic self-efficacy, and the inability to see one's self as "college material" have a substantial impact on whether or not a formerly incarcerated individual pursues education (Allred, Harrison, & O'Connell, 2013; Stone, Morash, & Goodson, 2016). At the core of this study is the idea that increasing a person's college self-efficacy while decreasing their perception of structural barriers, will prompt greater motivation to pursue post-secondary education. This requires a fundamental shift in the participants' identity and the ability to envision themselves as college students and graduates. Because of this, the intervention is informed by Possible Selves theory (PSs) which states that a person's behavior is largely determined by what they think they will become, what they would like to become, and what they fear becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2009).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Along with PSs, the development of the CAP Workshop was guided by social cognitive career theory (SCCT), which is informed by Bandura's social cognitive theory and aims to explain why people make the choices they make (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). According to Bandura (1988), motivation is determined through the interaction of self-efficacy, or the belief in your ability to perform a task, and your expected outcomes from that task, both of which are informed by the environment in which learning occurs and the consequences of chosen actions. The SCCT model examines the inputs of self-efficacy and expected outcomes and their influence on the setting of goals, the attainment of which is influenced both by these inputs and the context in which the person is situated.

The aim of this study was to use standpoint theory and possible selves theory to understand why these women wanted a college education, what expectations they had both of their ability to receive an education and the benefits gained from a college degree, and the barriers to education they have encountered. These theories allowed for a deep dive into their experiences and the ability to use the SCCT model to provide educational content that met them where they are and positively affected their expectations and their sense of what they will become.

Context

Higher Education Context

Many colleges and universities, along with the Common Application, have chosen to "ban the box" and no longer require applicants to answer questions about convictions. Because of this, it is not possible to know how many formerly incarcerated women have

pursued or are pursuing a college education. Any outreach relies on learners self-identifying, and the stigma attached to incarceration coupled with the lack of programs geared toward the success of these students in Arizona provides little opportunity or incentive for them to do so.

This study focuses on formerly incarcerated women in a large metropolitan area of the Southwestern United States. My area of practice covers two institutional systems: Arizona State University (ASU) and the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). ASU is a public university which, in 2018, had an enrollment of 111, 249 students (Arizona State University, 2019). ASU works closely with the MCCCD as well as other community colleges across the state and two other universities. All of these schools are potential educational landing places for formerly incarcerated individuals. However, the educational and financial challenges faced by this population indicate that the community college system may be a more likely entry point due to lower tuition and ease of admission.

Arizona has 21 community colleges, 10 of which are part of the MCCCD. In 2017-18 there were approximately 196,000 students enrolled in MCCCD. Of these students, 32% were classified as full-time, and 68% were classified as part-time, 57% identified as non-white, and the average age was 25 (MCCCD, 2018). This is in line with national data which show that community college students are more likely to be non-White, older than the traditional entry age of 18, and not attending school full-time either because of employment or family responsibilities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016).

Arizona Department of Corrections

According to the Arizona Department of Corrections (AZDOC) at the end of November 2019, there were 42,562 inmates in custody in Arizona, 10.4% of whom were female. Of the total prison population, the majority were either Hispanic (38.6%) or Caucasian (38.9%), and between the ages of 18 and 54 (88.1%). The average length of incarceration for inmates is 24 months, and 51% had been incarcerated at least one time before their current stay. Of these inmates, 5,333 were involved in educational programming, including 2,276 participating in high school equivalency classes (AZDOC, 2019).

Incarcerated Reentry Programs in Maricopa County

Rio Salado Community College, part of the Maricopa County Community College system, has been involved prisoner education since the early 1980s. Their Incarcerated Reentry program provides educational opportunities in Arizona prisons and through distance learning, and they have both vocational training and associate degree options (Incarcerated Reentry, 2017).

Arizona State University (ASU) currently has several initiatives in place aimed at providing education to current prisoners. The Prison Education Program, or PEP, is comprised of volunteer faculty who go into Arizona prisons and teach classes in literature, math, and psychology, among other subjects (Prison Education Program, 2017). The College Program does the same, though specifically with incarcerated women (ASU Lodestar Center, 2016). The Criminology Department participates in a program called Inside-Out that combines ASU students with current inmates for a three-credit class on Criminal Justice (Inside-Out, 2017). ASU also has a student organization, Prison

Education Awareness Club (PEAC), which stages the Prison Education Conference every spring and is involved in various initiatives to increase prisoner education (PEAC, 2017). However, there is no program in place for assisting formerly incarcerated adults attend college.

Arouet, an initiative of Televerde, is a non-profit organization that works with women both while they are incarcerated and upon release. They provide employment, job training, and reentry services, and they are interested in expanding their offerings to include the CAP Workshop (Arouet, 2019).

Problem of Practice

My current positions are Academic Success Coordinator for Arizona State University and Adjunct Sociology Instructor at a community college which is part of MCCCDC. In both of these positions, I have worked with formerly incarcerated students and I have studied the effects of our failed carceral system policies. I have seen the transformation that happens when a person is successful in college, and I believe that this intervention can increase those opportunities for an oft-ignored population.

In my time with MCCCDC, I have had quite a few students who have either served time themselves or had a family member who was incarcerated. This has usually been revealed during class discussions when we are examining the carceral system, though several students have spoken to me privately out of a fear of negative class reactions. In these conversations, formerly incarcerated students have revealed the struggles they faced, and the obstacles they needed to overcome to get to the point where they could enter college. Almost every student told me the same thing: “I knew I wanted to do it, but I didn’t know where to start or if it was even possible and so I almost gave up.”

Thankfully, these students either found it within themselves to take that first step or had someone in their life who provided needed support. But, for each of their success stories, there are many who never make it that far.

Over the course of the past three years, I have gathered perspectives from fellow advisors and teachers, including those at ASU who are teaching classes to currently incarcerated populations, and I have taken part in discussions and workshops meant to ease the reentry process. Through my own classrooms, campus panel discussions, and the annual Prison Education Conference at ASU, I was able to listen to former inmates tell their stories, and I have heard leaders in the Arizona Department of Corrections discuss their wish for a system that is more rehabilitative and less punitive. What I have taken from all of this is that there are people in the system—current and former inmates, teachers, administrators, and state officials—who want to find a better way to make education possible for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

As discussed, there are some programs in place for going into the prisons and teaching inmates, sometimes for credit and sometimes not. I spoke to the directors of three of these programs and asked two questions: “What type of information are people given about applying to college when they get out of prison?” and “What programs are you aware of for people who are already out of prison and are interested in attending college?” The answers were that there is a small workshop for those who are attending in-prison classes about the process for applying to college upon release, but nothing for those not in the classes, and they were unable to direct me to any solid resource for formerly incarcerated individuals.

I then asked those who have been incarcerated about their experiences with release and reentry. Each of the seven people I interviewed told me that they were given no information about education, and little about anything else (Personal communication, 2017-2018). They were each interested in pursuing education after adjusting to life on the outside and finding a way to survive, but, for many, they just did not know where to start.

The Arizona Department of Corrections does have a transition program in place to help facilitate a successful reentry into society, but only a small percentage of released inmates, 5% in 2015, participated in the program due to budget cuts (Mahoney & Philip, 2015). Unfortunately, when it comes to educational opportunities for formerly incarcerated adults, ASU, and the community as a whole, is doing little to contribute to a solution. Underscoring my point was the recent experience I had when I tried to put myself in the shoes of a formerly incarcerated woman who is interested in attending college and attempted to find information on my next steps. Despite my years as a higher-education professional and familiarity with search engines and college websites, and my general comfort level with the internet, I had little success. Though I was able to find a number of organizations that help with possible job placement, even more that dealt with substance abuse, and two that provided life coaching in various forms, I was unable to find reference to one program that focused on helping these women attain their educational goals.

If we are to engender change in a problem as far reaching, and as complicated, as low-educational attainment among this population, I propose an easily accessible, comprehensive, evidence-based workshop that actively encourages college self-efficacy

among formerly incarcerated women and shows them the ways to remove the barriers that may be interfering with their successful pursuit of a college education.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to explore the academic identities of formerly incarcerated women, critically examine the post-secondary educational system through the lenses of possible selves theory and standpoint theory and develop recommendations for effective university outreach programs. It was framed around the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past selves within the educational system?

RQ 2: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past, current, and future expectations for a college education?

RQ 3: How have learning experiences influenced college-going behavior and attitudes among formerly incarcerated women?

RQ 4: What barriers to education have formerly incarcerated women experienced?

RQ 5: How do formerly incarcerated women experience a college readiness program designed to support their expectations for a college education?

RQ 6: How can colleges and universities develop and sustain outreach programs to best support formerly incarcerated women's expectations for college degree attainment?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

In this chapter, I discuss the carceral system in the United States and Arizona, including relevant key terms, and examine challenges facing formerly incarcerated individuals, with a focus on the unique challenges faced by women. I additionally describe the theories that provide the framework for the study, namely, critical social theory, which frames the project in terms of social justice, standpoint theory, which places the lived experiences of the participants at the center of the research, and, possible selves (PSs) and social cognitive career theory (SCCT) which informed the development of the innovation.

The Carceral System in the United States and Arizona

Key Terms

Post-secondary education. For the purposes of this study, post-secondary education refers to any education beyond high school or the K-12 system. This includes both two-year and four-year universities and trade and technical schools and includes certificate and both degree and non-degree seeking students.

Educational attainment. Educational attainment refers to the level of education an individual has achieved (as opposed to any schooling they may currently be receiving). This study was guided by the premise that formerly incarcerated women have low educational attainment as compared to the general public and, as a result, their prospects for post-incarceration success are limited.

Identity. Mead (1934) believed that identity, or our idea of self, is a social process and that a person's identities are the result of their interactions with others and

with their society. These identities are constantly renegotiated in response to new social inputs, and our view of self allows for the simultaneous existence of multiple identities. In their original exploration of possible future selves, Markus & Nurius (1986) believed that these identities form our ideas of what we can become, and they take a “constructivist orientation to identity in which the self is seen as dynamic, contextually interactive, and evolving, rather than fixed throughout adulthood” (Plimmer & Schmitt, 2007, p. 61). The use of standpoint theory and exploration of possible selves in this study is aligned with the idea of identity as a fluid social construct.

Expectations. This study focuses on two types of expectations: efficacy and outcome. Efficacy, or self-efficacy, expectations are your belief in how capable you are of performing an action or completing a task (Bandura, 1986; Reeve, 2015). Unlike self-efficacy, which is an expectation of your own capabilities, outcome expectations are what you believe will result from a behavior or chosen course of action (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Self-efficacy in a particular task and the expected value of that task determines the likelihood that an individual attempts the task and persists in its completion (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This forms the basis for the CAP Workshop.

Recidivism. Recidivism refers to a return to criminal behavior after having been punished in some way for previous crimes and is measured by “criminal acts that resulted in rearrest, reconviction or return to prison with or without a new sentence” (The National Institute of Justice, 2014, n.p.).

Justice involved. The Department of Health and Human Services (2016) defines justice involved individuals as, “anyone who is currently or has been involved with the criminal justice system. This includes individuals who are awaiting trial, convicted of a

crime, on probation, under home confinement, incarcerated in jail or prison, under community residential supervision, or on parole.”

In 2019, Berkley Underground Scholars published *Language Guide for Communicating About Those Involved in the Carceral System* which included the following terminology which I use throughout this study:

Formerly incarcerated. This applies to anyone who has been in state or federal prison, local jails, juvenile detention centers, or any other carceral setting.

Carceral system. This term replaces criminal justice system, which is both inaccurate and carries a negative connotation. The carceral system includes the detention facilities and the systems in place that contribute to mass incarceration.

The Rise of Mass Incarceration

In 1980, there were approximately 500,000 people in America’s prisons and jails, by 2015, that number had jumped to nearly 2.2 million, and though the last few years has shown some decline in the rate of incarceration, the United States is still the most incarcerated nation on earth (Gramlich, 2018). In that same time period, the total United States population only grew by approximately 30% (Census.gov). The incarceration rate only tells part of the story, however, as the majority of those under correctional supervision are not in prison or jail. In 1985, there were 2, 904, 979 people under some form of correctional supervision, including incarceration, probation, and parole (BJS, 1987). That number had more than doubled to 6,741,400 in 2015 with 1 in 37 adults supervised by United States adult correctional systems (Kaeble & Glaze, 2016).

This rise in incarceration rates, and the resultant increase in justice-involved individuals, has its roots in carceral system policies, such as mandatory minimums and

three strikes sentencing, that were put in place in the 1980s and 90s and driven by political parties fighting to be seen as tough on crime (Alexander, 2012; Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014).

In the mid-1970s, state and federal lawmakers started moving away from a model where prosecutors, judges, and parole boards had discretion in sentencing and in deciding who would be released and when. Instead, policies which standardized prison sentences and the length of required time served were enacted (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014). Though these policies were created and enforced ostensibly to remove bias from a flawed system, one of the latent functions was a system where it was harder for judges and prosecutors to use discretion based on circumstances outside of the crime itself or to find alternative means of punishment.

In the mid-1980s, the focus turned to enacting stricter drug laws and stricter penalties for violent crimes. The *Anti-Drug Abuse Act* of 1986 established mandatory minimums for drug offenses, which contributed to the dramatic increase in incarceration (Provine, 2007). The effect on communities of color was particularly devastating due in part to the focus on crack cocaine and the disparity in sentencing between crack, which was more likely to be used in low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color, and powder cocaine, which was associated with affluent whites (Beaver, 2010; Provine, 2007; Vagins & McCurdy, 2006). The legislation took power away from judges and prosecutors and required a minimum sentence of 5 years for 5 grams of crack cocaine or 500 grams of powder cocaine. If you were caught in possession of 50 grams of crack, the minimum sentence was 10 years, but to get the same amount of time required 5 kilograms of cocaine. The mandatory minimum sentences and the focus on crack cocaine and drug-

policing ensured that huge numbers of low-level drug users would be arrested and, once convicted, sentenced to years in prison (Clear & Frost, 2014).

The final major piece of legislation that accelerated mass incarceration was the *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act* signed by then President Bill Clinton in 1994 which codified systems that were more punitive than rehabilitative (Clear & Frost, 2014; Eisen, 2016). The VCCLEA not only established criteria for truth in sentencing laws, which dictated how much of their sentence inmates must serve before being eligible for parole, it also provided funding to states to increase police presence and build the prison industrial complex (Department of Justice, 1994). The *VCCLEA* also overturned earlier legislation which allowed incarcerated individuals to receive education funds through the Pell Grant (Galston & McElvein, 2016). This change made it extremely difficult for inmates to receive education, and the decrease in educational funding contributed to the number of prison education programs dropping from 340 to 8 in just one year (Clough & Fine, 2007), thereby ensuring that those who entered prison educationally disadvantaged exited in the same position.

The Carceral System and Race

There is no evidence that increased incarceration provides a clear benefit to society, but there is ample evidence that this reliance on incarceration has devastated communities and disenfranchised a large number of American citizens, especially citizens of color (Alexander, 2012; Davis, 1998; Fasching-Varner, Mitchell, Martin, & Bennett-Haron, 2014). Nationally, people of color are disproportionately represented in the carceral system (Carson, 2018; Nellis, 2016). Although white women outnumber African American and Hispanic women in prison, the rate of incarceration for women of

color is double that of whites (Carson, 2018). African Americans make up 12.6% of the total United States population and 5% of the Arizona population (U.S. Census, 2017), but they make up 41% of the total prison population (Carson, 2018) and 14.5% of the prison population in Arizona (AZDOC, 2019). We see this same trend with Hispanic and Native American populations, with almost 45% of the Arizona prison population falling into these two categories despite the fact that the state is 83% white (U.S. Census, 2017).

Reentry Challenges

With an incarceration rate of 710 inmates per 100,000 residents, the United States is leading the world in the percentage of our citizens who are imprisoned (Kearney & Harris, 2014). At the end of 2015, 1 in 53 adults was under some form of community supervision (Kaeble & Bonczar, 2017), and the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that more than 600,000 people were released from state or federal prison in 2016 (Carson, 2018). These former inmates are confronted with the same challenges of low-educational attainment and low employability that they faced going into prison coupled with a host of societal censures that come with having been incarcerated. As a result, the majority of them will recidivate within five years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). Unfortunately, colleges and universities are doing little to address this issue, despite ample evidence of higher education's positive impact on reducing recidivism and increasing the chances of a successful reentry into society (Aos & Drake, 2013; Duwe & Clark, 2014; Pompoco, Wooldredge, Lugo, Sullivan, & Latessa, 2017).

This lack of involvement from post-secondary institutions is not surprising in a society that, according to Alexander (2012), devalues the lives of prisoners and former prisoners and uses incarceration not as a means of rehabilitation, but as a way to further

marginalize a large number of its citizens. The societal expectation is that people will come out of prison and live as law-abiding citizens, but that same society legalizes discrimination against these citizens and reduces the chances for a successful reentry into the community. For example, housing instability has been shown to be a significant predictor of recidivism (Clark, 2016; Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010), but those with a criminal record are often restricted from attaining housing either through direct regulation, in the case of public housing, or through policies enacted by individual landlords that allow a refusal to rent (Fontaine, 2013; Geller & Curtis, 2011).

The ability to attain and maintain employment is one of the key determinants of reentry success (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2016; Gill & Wilson, 2017), but former inmates face discrimination in employment through applications that require the disclosure of a criminal record and the stigma of having been incarcerated (Duane, La Vigne, Reimal, & Lynch, 2017). Employment, or lack of it, is closely tied with housing instability both because the need for a stable address is often required on applications and the job itself is needed to pay for housing (Herbert, Morenoff, & Harding, 2015; Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010). This helps to create a system in which those who may want to move on from incarceration and create a better life for themselves are blocked from doing so.

Education level has been shown to be a predictor both of post-prison employment and recidivism (Gaes, 2008; Hall, 2015; Lockwood, Nally, Knutson, & Ho, 2012; Matsuyuma & Prell, 2010). However, post-secondary educational institutions have engaged in discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals by requiring any criminal record to be disclosed on the admittance application or openly denying former prisoners who are otherwise qualified (Castro, Ginsburg, & Howard, 2017). Although

some states are taking the lead and actively working to provide education to currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, the state of Arizona and its post-secondary institutions need to do much more to contribute to the successful reentry of these individuals into their communities.

Challenges Faced by Women in the Carceral System

The United States accounts for only 4% of the world's female population, but it is home to more than 30% of incarcerated women (Kajstura, 2018). The rate of incarceration for women in Arizona outpaces the rest of the country, with a rate of 184 per 100,000 women as compared the United States average of 133. Though many of the consequences faced by formerly incarcerated persons are universal, the experiences of women often differ dramatically from their male counterparts and they face a unique set of challenges that many existing programs do not take into consideration (Garcia & Ritter, 2012; Van Voorhis, 2012).

Incarcerated women are far more likely to have come from abusive relationships or to report experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in their past (Benedict, 2014; Messina, Calhoun, & Braithwaite, 2016). They also report a much higher rate of mental health issues, with a rate in state and federal prisons that is almost 20% higher than male inmates (James & Glaze, 2006). Incarcerated individuals experience serious psychological distress (SPD) at a rate that is far greater than the general public (Bronson & Berzofsky, 2017). This is particularly evident in women, with 32% of women in jail and 20% of women in prison meeting the threshold for SPD, while for men it was 14% and 26% respectively.

Researchers point to the role the war on drugs has played in the dramatic increase in the imprisonment rate among women, who are often imprisoned for nonviolent drug offenses (Bumiller, 2013; Ramirez, 2016). However, many women leave prison with the same substance-abuse issues with which they entered (Garcia & Ritter, 2012). These issues, coupled with mental health challenges and the demands of reentry prove overwhelming for many.

Women are also far more likely to be the primary caregivers of children, with more than 60% of women in prison, and 80% of women in local jails, having a child under the age of 18 (Glaze & Maruschak, 2009; Sawyer & Bertram, 2018). Upon release, these women often struggle with their identity as ‘good mothers,’ and many need to fight for custody of their children and, regardless of custody, to rebuild a relationship that was interrupted by incarceration (Baldwin, 2018; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Easterling, Feldmeyer, & Presser, 2018). This struggle, and the demands of caregiving, can have a negative impact on a woman’s ability to attend college, even if the motivation and desire is present.

Garcia & Ritter (2012) found that 95% of women leaving prison reported that education was their greatest employment need. As discussed, the majority of incarcerated women have not attempted college, compared to the rate of 58% among the general public (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011), and we know that education level is a predictor of wages (Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010; Torpey, 2019). Incarcerated women had, on average, a lower median income before going to prison than non-incarcerated women, with 72% having an income below \$22,500 as compared to 48% among non-incarcerated women (Rabuy & Kopf, 2015).

Women are less likely than men to gain meaningful employment after prison, and this is even more true when race is taken into consideration. In an examination of unemployment rates, Couloute and Kopf (2018) found that formerly incarcerated people were 5 times more likely to be unemployed than the general public, but that African American women, with a rate of 43.6%, were far more disadvantaged than other groups. For example, the rate for formerly incarcerated white women was 23.2%, and for it was 18.4% for white men. What this means in practical terms is that formerly incarcerated women, and especially women of color, have fewer resources when coming out of prison and less work experience above minimum wage to take into the job market, and they are more likely to face difficulties when trying to secure employment and successfully re-enter the community.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory (CST) is a means to explore the dominant social and political systems and the ways in which they oppress and marginalize certain members of society (Dant, 2003; Freeman and Vasconcelos, 2010). One major way this is accomplished is through the voices of the marginalized in an effort to interrupt the dominant narrative and understand alternative realities (Brooks, 2007; Harding, 2004). CST has its roots in the work of Horkheimer (1982) who claimed that if a theory, if applied, should explain a phenomenon, identify those in power, and provide clear goals to affect change. CST has spawned a number of sub-theories, such as feminist theory and critical race theory, which focus on different groups of marginalized people in an attempt to elevate the human condition (Bohman, 2016).

In the context of this project, CST is used to acknowledge the systemic inequalities that are built into the American educational, carceral, and capitalist systems and emphasize that these issues must be addressed when looking at any social phenomenon (Calhoun, 1995; Collins, 1998; Leonardo, 2004). CST includes approaches that are focused on the power of social change through education and include diverse perspectives from stakeholders while being both aware and critical of the larger social systems in which the problem being studied operates (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Freire, 1970; Greene, 2006). The carceral system is in many ways a system of oppression which disproportionately affects communities of color and low socioeconomic status populations, so it is important to keep these systemic inequalities in mind when approaching this research (Lofstrom & Raphael, 2016; Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014).

