"I Feel Like I'm About to Walk Out of Prison Blindfolded":

Prison Programming and Reentry

by

Bianca Rodriguez

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Kevin Wright, Chair
Jacob Young
Cody Telep

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ABSTRACT

People who participate in correctional treatment programming are viewed as making positive steps towards their reentry into society. However, this is often assessed through a simple "yes" or "no" response to whether they are currently participating without much emphasis on how, why, or to what degree that participation is meaningful for reentry preparedness. The present study aims to a) identify to what extent there is variation in the degree to which women participate in programming and are prepared for reentry, b) identify the characteristics that distinguish highly-involved programmers from less involved programmers, c) identify the characteristics that distinguish women who are highly-prepared for reentry from women who are less prepared, and d) assess whether levels of involvement in programming relate to levels of reentry preparedness. The sample comes from interviewer-proctored surveys of 200 incarcerated women in Arizona. Two indices were created: one for the independent variable of program involvement and one for the dependent variable of reentry preparedness. Logistic and multivariate regressions were run to determine the indices' relatedness to each other and the characteristic variables. The two indices did not have a statistically significant relationship with each other. However, variation across them is found. This indicates that programmers may not be a homogenous group and that they may engage with programming to varying degrees based on a multitude of indicators.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my work to all of the amazing people in my life that have held

me up every step of the way. My most heartfelt gratitude goes to my parents, my sisters,

my brothers, my grandfathers, my grandmothers, my partner, and my closest friends for

always believing in me. Your love and support have been my greatest gifts. Thank you

for making my dream your dream.

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INTRODUCTION

The first day someone enters prison is also the first day that they can prepare to leave prison. Reentry into society following incarceration is a process that is experienced by 95% of prisoners (Hughes & Wilson, 2020), and yet 55% of them will return to prison within five years (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). Correctional treatment programming facilitates preparation for reentry by placing individualized attention on challenges that people leaving incarceration will face on the outside. Involvement in programming can be used as a way to signal that participants are taking steps to prepare for eventual reentry, such as through programs focusing on gaining and maintaining employment (Bushway & Apel, 2012). Other programs can signal the preparation of participants to confront internal struggles, such as substance abuse or mental health. In addition to the more explicit goals of programming, there are other potential benefits such as belonging to a community of support, which is particularly important to incarcerated women (Collica, 2010). In these ways, programming is viewed positively as an avenue for participants to transform into ideal candidates for successful reentry.

People in prison have different degrees of investment in programming and therefore the impact of programming may not be uniformly beneficial across the prison population. Typically, research on programming in prison focuses on the supply side, with correctional program treatment quality found to vary significantly across programs (Lowenkamp et al., 2006). The demand side of programming, where prisoners vary in their motivation to engage in programming, is often assumed to be constant (Morse & Wright, In Press). This is problematic because it neglects the role that people in prison may play when it comes to how prepared they are for their return to society. Existing

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research suggests that they are woefully underprepared. For example, among 409 men incarcerated in a medium security prison in Arizona, 1 in 3 did not know where they would live upon their release, nearly 3 in 4 needed help with employment and healthcare upon their release, and 2 in 5 needed substance abuse counseling upon their release (Wright et al., 2017). Dismal release outcomes are found even as programming opportunities are made available, indicating that this is not only a supply side issue. So, it cannot be assumed that a lack of programming is solely responsible for these disappointing statistics, and the degree to which people in prison participate and engage in the programming that is available to them likely impacts their preparedness for release.

How can we best document variation in engagement in programming and release? Are levels of engagement in programming related to levels of preparedness for release? The present study uses 200 semi-structured interviews from minimum and medium security incarcerated women to examine involvement and outcomes of correctional programming. Specifically, these interviews were used to a) identify to what extent there is variation in the degree to which women participate in programming and are prepared for reentry, b) identify the characteristics that distinguish highly-involved programmers from less involved programmers, c) identify the characteristics that distinguish women who are highly-prepared for reentry from women who are less prepared, and d) assess whether levels of involvement in programming relate to levels of reentry preparedness. The broader purpose of this work is to bring a more nuanced view to the understanding of the relationship between correctional program treatment and the potential to reduce recidivism among women returning from prison.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, scholars have debated the ability of correctional programming and treatment to rehabilitate individuals throughout different criminal justice eras. This transformation through the decades has shifted between a focus on individualized treatment methods for rehabilitation, to the view that "nothing works" and efforts to rehabilitate are futile, to modern systems where the potential for rehabilitative treatments are widely evidenced as having positive effects on potential desistance (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001). The shift back into "what works" re-inspired a more individualized approach to be taken with correctional treatment, such as through the risks-needs-responsivity (RNR) model (see Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge 1990). These differing viewpoints, and thus programming objectives and goals, have led to an abundance of research assessing what aspects of programming and participants have the best treatment outcomes.

Program involvement is viewed as a productive use of time by demonstrating that the individual is engaging in prosocial activities that will benefit them in the future. This is supported by the widely researched hypotheses that programming can aid in rehabilitation and that rehabilitation is connected to eventual desistance (Cullen, 2013). Congress formally recognized these relationships through the Formerly Incarcerated Reenter Society Transformed Safely Transitioning Every Person (FIRST STEP) Act, which was passed in late 2018. The FIRST STEP Act targets recidivism in medium- and high-risk individuals by including an emphasis on reentry programming as one of its main goals (Jeffries, 2018). Indeed, there is a broad acceptance of program participation

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as a desirable attribute of someone who is incarcerated, allowing participants to be viewed as a homogenous group of 'do-somethings.'

As correctional programming is generally viewed as beneficial for participants, a 'more is better' approach is often taken. That is, greater amounts of programming are thought to increase positive outcomes. Some research finds that programmers should participate in minimum dosages of 100 to 300 hours calculated by assessing their risk and need levels in order to gain the benefits of programming (Hanson et al., 2017). Although other research has contested the validity of minimum dosages (Simourd & Olver, 2019), it still supports the idea that any treatment is better than none. People reentering from institutions that do not provide programming or other reentry resources may view their options as limited to returning to the environment of crime from which they originally came (van Olphen, Freudenberg, Fortin, & Galea, 2006). As such, program involvement is quantifiable in that the acquirable benefits increase with greater amounts of involvement.

Variation in Programming

Program involvement is one of a limited number of ways that people who are incarcerated can signal their preparedness for reentry. Mere program participation is a simple box to check, however, where participants may use engagement with programming as a "signal" that they are ready to reenter. Spence's signaling theory (1973) discussed the ways in which people who were in search of employment could acquire, or purchase, education to increase employers' willingness to invest in them. Essentially, even if potential employees' education does not directly increase productivity in the workplace, it is mutually beneficial for employers and employees in such that it

signals employees are willing to invest more in the appearance of productivity (Spence, 1973). Bushway and Apel (2012) adapt signaling theory to employment programming during incarceration. As those who are incarcerated are willing to invest in programming and training for future employment, they are able to signal that they would be productive as employees, and more broadly, members of society.

Readiness for employment, then, is a signal of investment in the future, but there may be a number of other signals that evidence productivity beyond employment. Formerly incarcerated people carry "stigmatizing signals" (Wright, 2020, p. 54) of prior incarceration with them throughout their lives that can disqualify them from many of the signals associated with productive lives, such as education or stable housing. In this way, it can be difficult to ameliorate the consequences of stigmatizing signals. "Reintegrative signals" (Wright, 2020, p. 54) associated with prison programming, however, can help identify people proactively preparing for reentry. The desire for more reentry resources in prison, involvement in various program types, and interest in future voluntary programs evidence that an individual is investing in signals of productivity that extend beyond a simple "yes" or "no" response of whether they are currently enrolled in a program. These signals can be formalized, such as through a life resume. Life resumes could operate similarly to resumes prepared for employment. This would provide an opportunity for individuals to highlight their efforts through reintegrative signals rather than trying to hide stigmatizing signals. The tracking of these proactive signals contributes to the larger signal that the individual can contribute, rather than detract, from society (Wright, 2020).