According to Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010), to be a critical social theorist is to “view society as a human construction in need of reconstruction” (p. 7). CST is both a means to evaluate a phenomenon and the resulting activity that advocates for and brings about change. They contend that all critical social theories involve the four interrelated theories of false consciousness, crisis, education, and transformative action. In this study, these four manifest in the following ways:

Theory of false consciousness. False consciousness refers to an individual’s acceptance of the dominant narrative and a distorted view of their place in that narrative. This false consciousness can manifest in incarcerated populations where low educational attainment coupled with low college self-efficacy creates a self-perpetuating system where the people in the system believe they cannot turn their lives around (Allred,

Harrison, & O’Connell, 2013; O’Brien & Leem, 2007). The aim of the CAP Workshop is to increase college self-efficacy and flip the accepted script.

Theory of crisis. In education policy making, crises are often presented as a failure on the part of the learners and community rather than on the educational system (Valencia, 1997). This deficit approach situates the problem of low-educational attainment as one of “achievement gaps” and cultural practices which do not value education and serves to define marginalized groups as problems in the system, thereby creating an *us vs. them* mentality (Freeman and Vasconcelos, 2010). It is incumbent on critical social theorists to work toward identifying the genuine crises that face society and avoid blaming the victims of oppressive and unjust policies. When looking at the issue of low-educational attainment among formerly incarcerated women, it is important to be aware of an educational system that creates the school-to-prison pipeline, carceral system policies that lead to high rates of incarceration, and a system that works against the successful reentry of former prisoners.

Theory of education. CST views education as an ongoing process between the learner and the researcher and challenges both to critically examine society and their role in that society while working toward engendering change in that society and themselves. One aim of the CAP Workshop is to allow for that critical examination while encouraging problem-solving behaviors in the participants that lead to further education and action (Freire, 1970). I approached this study with the idea that education is a “practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994). In regard to these participants, the freedom applies not only to prison, but from their own self-doubt and from the systemic barriers which prevent attending a post-secondary institution.

Theory of transformative action. The goal of applying CST is to affect change, but that change has to be internal as well as external. Transformative action requires not only the push toward social change but an awareness of your role in creating and maintaining the current systems. It is not as much about fixing a problem as changing the ways in which we approach that problem (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Freire, 1970; Leonard, 2004). The short-term goals of this study were to help formerly incarcerated women take the next step toward post-secondary education, and to learn from their experiences to help the larger population of women re-entering society from prison. The long-term goals revolve around reshaping the way in which this society thinks about and approaches prisoner education and reentry. This is a journey that also forced me to engage in constant self-reflection, and I encourage the participants and the audiences for this project to do the same.

Standpoint Theory

In order to study a phenomenon, we must approach it from the margins with an eye toward challenging existing dominant structures that contribute to the systemic oppression of marginalized groups (Harding, 2004; Intemann, 2015). The goal of my research is to not only understand the experiences of formerly incarcerated women, but to use those experiences to engender both small and large-scale social transformation. With this in mind, this project applied the lens of standpoint theory and it is guided by the idea that knowledge is situated in social location and experiences (Hartsock, 1983).

Standpoint theory, with its focus on marginalized voices, social justice, and speaking truth to power is, by its very nature, a transformative approach (Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1983; Jaggar, 1983).

One tenet of standpoint theory is that to understand a phenomenon in any substantive way, we must explore the situated knowledge of the people who experience that phenomenon and not rely on the researcher's ability to be objective (Haraway, 1988). Using this theory, the CAP Workshop and accompanying study are meant to provide a platform where those who are often silenced can speak about their experiences and examine the context in which they have lived these experiences with a critical eye. Standpoint theory places these voices at the center of the work to allow for the exploration of individual experiences with a commitment to intersectionality and social justice (Chesney-Lind & Morash, 2013).

In practice, this means that the workshop activities, as well as the data collected from this study, were geared toward listening to and understanding the experiences of these women. Though a review of the literature and my own interviews with formerly incarcerated individuals have given me an idea of the barriers faced by this population, any substantive change effort must be driven by the perceptions and lived experiences of the people most affected by those barriers.

According to hooks (1989), marginalized people know that they are marginalized, and this knowledge can, and should, be a place of power because it allows for a view of reality that encompasses both the margins and the center they orbit. This center is shown through the fight against it, and there is power in critical and socio-political consciousness that relies on the importance of voice. Both Ladson-Billings' (2014) culturally relevant pedagogy and Paris & Alim's (2014) culturally sustaining pedagogy are direct assaults on that center and a call to voice. The authors discuss the need for those outside the center to not only be tolerated, but be heard, and respected as a part of a new

center. To do this, those in the center must allow space for counter-storytelling and a critical examination of privilege.

Possible Selves Theory

My years of working with students in higher education, discussions with formerly incarcerated women, and gathering of composite narratives of this population, have shown me that the images students have of themselves, both positive and negative, have a major impact on the decisions that they make. Research shows that developing a positive future self aids in increasing desistance and, by extension, decreasing recidivism (Healy, 2014; Hunter & Farrall, 2017). For this reason, the CAP Workshop and the data collected to inform future iterations of this workshop are partially informed by Possible Selves theory (PSs). PSs looks at motivation through the lens of self-concept and the examination of possible future selves which guide behavior through what you think your future can be, what you want that future self to be, and what you fear that future self could become (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2009).

These possible future selves are created through experience and societal conditioning, including the systems of oppression that have created our carceral system, and are influenced by internal (self-efficacy) and external (belief in what is possible) factors (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In relation to this study and its participants, this means understanding past educational selves, recognizing current educational selves, and developing an idea of future educational selves. This allows for an exploration of knowledge and an examination of formal systems so that those in the margins can overcome their oppression by “critically recognizing its causes, so that through transformative action they can create a new situation” (Freire, 1970, p. 47).

Possible future selves can be a powerful motivator by providing a “conceptual link between cognition and motivation” (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p 954). If a person is able to visualize their future self, they are more likely to either work toward the positive future self (what they would like to become) or actively work against the negative future self (what they fear becoming). Markus & Nurius (1986) argued that these possible selves are the motivator for the majority of behaviors because we are always moving toward the person we want to be or away from the person we do not want to become. They further theorized that a positive future self is, often, not enough to fully motivate behavior without the presence of a feared self as well. It is this idea of chasing what is desired and running from what is feared that provides the motivation to act (Dunkel, 2000; Gibson, 2015).

In the case of non-traditional college students, the visualization of possible selves, both positive and negative, aids the individual in persisting despite the existence of multiple societal factors that work against that persistence (Gibson, 2015; Ozaki, 2016). For formerly incarcerated individuals, these same possible selves can provide an alternative to behaviors that may lead to recidivism by tapping into what is possible for the individuals and giving form to the feared future self (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Cross & Markus (1994) theorize that an individual’s ability to reach their desired possible self is largely dependent on the schemas they employ. These schemas are constructed from past learning experiences and “have a systematic and pervasive influence on how information about the self is processed” (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 955). According to Ozaki (2016) self-schemas provide the cognitive bridge between possible selves and the behaviors employed to either reach the desired self or avoid the

feared self. Conceptual schemas are the frameworks we use to make sense of the world and the ideas we have about how it operates, while procedural schemas are the behavioral strategies we develop and the plans we make to work toward the attainment of our desired possible self (Ozaki, 2016). In this context, conceptual schemas contain information on the value of a college education and the ability to see oneself in the role as student, and procedural schemas include information on how the process works and the tools needed to reach the long-term goal of a college education (Pizzolato, 2006).

One aspect of PSs focuses on self-efficacy and what the person feels they can become (as opposed to what they would like to become). This was of particular interest to this study as I worked to increase academic self-efficacy, which is defined as the belief in one's ability to perform academic tasks successfully (Schunk, 1991). Bandura (1997) stated that: "People's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively the case" (p. 2). For the study participants, what this meant is that it does not matter if they are capable of performing college-level work and successfully completing a degree as much as it matters if they believe they are capable. One goal of the CAP Workshop was to increase academic self-efficacy where needed and to help women who may not feel as if they are capable of completing college begin to view themselves as "college material."

As an example, I spoke with a woman who has successfully started educational programs in several states, and who has taught incarcerated juveniles for fifteen years, and I asked her how she motivates these children to pursue higher education. One major factor that she reported was the building of self-efficacy through the completion of small goals—a good rewrite on a difficult paper, she said, would often lead them to want to

write another, and another, and to eventually believe that they could actually write (Personal communication, October 10, 2017). She theorized that the act of writing an acceptable paper changed the way they viewed themselves and what they were capable of, thereby creating a new desired possible self and, perhaps, helping them forge a new path, and their former identities as people for whom college is not an option were replaced with the new possible self of college student. This is in line with the belief that identity is fluid and the formation of our identities can be influenced by new social inputs.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

The workshop was also informed by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) which outlines the ways in which people are motivated toward employment and academic decisions through the interaction of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and the influence of the larger context in which the behavior occurs (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). SCCT draws heavily from Bandura's social cognitive theory and the study of self-efficacy beliefs and their influence on behavior. According to Bandura (1988), one's self-efficacy in relation to a task combined with the expected outcomes from that task determine motivation, and this motivation is further influenced by the environment in which learning occurs and the consequences of chosen actions. This is illustrated in the idea of triadic reciprocity, a model in which personal attributes and attitudes, external environmental factors, and overt behavior influence each other and decisions that are made (Bandura, 1988). In the SCCT model (Figure 1), these same three constructs are seen in person inputs, background environmental influences or contextual affordances, and the personality and proximal environmental influences.

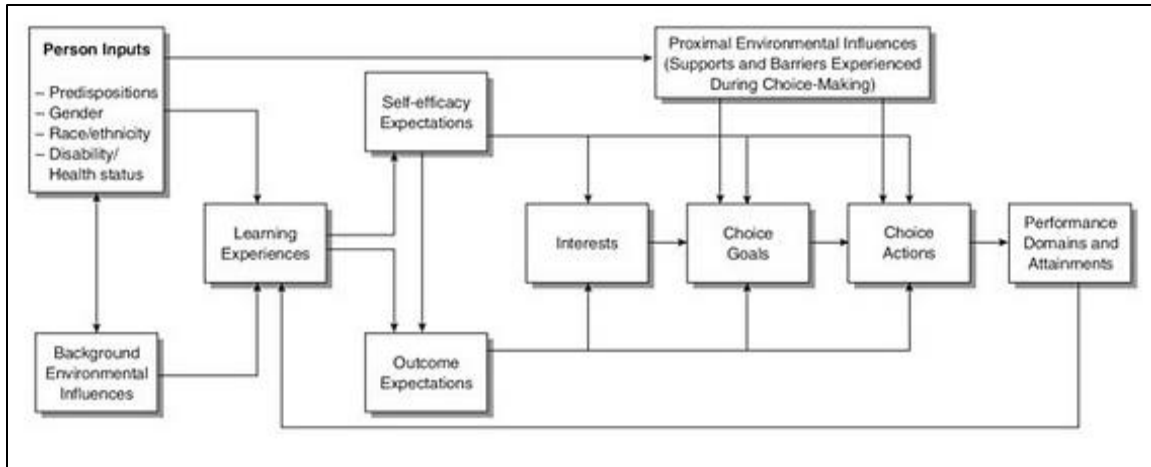


Figure 1. A Simplified View of How Career-related Interests and Choices Develop over Time, According to SCCT

Hackett (2002). Adapted from Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D. and Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 45, 79-122. Reprinted with permission.

SCCT is also influenced by Krumboltz's (1976) work in social learning theory as applied to career decision making and by Hackett and Bentz's (1981) work with self-efficacy and career development which evolved from Bandura's work (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). SCCT is more concerned with self-efficacy than the work done by Krumboltz, however, and treats it as task specific rather than an overall personality trait. Lent, Brown, and Hackett maintain that self-efficacy in career and academic pursuits is a major factor in eventual goals, regardless of any global sense of self-efficacy. SCCT aims use social cognitive theory and the constructs of social learning theory and career self-efficacy to create a model of career and academic choice that can be used to develop interventions and to aid in counseling.

SCCT, as applied to academic interests, is concerned with how these interests develop, how academic choices are made, and how success is obtained. Though SCCT was developed to apply to employment choices, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) make

the point that academic choice and career choice models share similar causal mechanisms and, because academic development is closely tied with career development, it is useful to look at both of these areas through the same lens. SCCT has also been used to examine both the career and academic choices of marginalized populations, including adult inmates and juvenile offenders (Ameen & Lee, 2012; Chartrand & Rose, 1996).

The theory focuses on three linked variables: self-efficacy beliefs (do you believe you are capable?), outcome expectations (do you believe that the system will help or hinder?), and goals (what actions are you taking?) and targets these constructs specifically to career and academic goals and thus provide an appropriate framework for this study.

The CAP Workshop focused on self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations by attempting to influence college self-efficacy and improve the outcome expectations to allow for the settings of goals as the participants work toward their desired future self. However, it is important to understand that neither self-efficacy nor outcome expectations exist in a vacuum. The life experiences that the participants brought to the workshop influenced not only how they received the training but the training itself. The data collected using the standpoint and possible selves lenses, specifically, the person input and contextual affordances associated with these women, served to answer the research questions and improve future iterations of the workshop.

Person inputs refers to both the ascribed characteristics over which one has little control such as race, sex, and physical disabilities (Lent, 2014). These inputs can affect learning experiences through socialization, membership in the dominant group or existence in the margins, and attempts one makes to be in and of the dominant world. The

background environmental influences relate to everything else in a person's life, including socioeconomic status, family dynamics, and access to education (Lent, 2014).

All of these influence the level of self-efficacy a person feels in a particular area and what they expect to happen when performing a behavior or making a choice about which direction to take (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

Varghese and Cummings (2012) specifically addressed the use of SCCT with incarcerated populations by examining the ways in which its components could be applied to work with current and former inmates. The authors contend that this model is well suited to use with this population because it deals with both social justice aspects (in the form of barriers and supports), and personal inputs such as abilities and ascribed characteristics such as race and gender. They further hypothesized that this framework can be used to look at the self-efficacy and outcome expectations in a marginalized population and use these data to develop effective interventions. For example, a participant in the current study may come into the workshop with low college self-efficacy based on their upbringing, quality of education, and belief in the idea that it is impossible to break out of the carceral system in any lasting way. The achievement of a small win in the form of setting a goal, such as successfully gathering information on the college of their choice, and the action of completing a college readiness worksheet, may lead to an increase in that self-efficacy and the outcome expectations of attending college, which may then lead to the setting of another small goal, and so on.

Self-efficacy, one of the key components of SCCT and a major focus of this project, has been tested in various ways with formerly incarcerated individuals, but Allred, Harrison, and O'Connell (2013) tested the immediate effect of a prison-based

education program on self-efficacy. They studied the effect of prison-based education on self-efficacy among participants in an Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (one group of students from the university, and one group of incarcerated individuals) and hypothesized that participating in this program would improve self-efficacy. They measured general self-efficacy among both groups of students (incarcerated and not) both before and after the intervention, which involved a semester long program in two prisons and one work release facility. They found that participation in the program significantly increased general self-efficacy for the incarcerated students. Though its scope is limited, it provides a useful jumping off point for my own innovation.

Oen, Manger, Eikeland, and Asbjornsen (2013) examined academic self-efficacy in prisoners, specifically whether their belief in their reading and writing skills or those actual skills were more predictive of participation in prison education. They found that self-efficacy, especially in regard to writing, had a much more positive impact on participation than the actual writing ability of the participants.

SCCT has also been used to create career interventions for current inmates. Fitzgerald, Chronister, Forrest, and Brown (2012) completed a study with adult male inmates which tested the effect of OPTIONS, an intervention grounded in SCCT and its constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations (change in lives that inmates expected from employment), and career goals. Results showed that the treatment groups had higher career self-efficacy, more hope for the future, and a greater belief in their problem-solving skills after the OPTIONS program as compared to before the program and as compared to the control group.

The goal of this action research study was to facilitate the next step toward higher education (whatever that next step might be) for the participants and identify the obstacles that may be hindering their progress. The SCCT model offers a systematic way to explore barriers, both internal and external, and measure concrete outcomes such as making an appointment with an admissions counselor or filling out a college application.

Switch

Though the larger goals of this study included the creation of an ongoing workshop for formerly incarcerated individuals and a contribution to a societal change in the way we work with this population, the immediate goal was to engender change in the individuals who participate. Because of this, the activities were largely guided by the Heath and Heath (2010) Switch model and the idea that to really engender change you must address both the rational and emotional thoughts and feelings of the individual and the situation in which behavior occurs. The authors liken this to a rider (rational), an elephant (emotional), and the path (situational) and theorize that if one part of this system is not functioning optimally and is dominant for too long, change is difficult. You can be rational all the time and get nothing done, you can run on pure emotion and get nothing effective done, or the path can be so obstructed that neither the rider nor the elephant have a chance. Yes, a strong vision and motivation might help to clear that path, but if you want change to be sustainable, you need to make it easy for the rider to direct that elephant, and for the elephant to get where it needs to be.

Though my work is focused on identifying and overcoming barriers in regard to post-secondary education, I know that I am just working on a very, very small part of a situation with no easy answers. I could potentially affect the motivation and college self-

efficacy of every participant, but, unfortunately, I do not have a lot of control over the situation. Until that larger situation changes, the best I can do is try to change the behavior of some individuals and contribute, just a little, to a societal shift.

The CAP Workshop addressed all three of these components through activities tailored to speaking to the rational rider, motivating the emotional elephant, and shaping the path, or situation, in such a way as to facilitate change.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I discuss the purpose of the study and the research questions, the intervention of a college readiness program, the methodology, sampling, setting, role of the researcher, and data collection. I then discuss the methods for data collection and the trustworthiness of the study.

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to examine the educational experiences of formerly incarcerated women and to test and refine the College After Prison (CAP) workshop. Data collection was centered on giving voice to this population and providing materials that would facilitate pursuing post-secondary education. This study addressed the following questions:

RQ 1: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past selves within the educational system?

RQ 2: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past, current, and future expectations for a college education?

RQ 3: How have learning experiences influenced college-going behavior and attitudes among formerly incarcerated women?

RQ 4: What education barriers have formerly incarcerated women experienced?

RQ 5: How do formerly incarcerated women experience a college readiness program designed to support their expectations for a college education?

RQ 6: How can colleges and universities develop and sustain outreach programs to best support formerly incarcerated women's expectations for college degree attainment?

Intervention

I developed the College After Prison (CAP) Workshop based on a review of existing literature, interviews I have conducted with education professionals and formerly incarcerated individuals, and my experiences working with formerly incarcerated students.

Online Materials

At the beginning of the workshop, the participants were granted access to the CAP Google classroom and the collegeafterprison.org website which I created for this study. The classroom contained the learning modules that the students engaged with throughout the intervention, and the website provided a simplified view of the resources to allow for the possibility of technical difficulties and to ensure ease of access to important materials after the workshop. The belief was that if the participants are actively learning the new material, rather than just sitting through an informational session, they would more easily assimilate this new knowledge into their existing frameworks or use this knowledge to alter their view of themselves and the educational possibilities (Piaget, 1928; Bruner, 1961; Pizzolato, 2006). Table 1 provides an overview of the content contained within each Google classroom module.

Table 1*Google Classroom Modules*

Module	Contents
Module One: Getting Started	Education Journey Map instructions Possible Selves Questionnaire
Module Two: Burning Questions	Financial Aid and Incarceration (Ed.gov) Checklist for Adult Students (Ed.gov) Maricopa County Community College District Admissions Requirements MCCCD Prior Learning Assessment (video) Arizona State University Freshmen Admission Transfer Admission Earned Admission The Common Application
Module Three: Setting Goals	Why Do You Want to go to College? Motivation and Goal Setting Worksheet S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting Worksheet
Module Four: Paying for College	Federal Student Aid Resources Federal Student Aid ID Filing the FAFSA Financial Aid Process (video) Types of Federal Financial Aid (video) Federal Aid Forecaster FAFSA Estimator ASU Tuition Estimator MCCCD Financial Aid
Module Five: Choosing a Career & Major	me3@ (ASU website) MCCCD Fields of Interest Occupational Outlook Handbook Career One Stop MCCCD Transfer Pathways ASU Transfer Credit Guide
Module Six: Academic Roadmap	Academic Roadmap Worksheet

Module Content

The CAP Workshop consisted of one data collection module where the participants explored their possible selves and educational journeys, five learning modules, from which data was also collected but was not the focus, and one discussion module (Table 2). The modules were scaffolded to allow the participants to interact with material once the tools and foundational knowledge were in place (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Table 2*CAP Workshop Modules*

Module	Activity	Data Collection	Theory	Question/s
Zero: 15 minutes	Introduction Technology/Google Classroom check			
One: 45 minutes	Education Journey Mapping Possible Selves Questionnaire	Completed Maps Questionnaire	Possible Selves Possible Selves	RQ 1 to RQ 6 RQ 1 to RQ 6
BREAK 15 MINUTES				
Two: 60 minutes	Burning Questions (group discussion)	Researcher Journal	Possible Selves, SCCT	RQ 1 to RQ 6
Three: 45 minutes	Motivation and Goal setting	Researcher Journal	Possible Selves, SCCT	RQ 1 to RQ 6
LUNCH: 1 HOUR				
Four: 60 minutes	FAFSA Edu.gov website Application prep	Researcher Journal	SCCT	RQ 5, RQ 6
Five: 45 minutes	me3 [®] (intro, activity, discussion)	Researcher Journal	SCCT	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 4, RQ 5
BREAK: 15 MINUTES				
Six: 30 minutes	Roadmap	Researcher Journal	SCCT	RQ 3, RQ 5, RQ 6
Seven: 15 minutes	Debrief and discussion	Researcher Journal		RQ 5, RQ 6

To understand where the participants have been and how they view themselves within the educational system, the Module One involved the creation of Education

Journey Maps and completing the Possible Selves Questionnaire. The Education Journey Map depicted both the participants' past experiences with education and their expectations for the future. This mapping allowed for the visual representation of the standpoint of the participants and an exploration of possible selves (Annamma, 2017). Education journey mapping draws from PSs and was used to explore the participants' view of themselves in the educational system and to understand the ways in which colleges and universities can help this population. The participants were given a prompt which asked them to map their educational journey, including significant places and people, barriers, and opportunities. I provided paper, colored pencils and markers, and they were asked to draw a map for going forward and what that looks like to them. I shared my own education journey map with the hope that showing my own non-traditional journey would serve to humanize me and build trust. As a class, we discussed the maps and the barriers and supports that were either present or hoped for, and I took a photo of each map for later analysis.

The participants then completed a Possible Selves Questionnaire (see Appendix A), which served as a continuation of the Education Journey Maps and began to clarify the desired outcomes to facilitate the creation of an action plan for moving forward. Both of these activities speak to the emotional elephant in the Heath and Heath (2010) model and the conceptual schemas the participants have about the higher-educational system and their place within it (Cross & Markus, 1994).

In Module Two, the goal was to begin to direct the rational rider in the Heath and Heath (2010) model and influence the procedural schemas the participants may have by increasing knowledge about the college process. This was approached through a

facilitated group discussion to address the burning college-related questions that research has shown will be foremost in the participants' minds, with room for additional questions. The interviews I conducted with formerly incarcerated women and the informal discussions I have had with those who have been incarcerated indicated that the most pressing questions are those that pertain to the ability to attend college. The most frequent concerns were whether a formerly incarcerated person can be accepted into college and, if so, how they will pay for it. A common misconception is that a person who has been in prison does not qualify for federal financial aid, which is only true in one very narrow instance. According to SCCT, motivation for a behavior is dependent on the expected outcome and a person's self-efficacy beliefs in regard to the behavior (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1993). I theorized that addressing the burning questions, and facilitating understanding of what is possible, would serve to raise self-efficacy and improve the expected outcomes by lowering the perceived structural barriers, which would in turn allow the learners to more fully engage with the next activities.

To develop an effective intervention which improves the likelihood of college enrollment for formerly incarcerated individuals, it is important to understand the motivation of the population being studied (Aos & Drake, 2013). In Module Three, the participants explored their motivations for college and used the reflections from Module One to set concrete goals. In the motivation activity, we used an adapted version of the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, et al., 1992) to look at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to help the participants tap into their reasons for considering higher education (see Appendix B). As a class, we worked through statements about attending college and the participants scored themselves based on the statements. The Academic Motivation

Scale (AMS) asks the question, “Why do you go to college?” and uses a 7-point Likert-type scale and a series of 28 items to measure intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivation. Statements for intrinsic motivation include “Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things,” while extrinsic motivation is represented by statements such as, “Because I think that a college education will help me better prepare for the career that I have chosen.” I adapted the scale to focus on this population and why they want to go to college. After exploring motivation, we worked through a goal setting exercise using the SMART framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely (see Appendix C). These activities were meant to focus on the expected outcomes of attending college by speaking to both the rider and the elephant and beginning to clear the path for change.

In the next two modules, the participants took what they learned and the goals they had set for themselves and began to make academic choices and look at the possibilities. The work of naming a possible self, both desired and feared, is important, but what one would like to become means little if they feel as if there is no way to achieve this goal (Cross & Markus, 1994; Knox, 2006). It was also important that the participants not only believed that they are capable of achieving their desired future self, but they also had a roadmap that bolsters that sense of self-efficacy (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004; Pizzolato, 2006). This roadmap reinforced the possible future selves by giving clear direction both toward the desired self and away from the feared self.

Module Four was focused on exploring the available options for paying for college. We revisited the rules that apply to incarcerated persons and began working with

the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and looked at other funding sources. Like Module Three, these activities were meant to increase the positivity of expected outcomes and lower the perceived structural barriers, thereby providing the impetus for following through on the goals established in Module Three. We discussed the different types of federal financial aid available and watched two short videos provided by the Department of Education which further explained the aid available and the method of applying. I demonstrated how to find the tuition estimators for both Arizona State University and the Maricopa County Community College District, and the class worked independently on the Federal Aid Forecaster.

In Module Five, participants explored possible futures through the use of the me3[®] career and major exploration tool in conjunction with the Occupational Outlook Handbook and career exploration materials provided by the Department of Education and MCCCDC. Me3[®] is an interactive, and quick, major and career quiz that draws from the Strong Interest Inventory manual and Holland's RIASEC model that measures six areas of career interest: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (Holland, 1997; Major and Career Exploration, 2017). The RIASEC model has been shown to be an effective tool in helping individuals decide on a career path based on their interests and passions (Šverko, Babarović, & Međugorac, 2014; Tracey, 2008). The me3[®] program takes this a step further and chooses appropriate college majors based on the suggested careers, which helped the participants make decisions about their post-secondary education journey.

Module Six involved the creation of a college information sheet that the participants can use as a guideline when they are ready to take the next step and apply to

a post-secondary institution (see Appendix D). This activity provided a tangible document that both gave form to the desired possible self and provided practical information, thereby lowering the structural barriers and creating a clear path forward.

The final module was a group discussion and debrief of the day's activities in order to inform future iterations of the workshop. The focus was on what worked, what did not work, what is still needed, and what can colleges and universities do.

Role of the Researcher

Though I am an outsider to this population in many ways, having not been incarcerated, and possessing an advanced degree, I do feel I have a societal stake in this research. I have studied the effects of our failed carceral system policies, and in my role as a sociology instructor for several local colleges and universities I have spent a great deal of time in front of classrooms trying to make sense of a system so rooted in oppression. I have worked with students who have been incarcerated, and I have heard their stories of how they overcame many obstacles on the path to higher education, and how society still works against them as they strive to create a better life. As an academic advisor, I see the struggles that "traditional" students face magnified in marginalized populations. As a human being, I see the devastation caused by discriminatory policies meant to punish but never to rehabilitate, and I feel the need to contribute to a solution.

As a woman, I understand the struggles faced by many to have their voices heard, but as a relatively privileged woman, I know that my experiences may differ greatly from the women I am studying. However, my journey to this privileged place has not been smooth. My own standpoint from which I speak is Caucasian, middle-aged woman who was raised in a low-income household by parents, and then, after divorce, one parent,

who did not go to college. I had a difficult time in high school and was expelled, twice, before becoming a mother at a young age. I obtained my GED and tried unsuccessfully to attend college in my early twenties. I did successfully reenter college at 31 after the death of my husband. I believe that these experiences coupled with my commitment to place the voices of formerly incarcerated women at the forefront will ensure that I approach this work with empathy and humility.

As the researcher, I was, and am, responsible for all aspects of the study. I developed and lead the intervention which was a workshop for formerly incarcerated women interested in higher education. I conducted the initial screening of participants as well as in-depth interviews and post-intervention interviews, and transcribed, coded, and analyzed all data.

Research Methodology

Transformative Research Paradigm

Though the goal of this study is to ultimately affect college-going behavior, it does so through the belief that behavior is a direct result of systemic issues, and is often an adaptation to a dysfunctional system, and is not in itself the problem to be addressed. The aim of this action research project was to not only understand the experiences of formerly incarcerated women, but to take that understanding and use it to improve the CAP Workshop and, on a larger scale, to advocate for equality and fairness for this population and to engender lasting change in marginalized communities. The CAP Workshop is one part of a larger effort focused on not only the education of formerly incarcerated women, but also the communities to which they will return and the post-secondary institutions that will be instrumental in furthering that education. My work as a

sociologist and educational researcher is focused on social justice, and this project continues that work by examining the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated women not only to affect change in their lives but in the lives of other women through system level reform in the post-secondary educational system.

This focus on social justice and social change fits with a transformative design (Creswell, 2015). A transformative paradigm takes into account issues of inequality and the socially constructed nature of the problem presented. It relies on the researcher to build trust in the population being studied and to cultivate a deep understanding of the cultural issues of the participants so that participant experience drives the analysis (Mertens, 2007, 2010). It lends itself to a qualitative action research approach that allows for rich data collection with a look at the experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals through a case study of a smaller group of formerly incarcerated women that explores issues of self, motivation, and efficacy.

Methods

In this section, I discuss the setting, recruitment and participants, the overall data collection plan, provide detail about qualitative strategies, sampling procedures, instruments, process, and analysis.

Setting

The CAP Workshop took place at the Downtown Phoenix campus of Arizona State University. I chose ASU Downtown because of the proximity to public transportation and central location. The Downtown Phoenix campus is located in Maricopa County, the most populous county in Arizona and the 4th largest in the nation (Maricopa, 2020). The campus is located close to stops for both the Valley Metro light

rail and bus system. The classroom was located in the University Center building which is adjacent to two Valley Metro stops. The tables were arranged in rows with six computers per table. The participants sat in the first two rows, which allowed both for individual work and small group discussion.

Recruitment and Participants

As mentioned, the target population was formerly incarcerated women who do not have a college degree who have, or are in the process of getting, a high school diploma or GED, and have not attended a post-secondary institution post-prison.

To find participants, I established contact with two groups that work both locally and nationally and have a large Facebook presence: The Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network, and Reinventing Reentry. I then reached out to contacts at ASU who work with currently incarcerated persons and obtained their help in recruitment. Through these contacts, I was connected with a woman who is an executive at Televerde, an organization that employs currently and formerly incarcerated women and provides reentry resources including career and education workshops. I obtained the cooperation of the founder of Reinventing Reentry and the executive at Televerde to act as liaisons between myself and two Facebook groups created by formerly incarcerated women in Arizona. I also met with a representative from the Arizona Department of Corrections who agreed to place flyers for the workshop at the Parole Office in Downtown Phoenix.

In the summer of 2019, I used convenience sampling and sent a brief questionnaire via email and Facebook to the previously discussed community groups to obtain a pool of potential participants and delivered flyers to the Parole Office (see Appendix E). The questionnaire gathered basic demographic and contact information

(age, race, education level, phone number, email) as well as asking their ability to commit to the study and attend the workshop and participate in pre- and post-workshop interviews. The original materials listed the workshop as two sessions, but this was adapted to one day to encourage a greater number of participants. The survey received 27 responses, 13 of which were received before the change to the workshop was made, and I received an additional two inquiries via email. One email stated there were a total of five women who were interested, bringing the potential number of participants to 33. I responded to each inquiry using the method or methods provided by the respondents, then responded again if I did not receive a reply. I then sent the consent form and FAQ to all who responded (see Appendix F).

I gathered demographic data from the 27 survey respondents and one woman through email. Nine of the women were between the ages of 18-35, 11 were between the ages of 36-45, and the remaining eight were over the age of 46. Fifteen of the respondents identified as Caucasian, six as Hispanic, four as Native American, one as African America, one as Asian, and one respondent considered herself both Hispanic and Native American. Twenty-five of the women had a high school diploma or GED, and 18 had completed some college. Of the 33 who expressed initial interest, I was able to establish contact with 11 women, and nine participated in the study as an interviewee, workshop attendee, or both. Table 3 provides demographic information on the nine participants.

Table 3

Participant Profiles (pseudonyms used)

Name	Age	Race	Interview	Workshop
Carrie	28	Caucasian	Yes	No
Theresa	34	Hispanic	Yes	No
Michelle	32	Hispanic	Yes	No
Kelly	55	Caucasian	Yes	No
Jody	57	Native-American	Yes	Yes
Sharon	50	Caucasian	Yes	Yes
Mari	30	Asian	Yes	Yes
Sarah	68	Caucasian	Yes	Yes
Claudia	39	Caucasian	No	Yes

Instruments and Data Collection

As an exploration of identity and self-concept, PSs requires a deep dive into the lived experiences of the population being studied (Markus & Nurius, 1987), but data collection comprised of words alone may fall short of the desired thickness in data. Because of this, I utilized an intervention approach that involved the use of a visual representation in the form of the Education Journey Map that allowed the participants to tell their stories through different media. These visual data provide a window into the stories of the participants and allow for an examination of the ways in which a person's conception of self interacts with the larger society and the systems that have largely defined their existence (Annamma, 2017; Powell, 2010)

PSs places the story at the center of the research (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Whitty, 2002). The ways in which the researcher elicits this story are varied, but, at their core, each is an attempt to understand the lived experience of the participants and to gather data that allows for transferability (Mertler, 2017; Oyserman & James, 2009). Though this is possible with verbal and written data collection, our brains react differently to

images and this difference can be explored as a means to dig deeper and gather data that is richer, thicker, and more complex than that attained by words alone (Harper, 1993).

Five types of qualitative data were collected (Table 4). An inductive analysis of these data was conducted to search for themes that provided a framework and guided the refinement of the intervention. This was a constant comparison, as the qualitative data were coded, interpreted, and triangulated to allow the data collected to help drive the study (Mertler, 2017).

Table 4

Qualitative Tools

Data Tool	Detail	Questions Addressed
1:1 Semi-structured interviews, pre-workshop	7 formerly incarcerated women	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 6
1:1 Semi-structured interviews	3 carceral system professionals	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 6
1:1 Semi-structured interviews, post-workshop	4 formerly incarcerated women who participated in the CAP Workshop	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 5, RQ 6
Education Journey Mapping	CAP Workshop, 5 participants	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 6
Possible Selves Questionnaire	CAP Workshop, 5 participants	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 6
S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting	CAP Workshop, 5 participants	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 6
Post-workshop debrief	5 participants	RQ 5, RQ 6
Researcher Journal	Ongoing Field observations Reflexive analysis of the researcher and the process	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 4, RQ 5, RQ 6

Pre-intervention in-depth interviews (FIW). As part of a case study approach to qualitative data collection, I conducted intensive interviews with the workshop participants to illicit detailed responses about their lived experiences (Berg, 2007; Yin, 2017). This approach works well with standpoint theory as its goal is thick data that comes from the person being interviewed and not from preconceived notions on the part of the researcher. The interviews were conducted via phone and recorded through Google Voice, or face-to-face in a study room in a local public library. Verbal consent was obtained on the audio recording of the interview.

The interview protocol was informed by previous discussions with formerly incarcerated women, my work with formerly incarcerated students, and a review of the literature (see Appendix G). The in-depth interviews addressed RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, and RQ 4. The open-ended questions focused on the ways in which the participants see themselves in the educational system, the ways in which they view that system, perceived and experienced barriers, and received and desired support from a post-secondary institution.

Semi-structured interviews (carceral system professionals). It was important to this study to also hear the voices of people who have worked within the carceral system and who could speak to the needs of the target population. These interviews provided insights into the system itself and valuable data which allowed for pattern matching and triangulation of the themes that emerged from the interviews with formerly incarcerated women and my observation during the CAP Workshop. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix H.

Education Journey Mapping. Education Journey Mapping was the primary form of visual data collection that was utilized. This technique involves the exploration of past, present, and future selves in the educational system through the creation of a map that charts the journey and allows for an exploration of the barriers, successes, and contextual influences on the participants throughout that journey (Annamma, 2017). The participants created these maps in Module One of the workshop, and we used them as a way to open a conversation about college and the contexts in which the participants have lived. I used a content analysis approach, defined as “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Neuendorf, 2002) to look for themes that relate to PSs and the participants’ view of themselves in the educational system. I also used pattern matching to look for representations of self-efficacy, background contextual affordances, and perceived structural barriers which is in-line with the SCCT model (Lent, 2014). Samples of the created maps can be found in Chapter 4.

Possible Selves Questionnaire. In an effort to further understand where the participants have been and, more importantly for the CAP Workshop, where they would like to go, I administered the Possible Selves Questionnaire which was adapted from Oyserman (2018). This tool asked the participants to think about who they would like to be next year and whether or not they felt as if they were capable of achieving those goals. They were then asked to reflect on why they did or did not feel capable. They were then asked to think about their feared possible self with the prompt, “In addition to expectations and expected goals, we all have images or pictures of what we don’t want to be like; what we don’t want to do or want to avoid being.” Information from the

questionnaire was used to both stimulate conversation and inform future iterations of the workshop. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Goal setting. Data were collected from both the modified Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) (Vallerand, et al., 1993) and a S.M.A.R.T. goal setting activity. The AMS was modified to remove questions which measured amotivation with the belief that those who participated in the workshop have already demonstrated that they are motivated on some level to attend college. The participants were asked to rate 22 statements on a Likert-scale from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating *not at all me* and 7 indicating *this is me exactly* in response to the questions, “why do you want to go to college?” The AMS included statements such as “For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things,” and “because I want to have ‘the good life’ later on.” The participants then used the key provided to determine if they were more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (see Appendix B). As a class, we discussed strategies for maintaining each type of motivation during their academic careers.

The participants then completed a S.M.A.R.T. goal setting activity (see Appendix C). The S.M.A.R.T. approach was first described by George Doran (1981) to help executives set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. It has been used widely as a way to help individuals and teams break down big projects into manageable steps. In his theory of small wins, Weick (1984) explains that large problems are too much for any person, or any system, to attack at once, and that it is easy to feel overwhelmed to the point of inaction. The solution is to focus on smaller, more controllable parts of that whole. This activity, and the larger workshop, is partially based on these small wins and research that shows that increased self-efficacy combined with

expected value increases the likelihood that a desired action will be taken or goal achieved.

Post-intervention semi-structured interviews. The post-workshop interviews were used to illicit feedback on the CAP Workshop, as one goal of this study was to have a participatory aspect to the action research. It was important to understand what activities were of the most use to the participants, and I was particularly interested in learning about how the workshop did not meet expectations. Another goal of the interviews was to determine whether the participants had made any progress in fulfilling the goals they had set for themselves in the S.M.A.R.T. goal activity and to gauge the level of confidence they now felt. Finally, the interviews were a chance for the participants to ask me further questions and receive ongoing support for their efforts. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.

Post-workshop debriefing. In order to understand how the participants experienced the CAP Workshop, it was important to have both immediate conversations and a chance to give feedback after some reflection on the part of the participants. After the workshop, we sat as a group and discussed the day's activities, including what went well and what needed improvement.

Researcher journal. I kept a researcher journal with field notes from the innovation containing observations of the participants and data that emerged from their interactions with myself and with each other. I also recorded my impressions from the interviews and the themes that emerged as I transcribed and coded each round.

Data Analysis

For this study, I used a ground up approach when analyzing data (Saldaña, 2018). Though I came into the study with some basic propositions and information gathered from early interviews and a review of the literature, it was important for the constructivist/standpoint theory lens to allow the participants to drive the data. I coded the various data sources using a general grounded theory approach.

The desire to allow the themes to emerge from the data, coupled with a need to understand a phenomenon that is not well represented in the current literature, lends itself to an approach to data collection that involves an inductive analysis to search for themes that will provide a framework and guide the refinement of the intervention (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2015). This involved a constant comparison of the qualitative data and a system of coding these data coupled with a willingness to remain flexible as open coding led to the development of focused codes that directed further data collection (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

I approached the data first with a mixture of descriptive and process coding to provide straightforward information on the data, and, through process coding, a richer analysis of the experiences of the participants (Saldaña, 2018). Though I was not looking specifically for the processes of daily life, I was looking for the actions the participants took both before and after prison in regard to education. I then utilized in vivo coding for the interviews with formerly incarcerated women as it is applicable to a study grounded in standpoint theory (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2018). In vivo coding is used when you want to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (p. 106). This method was useful to the study because it allowed me to evaluate my own preconceptions about the themes that

would emerge and ensured that the lived experiences of the participants were at the forefront.

I then utilized a focused coding approach and grouped the initial codes generated into broad themes such as “self-efficacy,” “barriers,” and “attitudes” while constantly comparing the descriptive, process, and in vivo methods of coding. Finally, I recoded each interview using codes that were focused on possible selves theory and critical social theory. These included the creation of themes such as “feared possible self,” “lost possible self,” “false consciousness,” and a breakdown of different sources of self-efficacy as they applied to education.

Trustworthiness

This study focuses on the lived experiences of the participants and their perceptions of the post-secondary education system, and the small sample size makes it is less about generalizability and more about transferability. The goal is a deep understanding of a phenomenon with an eye toward using the data collected to inform further research both within the current setting and beyond. Because of this, validity and trustworthiness are vital (Mertler, 2017).

I used several strategies to counteract any possible threats to validity. Among these were triangulating the data collected from the interviews, Education Journey Maps, Possible Selves Questionnaires, goal setting activities, and class discussions with data collected from carceral system professionals to ensure that the themes I identified were evident in different sources (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I also engaged in reflexivity throughout the process and worked to clarify my background and possible biases before the study began and monitor how these biases

may shape the interpretation of my findings (Creswell, 2015). I recognize that complete objectivity is not possible, and subscribe to the idea that “Subjectivity is not bias; in fact, a deep awareness of one’s own assumptions and focus strengthens the qualitative researcher’s claim of quality” (Maxwell, 2015, p. 687).

Finally, I utilized synthesized member checking as a way to ensure the accuracy of my findings (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). The participants were each offered a copy of their transcript for review, and they were also directed to a form which summarized the key themes that emerged from the interviews and invited feedback. As an example, they were given the following summary of Theme 2, missed opportunities: Many women spoke about regret over missed educational opportunities. For some, they wished they had made different choices when they were younger. They felt as if they were encouraged to go to college but they followed a different path. Others felt as if their lives may have been different if they had been given the tools they needed when they were in high school. One person stated: "I wish I would have known in high school that I could go to college, it would have probably changed my whole life because I would have had some hope for the future, but I didn't know.”

The participants were then asked if they had experienced or witnessed this and if they had anything else they would like to add. I also then asked two of the carceral professionals that I interviewed about the themes that I had found and directed them to the form as well.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

If we don't center the voices of marginalized people, we're doing the wrong work.

—Tarana Burke, CNN, 2017

This quote from activist and creator of the MeToo movement, Tarana Burke (cited in Grinberg, 2017) is at the heart of why I have spent the better part of the last three years listening to the experiences of justice-involved women and examining their role in the educational system before, during, and after incarceration. This has been a reflective process as I have had to examine my own place in the educational system and the assumptions I brought into this work and continually revisit completed interviews and use this knowledge to inform those that came after.

In this section, I share what I have learned from these women about their educational journeys and the forces, both internal and external, that have influenced, and have the potential to further influence, those journeys. First, I discuss the major themes that emerged in relation to the educational past selves of the participants (RQ 1) and examine their past, current, and future expectations for a college education (RQ 2). Then, I discuss how learning experiences have influenced their educational journeys (RQ 3). Finally, I look at the institutional barriers these women have faced and the ways in which they experienced the CAP Workshop (RQ 4 and 5).