The freedoms granted to those on the inside are few, so the motivations behind participating in activities send different signals. The long-term goal of desistance depends

on an individual's motivations for involvement in these activities. It seems intuitive that individuals who engage in programming knowing that this participation is generally viewed positively by others are inherently different from programmers who engage in these activities because they desire to grow as individuals. Indeed, the RNR model acknowledges that individualizing programming opportunities based on motivations to participate and readiness to change is key for the responsivity of an intervention (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011). Based on this, there is evidence that suggests that those who are more motivated to participate before beginning their program may have better program outcomes. Specifically, higher motivation is associated with higher program performance and lower future recidivism (Higley, Lloyd, & Serin, 2019).

An underlying and ongoing motivation to do better in the various areas of life is critical for long-term success past initial reentry. There are a multitude of barriers that individuals will face on the outside such as personal and family relationships, employment, housing, and health and mental health that can lead to reoffending across individual, community, and system levels (Travis, 2005; Wright & Cesar, 2013). These are ongoing barriers that individuals will continuously face. Programming has the ability to not only provide assistance identifying these barriers prior to release but can also facilitate the practice of skills needed to confront them. Addressing barriers found on the outside through programming on the inside prepares participants for a life very different from the one they led during their incarceration.

Given these variations in utility and motivation to program, there are reasons to expect great heterogeneity within programming involvement. Measurement of program involvement through simple participation, or nonparticipation, not only obscures a wealth

of information regarding people's actual engagement with programming, but it can affect the understanding of programming as a viable tool to prepare participants for reentry. The evaluation of program involvement through more complex means is necessary to observe potential variation within program participants, which can lead to a better understanding of how program involvement affects preparedness for reentry.

Variation in Reentry Preparedness

The foresight of incarcerated people to signal that they are ready to reenter requires an optimism of reentry success. Most individuals approaching release feel positive about their potential and their ability to stay on the outside, even if this optimism might not always reflect the reality of their situations (Dhami, Mandel, Loewenstein, & Ayton, 2006). They may create a redemption narrative about themselves where the improvements they have made during incarceration will keep them from falling back into past behaviors after release. In this way, they may need to "convince themselves" logically that there will be a difference when they reenter (Maruna, 2001, p. 87). This self-enhancement bias may allow individuals to feel as though they are exceptional and will not return to incarceration after release (Dhami et al., 2006) while also having a pessimistic outlook on the reentry potential of others in the same situation (Cobbina & Bender, 2012). They may also consider their desistance as uniquely earned by their ability to overcome their own challenges (Maruna, 2001).

This optimistic outlook may even contribute to positive effects on the outside. There is some evidence that suggests that as optimism, or hope, for reentry increases, the probability of future convictions and incarceration decreases (LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008). Optimism may also serve as a protective factor against reentry

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challenges. For example, certain reentry problems such as poor finances, diminished personal relationships, or substance abuse may be mediated by an individual's optimism that they will succeed on the outside (LeBel et al., 2008). An individual who feels that they will desist and avoid future incarceration may also invest in learning tools for life on the outside, such as through program involvement, and make practical plans about where they will live or what kinds of job they might want to obtain after they are released. In this way, one's perceptions of their success on the outside can greatly affect future outcomes.

Perceptions of reentry success may be gendered. Although men and women have the same optimism self-enhancement biases (Visher, La Vigne, & Castro, 2003), women may base their success relative to others on more gendered terms. Some women discuss the importance of a change from a criminal mentality to a desistance mentality. Specifically, they indicate a loss of interest in criminality and a greater focus on motherhood as reasons to shift thinking and succeed on the outside (Cobbina & Bender, 2012). This is consistent with reviews of research that find motherhood associated with a decrease in some crime types and parenthood as a more often cited reason for desistance in women than in men (Rodermond, Kruttschnitt, Slotboom, & Bijleveld, 2016). In this way, there are different indicators of success upon release and different motivators for desistance between genders.

Taken altogether, there may be variation in the degree to which people feel prepared to reenter society. Some people think they are never coming back to prison, and others think they are leaving prison blindfolded with no hope for success. A common refrain from reentry scholars is that reentry must begin on day one of incarceration

(Petersilia, 2009). This implies that men and women in prison be actively addressing the obstacles that they will face upon release. An analysis that considers the relationship between active involvement in programming and preparedness for release is needed to better understand how programming can aid in this process.

CURRENT FOCUS

Involvement in programming during incarceration is considered positive for reentry outcomes. However, this knowledge has been widely accepted as true across different aspects of programming and different individual participants. The current study uses a variety of programming indicators to understand the complexity of program involvement beyond simple participation and the characteristics of individuals who take advantage of these opportunities. The relationship between program involvement and signals of reentry preparedness is examined to assess variation across the sample. An individual's level of program involvement may affect their preparedness for reentry, which can influence realized success upon release.

METHOD

Setting

Arizona's Prison Population. As of early 2020, there were over 47,500 people incarcerated in Arizona state facilities, 4,300 of whom were female (Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, 2020). The state had the fourth highest incarceration rate in the country in 2018 (Arizona Town Hall, 2018). As of February 2020, there were over 30,400 participants in various types of prison programming; the most common program type was work programming (Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, 2020). Additionally, the state publicly

acknowledged the importance of rehabilitation and reentry in corrections, evident by the inclusion of these terms in the Department's formal name in early 2020 under Arizona Governor Doug Ducey.

Putting Second Chances to Work Sampling and Methods

The current study used data from the Putting Second Chances to Work Project (P2W). This was a collaborative project spearheaded by the Center for Correctional Solutions (CCS) at Arizona State University, in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR), the Arizona Department of Economic Security, and a number of other ASU and community entities. The purpose of the P2W was to gain insight from incarcerated women about their experiences before and during prison as well as their expectations for life after prison. The ultimate goal of the project was to create an in-prison program that could prepare women for employment following release by providing them with basic life skills organized around the entrepreneurial mindset. The project began in the summer of 2018 and is set to conclude in August 2020.

The survey instrument utilized for the P2W was designed by CCS and included various open- and closed-ended questions about women's experiences and hopes for the future, with special attention placed on reentry, employment, and programming. The data were gathered through in-person, interviewer-proctored surveys. Due to the survey design, there were many opportunities for the women to expand on their responses beyond a simple "yes" or "no." This allowed for rich data gathered from input of women at various stages in their incarceration, which was prioritized by researchers. The interviews ranged from 20 minutes to over an hour.

To reach their sample of prisoners, researchers visited ASPC-Perryville, an all-women's facility in Goodyear, Arizona during the spring of 2019. Two units, a minimum and a medium unit within the complex, were chosen for sampling. The women on these units were recruited through flyers placed on the yard by correctional staff on behalf of the researchers. Additionally, some women were recruited by researchers when they were walking the yard and by word of mouth from other survey respondents. Participants were escorted to the interview location by prison staff. The ADCRR staff had no influence in selecting respondents and did not discuss the project while escorting them to the interview location.

Interviews were carried out on a one-on-one basis within visitation or a classroom on the unit. There were no incentives offered to participate in interviews. All participants self-selected into the survey knowing that it would be asking questions related to program participation. It should be noted here that the interviews were conducted during the day while many women were at work or engaged in programming. It is possible that this serves as a sampling limitation, particularly in regard to the research interests discussed here. A total of 233 inmates were approached to participate in the project. Of those, 13 were ineligible due to working off unit or conflicts with programming and 20 declined to participate upon arriving to the location or after consent was provided. This resulted in a cooperation rate of 91% (200/220). Out of the 200 interviews conducted, half (n=100) were women from minimum security and the other half (n=100) were women from medium security.

Measures

The descriptive statistics for the sample are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

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Independent variables. The primary independent variable is an index of program involvement that was constructed from eight other variables: current program participation, program types, current employment, interest in future leadership and success programming, interest in future self-employment programming, motivations for programming, satisfaction with available resources, and the desire for more programs in prison. These variables were selected due to their relevance to program participation and ability to show variation within programmers. Please see Appendix A for a full explanation of how this index was constructed.

Current program participation. The women were asked if at the time of the interview they were participating in any programming, which is often the primary measure of program involvement used in other research. The responses were dichotomized where "no" was coded as 0 and "yes" was coded as 1. Thirty-nine percent of respondents (n=77) said they were not participating in programming and 61% (n=123) stated that they were participating.