These results were based on analysis of the five qualitative data sources: (a) pre-intervention semi-structured one-on-one interviews with formerly incarcerated women; (b) semi-structured interviews with educators who work with justice-involved

individuals; (c) post-interview follow-up interviews with workshop participants; (d) notes from my researcher’s journal; (e) participant-created materials from the CAP Workshop. Data sources included (a) transcriptions from seven pre-workshop interviews with formerly incarcerated women, three of whom participated in the CAP Workshop; (b) four post-workshop interviews with participants; (c) interviews with three women who work with justice-involved individuals; (d) content analysis of the Possible Selves Questionnaire, SMART goal setting activity, Education Journey Map, and researcher journal notes. Table 5 provides information on the formerly incarcerated participants, including age, race, and the data collected.

Table 5

Participant Profiles and Data Collected

NAME	AGE	RACE	DATA COLLECTED
Carrie	28	Caucasian	Pre-workshop interview
Theresa	34	Hispanic	Pre-workshop interview
Michelle	32	Hispanic	Pre-workshop interview
Kelly	55	Caucasian	Pre-workshop interview
Jody	57	Native-American	Pre-and post-workshop interviews, workshop activities
Sharon	50	Caucasian	Pre-and post-workshop interviews, workshop activities
Mari	30	Asian	Post-workshop interviews, workshop activities
Sarah	68	Caucasian	Pre-and post-workshop interviews, workshop activities
Claudia	39	Caucasian	Education Journey Map

In addition, I interviewed three women who work with incarcerated populations: Amanda, who has worked with juvenile populations and created educational programs in detention centers; Lindsey, who was incarcerated and now works with an organization

that employs women both in and out of prison; and Regina, a formerly incarcerated woman who works for Lindsey.

In the initial analysis of the five qualitative data sources, I first coded the interviews with formerly incarcerated women, both pre- and post-workshop, interviews with prison educators, and all classroom activities, using an eclectic coding method that focused on description and process (Saldaña, 2018). Then, on the interviews with formerly incarcerated women, I used an additional in vivo coding method to help ensure that it was their words, and not only my interpretation, that informed the analysis. With each method of coding, I identified the initial codes and used the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to group these codes into the larger themes which I present here.

Past, Present, and Future Selves

Research questions 1 and 2 are concerned with the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated women, especially in relation to education, and their views of themselves in the educational system moving forward. In this section, I discuss the major themes that emerged from examining their past, present, and future selves in education: craving a sense of belonging, regret over the lost possible self, childhood trauma affecting educational experiences, fear of standing still or going backward, a desire to help others, and optimism for the future.

Belonging

It seemed like I never fit in. I didn't know how; I just didn't understand what it was. I did what I could to fit in, you know, to find that niche. I still don't know what that niche is.

—Jody

Each of the participants spoke about themselves in relation to the groups they belong to and the ones in which they did not fit in, and how these relationships influenced their academic journeys. Regarding elementary school, this most often manifested in statements of exclusion and discrimination, while in middle and high school the focus moved to the groups the participants did belong to and how they reinforced either negative or positive behavior.

For some, this alienation from classmates was situational and depended on the particular school or on factors external to school that had a profound influence on how they related to others. For others, this lack of connection ran through their entire K-12 experience. Sharon, for example, had trouble belonging both in elementary and high school, and she related this lack of fitting in to her feelings about school in general:

I hated school when I was in grade school and high school. I was not a popular kid and I just, I didn't like school. I didn't like learning. Didn't apply myself. And then in high school it was more about, you know, trying to fit in and doing like the in crowd did. I never really fit in.

She never did find her place in K-12 and did not discover a love of learning until much later when she began to take classes at a local community college.

This connection between school and belonging was echoed by others who saw themselves as disconnected from education because school was a “waste of time” and lacked a sense of community, despite the efforts of the participants to find their place among others. Carrie’s experience in elementary school illustrates the connection of belonging to academic performance: “I want to say I worked hard, but I was super shy and quiet so, and I was really self-conscious. So, I think I was trying to hide more than to focus on my work and I was scared of what people thought about me.” Though she said that there were points when she really liked school, she never developed a deep connection with the educational system and is still struggling to place herself in it.

Jody had perhaps the most intense sense of not belonging because she was transplanted to a completely different culture several times in her life and she struggled with finding her place. She constantly sought ways to fit in with others, but long-standing issues related to abuse and trauma routinely interfered with her efforts to be accepted. She was born on a Native American reservation and had been hospitalized for most of her first two years. Her parents were considered unfit to raise her, and so she was sent to live in a foster home with Hispanic foster parents off the reservation. However, she was returned to her mother a few years later and had to re-enter a society where she technically belonged but with which she felt no sense of belonging:

I was taught, you know, I wasn't like the other kids, and I think I suffered a lot because of that. I had a lot of issues around that as well because for many years I thought I was Hispanic because the foster family was Hispanic. And then after that when I realized that they weren't my family and that these people were my

family, I was like, I went through this like, identity crisis, if you will. I was mistreated on the reservation because I wasn't like the Apache kids.

She stated that this lack of belong was based on a lack of commonality because she “didn't know the customs traditions, the language, anything.” In our interview, she indicated that she still feels disconnected from her birth family and the life that they represent.

Jody experienced this alienation again when she ran away in fourth grade, after several years of abuse by her biological mother and her mother's boyfriend. She found her way to a local church and to the house of the pastor, where she “happened to look in the house and I saw something familiar, which was a home and nice warmth and all that stuff that I remember from growing up. And I wanted that back.” Eventually, her mother was sent to prison and she was able to be reunited with her foster family.

Though Jody was back where she wanted to be, the experiences she had with her birth mother instilled an anger in her that did not allow her to get close to others:

And so, when I came back, I was like the totally, you know, messed up little kid and they had a difficult time with me. I will not say that they didn't. And so, through school I was, I was mean, I was like a little bully. I'd beat up boys, you know, beat up girls. I was pretty, you know, kinda empty there and I wasn't really well liked. I wasn't well liked, and I get it now, but back then, you know, and so I just kinda like just went through all that.

In high school, she sought groups to which she could belong, but her anger issues and constant need to fight interfered with her attempts at connection:

I still had the anger issues. I was always fighting. I was trying to, trying to fit in somewhere. I, it seemed like I never fit in. I didn't know how; I just didn't understand what it was. I did what I could to fit in, you know, to find that niche, which I wasn't sure what, I still don't know what that niche is.

These attempts at fitting in involved joining the basketball team and, in high school, the speech and debate team after being encouraged by a teacher. Ironically, one of the most important means of fitting in that she discovered was through a negative experience with a teacher. This teacher criticized her handwriting, saying that he did not understand the poor quality of her handwriting because he told her that her people had the most beautiful writing. Though she did not identify with “her people,” she made it her mission to practice her handwriting, which led to calligraphy, which led to becoming the go-to artist for school plays, clubs, etc. In our interview, she demonstrated her calligraphy skills, and is still very proud of these skills decades later: “So it's those things that I was like, okay, okay, I fit right here. Okay, I'm good with this.” Unfortunately, these positive associations did little to keep her from seeking other means of connection.

Despite being involved in various school clubs and activities, Jody said that she sought out a group with which she could give her powerful negative emotions free reign. She quit school to start “running around with a bunch of little cholos and gangsters and whatnot, who pretty much fit the bill on my anger issues.” She stated that she found this life glamorous, and though she did attempt some college in an effort to pursue her dream of being an architect, she was pretty far in with the group of friends she had chosen and this eventually led to her arrest and incarceration for almost three decades.

In prison, the need to be accepted and to gain some sense of belonging continued. Though her first few years of incarceration were spent fighting against herself and the picture others had of her, she did eventually, through therapy and a great deal of “soul searching,” find her way to Buddhism and she put herself on a path to cultivate the kind of peer group that would help her move forward rather than holding her back. She decided that she needed a new group that would put her on the path to education and, ultimately, a different type of life:

I need to go to the classrooms, and I need to go to, you know, and that's where you're going to find out the people you want to be around who are productive, positive. I don't care how long you have been at the bottom. So, you got to try to, find a way to elevate yourself. The only way to do that is through school.

Jody's sense of not fitting in, though extreme, was not uncommon among the participants. Several spoke about not fitting in with classmates and how this affected their view of school and their desire to learn. For many, the need to feel a sense of belonging in school intensified in high school as they pulled further from their families and developed peer groups both in and out of school.

Michelle shared that her earliest memories of school are of struggling to fit in with classmates. She attributed this to a shyness that was so deeply rooted that she allowed the teachers to think she could not read rather than read out loud in class. This shyness was partially caused by a childhood illness which kept her physically separated from classmates for fear of infection: “I was pretty sheltered, which didn't really help with me already being shy. So, like I really hated school at that time. I thought it was a

waste of my time.” Because of this, she said, she did not want to attend school and gave little thought to college.

When she was in fifth grade, any potential connection with classmates or teachers was cut off because her parents, who were very religious and did not appreciate the school’s secular teaching, decided to home-school Michelle and her siblings. However, she returned to public school in eighth grade and managed to find a group of friends who were very focused on going to college, which, she says, encouraged her recently discovered desire to become a psychiatrist: “I was super focused on that and it probably helped that most of the people that I befriended when in the new school, they were all focused on college and so that became like a big deal.” These new friends gave her a sense of belonging and instilled in her the idea that “if you didn't go [to college], then you know, you weren't really going to be considered successful.” She graduated from school a semester early and received a scholarship to nursing school, but, for reasons she says she does not entirely understand, she chose to get married right out of high school and had two children by the time she was nineteen, thereby finding a new group to which she would belong.

Theresa’s story is different in that she had a steady group of friends in elementary school and considered herself a good student who was encouraged by her family to attend college. However, in middle school, she began to get into trouble regularly and was eventually expelled from her public school. When asked why she felt she had changed, she stated, “I know I was hanging around with the wrong crowd. I didn't realize it at that point because that was all that was around, or that I cared to hang around, I should say.” During this time, she was “getting into fights and just misbehaving,” part of which she

attributed to the neighborhood she lived in and her home life at the time which was “a little crazy too.”

When she was fourteen, she became pregnant with her first child and left the public school system to attend a charter school intended for students who were either pregnant or had gotten in trouble and so needed an alternative. It is at this school that she found a different sense of community and a place where she felt less like an outsider:

Everyone was either had been in trouble or had to grow up a little bit quicker, so they were at a whole, you know, a little bit different level. So, I could relate a lot more to the people who were going to the school. In public school, it wasn't like that. Like 'oh my god, you have a kid!' or, you know, it was like you didn't belong there.

For Theresa, this sense of belonging helped to keep her in school, though, ultimately, she pursued her GED in an effort to get a decent job so that she could support her child.

Kelly, who is now working on her bachelor's degree but who entered prison with only a tenth-grade education, attributes much of her success to the community she found in prison and their focus on education:

I had, believe it or not, a lot of friends in prison. A lot of people who cared about me as a person, as an individual and that wanted to see me move forward. My actual roommate I have now I was in prison with and she was a GED instructor in prison, and she encouraged me to get my GED at the age of 52—and I did it!

When she decided to attend college, she received further help from this community with administrative tasks, as well as with application and testing fees. Without this help, she said, she could not have done it.

During the CAP Workshop, we discussed prison education and each woman told me that this form of peer support was especially valued while they were incarcerated because they felt truly seen when they worked with others who could understand what they had been through and being encouraged by others in that same situation made everything seem more “doable.” One way in which this support manifested is in the community party atmosphere that would develop when an inmate was successful academically. As Sarah said in our initial interview: “I remember the celebration that would go on when a girl when one of the girls would pass her GED test. You could hear them across the yard. And even the CO's, the officers, you know, were very congratulatory of anybody that was passing their tests.” She went on to say that it is the cheerleading and the help from the community that inspired several women she knew to pursue their GED while in prison, and that “There's value to education there just by watching how appreciative they were that they passed and the support they got.”

Though not every participant felt they did not fit in during their elementary and secondary school experience, they did each speak about community and the ways in which belonging to a group, or failing to gain entry, affected their view of school and motivation to continue their educational journeys. These groups also helped form their identities and their sense of what might be possible.

Lost Possible Self

I was a horrible student, you know, but that just tells me, had I applied myself, I could have been, you know, so much more.

–Jody

Possible selves theory is focused on looking toward the future and what you would like to become, what you think you can become, and what you fear becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In this study, the participants were clearly affected by another aspect of possible selves: what they could have become. Each of the women spoke about the times in their lives that they were given no opportunities or failed to take advantage of those that were present. At one point in their lives, they each had a vision of who they could become, and now they look back at those missed opportunities, and the image of themselves that they see through the eyes of others and think of what might have been.

Of the nine formerly incarcerated women who participated in the study, only four graduated high school before entering prison and, of those four, only two had attempted some form of post-secondary education. All of the participants expressed regret when it came to their education and the opportunities they either missed or were never given. A number of participants talked about the various ways in which they were encouraged to go to college and provided the tools to make it happen, while others turned their frustration toward a system that they feel did not properly set them up for success.

Michelle is one who was given the tools to succeed in college and who had family and teachers who encouraged her goals. She decided in high school, after reading the story of a doctor who had helped a young girl who had suffered horrific abuse, that she wanted to be a psychiatrist. Her friends in high school were all on a track for college, and it was expected that she would follow. But, instead, she went in a completely different direction: “I graduated in December instead of going all the way through May and then got married two days later. Um, if you were to ask me if that was the best decision now, I probably would say I was crazy. I turned down a couple of opportunities, but I felt like at

the time that was the best option for me.” She had two children before she was 19 years old, and says she always expected to go back to school when the children were older, but her husband was “very against me being outside the home” and it never seemed like the right time to make it happen.

Michelle expresses regret about her path not taken not only because her career opportunities are limited without a college education, but because her decisions disappointed her parents, her teachers, her children, and herself. She felt as if there was potential and she was expected to be and do more, but she squandered her opportunities and so, when she was in prison, she “focused a lot in there on building my education and doing anything and everything I could to make sure that I would have a career when I got back out.” Unfortunately, years of not knowing which path to take and not feeling fully equipped to jump back into school has left her in a place where she feels as if there are opportunities, but she just does not know which she should attempt or how she would take advantage of them.

Many of the participants attempted to complete school, for some high school, for others college; however, either internal or external forces often interfered with their progress. Carrie, who does not currently have a high school diploma or GED, talks about her repeated attempts:

I did drop out of high school my freshman year after my dad died and then I went back my sophomore year the following year and I dropped out after that. I tried doing like the online high school and then, I always wanted to get back in school, but I was just so caught up in numbing my pain and whatnot.

She makes it clear that failing to get a diploma was not because of the school itself: “I loved going to school. I think I just, um, I wasn't very confident in myself, but I loved like getting up and getting ready and going to school and all of it. So, I don't really know why I dropped out.” In prison, she tried again, and said she was “lucky enough that they picked me” to attend GED classes, but then she was moved to a different yard and never got to complete the program. However, she said the program, “made me miss going to school even more. I just wanted to, it kind of made me more eager to get out and really try hard to get myself back into school.” She hopes that she will be able to complete GED classes now that she is out and then go to college and work on eventually opening her own dance studio because “I'm really trying to get my life going forward and I want to get into school so I can have a career and really have a life.”

Sharon and Sarah also feel that disappointment, but they pointed to the ways in which their social and educational systems failed to encourage their academic success. Sharon, who came from a “tiny, tiny town in Oklahoma,” was upset with her high school and the lack of resources and information that she feels could have made a difference in the trajectory of her life:

My parents, all my life told me they couldn't afford me to go to college and we didn't have counselors at that time, they probably still don't, I don't know, but in my school we never had a counselor or you know, it was just the k through 12 school and you went to school and I never knew or was informed that you could get grants or student loans. So, college was just to me in my mind was never an option. So, I dropped out and went and got a job at Pizza Hut.

Eventually, she moved to Arizona and did receive her GED and started taking classes at a local community college because she wanted to study psychology and had discovered a love of learning, but marriage and a young child derailed her plans. She continued her lifelong battle with addiction and went to prison on a drug-related charge, and though she does not know if she could have battled her demons successfully, she wishes that she “would have known in high school that I could go to college, it would have probably changed my whole life because I would have had some hope for the future, but I didn't know.” So, she resigned herself to what she called a “very black life” and lost the opportunity to pursue her childhood dream of becoming a veterinarian.

In one case, the regret over missed educational opportunities was present even when the participant had a successful career. Sarah, worked for many years in a high-level professional job before going to prison, talked about her experience and the experience of another formerly incarcerated woman with whom she has remained friends. She lamented the missed possibilities “business wise, career wise, and my own self-worth” had she pursued her education: “We’ve both been in these positions of work where, you know, without degrees, but have always felt guilty and felt we could have done more had we had our degrees.”

This sense of regret over missed opportunities also extends to the prison system and what could have been accomplished on the inside given a decent amount of resources and options (see *Institutional Barriers*, p. 93). Jody completed “a hundred plus credits” while in prison, but she regrets her choices because the credits were not focused toward a degree either because the options were limited or, in some cases, because she took classes that sounded interesting without thinking of how they might apply later:

I was too busy collecting credits, and it didn't really dawn on me until it was too late. I should be doing something here. What am I supposed to be doing here?

And you know, because when you're in a situation like that—I ran out of time, I ran out of time, believe it or not, I actually ran out of time.

She said that she wants to attain a bachelor's degree before she dies, and she has taken steps toward finding out how those former credits can be applied, but she regrets that time wasted and wishes she had set herself up better for her reentry into society.

This sense of regret is also evident in the materials completed by the participants during the CAP Workshop. In her education journey map, Mari (Figure 2), drew her journey as a mountain.

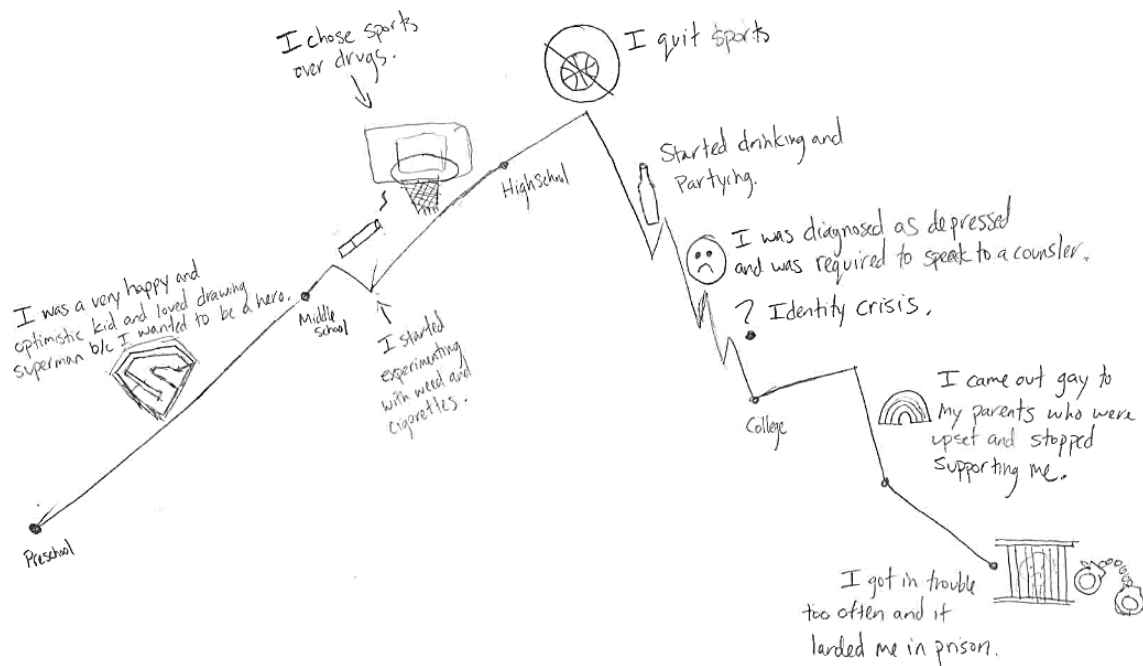


Figure 2. Mari, Education Journey Map. This figure displays Mari's education journey map created during the CAP Workshop.

On the ascent, she presented being a “happy and optimistic kid” and about experimenting with drugs but choosing to pursue sports instead. However, sometime in high school, the drugs won, and she quit sports. She illustrated this decision as the point when the journey starts going downhill and we follow that decision through years marked by increased partying, mental health issues, and the pain of being rejected by her parents for coming out of the closet. Eventually, she “got in trouble too often” and went to prison.

Regret has been described as “a comparison-based emotion of self-blame, experienced when people realize or imagine that their present situation would have been better had they decided differently in the past” (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007, p. 6). Studies have repeatedly shown that one of the life domains in which people experience the most regret is education (Roese & Somerville, 2005; Wrosch & Heckhausen, 2002). As the women in this study worked toward creating a better future for themselves, they were each affected by the idea of what they could have become if they had pursued their education, and they each came to this project stating a determination to overcome that past regret and move into the next stage in their lives.

Childhood Trauma

I always wanted to get back in school, but I was just so caught up in numbing my pain.

–Carrie

For many of the participants, trauma in their childhoods and adolescence played a key role in their educational journeys. For some, such as Michelle, this took the form of serious childhood illness that kept her from fully participating in school and with her

classmates, for others it involved parents who were incarcerated or otherwise absent, while others experienced physical and sexual abuse.

Several of the participants come from homes marked by drug addiction and alcoholism. For Jody and Sharon, this meant being removed from the custody of their parent or parents and entering the foster care system, while for Carrie, this became a model for behavior: “I started doing meth when I was actually in sixth grade. That was the first thing I ever did, um, before smoking weed or drinking. Um, it just ran in my family, my parents did it and whatnot, so I kind of grew up around it.” Her teen years and her years in high school were greatly influenced by what was going on with her parents. Earlier in our interview she had stated that she loved going to school and was not sure why she dropped out, but as we dove deeper into her childhood, her views on the experience changed: “I didn't want to be there. I was doing a lot of drugs so I just, I would go to avoid my mom yelling at me ‘cause she was out [of prison] at that point.” There was a brief time, during her sophomore year, where she switched to a different high school which has a partnership with Arizona State University and she seriously began to think about college, but then her life took a drastic turn:

My dad died when I was 16, and that's where I started getting really heavy into using meth. And then my mom died when I was 22 and at that point I just didn't, I just didn't care anymore. So, um, that's all I was just using to numb. I didn't care about trying to get a job or trying to get my life straight or go to school or anything of that sort.

She was “homeless and doing a lot of drugs” before going to prison, and she tried several times to pursue education while in prison, and now she worries that those past

experiences will always be in the back of her mind as she tries to get her college education.