Program types. Researchers asked, "which types of programs are you involved in currently?" They provided a list of various program types: education, substance abuse, peer-to-peer, job training, self-help, and other. The women were able to select as many of the options as applied to them with the opportunity to add others that were not on the list. Responses ranged from 0 program types to 7 program types. There was a mean response of 1.83 (SD=1.65), indicating that on average, women were enrolled in about 2 program types.

Current employment. The women were asked, "are you currently working in here?" The responses were dichotomized where "no" was coded as 0 and "yes" was

coded as 1. Thirty-three percent of respondents (n=66) indicated that they were not working while 67% (n=134) stated that they were working.

Interest in future leadership and success programming. An interest in future voluntary programs indicates that the respondent found some value in program participation. Two questions were used to examine this more closely. The first asked, "how likely would you be to participate in programming focused on tools for leadership and success if it was voluntary?" Responses that did not indicate interest were coded as 0 and responses that indicated interest were coded as 1. Five percent (n=9) of individuals said they were not likely to participate and 95% (n=191) said they were likely to participate.

Interest in future self-employment programming. The second question assessing future voluntary program participation asked, "how likely would you be to participate in programming around small business or self-employment?" Responses that did not indicate interest were coded as 0 and responses that indicated interest were coded as 1. Seven percent (n=14) of individuals said they were not likely to participate and 93% (n=186) said they were likely to participate.

Motivations for programming. The women were asked "what are three of your biggest motivations to participate in programming in prison?" Respondents were able to give as few as 0 motivations related to high program involvement, or as many as 3. The mean answer was 1.53 (SD=0.84), indicating that on average respondents gave between 1 and 2 motivations related to high program involvement.

Satisfaction with available resources. A desire for more resources or additional programs indicates that value is placed on programming. As such, the women were asked

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two questions about additional resources. First, the women were asked if they were "satisfied with the current resources in prison available" to them. The responses were reverse-coded where "yes" was coded as 0 and "no" was coded as 1. This item was reverse-coded because women who were unsatisfied with the available resources and desired more opportunities were considered more involved than those who were satisfied with what was already available. Twenty-three percent of respondents (n=45) indicated that they were satisfied with the current resources and 77% (n=155) were unsatisfied.

Desire for more programs. Second, the women were asked, "what is one program you wish you had in here, but don't currently?" These responses were dichotomized and coded as 0 if no additional programs were desired and as 1 if the respondent did desire another program. Seventeen percent (n=34) were not interested in another program and 83% (n=166) provided interest.

Dependent variables. The primary dependent variable is an index of reentry preparedness that was constructed from seven other variables: where the respondent will live after release, jobs desired after release, interest in types of jobs, confidence for release, reasoning for confidence after release, struggles with release, and five-year projections after release. These variables were selected due to their association with indicators of reentry success. Please see Appendix B for a full explanation of how this index was constructed.

Live after release. The women were asked if they knew where they would live following release. Responses that did not indicate the respondent knew where she would live were coded as 0 and responses that indicated the respondent did know where she

would live were coded as 1. Twenty-three percent (n=46) responded that they did not know, and 77% (n=154) stated that they did know where they would live.

Jobs desired after release. The women were asked, "what kind of job do you want when released?" The answers were dichotomized so that no job provided by the respondent was coded as 0 and when the respondent did have a job she desired, it was coded as 1. Twenty-six percent (n=52) did not provide a job and 74% (n=148) provided a job as a response.

Interest in types of jobs. The women were asked, "on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents not desired and 10 represents extremely desired, how much do you desire to pursue the following jobs?" A list of job types was provided, and respondents were able to rate each individually. The responses were coded as 0 if they rated a job type below the mean score of all responses for that type by the full sample or 1 if they rated the job type at or above the mean. Each respondent could have as few as 0 or as many as 10 job types they found desirable. The mean response was 5.13 (SD=2.26), indicating that on average, the women desired about 5 of the jobs listed.

Preparation for release. Researchers asked, "how confident are you that you will stay out of prison after you're released?" The responses were dichotomized so when the respondent did not feel confident, which was considered any rating 99% or lower, it was coded as 0. When the respondent indicated that she did feel confident she would stay out of prison, or 100% prepared, it was coded as 1. Twenty-eight percent (n=56) were not confident and 72% (n=144) were confident.

Reasoning for confidence after release. Interviewers followed up the previous question about confidence after release with, "in a few words, can you tell me why?"

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These responses were coded into themes, a few of which were selected for their association with reentry preparedness. The women's responses fell in as few as 0 and as many as 4 of the selected themes. The mean response was 1.41 (SD=0.91), indicating that on average, the women's responses fell within 1 to 2 of the selected themes related to preparedness.

Struggles with release. As previously discussed, there are a number of challenges that face people during reentry. One question asked, "what are one or two struggles that you foresee about your release?" Responses that acknowledged and accepted struggles resulted in more points than responses that did not consider or observe struggles. The responses were coded into themes, a few of which were selected for their association with reentry preparedness. The women's responses fell in as few as 0 and as many as 3 of the selected themes. The mean response was 1.31 (SD=0.79), indicating that on average, the women's responses contained around 1 theme related to preparedness.

Five-year projections after release. The women were asked "thinking about your career, where do you see yourself in five years?" These responses were coded into themes, a few of which were selected for their association with reentry preparedness. The women's responses fell in as few as 0 and as many as 4 of the selected themes. The average response was 1.43 (SD=0.76), indicating that on average, the women's responses fell within 1 to 2 themes related to preparedness.

Control variables. Consistent with prior research, several variables were selected as controls to ensure the relationship observed between the independent and dependent indices was not affected by other factors. Age was a continuous variable with a range between 20 and 72 years. The average age in the sample was 39 years (SD=11.45).

Respondents' race and ethnicity was measured through six dichotomous variables: White, Hispanic, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Other. Fifty-three percent identified as White, 32% were Hispanic, 10% were Black, 9% were American Indian/Alaska Native, 7% identified as Other, and 1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Respondents were able to select as many of the options as applied to them, so totals may be over 100%. Respondents' custody security level was controlled through a dummy variable of whether or not they were in medium security. Fifty percent of respondents were from minimum-level and 50% were from medium-level security. Education level was measured through six dichotomous variables: 8th grade or less, some high school, high school diploma or GED, some college, college degree, or graduate studies or degree. Forty-one percent stated they had some college education, 21% had a high school degree or GED, 20% completed some high school, 8% stated that they had an education of 8th grade or less, 8% had a college degree, and 2% had studied at the graduate level or received a graduate degree. The number of times each woman had been to prison was measured with a continuous variable with a range of 1 to 9 times. This variable had a mean of 1.70 (SD=1.24), meaning that on average, women were in prison for the first or second time. Respondents' current incarceration length was measured through a continuous variable with a range between 0.08 years and 28 years. The average length of current incarceration was 3.43 years (SD=5.00).

Plan of Analysis

To address the first research question and identify to what extent there is variation in the degree to which women participate in programming and are prepared for reentry, two indices for program involvement and reentry preparedness were created as described

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in the previous section and Appendix A and B. The individual variables within the indices were selected due to their association with, and potential to signal, program involvement or reentry preparedness as informed by previous studies. Using an index allows for variation within the sample to be observed where higher index scores indicate higher degrees of involvement and preparedness.

The second research question looks to identify the characteristics that distinguish highly-involved programmers from less involved programmers. To do this, index scores must first be considered. The full indices create an opportunity for low and high scores within the program involvement variable to be determined. The median score of each index was considered the level at which a respondent is placed in the high or low group. The median is used as a cutoff point because it allows for the variation within the indices to be fully observed. There were no predetermined minimum or maximum amount of points that were possible to earn towards the indices as each variable was coded differently. Due to this, the range potential is large. As such, the median is a better measure than the mean. Therefore, a full index score below the median was considered low involvement and an index score at or above the median is considered high involvement. Several observations fell across the median, making the groups unequal. To make the high and low groups equal, these observations were randomly assigned to either group.