Sharon was born a heroin addict and taken from her mother at age three. She spent three years in the foster system before being adopted by a family who moved her to a small town in Oklahoma that was defined by agriculture and religion. Despite being removed from her mother's influence she says she "idolized my biological mother thought that I wanted to be just like her, which I turned out to be, which was not a good thing." As previously discussed, she struggled to belong and did not feel as if college was an option, so she followed in her mother's footsteps and has only recently begun to change her life and look toward finally completing her education.

In Jody's case, she was removed from her family and sent to live with a foster family, then sent back to her mother when she was in second grade. She says that she "went from living in a nice three-bedroom house, two bathrooms, all the amenities, whatnot to pretty much third-world conditions and lived in a one room house." There were nine other children in the house, and the children were left to fend for themselves:

We would pretty much eat raw bacon, whatever we came into. We knew, we learned how to scramble eggs. We ate a lot of eggs, a lot of, sometimes we just, we didn't know how to build fires. We had to learn how to build fire. We would cook outside. It was really rough.

For Jody, elementary school became a place where she could escape her mother and get food because "to me it was a big deal to be able to eat lunch." She was a smart girl, but said that she was a horrible student, despite being on the honor roll, because she was "just

a student who just kind of like showed up.” She described being disengaged from school but doing well because she would do her homework at the last minute and pass.

When Jody was in fourth grade, she ran away to escape the mental, physical, and sexual abuse she was suffering at home:

I was molested by my mother's boyfriend. After I told her, she pretty much took his side. It was really kind of weird, but she just, kind of it wasn't a big deal. And to me, I, I was, you know, I didn't know how to handle that. So that was like one of those things that I didn't resolve. I got abused. My mother, she would come home in a drunken rage and beat us for no reason, for whatever.

She was eventually able to be reunited with her foster family, but the scars from her time with her mother affected every aspect of her life and her time in middle and high school was marred by her anger and her inability to cope with her trauma:

I had a lot of underlying issues that I know that were never dealt with. Nobody could understand why I was so angry. Nobody could ever understand, you know, a lot of the stuff that I went through, I never, they tried to send me to counseling, but I couldn't talk about it. I don't want to say I didn't know that what I was doing was right from wrong, but I didn't really understand that I had an anger problem.

Though Jody did finish high school, she did not really address her anger with her mother and the abuse she suffered until she had been in prison for a few years and started receiving intense counseling because she needed “to talk to somebody because I need to find out what's wrong with me and I need to get healing. I need to get, get it straight and what's wrong with, you know, why—I need to get to the why.” She discovered Buddhism

and used it as a way to “practice peace” and began seriously pursuing her education as her path forward.

During the CAP Workshop, we spoke about past trauma and the abuse some of the participants suffered both as children and as adults. As we discussed how this trauma could affect attending classes in prison or pursuing a college education when you are released back into the community, the conversation turned to the prison itself and the model of control employed. The women discussed the ways in which women who have been abused come into the system and are immediately forced to contend with male guards who use tactics meant to break them down and keep them submissive. The point was made that abusers use these same tactics. The participants expressed anger that women were put into this situation and “beat down” even further before being released back into society where they are expected to be a functioning adult.

Fear of Standing Still or Going Backward

I am not going back to the same life. It is not an option for me.

–Sharon

One theme that emerged in our discussions was the twofold feeling among many of the participants that they do not want to go back to prison or fall back into their addictions, but they are also afraid of staying where they are and making no progress.

When discussing their future selves, the participants tied future success to education, but many of them were uncertain of how to get where they want to be, and they feared that this uncertainty will lead to stagnation. Michelle said she tends to overanalyze to the point of inaction and fears that “if I don't know what it is today or what I'm going to do for the rest of my life, then I'm not going to do anything.” She went

on to say that she wants to know everything about a subject she is studying, but she indicated that this need to go to that depth is what keeps her from trying at all, and she worried that if she does not just choose something and go for it, she may miss her chance.

Carrie echoed this idea, and as I was coding, and recoding, her transcript, what I noticed is that she is unsure of her place in life and how to move forward. She knows that she has to make progress because she does not want to go back to prison a third time, but I was struck by the number of times she said “I don’t know why I did this” or “I don’t know what I want to do.” I realized her indecision is what keeps her in one place.

This fear of standing still was also evident in the CAP Workshop activities. On the Possible Selves Questionnaire, participants were asked to list three things they did *not* want to be at this time next year. This question is meant to look at one aspect of possible selves: what you fear becoming. Common answers to this question were not wanting to be *stagnant, standing still, or procrastinating*. These were tied closely with not wanting to give in to addiction and not wanting to go back to prison. This idea was echoed in our conversation as each woman spoke about why they decided to participate in the CAP Workshop and for each it was the same—they want to move forward, they have to move forward, there is no choice.

This need to move forward started for most of the women long before the CAP Workshop. I spoke with each of them about why they chose to pursue education while in prison, and the need to create a new life and avoid falling back into old habits was the dominant theme. As Theresa stated,

I wanted something different. Um, I knew that, you know, just sitting around and not doing anything wasn't going to get me anything different than what I had

already gotten right? Or anywhere different than where I'd already been. So that was the main, the main reason was I wanted something better.

Now that Theresa is out, she is focusing on raising her children and finding success in her current career, but she wants to continue the education she started in prison "because that little bit of education that I was able to obtain, even though it was, you know, in the unfortunate circumstance has really made a difference on where I'm at and what I'm doing."

Jody expressed something similar when talking about why she decided to start pursuing her education in earnest once she began to work through some of the issues from her past:

I have to do something to, to make things happen, you know, because I have a stigma that I, that I have, and now I have to find a way to, to fight that. I didn't make things right. If I'm here and I don't make things right, it's not gonna ever happen for me. It's not gonna ever happen for me.

She started taking every class she could, and stated, "anything with the ology I liked, with the exception of psychology." She finished a lot of credits in prison, and thinks she may have a completed associate's degree, but she has not yet found a way to start the process to find out because "it's that invisible veil of incarceration that keeps me like in this little room." She understands that in some ways it is her own fear that keeps her place: "You can't go past this line because you can see it. I can see it. And so that is a psychological thing that I'm trying to work through because there's a lot of times I keep thinking I can't do it."

When asked about why they wanted to participate in the CAP Workshop, the overwhelming response was that they simply need to move forward and find a life that does not involve prison. Sharon described it best when she said:

My life is going to change and I'm going to make something positive out of something that's been very negative for very many years. I want to have those tools to help me defend myself against anything that could cause me to fall back into old patterns.

The other women in the workshop agreed with her that the tools are what they really need to move forward because the motivation is there, but the lack of a clear path forward could keep them from the new life they imagine.

Helping Others

I want to have a career, something that I love but also where I can help those in need that are struggling as well. I always want to help everybody.

–Carrie

Each of the women I interviewed spoke about the need to get an education and get into a career where they can help others. Specifically, they want to help other justice-involved women and prevent these women from experiencing some of the things they had been through. The majority of the participants wanted to be in a helping profession, but they had a very narrow view of what that meant. For most, they wanted to be involved in addiction counseling in some way because this was an area they felt as if they could contribute with their lived experiences. As Sharon said, “I want to go back to school. I want to become a recovery support specialist so that I can use my experiences to

help others, hopefully avoid making the same choices and mistakes that I made in my life” Others were less certain about their exact career plan.

This uncertainty was very evident during the CAP Workshop and the me3[®] activity. As discussed in chapter three, me3[®] is an interactive, and quick, major and career quiz that measures six areas of career interest (Holland, 1997; Major and Career Exploration, 2017). The participants looked at a series of picture pairs and chose the one from each they liked the most with the goal of finding a career they might be interested in. The participants seemed skeptical at first but were willing to engage with the activity. It did not take long for exclamations of surprise to replace the strokes of the keyboard as the possible careers started appearing on screens. It was not the generated category of careers they found surprising. As expected, many fell into careers that were in line with counselling or education. It was the variety of job titles that most surprised them and it was clear that the rabbit hole down which this career exploration would lead them was far deeper than we could explore in the workshop.

Jody did not find her definite path forward during this activity, but she has put a lot of thought into what she wants to do and the specific ways in which she can help. She wants to continue her education and take advantage of the many credits she earned while in prison with the goal of creating a new sort of peer group that revolves around meaningful work and helping others who were in her situation.

I want people to, to tap into that talent and in to that knowledge that they have, that experience that they have and take what they know and make it even more, not just by, you know, I want someone who I feel is gifted enough to like be on a

design team. Let's design something and let's make it happen and let's make this and this, make it available for people in this area.

She has the goal of opening a business that allows her to employ those who have been incarcerated so that she can help them see their own potential.

Optimism

I just, I just have a better outlook now and I think I can do it, you know, I'm eager to try at least.

–Sharon

These words were spoken by Sharon, who says of her time before prison, “I didn’t really have any hopes and dreams. I was in a very black life. I thought I would die an addict. I didn’t really see any other option.” Now, however, she is in recovery and really wants to get her life back on track: “I have the confidence in myself that I think I need to be able to go to school and make the grades and apply myself where I never had that confidence before.” This sense of optimism for the future was universal among the participants as each looked toward what is possible and, for each of them, those possibilities included education.

Though each of the women could easily articulate the many challenges they would face, they each came back to the idea that school would be worth it and that it is something that they can do if they can just get past the barriers and get started. When asked what school would look like in her life, Carrie stated the following:

Busy, really busy. Kind of just like either going to school and then work or going to work and school and then home and going to bed and just that kind of being my

life. And just really focusing on my future. And I'm just staying busy. I just see it as like being really busy but really exciting as well.

When I asked how confident she was in her ability to complete her degree she said “100% confident,” Michelle said something similar after we discussed the barriers she might face: “I know I can do that [college]. It's just getting there at this point.”

The optimism was also evident in the ways in which the participants would encourage themselves and each other. I asked Kelly, who started working on her GED at the age of 52 and who is now working on her bachelor's degree, what advice she had for other women getting out of prison, and her answer shows that sense of optimism and possibility:

So, my advice would be go with your heart. I knew when I walked through the prison gates that my life would never be the same again, that I was going to be a completely different person with a completely different passion for life. And that is what's carried me through. If there's a will there's a way. Makes sense, right?

Repeatedly, participants advised others (and themselves) to keep going, even when it is hard because it will be worth it. As Carrie stated, “apply yourself and not give up and just stay strong and no matter what, you will succeed. You just have to believe in yourself.”

Jody illustrated this feeling of optimism in her education journey map (Figure 3). She chose to represent her journey in categories because she says she does not “think in a linear fashion.”

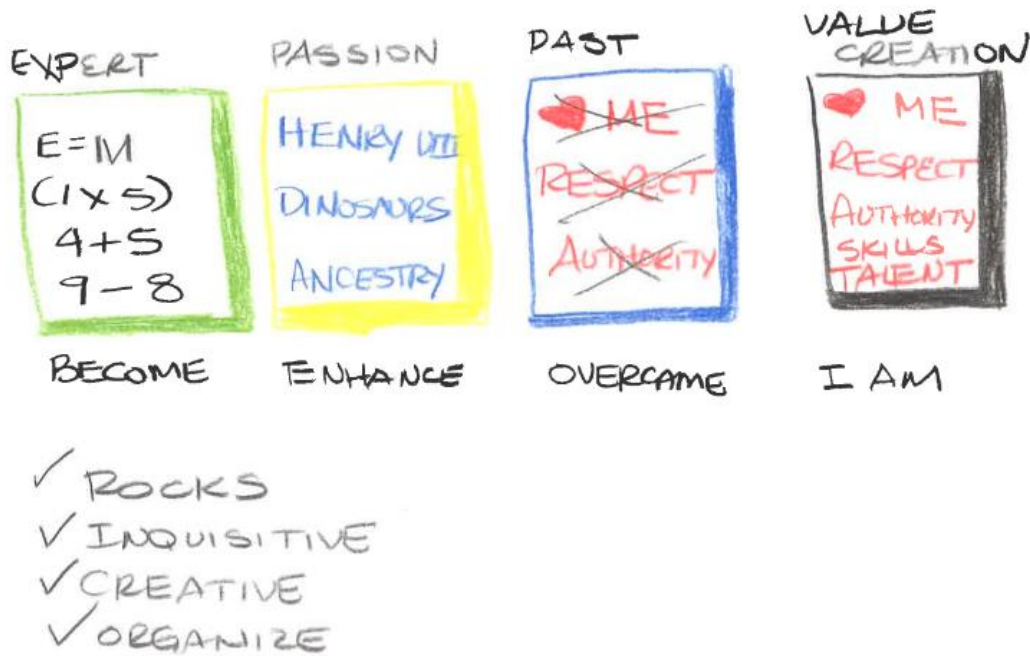


Figure 3. Jody, Education Journey Map. This figure displays Jody’s education journey map created during the CAP Workshop.

Her goals are to become an expert at everything she attempts, to follow her passions, to overcome a past that was marked by little respect or love for herself, and to fully own who she is now—a person who loves and respects herself and who recognized her own skills and talents. In our conversations, it was clear that she is very confident in herself, and she does feel she will reach all of these goals if she can just get over what she calls an “invisible barrier” that results from incarceration.

Learning Experiences

RQ 3 asked how learning experiences influenced college-going behavior and attitudes among formerly incarcerated women. As I was coding the initial interviews, it was clear that the teachers and principals these participants interacted with during K-12,

coupled with specific memories of having done well at different times during school, inform their sense of what might be possible.

Some, like Carrie, associated feeling good about school with having done well on assignments: “When I would do my homework and I would get it right and do a good job, I would always feel good about that.” This idea was also expressed by Amanda, an educator who works with incarcerated juveniles, when she discussed what motivates her learners to continue with school:

I think it comes in their first good grade, and in that teacher congratulating them on that good work. I think there’s that, that’s the moment that they’re hooked.

When they finally realize that schoolwork is not, you know, impossible, and that passing the GED is a possibility and then taking a college class. Doing that first assignment in that college class.

She believes that it is this encouragement that “inspires them that they can believe in themselves and that they actually can do well in school.” She sees it as the role of the educator to “plant that seed that it is possible,” and the study participants appreciated that from their own teachers, even if they did not ultimately follow the college path.

For many of the participants, it was a teacher’s ability to see that they were struggling and to empathize with their situation that they most remember. When asked about the teachers she remembers, Michelle recalled one teacher she says was “super mean, but I really liked her because she would push us to do better,” and Sharon remembered a history teacher who “really just wanted the students to succeed and worked with you and he applied himself to your education.” Though they found some of the coursework challenging, they appreciated when teachers obviously cared enough to

challenge them further and who obviously cared about whether or not they were successful. Theresa specifically remembered the teachers in the charter school she attended while pregnant with her first child:

In the school and the teachers were really adamant about our success and you know, doing anything and everything that they had to do to, to make sure that we attended and, and that we were doing good and that we were understanding, always checking in, asking questions and just really understood.

Theresa says that the teachers put in extra time to “really care about what we were doing and what we were learning” and that this level of care combined with a program that provided some money as they went to school helped her to stay as long as she did.

Jody recalls one teacher who had a profound effect on her in high school because “she was probably the only one that I can remember who actually was like took the time to actually say, ‘well, what is going on?’” This teacher recognized that Jody had anger issues and worked to give her a place to channel that energy. Her solution was to enroll Jody in speech and drama, and through her, Jody said, “I learned debate. I learned about extemporaneous speaking, I learned about impromptu speaking. I also learned how to appreciate the classics. And it was through her I placed third in State.” When Jody was released, she made a point of seeking out this teacher and they have maintained their friendship.

The participants also spoke about negative experiences with teachers and felt that either apathy or active discouragement from educators affected their educational trajectory. Sarah had the goal of college in mind in high school despite struggling in some subjects, as exemplified when she said, “I remember once when I had mentioned that I,

when I had gone into look for college material, one of the nuns said ‘Why? You're never going to get in’ And I think that turned me off now.” She said that her difficulty in science coupled with this teacher’s discouragement planted in her mind that college should not be a priority.

Michelle spoke about understanding the nature of the world at a young age and recognizing bias on the part of an elementary school teacher who treated students differently based on their socio-economic status:

I've always been very analytical so I caught on this stuff pretty quick and I would notice that she would put like some of the lower income students, she would give them harder tasks and she would put them in detention whenever other kids were doing bad things just because she didn't want to upset their parents and because they donated to the school.

She said this teacher was more focused on getting to know the parents than educating their children, and so she “didn’t really care too much for her.”

All of the participants had vivid memories of educators who stood out either because they were a bright spot in an otherwise dark time or because they contributed to that darkness in a profound enough way to be remembered. When they spoke about their educational journeys, it became clear they are defined by these relationships and it is evident that these educators, whether they realized it at the time or not, played a crucial role in these students’ lives.

Barriers

In earlier conversations with formerly incarcerated individuals and with educators who have worked with this population, two themes appeared in every conversation:

potential learners feeling as if they might not be “college material,” and their perception that college might not be possible because of admissibility and financial issues. In this section, I will further break down these themes and discuss the barriers experienced by these women before, during, and after their incarceration (RQ 4). These barriers fall under three categories: *dispositional*, which refers to barriers internal to the individual; *situational*, which refer to those barriers specific to a person’s life such as childcare responsibilities or a lack of transportation; and *institutional*, which refers to those barriers outside of a person’s control, such as those that apply to the educational and carceral systems as a whole (Ekstrom, 1972; McDonald, 2003).

Dispositional Barriers

The three dispositional barriers discussed most often by the participants were low self-efficacy and a decreased sense of self-worth; challenges with mental and physical health, including addiction; and a lack of knowledge about the college process.

Self-efficacy and self-worth. In the pre-workshop interviews, the women spoke about self-confidence and self-worth both in relation to their own experiences and as observers of other incarcerated women. Sharon, when asked what universities need to know about working with formerly incarcerated women said, “People that come from where I came from, they don't feel like they can or that they're not worthy of it, but we're really the people that need to be touched.” She, and the CAP Workshop attendees, believe it is important for universities to actively welcome these students and that no amount of encouragement is too much because there is so much self-doubt and low academic self-efficacy to overcome.

Though quite a few of the participants felt some sense of academic self-efficacy in elementary school, most of them did not carry that confidence through high school, and though they are optimistic about the future, holding onto the idea of being successful in college was still challenging. Carrie said that although eventually she was more focused on numbing her pain and running away from life, for a time in K-12 she “loved going to school. I think I just, um, I wasn't very confident in myself,” and now she feels her biggest challenges are “my grades ‘cause throughout school I didn’t have the best grades, and I think because I didn’t apply myself. I guess just my past experience of going to school when I was younger and not doing that would kind of be in the back of my mind thinking I'm not going to be getting good grades because I didn't when I was younger.” When asked about how she feels about getting into college now she says, “I have a little bit of confidence, but it's not very high at all.” She does feel as if she can just get there, that she will be dedicated to college and will be successful.

Kelly, whom I spoke to as I was gathering reconnaissance for this project, stated, when asked about concerns about attending GED classes while incarcerated, that “I think my biggest concerns were my age, for one, I was 52, incarcerated, had a tenth-grade education, and I didn’t feel like I was very smart.” She went on to talk about her strong desire to change her life fighting against decades of being told she was “not good enough.” She received her GED, then an associate’s degree, and is now out of prison and working on a bachelor’s degree in addiction counseling, but that sense of not being good enough still follows her.

Sarah spent much of her time inside tutoring other incarcerated women and spoke about the challenges of helping them achieve their educational goals: “I kept thinking

okay, is there another way I can help you to learn this? Can I present the information in another way that isn't so intimidating or making you become all defensive? Because they're going to be defensive because of their self-confidence and self-worth." When asked what the most helpful thing would be in regard to education for this population, she said, "A lot of it is recognition that they're making an effort and want to learn and improve themselves and get better jobs. There's such a need for their own, their confidence." We revisited this idea in the post workshop follow-up interview: "The one I always go back to is the self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth. Because most of, you know, I think we've all gotten into trouble because of the lack of [self-worth]." She felt as if increasing self-worth and self-confidence will lead to better choices and allow more people to pursue education.

In Sarah's experience, both working with and observing the women on her yard, self-confidence is the key to success: "I feel like if their concerns are acknowledged and that they're given the confidence that they can succeed in a college environment that they would absolutely jump on it." She, and the other participants, feel it is important to understand that it is not a lack of desire that keeps some formerly incarcerated women from pursuing college, or a lack of motivation, it is a matter of just believing they can do it and overcoming the fear they cannot.

This sentiment was supported by the professionals I spoke to who work with justice-involved individuals. Amanda, who has spent the last fifteen years developing educational programs in juvenile prisons and detention centers, spoke about the challenges this population faces when they come from situations that did not set them up

for success and where they are constantly told that they are not good enough, that they are not college material:

They're under the assumption that college would never be an option for them. Ever. Nobody's ever talked to them about it, nobody's ever mentioned it, and, in fact, along the way, people have laughed at kids in the criminal justice system, you hear a lot of stories about people, you know maybe they tried to bring it up growing up and they were laughed at and told to forget it, that is definitely not an option for you.

Though her work has been exclusively with juveniles, it is easy to see parallels with the women in this study, many of whom, like Kelly, came into the prison system with limited education and the belief that college was just not something she could do.

Several of the women expressed the affect seeing others who have been successful might have on their own self-esteem and sense of what is possible. Theresa believes a workshop should "provide some success stories like, Hey, you know these 10 people were just in the same situation as you were, and this is what they did or this is what they didn't do. This is where they're at, this is where they could be." It is her assertion that her own possible self could be positively affected through these success stories, and her self-efficacy could be, as Bandura (1977) states, raised through vicarious experience.

Mental and Physical Health. For some participants, it is the ongoing struggle of re-entering society coupled with persistent mental health issues or the effort of battling their addictions that is proving to be a barrier to college.

Michelle went straight from a strict religious household to a marriage to a controlling man who did not want her working or going to school to prison, so she feels “overwhelmed and a little chaotic with, uh, work and trying to figure out how to live life on my own.” She is trying to navigate the world as a single person while also coping with all of the baggage that comes from being formerly incarcerated, and she said that sometimes it gets to be too much: “I’ve only been out about a year and a half and this is the first time I’ve ever lived on my own or had to pay my own bills or, um, I probably had a panic attack about a million times when I had to go get health insurance and car insurance.” Though she wants to finish her education, the thought of working that into a life spent just trying to get by and learning to cope has thus far proven difficult.

Mari worries her issues with anxiety will get in the way of being successful in college. In the CAP Workshop, she spoke at length about the challenges of trying to cope with this anxiety and “manic episodes” and the lack of counselling services for people trying to rebuild their lives. Sharon has similar concerns, and both she and Mari listed mental health issues on the S.M.A.R.T. goal-setting activity as one of the obstacles that they need to overcome.

College-going knowledge. Finally, the lack of knowledge about college systems and about major and career possibilities that the participants felt interfered with their ability to move forward. Several participants stated that they just did not know how to begin the process of going to college, or what they would really do once they got there. As discussed, there was a sense among several of the women that they want to move forward, but without the knowledge needed to navigate through the educational system, they could not see how to do that. Two of the women had already reached out to someone

before our initial interview. One woman had spoken to one of the local community colleges, and the other was getting ready to meet with an admissions counselor, but they both felt as if they needed someone to help them navigate the information. The women circled back to this need for knowledge, along with the need for easy to access resources (see Institutional Barriers) throughout the interviews because they felt as if no amount of self-confidence would help them if they simply “don’t even really know where to begin.”

The two areas in which this lack of knowledge is especially damaging is financial aid and admissions policies. Carrie said she does not “really know how to go forward to begin college without having the money or how to get grants or, or what not.” Several women worried their status as having been incarcerated meant they would not be eligible for financial aid and so they had not planned to apply.

Situational Barriers

Finances. Every participant interviewed cited finances as their number one barrier to college. Theresa stated, “Education has been on the back burner because it's just been really hard to get back into the groove of going to school and financially. Like that's one of the main factors is financially it's hard.” This hardship applies not only to paying for college, but to getting to the school, taking time off of work, paying for day care, and buying textbooks and tools they need to complete their coursework. Sharon stated she would need some basic necessities: “I've had to completely start over. I started everything fresh when I walked out of prison. I didn't even have a pair of shoes or, or change of clothes and, you know, of course no money.” So, although she wants to go to school, having enough money to survive is the priority.

When asked if she had taken any steps toward college, Sarah said “No, no. Most of it was mostly because, like I said, the finances and I, you know. I don't have any money, so that's why I haven't even bothered with it.” Mari says, “I guess finances would be a big issue,” and explained, “some probation officers like would rather have the inmates work than go to school because they have so many fines to pay.” Though a lack of finances is not uncommon among college students, for these learners, it seemed like an insurmountable barrier.

Institutional Barriers

In this section, I discuss the barriers within the educational and carceral systems which these women experienced before, during, and after incarceration. Specifically, I focus on the role of gendered expectations on educational attainment, access to quality educational opportunities while incarcerated, and the availability of reentry resources and information.

Societal expectations. Three of the participants spoke about the societal expectation of being a housewife and mother and how that had a direct impact on their attempts at post-secondary education. Sharon dropped out of high school in 1986 and did not go back to school until 1999 when she got her GED and started taking classes in psychology. She says she “discovered a love of learning” around this time, but then she married a man who had an infant son and “school got put on the back burner and I never went back until I was in prison.” It was expected that her husband would work and she would take on the role of wife and mother.

Sarah, who had planned on becoming a pediatrician, grew up in a time when women were not expected to pursue a college education. Figure 4 shows her education journey map and the discouragement she received along the way.

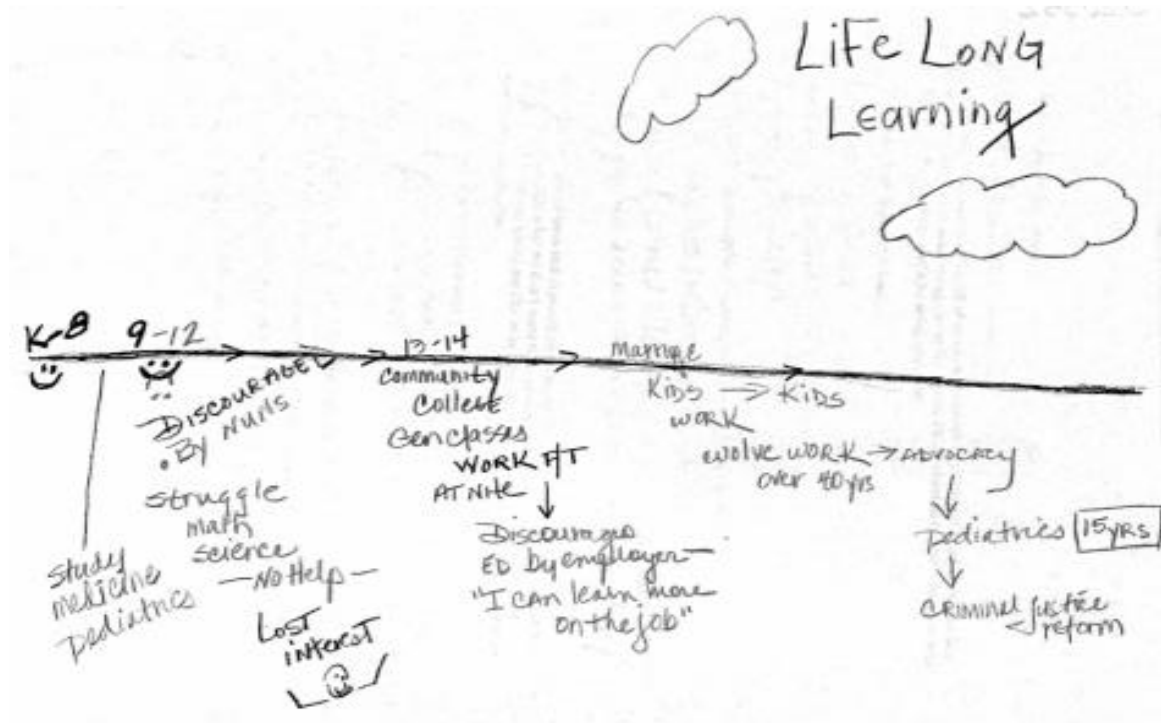


Figure 4. Sarah, Education Journey Map. This figure displays Sarah’s education journey map created during the CAP Workshop.

Sarah went to a Catholic school and graduated in 1968, and when she expressed an interest in college, the answer given to her by one of the nuns was, “Why? You’re never going to get in.” She was discouraged again by one of her early supervisors in retail, and the desire for college was pushed aside. When she married, her husband was supportive of her going to school, and she tried several times, but “then I would have a baby.” Now, several decades later, her four daughters are all grown and have college degrees and are supporting her as she pursues her education.

Michelle, who was encouraged to go to college but who chose to start a family instead, felt as if she was only putting college on hold for a little while. She had two children before turning 19, and she assumed that when the children were old enough, she would go back to school and get her degree, but her family situation was not conducive to college: “I had gotten a couple of jobs here and there after I had my kids, but I, it was hard for me to work and take care of the kids and take care of him [her husband] when he came home. So, for the most part I was a housewife.” Unfortunately, her husband did not want her working outside the home or going to school: “When I was pregnant with my son that I was going to actually go through with it, he kind of like flipped out. And so at that time it was more of a, I wanted to please him. So, I just didn't pursue it.” Eventually, she did start taking some classes and “trying to figure out, uh, what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be outside of just being a mom,” but it was not long after that she went to prison and college was once again set aside.

Prison education system. Though one can argue that pre-incarceration experiences with apathetic high school counselors and societal expectations of gender performance had a significant impact on the trajectory of these women's lives, it became evident in the interviews that the poor quality of prison education and limited access to resources upon reentry are responsible for much of their educational inertia.

Most of these women participated in some form of education while in prison, and some amassed more than enough credits for an associate's degree, but they believe that the prison education system and its dysfunctional and, some said, corrupt nature, thwarted their efforts and forced them to take classes that were ultimately useless because they were unrelated to their life goals. It was clear that many felt as if these classes were

more about keeping the women busy than providing a clear path to rehabilitation. As Sharon stated, "It's messed up. What they did, they don't care whether you get your education, they don't care if it's something you'll ever use. They just, they just want the money that they get for putting you in a class."

One of the complaints is that there are limited options and that those that do exist, such as plumbing and electrical, are not what most incarcerated women would like to study. There is also a belief that the ways which these topics are studied is not realistic. As Sharon said about her experience: "I mean like the electrical, it was nothing hands on. It was just all, you just read the book and took a test and read the book and took a test. You know, if I had to go, if I had to go be a journeyman electrician, I wouldn't know what I was doing in any way, shape or form." Adding to her frustration is the fact that she is "petrified" of electricity, so working in that field is not something she would ever do.

While incarcerated, several of the women either pursued a GED or took college classes but had to stop partway through because they were moved to a different unit and the classes would not travel with them. Carrie took some computer-based classes and later attempted to finally get her GED while inside: "The first time I went to prison I did the Rio Salado but that was, those were just computer classes. It was still a little bit of something. So, I enjoyed it. I didn't get it finished though 'cause I was getting out. And then this last time I was in GED, but I kept getting moved yards, so I never got to finish it." Sharon had a similar experience: "I was on the yard, Pedro and they just up and moved me one night to Carlos. So, I just got yanked out of that class without, you know, without an option." Worrying that the resulting withdrawals on her transcript would be held against her was one of her stated reasons for not applying to college sooner.

Mari and Jody tried to help other inmates navigate the prison education system and successfully complete classes. Mari talked about trying to help her bunkmate finish her assignments despite the inefficiency of the educational model and the lack of tools:

Their education within the prison is just a joke. They don't even have access to computers where they could email their professor and when they're taking online college courses. So, I would literally have to help my bunky or whatever, like write half of her homework like her essays, just like she would speak, and I would write it cause her hand would get so tired from the pencil and pen and paper.

Mari also spoke about this in the CAP Workshop as the women compared their experiences. They each stressed the importance of help from fellow inmates because, as Mari said, “really, there is no help from the system, they really just don’t care.” Claudia, who had been in the system for twenty-four years, said she remembers a time when they did offer realistic degrees that made sense for women who would be getting out of prison, but in the last few years of her sentence, it was fellow inmates not prison educators, who helped to get her on a path to a new life.

Sarah helped fellow inmates, but she also served as a tram driver between the yards and was able to speak to the educators who were coming into the prison to teach. Some, she said, “were excellent, but they got so frustrated with the system.” These teachers would quit, and of the ones who would stay she said, “I don't even know why they even bother being out there because they were not inmate friendly at all where you would expect that you would want them to succeed.” She believed many of the teachers took on the role of chaperone rather than teacher, and it was the inmates who served as peer-to-peer tutors and helped each other through the classes.

Michelle also experienced teachers who were not actively engaged, but she believes the larger issue is a lack of options and that this needs to be addressed by both the Department of Corrections and the educational system:

Whenever people first get in there, I mean, you go one of two ways, you just don't care anymore and at some point maybe you will, or there's the other side of it of, you know, you're scared and you just want to do everything you possibly can to not repeat your mistakes. And today, anyway, there really aren't as many options available, so when you're ready to change, it makes it really hard because there aren't a whole lot of schools or people that are willing to help.

She believes if those options were available then women would absolutely take advantage of the opportunity and gain the confidence to attend college once they are released back into the community.

Reentry resources. Sue Ellen Allen, who is a formerly incarcerated woman, author, and founder of Reinventing Reentry, has been quoted as saying that “being released from prison is like being shot out of a cannon naked and blindfolded into a brick wall.” She and I have had many conversations about the post-prison experience, and I have taken part in her reentry simulation which attempts to instill empathy in a population that is largely apathetic about the experiences of formerly incarcerated people who are attempting to put their lives back together. What I learned from her is that there really is no such thing as realistic reentry resources in the state of Arizona. This was corroborated by all of the formerly incarcerated individuals I interviewed when I asked what resources and information they were given as they were getting ready to leave prison and re-enter society. Michelle stated, “You're pretty much on your own to figure

out, you know, where, where are you going to stay? How are you going to survive? How are you going to get a job? It's terrifying.” Each person told me that they either received no information, or that the information they did receive was outdated and useless, and none of the information was about the possibility of education.

I asked Kelly what barriers she sees for someone coming out of prison who is thinking about college and she said that resources are the biggest barrier:

A lot of these women that are getting out of prison do not have resources with family, they don't have resources on the outside to be able to help them to pursue if it they want to go to college so to speak, and if they do have those charges where they don't qualify for that financial aid, then what do they do? What do they do?

She believes that everyone deserves a chance at redemption and that the educational system should be actively encouraging that process and looking beyond the label:

Yes, they've had problems in their life, and yes, they're troubled souls, but you know they are trying to change their lives and they deserve to be a functioning part of society. They deserve to have that chance. So, I think just to provide the resources for them to move forward...is what makes a difference.

Kelly believes she was lucky because she did have a support system that helped her complete much of her education in prison and find her passion to continue that education on the outside. However, some lacked the support of family or close friends and felt as if they had no place to turn for information.

The College After Prison Workshop

During the initial interviews, I asked each participant what they would like to get out of the CAP Workshop. I also conducted follow-up interviews with Jody, Sharon, Mari, and Sarah to find out how they experienced the CAP Workshop and to ask for suggestions on how it can be improved. The fifth participant, Claudia, indicated that she would like to be interviewed, but we were never able coordinate our schedules. My questions in the post-workshop interviews focused on what was most useful, what was missing, and how and when they thought this workshop could best support justice-involved women in an effort to answer RQ 5. In this section I present information from the interviews and from notes entered into the researcher journal during the workshop.

Before the workshop, participants were unsure of exactly what it would entail, but they were eager to get resources and information so that they could enter college. Sharon said she was interested in “any resources or anything I can, everything! Like I said, I love to learn and, and I spent so many years not being able to, or maybe being able to, but not thinking that I was worthy. And um, I don't think that way anymore.” She hoped the workshop would give her the help she needed to actually enroll in college and help her to “learn everything I can, and I want to do everything I can that I've never done.” All of the formerly incarcerated interviewees expressed the same idea.

On the day of the workshop, we started late due to difficulties with facilities and one participant missing her bus. Once we had everyone in the room, I noted the participants were very eager to start sharing their stories, and they immediately began exchanging resources and knowledge. I let this go on for approximately ten minutes in an effort not to interrupt the flow and the spirit of collaboration. I also wanted it to be clear

that this was a space in which these women's voices would be valued. This open sharing of life stories and collected knowledge continued throughout the day.

After the introduction, I passed out the materials for the education journey map. The participants seemed confused by the education journey mapping but became more engaged when they started drawing. I then asked for volunteers to describe their maps, and Mari spoke about her journey as a mountain (Figure 2, p. As she discussed her persistent issues with anxiety and depression, the other participants shared some of the challenges they have faced in that area as well, and it was universally agreed that there is an urgent need for quality post-incarceration counseling.

The next activity was an attempt to look at future goals and to prime the participants for the motivation and goal-setting activity which would come next. The participants embraced the spirit of this exercise quickly, perhaps due to just attending a workshop such as this has them thinking about what is possible. In the discussion that followed, there was a strong focus on moving forward, and some of the participants were afraid that if they stood still too long, they would either regress or simply fail to better themselves in the way they would like. These women are unsure of exactly how to get to their future self—or what that future self really is—but they know that they do not want to go back to prison.

As discussed, the me3[®] activity was very popular but far too short. This activity could have easily taken an hour as the women were fascinated by all of the possibilities. In future iterations of the workshop, this will be much longer and go much deeper.

The remainder of our time was spent on the resources the women desperately wanted and needed. I first focused on financial aid and addressing myths surrounding aid

for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. The most prevalent myth is that they cannot get federal financial aid. This belief is also prevalent among the educators and university staff I have spoken to in the last three years, but it simply is not true. There are some restrictions on federal aid, but only in very specific circumstances. Once I explained the federal rules regarding financial aid and made it clear that there was a strong possibility that the attendees would qualify, they seemed much more open to discussing admission policies. I then presented information on admission criteria for Arizona State University and the Maricopa County Community College District. The women were very interested in community college because of the lower cost, the ease of entry, and the possibility of life experience being used for credit.

Post-workshop Follow-up

In the follow-up interviews, the themes that were common among all four women were that the workshop served to remove barriers; it increased their confidence; and it provided a sense of community with other women who have the same life goals and, perhaps more importantly, can understand where they have been and how challenging those goals are. All four interviewees had taken measurable steps toward college, and two were enrolled in classes for the fall 2019 semester.

Access to resources and information on financial aid and the possibility of getting into college were the areas the participants stated they found the most beneficial. Sharon, who had worried before the workshop that the withdrawals she had on her transcript would keep her from being admitted into college, now feels as if the only challenges are logistical. That one piece of information removed a huge perceived barrier. She said she

kept the binder that was provided during the workshop and she feels she has been given the tools she needs to move forward.

Sarah, who contacted me recently to share the news that she has since successfully completed three college classes and has planned out the next two years, said the following:

My biggest barrier of course was just number one, feeling comfortable that I could. The other one was the financial and you took those barriers away through the information was, that you presented. So now I have every confidence that it'll be, it'll be good, and it'll be fine and I'm really excited about it.

She feels as if the biggest service a program such as this can provide outside of information and resources is a focus on self-confidence and encouragement to those who do not feel they can successfully complete college.

Mari found the Google classroom helpful and appreciated that I kept it active so the participants could revisit as needed: "I think that whole page, the classroom with all the links that were really resourceful, like I had no idea about the earned credits with ASU. I've never heard of a program like that." When questioned further about her experience with the earned admissions system at ASU, Mari said, "I'm actually doing homework now, you know, it's a really easy system to use and I was like, what happened? Did Bernie Sanders win? And did we get like college for all? Universal College? It was cool." Her goal is to be a paralegal, so she is hoping that this alternative way of gaining admission into ASU will put her on the right path.

When asked what effect the workshop had on her view of herself as a college student, Mari said, "Well, honestly I think it just, your workshop really made me feel

confident...So I, I think, you know, your positive attitude, your drive for this cause really gave me confidence into like wanting to be a student.” She did, however, wish there was more of a focus on people being released from prison and “the obstacles that they will specifically face because of their history.” She stated throughout the workshop that there needs to be a bigger focus on mental health, and she is hoping that counseling would be one of the services that any college after prison program provides.

Jody, who had completed quite a few credits in prison but was unsure of what to do with them said that what she found the most helpful was “a lot of the information with regard to the financial aid, with the transfer of credits, the different programs that are available ... just basic information that I was not even aware of.” She said the workshop “just made me want to finish and achieve and obtain a degree in something.” She said it has always bothered her that she has not completed a degree, and the workshop helped her to realize that she can actually start over.

Several women mentioned the ability to speak to others who had been in the same situation and who had possible resources was one of the best things about the workshop, as demonstrated when Jody stated she “really enjoyed the fact that I was able to be a part of something.” Similarly, Sarah appreciated “the opportunity to be able to chat, you know, with the other girls. It's almost looked like a support system so that you can hear that, you know, what other people were also experiencing. It's was good to get some, hear them talk about other resources.” Sarah also mentioned that she would be meeting one of the other workshop participants at an ACLU event later that week, and the other participants also spoke about maintaining contact with each other. The overall feeling was one of hope, which continued the optimism that was evident in the initial interviews.

It was important to this study to hear the stories of these women because it is only through these stories that we begin to understand this phenomenon. Any efforts to reform the ways in which colleges and universities in Arizona approach these potential learners must include an attempt by these institutions to view themselves through the standpoints of these women. As Harding (1991) states, it is only through the eyes of those who are marginalized in a system that we begin to truly understand the flaws in that system. Once we can identify, and own, the flaws, these marginalized voices gain power and create the possibility for systemic change.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Women who are incarcerated are incredibly resilient and given the opportunity and support they can really rebuild their lives, find their voice, their meaning, and their purpose.

–Susan Burton, *Essence*, 2019

The purpose of this action research project was to study a small group of formerly incarcerated women and their experiences with the educational system in an effort to more fully understand low-educational attainment in this population and develop an effective, participant-informed intervention. The intention was to test and refine the CAP Workshop before offering it either through a college or university or community organization, with the larger mission of centering the voices of marginalized people and using those voices to affect large-scale societal change. I entered into this project with the belief that the voices of the women who are the intended recipients of prison and post-prison education were not being heard, and that these voices provide the greatest opportunity for post-secondary institutions to engender transformational and sustainable change both within their walls and beyond. With this in mind, I framed the study with the following questions:

RQ 1: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past selves within the educational system?

RQ 2: How do formerly incarcerated women describe their past, current, and future expectations for a college education?

RQ 3: How have learning experiences influenced college-going behavior and attitudes among formerly incarcerated women?

RQ 4: What education barriers have formerly incarcerated women experienced?

RQ 5: How do formerly incarcerated women experience a college readiness program designed to support their expectations for a college education?

RQ 6: How can colleges and universities develop and sustain outreach programs to best support formerly incarcerated women's expectations for college degree attainment?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings and how they relate to the original research questions with an emphasis on research question six, and I explore the intersection of critical social theory (CST), social cognitive career theory, and possible selves theory (PSs) which became evident during the interviews. I then discuss the limitations of this study and implications for research and practice on both a personal and system level.

The Role of Universities and Colleges

The final research question focused on what colleges and universities can do to best serve these learners. There have been numerous studies on the role of race and socio-economic status in the carceral system, the determination of who enters the system, and the ways in which this educational system contributes to that determination (Mallett, 2017; Mccarter, 2017). What is missing, however, is the discussion of what the educational system can, and should, be doing when people find themselves back in the community. Post-secondary institutions should not merely be a possible landing place for women coming out of prison; they need to actively seek these students and put

themselves in the forefront of prison educational reform. Based on analysis of data generated from this study, a review of the literature, and an examination of current post-prison education programs, it is my assertion that colleges and universities can support formerly incarcerated women in the post-secondary system by curating a community of scholars and demonstrating a clear path forward for formerly incarcerated women by working to reduce systemic barriers.

Community of Scholars. Though the CAP Workshop can help create a path from prison to college, large-scale, systemic change has to be created through sustainable processes that involve the participation and constant input of justice-involved individuals. An important aspect of this is the creation of a community of scholars or, what Wenger (1998) calls a community of practice. This community can serve to bring stakeholders together to work toward a common goal and create a framework grounded in lived experiences. Colleges and universities can create a community of scholars by fostering a sense of belonging and centering the voices of formerly incarcerated women, engaging learners, providing resources, and utilizing experience.

During the CAP Workshop, the participants helped each other through every step of the process, sometimes by explaining something we were working on in greater detail and sometimes by suggesting other resources or sharing their experiences. In the post-workshop interviews, this sense of community and the ability to speak with other women who could really understand where they had been and shared similar goals for moving forward was mentioned repeatedly. As Jody stated, “I really enjoyed the workshop. I really enjoyed the fact that I was able to be a part of something.”

Maslow (1962) tells us that belonging is a basic human need, and that the absence of this sense of acceptance by others can have far reaching effects on motivation and performance. A sense of belonging in school has been shown to influence overall wellbeing and academic motivation (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Osterman, 2000). This belonging can take the form of acceptance by a peer group or educators, or in an internal sense of belonging based on academic performance. The role of colleges and universities in this process is to not just accept these students when they apply, but to make it clear that these students are welcome. Both Sarah and Mari expressed surprise during the workshop that it was taking place at a university and that they were welcome as students. In her follow-up interview, Mari stated that being incarcerated was not the only stigma that made her hesitant to enter a classroom: “I feel a little insecure about my age and trying to go back to college. I feel like a lot of people feel that way.” When asked what effect the CAP Workshop had on these feelings, she stated, “your workshop really made me feel confident and it's nice to know that professors want to change people's lives.”

The Corrections to College program in California is an example of what this looks like and can serve as a model to Arizona schools. Corrections to College is a project of Renewing Communities, a joint initiative of the Opportunity Institute and the Stanford Criminal Justice Center. In 2017, they published a roadmap for colleges and universities to use in the creation of programs for formerly incarcerated individuals (Corrections to College, 2017). Among their recommendations are:

1. Build support and competency from a broad range of college stakeholders.

2. Foster formerly incarcerated peer mentors, either through structured peer support with other formerly incarcerated students, or by creating time and space for students to connect with and support each other.
3. Reach out to and respond to prospective students, particularly those in jail or prison.

By following these practices, they work to create a community where formerly incarcerated students feel both welcomed and supported.

To make this support system work, it must be informed by the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. In practical terms, what this means is that any college education program must listen to the people it is created to help about what they need and the best ways in which those needs can be fulfilled. They can do this by opening a dialogue with those who have been incarcerated and engaging them not only as learners, but as participatory action researchers who are involved in the creation of materials for currently and formerly incarcerated potential learners and in curriculum development.

There needs to be an easily accessible way for people coming out of prison to get information about education, and it needs to be kept up to date. One complaint I heard from several women is that their reentry into the community was made more difficult because the resources they were given were just not useful anymore. A community is created when you ease the barriers to entry.

Finally, the community needs to be ongoing and must encourage mentorship and constant involvement of alumni so that they can speak to the unique challenges those coming out of prison will face and continually help to grow the network. As discussed in

Chapter 4, these women want to help others. They each feel called to be of service, and they want to affect the lives of other formerly incarcerated women in a positive way.

A Clear Path Forward. The women who volunteered for this study, and each of the formerly incarcerated people I have spoken to in the last three years, all knew where they wanted to go, but they had no idea how to get there. Because of this, colleges and universities must put the majority of focus on clearing the path. In their Switch model, Heath and Heath (2010) state that in order to engender change, you cannot just attack one possible barrier because to do so keeps the entire system in dysfunction. They believe that lasting change requires us to address the rational, emotional, and situational barriers that stand in our way. The authors liken this to a rider (rational), an elephant (emotional), and the path (situational). Their belief is that it is important for the rider to know what to do, but if he or she is not emotionally invested in change, or the path forward seems too difficult to overcome, change will stall. For the participants in this study, the rider and the elephant know what the goal is, but they just could not see their way through a path that was filled with obstacles and vague instructions. For many of the participants, the obstacle blocking the path was information, and once that obstacle was removed, they were excited about moving forward.

This was illustrated in the follow-up interviews when participants were asked what they found most useful about the workshop. Jody stated that what she found the most helpful was, “just basic information that I was not even aware of” and went on to say that the information on financial aid and scholarships “Was kind of like a little push I needed and I really appreciated that.” She believes that the workshop can help others

because, “if they were able to take this workshop, it could at least give them some signs of direction.”

This is mirrored in Sharon’s response when she was asked what effect the workshop had: “It was very informative. I enjoyed it and it kind of helped me look at exactly where I wanted to go and where to begin, and now that I’ve got the online help that you gave us, it makes it a lot easier and helps me know where to start now.”

This ability to see a clear path translated into action. Sarah said that she “started going through all of the documents and everything and I went ahead and did the FAFSA, and I did the enrollment ‘cause I just followed that checklist that come in our little notebook that you gave us.” She has since successfully completed her first semester and is enrolled in the next. Mari used the information she learned about the earned Admissions program at ASU to enroll in a class during the workshop itself, and both Jody and Sharon have met with admissions advisors to start the registration process.

To clear the path, colleges and universities must first identify the barriers, but to do this they must listen to the people most affected by those barriers. Educational reform has a long history of approaching these barriers as specific to individuals and groups without examining the systems in which these barriers exist or the ways in which the system itself is the barrier (Valencia, 1997). The knowledge gained from the experiences of the participants and their ability to help us view the system from their standpoint is invaluable if the goal is to help create a system where barriers are reduced or eliminated and post-secondary success is the norm rather than the exception.

As discussed, financial aid, and the myths surrounding it, was the biggest obstacle on the path to college, but other obstacles included not understanding the admissions

process and requirements, misconceptions about the applicability of former college work, unfamiliarity with technology, and a lack of knowledge about available programs and majors. All of these areas can be easily addressed through clear, user-friendly internet materials and access to academic advising, admissions, and financial aid experts who are familiar with the challenges facing formerly incarcerated individuals and can speak to the ways in which these challenges can be overcome.

The Intersection of CST, Possible Selves, and SCCT

In this section, I examine the ways in which the possible selves of the participants intersected with social cognitive career theory (SCCT), critical social theory (CST), and the four sub-theories of false consciousness, crisis, education, and transformative action. Patricia Hill Collins (1998) defines CST as “a body of knowledge and a set of institutional practices that actively grapple with central questions facing groups of people differently placed in specific political, social, and historical contexts characterized by injustice” (p. xii). CST is, at its core, a transformative process as the researcher commits to being both a critical observer and active participant who works with stakeholders to identify and unpack the social structures that contribute to the injustice being studied and use this knowledge to change those systems (Calhoun, 1995; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010; Leonardo, 2004). In this way, the theory of transformative action acts as the driving force behind the process. Figure 5 illustrates the ways in which CST, possible selves (PSs), and SCCT worked together and contributed to my understanding of the lived experiences of the participants and the role of the CAP Workshop.

Markus and Nurius (1987) theorize that an individual’s possible selves are created from their learning experiences, personalities, sociocultural context, and environmental

influences. This is mirrored in SCCT where choices are seen as a result of background influences and person inputs, which include both ascribed characteristics and personality (Lent, 2014). The first two sub-theories of CST, the theory of false consciousness and the theory of crisis, frame experiences in terms of what is both possible and expected, and influence what you want to become, what you think you can become, and what you fear becoming, all of which contribute to the academic possible self.

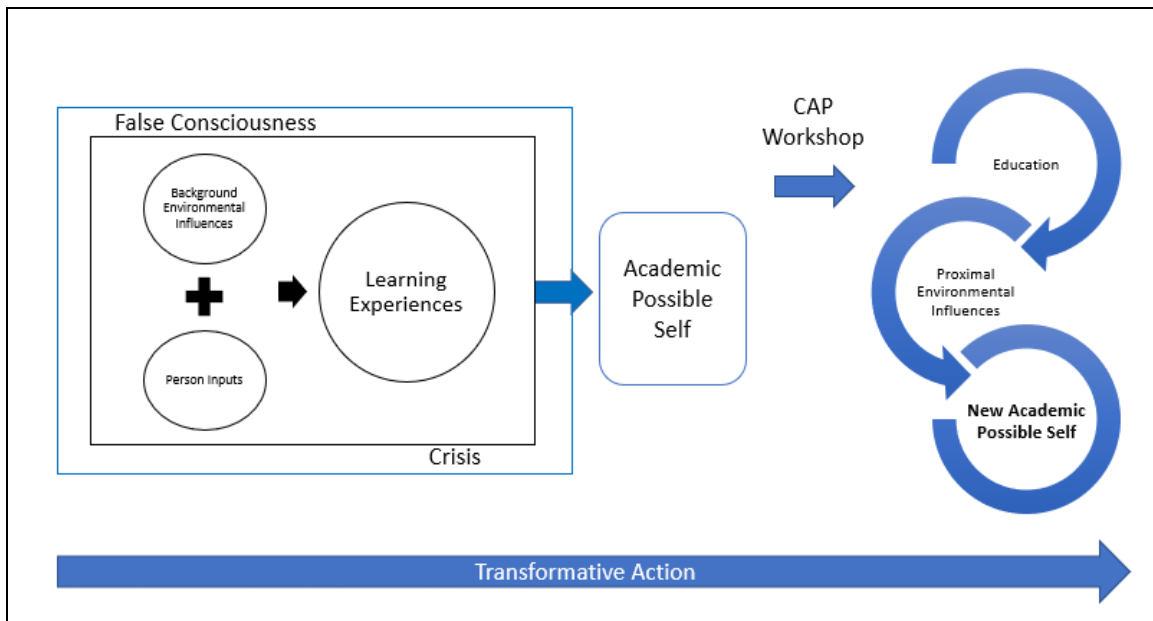


Figure 5. Critical Social Theory, Possible Selves, & Social Cognitive Career Theory in the Context of the CAP Workshop

The Theory of False Consciousness. Paulo Freire (1970) believed that education that is liberating must work with, and not against, marginalized populations, and that people need to understand the systems in place and their place in those systems in order to affect social change. However, it is these same systems that actively work to keep the oppressed from developing a “conscientização,” or critical consciousness. It is incumbent upon the educator to facilitate a dialogue that centers the voices of the marginalized and works to interrupt these systems. In CST, this idea is presented in the theory of false

consciousness, which states that the oppressed have internalized the views of the oppressors and, as hooks (1989), explains, adopted the colonizers' voice as their own.

During the interviews, it became evident that the participants' sense of what they could become was deeply affected by these systems of oppression that largely defined their lives. This was particularly true of their incarceration and post-incarceration experiences which were, by their description, designed to help them fail. However, they sometimes fought against the idea that any of these systems were responsible for the choices they made. The women were often willing to take all blame on themselves, even when acknowledging the larger societal systems that had at least some effect on the trajectory of their lives.

Jody, who suffered horrific abuse, was the most vocal opponent to the idea that the system, and not her own shortcomings, determined her pre-incarceration path:

During sentencing, the lawyer says, well, she's been this, this is what happened to her. I said, don't say that because you know what? Bad things happen to good people all the time and, you know, and they don't end up like this. I said, no, I don't like that. I don't like that. I don't like people using that stuff as an excuse.

And that was one thing that, and that I will say is that I've always been told to take responsibility, but the bottom line was, you know, I did that to myself.

Though she has done some reflective work in the last few years with a therapist and understands that the anger she carried in relation to her early-childhood experiences interfered with her ability to live a "normal" life, she only talks about that anger as a personal failing and does not examine the society in which it occurred. However, when she talks about the people she would like to help now that she is out of prison, the initial

stages of critical consciousness are evident: “People who are poor are always told they are poor, that they are always unfortunate, that they lack, they don’t have potential. I think we need to need to focus on the potential.”

For many of the women, there is a deep understanding of how flawed the current system is, and they are more capable of seeing how the carceral system has limited their choices than they are of critically examining the larger societal system. However, an over-indoctrination of personal responsibility meant to combat recidivism stifles critical consciousness and has had the, perhaps, unintended consequence of making personal responsibility an obstacle to success. Internalizing the idea that the fault is all yours may not allow one to separate the areas in which they do have personal control from those dictated by the system, which may in turn interfere with the ability to find workable solutions. In short, if you think that the answer is only to fix yourself, you may miss the much larger issues and the opportunity to affect real change on both an individual and system level.

In the CAP Workshop, I was not attempting to gauge where the participants fell on the false to critical consciousness spectrum as that is work that is ongoing and involves intense commitment and study. My intent was to help them begin to look at the system critically and allow them to see that their place in the system is not as fixed as they may believe, because when you understand how the man behind the curtain works, the road forward seems much less dangerous.

The Theory of Crisis. Jody’s assertion that people on the margins are constantly told what they are lacking is at the root of the theory of crisis and the deficit thinking that is a hallmark of many educational reforms both in and out of prisons. The

theory of crisis requires us to look beyond the surface, and beyond the symptoms, to find the root cause of a phenomenon (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010), but deficit thinking often leads us to the shortcomings of the learners as the explanation for any failure in education rather than to the educational system itself (Valencia, 1997).

As I researched the various prison and post-prison education programs that have been attempted, I was struck by the amount of focus that has been paid to motivation for college, and how little focus has been paid to systemic barriers to reaching that goal. Many programs focus on the motivation of formerly incarcerated women to attend school as something that has to be externally taught. The focus is often on desistance from crime, the need to cultivate grit, or the building of overall self-efficacy which will lead to wanting a better life. What they fail to realize is many of these women have the internal motivation to go to school, they just cannot see beyond both the real and perceived barriers. As Mari said as we were working on the S.M.A.R.T. goal setting activity: “We did these motivation type things all the time in prison, but no one ever told us what to do with that motivation.”

This type of thinking also affected the participants’ sense of what they could become and what they feared becoming. It defined their lives in terms of what is possible for them, both before they went to prison and when they were released and expected to reintegrate into society. The message was that they were responsible for everything they had done and that women in their situation had few prospects, though they were expected to leave prison and become productive, successful members of society. When they internalized the message that anything is possible if only they were better, smarter, or had more willpower, they had difficulty seeing beyond the perceived barriers to education,

and their feared possible selves were entirely dependent on not living up to the deficits that they were told they possess.

The Theory of Education. As seen in Figure 5, academic possible self is formed by learning experiences that have been influenced by the theories of false consciousness and crisis. Of the three aspects of possible selves, what you want to become, what you fear becoming, and what you think you can become, it is the third that was at the heart of this research: what you think you can become. Every woman I interviewed expressed excitement over the possibility of college and a belief that they could complete their degree while simultaneously listing the reasons they may not be good enough. They knew what they wanted to become, they knew what they feared becoming, but the belief that they may not be able to achieve the goal of college student resurfaced repeatedly in our early interviews.

One goal of the CAP Workshop was to show the participants what is possible by raising academic self-efficacy and removing the barriers to entry into a post-secondary institution, or, at the very least, making those barriers seem like obstacles that could be overcome. I wanted them to look at the system as it currently stands, and to take an honest look at their place in that system, so that they could “perceive critically the way they exist in the world and see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 15).

We began the day by acknowledging the system and its unfair, and often inhuman, nature, and talked about issues of class, race, and gender and how the reality of the world we live in is not geared toward helping these women succeed. Then, we talked about the ways in which we can work within and around that system to reach their

personal goals. Though addressing the entirety of what it means to be a formerly incarcerated woman and critically examining the system to the point of enlightenment was beyond the scope of the CAP Workshop, it was obvious that speaking openly about the ways in which the system served to reinforce oppression, and naming the monsters, opened the door to the discussion of what is possible. This education, combined with the tools and support needed to pursue their goals, allowed the participants to formulate a new idea of what they could become and start planning accordingly.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the small sample size, which limits the ability to generalize the findings. As mentioned previously, however, the goal is transferability, and so the focus is on thick, rich description to facilitate replication in other settings. I was also limited by the time constraints of this program which did not allow for the full phenomenological study I would undertake in different circumstances.

Another major limitation was the selection bias that was present because any women who participated in this study were already interested in attending a post-secondary institution. Though the initial respondents varied in terms of race and age, the small number of interviews and women who participated in the workshop make it difficult to generalize to larger populations. Future iterations of this research will attempt to reach individuals who are at different places in the educational process with different levels of motivation to pursue college.

Another limitation was the time available to conduct the research. The intervention was adapted to take place over one day instead of two as I had originally

planned because there was a fear of attrition, and logistics forced the removal of some planned activities.

Finally, the inexperience of the researcher was a limitation. As I read through the transcripts of the interviews that were conducted, I realized that the inability to read body language coupled with my introversion and that the necessity of completing many of the interviews over the phone interfered with my ability to dive as deeply as I would have liked.

Proposed Changes to the CAP Workshop

As discussed, it is my hope to offer this workshop to formerly incarcerated individuals through local colleges and universities and community organizations that work with this population. The data collected have guided the creation of a facilitation manual (Appendix J) that can be used by others which will be freely available on the CollegeAfterPrison.org website along with resources for formerly incarcerated students and potential students.

The need to collect data during the workshop meant there was not enough time to focus on some of the activities that would provide added benefit to formerly incarcerated women. In the updated version of the CAP Workshop, data collection modules have been removed and they have been replaced with a guest speaker, extended time with the me3™ tool and college websites, and scheduled time with financial aid and admissions professionals.

One of the sources of self-efficacy beliefs is the vicarious observation of others like us who have succeeded (Bandura, 1977). This idea is evident in both the PSs and SCCT models of motivation and will be a valuable part of the CAP Workshop. Both

desired and feared possible selves are directly influenced by the social and historical context in which a person exists and the salient others that are present in their life (Markus & Nurius, 1987). By viewing these others and the places they hold in the larger society, and comparing our thoughts and behaviors to theirs, we learn what is possible and develop our idea of what we could become. In the SCCT model, the contextual affordances feed into the sources of self-efficacy, including salient others, to motivate behavior (Lent, Brown, & Hackett (1993). With this in mind, the revised workshop begins with a guest speaker to provide the experiences of someone who has been where these women have been.

The women wanted more time to explore career and major options, and the technology gap, especially among the older women, was pronounced enough to delay instruction, so the new version of the workshop has been designed to allow the space to explore with a facilitator who is available to answer such questions.

Implications for Research

Though for many, the educational experiences of the formerly incarcerated may not seem of general public interest, the state of incarceration in this country and recent research that shows that 45% of Americans have had an immediate family member in jail or prison at some point (Enns et al., 2018) proves otherwise. The vast majority of people who go to prison eventually reenter their communities, and understanding their experiences may help to create programs which increase the chances of success.

It is my hope that the next cycle of research continues to center the voices of the formerly incarcerated. This is an area that would benefit from a mixed-methods approach which would allow for the centering of voices through a single-case embedded case study

approach along with the collection of quantitative data on college attitudes and behaviors that could be gathered from multiple institutions and geographic areas. A single-case study is appropriate for an attempt to understand the lived experiences of this population within the context in which they occur and in relation to social and institutional processes which have contributed to the phenomenon of low-educational attainment among formerly incarcerated individuals (Farquhar, 2012; Yin, 2018).

Expanding this study would also allow for a greater degree of intersectionality and the tailoring of CAP Workshop activities to different populations. Though all of the people who would participate would be formerly incarcerated, this population is not homogeneous and we must be able to meet our learners where they are and provide culturally relevant, participant-informed content.

The Effect on the Researcher and Concluding Thoughts

When I first proposed the study of formerly incarcerated individuals more than three years ago, I could not have predicted the ways in which this study would change not only the way that I approach educational research, but also my understanding of myself and the systems in which I operate. It has changed my worldview and has altered my own possible selves as I have examined who I want to become, who I think I can become, and who I fear becoming.

As a classroom instructor and as an academic advisor, I do research on a daily basis with my students and adapt the setting, my language, and my behavior based on immediate feedback and observed trends, but on this dissertation journey I have learned to step back and examine my thinking as I make these adaptations as I attempt to allow the students, and not just my interpretations, guide my practice.

This research has made me more committed to critically examining our current educational systems and challenging the dominant paradigm that creates a culture that treats those in the margins as less than. In *Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness*, bell hooks (1989), challenges us to see the margins as a place of resistance. Central to this is the idea that those on the margin know they are on the margin, and this knowledge gives them the power to look “both from the outside in and from the inside out” (p. 20). This power allows for a place of resistance because hanging on to that marginality in a system geared toward silencing you is in itself an act of rebellion, and drawing on your language, and your history, opens the possibility for radical actions because you have knowledge of things outside of the center. The margin as power is a place that is chosen, not assigned, and it is continually chosen as the center attempts its dismissal and acts of erasure, and so is strengthened through struggle and through the use of language, and history, and space.

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APPENDIX A
POSSIBLE SELVES QUESTIONNAIRE

First name _____

Who will you be next year? Each of us has some image or picture of what we will be like and what we want to avoid being like in the future. Think about next year -- imagine what you'll be like, and what you'll be doing next year.

Next year, I hope to be (list at least 3):

Do you believe you are capable of reaching those goals? Why or why not?

In addition to expectations and expected goals, we all have images or pictures of what we don't want to be like; what we don't want to do or want to avoid being. First, think a minute about ways you would not like to be next year -- things you are concerned about or want to avoid being like.

Next year, I don't want to be (list at least 3):

Thinking about your above answers, what are your top 3 reasons for wanting to continue your education?

Adapted from Oyserman, D. (2018). Possible selves citations, measure, and coding

instructions. Retrieved from <https://dornsife.usc.edu/daphna-oyserman/measures/>

APPENDIX B

ACADEMIC MOTIVATION SCALE

Why do you want to go to college?

Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following applies to you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all me This is me exactly

Because with only a high school degree I will not find a high-paying job _____

Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things _____

Because I think that a college career will help me better prepare for the career that I
have chosen _____

For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to
others _____

For the pleasure I feel when doing very well in school _____

To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree _____

For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things _____

Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field I like _____

For the pleasure I experience when I read interesting authors _____

For the pleasure I experience when I do well on one of my personal goals _____

Because of the fact that when I succeed in school, I feel important _____

Because I want to have "the good life" later on _____

For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which
appeal to me _____

Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career
orientation _____

For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic
activities _____

To show myself that I am an intelligent person _____

In order to have a better salary later on _____

Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest
me _____

Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence
as a worker_____

For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting
subjects_____

Because college allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for
excellence in my studies_____

Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies_____

Adapted from Vallerand, R.J., Pelletier, L.G., Blais, M.R., Briere, N.M., Senecal, C.B., &
Vallieres, E.F. (1992). The academic motivation scale: A measure of intrinsic,
extrinsic, and amotivation in education. *Educational and Psychological
Measurement*, 52, 1003–1017.

APPENDIX C

S.M.A.R.T GOAL SETTING

Set two goals related to your education—check to make sure that each goal is SMART:
 Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely

1. _____

2. _____

What are some smaller steps you could take that would help with your larger goals?

Step	Timeframe/deadline

What do you think might get in the way of achieving your goals? How do you think you could overcome these obstacles?

Obstacle	Resources and/or support needed

What does success look like? How will you know you have achieved your goals?

Adapted from Doran, G. T. (1981). “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives”. *Management Review*, 70 (11): 35–36.

APPENDIX D
COLLEGE INFORMATION SHEET

School			
Location			
Major/Majors			
Application Fee			
GPA Requirements			
ACT/SAT Requirements			
Application deadline			
Application materials			
Website			
Admissions phone number			

APPENDIX E
RECRUITMENT

Email:

My name is Kendra Bell and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Eugene Judson, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on the experiences of formerly incarcerated women who are interested in attending a post-secondary institution.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in a workshop as well as interviews concerning your experiences and beliefs about the barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated women. The workshop will last approximately 7 hours and it will address college attitudes and the way you see yourself in the educational system, college motivation, college self-efficacy, financial aid considerations, and barriers to college.

For this study, you will need to commit to a one-day workshop lasting 7 hours, a pre-workshop interview, and a post-workshop interview (total time approximately 9 hours)

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to develop some new skills and then reflect on and think more about them, so there is potential to gain actionable knowledge about the college application process and the college experience. There are no foreseeable risks to your participation, though the topics discussed may be sensitive in nature.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you are interested in participating, please complete this brief survey: (see Google form below)

Social Media:

Are you a formerly incarcerated woman in Arizona who has not attended college? Are you at least 18 years old? If you answered “yes” to these questions, you are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Arizona State University! You will be asked to participate in a workshop as well as interviews concerning your experiences and beliefs about the barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated women. Participation is voluntary. For more information, contact Kendra Bell by email at kendrabo@gmail.com, by phone at 623-850-8227, or by filling out the following form: <https://forms.gle/WckDBRNQj8XRePGU8>

Flyer

College After Prison Workshop and Research

Are you a formerly incarcerated woman who has not attended college? Are you at least 18 years old? If you answered “yes” to these questions, you are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Arizona State University that involves a college-information workshop!

The workshop will last approximately 7 hours and it will address college attitudes and the way you see yourself in the educational system, college motivation, college self-efficacy, financial aid considerations, and barriers to college.

For this study, you will need to commit to a one-day workshop lasting 7 hours, a pre-workshop interview, and a post-workshop interview (total time approximately 9 hours)

Participation is voluntary. For more information, contact Kendra Bell by email at Kendra.L.Bell@asu.edu or by phone at 623-850-8227.

Thank you!

Google Form:

Interest in a college workshop (and helping with research)

My name is Kendra Bell and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University.

In the summer and early fall I will be conducting research into the barriers to college for formerly incarcerated women. The goal is to test out and improve a college-going workshop for formerly incarcerated women that I have developed. This study is for women who have been incarcerated and have not attended college since leaving prison.

The workshop will consist of learning modules that deal with financial aid, college admissions, confidence, motivation, and major and career exploration. There will also be an activity involving either photographs or drawings/paintings that you create.

The workshop will take place on August 10th from 9 am to 4 pm at the ASU Downtown campus. There will also be a recorded interview which will last 60-90 minutes in June or July (in person or on the phone) and another brief (30 minute) recorded interview (in person or on the phone) in the week or two after the workshop. Coffee, soda, water, and lunch will be provided. There will also be \$30.00 provided for completion of the final interview.

If you are interested in learning more, please fill out the following survey--and feel free to pass it on to anyone else you think might like to participate!

I can be reached at collegeafterprison@gmail.com or (623) 850-8227 * Required

Are you a woman who has been incarcerated and who did not take college classes before entering prison or since reentering the community? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (great--continue!)
- No (This study is not for you, but please feel free to fill out the contact information so that I can provide you information about future workshops)

Name *

Age *

Race or races you consider yourself *

Phone number or email *

Do you have a high school diploma or GED? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Have you taken any college classes? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, I took classes while incarcerated but none outside of prison.
- No

Do you think you would be able to commit to the study and workshop as described in the introduction? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (I have more questions, please contact me)

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM

Title of research study: Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline

Investigator: Kendra Bell

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in a research study because we believe that your insight as a formerly incarcerated woman will shed light on the barriers to higher education for this population.

All participants recruited must be 18 years or older to take part in the study.

Why is this research being done?

This research is being conducted because there is currently little to no research on the barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated women. This investigation will help contribute to a growing body of knowledge to help academic professionals and organizations that work with formerly incarcerated women. Plans are to develop innovations and intervention protocols as tools for colleges to use. Hopefully these efforts lead to an increase in educational attainment for this population.

How long will the research last?

The workshop will last approximately 7 hours and it will address college attitudes and the way you see yourself in the educational system, college motivation, college self-efficacy, financial aid considerations, and barriers to college. The pre-workshop interview will last 60-90 minutes, and the post-workshop interview will last 30 minutes for a total of 9 hours over the course of the study.

How many people will be studied?

The workshop will be comprised of 5-10 formerly incarcerated women and interviews will be conducted with 3-5 others.

What data will be collected?

I will be collecting the recorded interviews as well as the materials you create for the workshop including photographs or drawings and any related writing, a questionnaire, and a recorded discussion at the end of each session to discuss what worked and what didn't.

How will the data be collected and stored?

We are asking your permission to audio record the interviews. Only the research team will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. Let me know if, at any time, you do not want to be recorded and I will stop. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information during the interview. We will ask you to use a unique identifier known only to you and it will be easy to recall. This identifier consists of using the first three letters of your mother's name and the last four digits of

your phone number. Thus, “Sar 4567” would be the identifier for someone whose mother’s name was Sarah and whose phone number was (602) 543-4567.

Will I remain anonymous?

I will make every effort to maintain your confidentiality, and you will be anonymous in all data collected and in any materials created from these data, but because this is a group session involving a number of participants, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality and anonymity.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

You are free to decide whether you wish to participate in this study. You may decline to answer any of the questions during the interview, or stop the interview whenever you would like without any negative consequences.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time it will not be held against you.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

Some of the questions may be sensitive in nature (such as asking about the barriers you may have experienced). Of course, you can skip any question that you are uncomfortable answering. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and you do not have to respond to any question that you do not wish to answer. In order to protect your identify and the identity of others, please refrain from using specific names or identifiers (use 'Person A' instead, for example).

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research, but we believe you’re your participation will help you individually and the field of higher education as well. Our project will provide important information on the barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated persons. Your participation will help start to fill this gap in knowledge.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations or publications but your name or identifying factors will not be used.

Consent:

You will be asked to give consent while recording your interview and through a Google form.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, talk to the primary investigator, Eugene Judson at EugeneJudson@asu.edu or team member Kendra Bell at Kendra.l.bell@asu.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Behavioral IRB. You may talk to them at (480) 965-6788 or by email at research.integrity@asu.edu if:

Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.

You cannot reach the research team.

You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You have questions about your rights as a research participant.

You want to get information or provide input about this research.

APPENDIX G
PRE-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
FORMERLY INCARCERATED WOMEN

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Kendra Bell and, as you are aware, I'm conducting research on the experiences of formerly incarcerated women who have not attended college.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. Do you agree I may audio record this interview?

This interview will likely take 60-90 minutes. You do not have to answer all the questions. Please let me know if you wish to stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

For the first questions, I just want to get a sense of who you are now and where you have been.

1. Can you tell me a bit about your life now? (Do you have children? Do you work? How long have you lived in Arizona?)
2. Can you tell me a bit about your life before going to prison? (Tell me about your family, your job, your relationships)
3. What goals were you working on before going to prison?
4. Where do you see yourself in one year? In five?
5. What are your goals for your life right now?
6. Can you tell me a bit about your experiences with education before going to prison? (prompts: What were your favorite classes and why? What was your favorite grade and why? What did you struggle with? Did you like high school?)
7. Did you attend any educational classes while incarcerated?
8. If yes, were these classes mandatory or optional?
9. If they were optional, what made you want to take these classes?
10. What did you learn in these classes?
11. Could you tell me about the teachers and their teaching styles in these classes?

For these questions, I want to find out more about your educational experiences, and I would like you to think back to elementary school (kindergarten through 6th grade) and secondary schools (7th through 12th grade) and the people and events that may have had an influence on your life.

12. Can you tell me about your elementary school or schools? What are your most vivid memories?
13. How would you describe yourself as a student in elementary school? Follow-up—can you tell me more about what that means (based on the adjectives they use to describe themselves)?
14. What were you feeling during this time in your life?
15. How would you describe the quality of your elementary school/s? What made it/them good or bad?
16. As a child, what were your thoughts about college?
17. What were your expectations for college for yourself?
18. Can you remember any people in your life (family/friends/teachers) that encouraged you to go to college?
19. Can you remember any people in your life (family/friends/teachers) that discouraged you from going to college?

The following questions are based on your junior and high school experiences.

20. Can you tell me about your secondary schools? What are your most vivid memories?
21. How would you describe yourself as a student in high school? Follow-up—can you tell me more about what that means (based on the adjectives they use to describe themselves)?
22. What were you feeling during this time in your life?
23. How would you describe the quality of your secondary schools? What made it/them good or bad?
24. As a teenager, what were your thoughts about college?
25. What were your expectations for college for yourself?
26. Can you remember any people in your life (family/friends/teachers) that encouraged you to go to college?

27. Can you remember any people in your life (family/friends/teachers) that discouraged you from going to college?
28. While in high school, did you take any steps toward college?

Now we are going to switch gears a bit and talk about the moments in your life when you started thinking about colleges and the thoughts and feelings you've experienced around college.

29. How old were you when you first thought about college?
30. Could you tell me more about that moment? Was there a person or event that made you start thinking about college?
31. When did you start thinking about college after prison?
32. Why are you interested in attending college?
33. When you are thinking about college, what does that look like?
34. What were you telling yourself about college during this time?
35. How confident are you in your ability get into college?
36. How confident are you in your ability to successfully complete college?
37. When you think about applying to college, what words or feelings come to mind?
38. What do you feel will be your biggest challenges?
39. Aside from this workshop, what steps have you taken toward attending college?
Follow-up—what do you think is holding you back from taking that first/next step?
40. What do you hope to get out of the College After Prison workshop?

Do you have anything else that you would like to share about your experiences?

Thank you very much for your participation!

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: CARCERAL SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Kendra Bell and, as you are probably aware, I'm conducting research on the perceived and experienced barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated individuals.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. Do you agree I may audio record this interview?

This interview will likely take 30 minutes. You do not have to answer all the questions. Please let me know if you wish to stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions for Community Leaders

1. What barriers to higher education have formerly incarcerated clients expressed to you?
2. What barriers to higher education for formerly incarcerated individuals have you witnessed?
3. In your experience, in which areas, related to higher education, does this population face the biggest challenges?
4. What do you believe colleges could do to help formerly incarcerated students take the first step toward college? Follow-up: How could colleges best help this population succeed in school?
5. If you could talk to the Maricopa County universities and colleges in regards to this population, what would you say?

Do you have anything else that you would like to share about your experiences?

Thank you very much for your participation!

APPENDIX I

POST-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today and for participating in the College After Prison workshop. Today's interview will involve questions about your experience with the CAP Workshop.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. Do you agree I may audio record this interview?

This interview will likely take 30-45 minutes. You do not have to answer all the questions. Please let me know if you wish to stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

I would just like to ask you a few questions about your experiences over the course of our work together and where you are now.

1. When you think about applying to college, what words or feelings come to mind?
2. How confident are you in your ability get into college?
3. How confident are you in your ability to successfully complete college?
4. What do you feel will be your biggest challenges?

For these final questions, I would like to get your feedback on the CAP Workshop

5. Why did you attend this workshop?
6. What did you find the most helpful in the workshop?
7. What other issues would you have like to see covered?
8. How do you feel the workshop can be improved?
9. Do you have anything else that you would like to share about your experiences with higher education or this workshop?

Thank you very much for your participation!

APPENDIX J

COLLEGE AFTER PRISON WORKSHOP FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



The CAP Workshop is intended to reduce perceived barriers and increase academic self-efficacy among formerly incarcerated individuals through practical, relevant information on the college process, financial aid, and career and major exploration. The guide can be used as a one-day workshop, or the individual modules can be adapted for shorter learning sessions. This workshop requires a classroom with computers to allow participants to engage with the materials and get hands-on experience with the college process. All materials can be found at <https://collegeafterprison.org/workshop/>

ORGANIZATION AND LAYOUT


Module	Time
1 Opening/Website	15 minutes
2 Introductions/Identifying Barriers	40 minutes
3 Guest Speaker/s	30 minutes
Break	15 minutes
4 Financial Aid	30 minutes
5 Admission Requirements	30 minutes
6 Career and Major Exploration	45 minutes
Lunch	60 minutes
7 Academic Road Map	90 minutes
8 Overcoming Barriers	10 minutes
9 Closing	20 minutes

PLANNING AND MATERIALS

Task	
Confirm guest speaker/s and academic professional/s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Print participant handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assemble participant binders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up screen and computer with LCD projector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place supplies at each table (participant handbook, paper, colored pencils)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Familiarize yourself with the PowerPoint presentation and all materials	<input type="checkbox"/>

MODULES

MODULE 1: OPENING	
PURPOSE: To provide an overview of the materials we will be covering and to get participants logged into the CAP classroom	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: CAP website Participant binders PowerPoint presentation	TIME: 15 minutes
<p>PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS: Prepare binders with the following: Federal Student Aid for Individuals Exiting Incarceration https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/aid-info-for-individuals-exiting-incarceration.pdf</p> <p>Reentry Mythbuster! http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Reentry_Council_Mythbuster_Student_Financial_Aid.pdf</p> <p>MCCCCD Enrollment Steps https://cdn.maricopa.edu/documents/pdf/my-maricopa/enrollment/SEM_FL_Enrollment_Steps.pdf</p> <p>FAFSA Worksheet: https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21-fafsa-worksheet.pdf</p> <p>Lined notebook paper</p>	
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Introduce yourself and have participants log into the computers and to the CAP Workshop website. Provide an overview of what will be covered in the session.</p>	

MODULE 2: INTRODUCTIONS/IDENTIFYING BARRIERS	
PURPOSE: To encourage dialogue, to establish a safe space, to identify barriers in an effort understand the system and find solutions.	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: blank paper and colored pencils for education journey map	TIME: 40 minutes
Sample education journey map (it is helpful to have the facilitator's map to build trust and model the activity)	
HANDOUTS: NONE	
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Introductions (5 minutes) Have each participant introduce themselves and include name, hometown, reason they are in the workshop, career goals, and a fun fact</p> <p>Education Journey Map (15 minutes) Prompt: Map your education journey from elementary school though today. You can draw this as a map, as a timeline, or in any way you like! Some things to include are any obstacles you faced, any successes you had, the people who helped you or who you felt discouraged you, how you felt about school, and where you think you will go from here.</p> <p>We will discuss your maps as a class, and then use them on our next activity.</p> <p>Ask for volunteers to discuss their journey (10 minutes)</p> <p>Identifying Barriers (10 minutes) Using the information from your map and from the discussion, identify 3 possible barriers to college. Write each barrier on a post-it note then place the note on the board based on how hard this barrier will be to overcome. (Likert scale drawn on board):</p> <p>Not a barrier Somewhat of a barrier Challenging but doable Maybe too hard to overcome</p> 	

Module 3: Guest Speaker	
PURPOSE: To provide an example of success and a resource for questions, to influence self-efficacy through vicarious experience	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: Arrange speaker (formerly incarcerated individual who has successfully completed college classes), communicate expectations to speaker (20 minute presentation, 10 minute Q and A + remaining for 15 minute break to address further questions	TIME: 30 minutes
HANDOUTS: NONE	
ACTIVITIES Introduce speaker—ask participants to listen for the barriers that were discussed in module 2 and the ways in which the speaker overcame these barriers.	

Module 4: Financial Aid
PURPOSE: To demystify financial aid, to set clear expectations, to clear the path
TIME: 30 minutes
HANDOUTS (IN BINDER) Federal Student Aid for Individuals Exiting Incarceration Reentry Mythbuster!
ACTIVITIES Discuss the financial aid policies for formerly incarcerated individuals (5 minutes): https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/aid-info-for-individuals-exiting-incarceration.pdf Watch the following videos (5 minutes): Financial aid process: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/financial-aid-process.wmv Types of federal student aid: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/types-of-aid.wmv Visit the CAP website and give a brief overview of each of the following (participants will be able to revisit these links during lunch or on their own after the workshop (10 minutes) Federal Student Aid Resources: https://studentaid.gov/resources Federal Student Aid ID: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/fsaid Filing the FAFSA: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa Have participants complete the Federal Aid Forecaster (10 minutes): https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate

Helpful resources for forecaster:
ASU tuition estimator: <https://participants.asu.edu/tuition>
MCCCD Financial Aid: <https://maricopa.edu/become-a-student/tuition-paying>

Module 5: Admission Requirements

PURPOSE: To understand the admissions requirements for ASU and MCCCD and to learn common terminology used in the admissions process

TIME: 30 minutes

HANDOUTS (IN BINDER)
MCCCD Enrollment Steps
https://cdn.maricopa.edu/documents/pdf/my-maricopa/enrollment/SEM_FL_Enrollment_Steps.pdf

ACTIVITIES

Have participants open the Adult Student College Prep Checklist:
<https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/checklists/adult-student>

Visit the CAP website and explain each of the following (participants will be able to revisit these links during lunch or on their own after the workshop):

Maricopa County (10 minutes):
MCCCD Admissions (Required Criteria):
<https://www.maricopa.edu/future-participants/enrollment-information>

Enrollment Steps (Steps 1 and 2—watch Prior Learning Assessment video in step 2):
<https://www.maricopa.edu/future-participants/enrollment-steps>

Accuplacer:
<https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/participants/prepare-for-accuplacer/practice>

Arizona State University (15 minutes):
First Year Participants: <https://admission.asu.edu/first-year/apply>
Transfer: <https://admission.asu.edu/transfer/apply>
Earned Admission: <https://ea.asu.edu/>

The Common Application (5 minutes):
Counselor Toolkit: <https://www.commonapp.org/counselors-and-recommenders/common-app-ready>

Transfer Advisors: <https://www.commonapp.org/counselors-and-recommenders/common-app-ready-for-transfer-participants>

Module 6: Career and Major Exploration	
PURPOSE: To explore options for careers and majors, to understand what is possible, to gather information for Module 7	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: Become familiar with the me3® tool	TIME: 45 minutes
HANDOUTS: None	
ACTIVITIES	
me3® (30 minutes)	
<p>Explain the me3® tool: Find a major, degree program and career that fits you with me3®, an online interactive major and career quiz. Easily explore majors and careers that fit your interests and passions. Then chart an academic pathway to find a degree program that leads to a career so you can design the future you want.</p>	
<p>Have participants set up an account and take the me3® quiz: https://yourfuture.asu.edu/me3</p>	
<p>Introduce participants to alternative resources (105minutes) Career Onestop (resources for formerly incarcerated individuals): https://www.careeronestop.org/</p>	
<p>MCCCD Fields of Interest: https://www.maricopa.edu/degrees-certificates</p>	
<p>Occupational Outlook Handbook: https://www.bls.gov/ooh/</p>	

Module 7: Academic Road Map	
<p>PURPOSE: To apply provided information to a concrete plan for moving forward, to speak with academic professionals, to begin the application process. This section contains different activities so that participants can get what they need.</p>	
<p>PREPARATION/MATERIALS: Arrange to have someone who is familiar with transcripts and admissions procedures for ASU and MCCCDC who can help you speak with participants individually</p>	<p>TIME: 90 minutes</p>
<p>HANDOUTS (IN BINDER)</p> <p>FAFSA Worksheet: https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21-fafsa-worksheet.pdf</p>	
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>As a class, watch the following video on filling out the FAFSA: https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/how-to-fill-out-fafsa.wmv</p> <p>Unit 1—Financial Aid: Participants can begin to fill out the FAFSA: https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa</p> <p>To obtain a Federal Student Aid ID: https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/topic/managing_your_account/articles/</p> <p>ASU Scholarship search: https://scholarships.asu.edu/scholarship-search</p> <p>Unit 2: Transfer Options Discuss the transfer options within Maricopa County</p> <p>MCCCDC Transfer Pathways: https://www.maricopa.edu/degrees-certificates/transfer/pathways-partners</p> <p>ASU Transfer Credit Guide: https://webapp4.asu.edu/transfercrreditguide/app/searchcourses</p> <p>Unit 3: Meet with an Academic Professional If participants have transfer credits, help them access them if possible. MCCCDC: https://my.maricopa.edu/</p> <p>Participants can meet with the facilitator and other academic professionals (try to get at least 1 volunteer to speak with participants one-on-one.</p> <p>Unit 4: Application ASU: https://admission.asu.edu/apply MCCCDC: https://admissions.maricopa.edu/</p>	

Module 8: Overcoming Barriers	
PURPOSE: To examine the barriers that were identified in Module 2 and discuss ways of overcoming these barriers.	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: The barrier scale created in module 2	TIME: 10 minutes
HANDOUTS: None	
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>As a class, revisit the barriers that we identified at the beginning of the session. Ask the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would you change the location of any of the barriers (or remove them from the board)? 2. Why would you make these changes? 3. Looking at the barriers that still remaining, what do you think would help you overcome these barriers? 	

Module 9: Closing	
PURPOSE: To answer remaining questions, to encourage further participation with the CAP Workshop, to reflect on the day's activities	
PREPARATION/MATERIALS: None	TIME: 20 minutes
PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS: None	
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Discuss the ways on which the participants can be involved with the CAP Workshop (spreading the word, adding a testimonial/success story, mentorship)</p> <p>Ask participants to fill out survey with comments and suggestions on the workshop (Google form via the CAP website).</p>	

APPENDIX K

ASU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Eugene Judson
 Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Polytechnic Campus
 480/727-5216
 Eugene.Judson@asu.edu

Dear Eugene Judson:

On 4/15/2019 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline: Examining the Barriers to Post-secondary Education for Formerly Incarcerated Women
Investigator:	Eugene Judson
IRB ID:	STUDY00009958
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline IRB Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline Recruitment, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline Focus Group, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline Consent, Category: Consent Form; • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline Workshop, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Creating the Prison-to-College Pipeline Interview Protocol One, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus

	group questions);
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The IRB approved the protocol from 4/15/2019 to 4/14/2020 inclusive. Three weeks before 4/14/2020 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 4/14/2020 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the "Documents" tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Kendra Bell
Kendra Bell