Table 1.				
Demographics and Experience with Incarceration of Women in Prison				
Variable	*Mean*	*SD*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Age	39	11.4	20	72
Race/Ethnicity				
White	0.53		0	1
Hispanic	0.32		0	1
Black	0.10		0	1
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.09		0	1
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.01		0	1
Other	0.07		0	1
Security				
Minimum	0.50		0	1
Medium	0.50		0	1
Education				
8th Grade or Less	0.08		0	1
Some High School	0.20		0	1
High School Diploma/GED	0.21		0	1
Some College	0.42		0	1
College Degree	0.08		0	1
Graduate Studies/Degree	0.02		0	1
Times to Prison	1.70	1.24	1	9
Current Incarceration Length (years)	3.43	5.00	0.08	28
n=200				

After dichotomizing the program involvement variable, the characteristics of low
and high groups were identified. This was done through analyses of raw percentages of
group membership with each of the characteristic variables (i.e. the control variables:
age, race and ethnicity, security level, education, times to prison, and length of current
incarceration). Chi-square tests and t-tests were run to determine if there were significant
differences between the representation of characteristics across degree groups.
Specifically, t-tests were run on the interval level variables of age, times the respondent

Table 2.

Program Involvement and Reentry Preparedness Index Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Program Involvement Index	8.13	2.49	2	15
Current Program Participation	0.61		0	1
Program Types	1.83	1.65	0	7
Current Employment	0.67		0	1
Interest in Leadership and Success Programming	0.96		0	1
Motivations for Programming	1.53	0.84	0	3
Satisfaction with Available Resources	0.78		0	1
Interest in Self-Employment Programming	0.93		0	1
Desire for More Programs	0.83		0	1
Program Involvement Dichotomized	0.50		0	1
Reentry Preparedness Index	11.50	2.99	2	19
Live After Release	0.77		0	1
Jobs Desired After Release	0.74		0	1
Interest in Types of Jobs	5.13	2.26	0	10
Preparation for Release	0.72		0	1
Reasoning for Confidence After Release	1.41	0.91	0	4
Struggles with Release	1.31	0.79	0	3
Five-Year Projections After Release	1.43	0.76	0	4
Reentry Preparedness Dichotomized	0.50		0	1
n=200				

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had been to prison, and their current incarceration length. Chi-square tests were run on all other control variables. Additionally, a logistic regression was run that included the dichotomized program involvement variable.

The third research question looks to identify the characteristics that distinguish women who are highly-prepared for reentry from women who are less prepared. The same methods were used to answer this question that were used for the second research question to determine and analyze low and high reentry-preparedness group membership.

The fourth research question assesses whether levels of involvement in programming relate to levels of reentry preparedness. This was analyzed through two regressions: an OLS regression with the full program involvement and reentry preparedness indices and a logistic regression with the dichotomized independent and dependent variables.

<div align="center">RESULTS</div>

Univariate Analyses

Q1: Identify to what extent there is variation in the degree to which women participate in programming and are prepared for reentry

The program involvement index had a range between 2 and 15 indicators of high involvement. Women who had up to 7 indicators were in the 25_{th} percentile, women with up to 9 indicators were in the 50_{th} percentile, and women with up to 11 indicators were in the 75_{th} percentile. The average score on the index was 8.13 indicators (SD=2.49) and the most common score was 10 indicators.

The reentry preparedness index had a range between 2 and 19 indicators of high preparedness. Women who had up to 12 indicators were in the 25_{th} percentile, women

with up to 14 indicators were in the 50th percentile, and women with up to 15 indicators

were in the 75th percentile. The average score on the index was 11.43 indicators

(SD=3.01) and the most common score was 12 indicators.

Bivariate/Multivariate Analyses

Q2: Identify the characteristics that distinguish highly-involved programmers from less

involved programmers

To test the significance in the differences across low and high involvement in

programming, t-tests and chi-square tests were run on the full set of variables. The results

for identifying the characteristics that distinguish highly-involved programmers from less

involved programmers are presented in Table 3. At a glance, the raw percentages of low-

involvement and high involvement programmers look similar. There were no statistically

significant (p<0.05) differences in characteristics between these groups. That is, there

were no characteristics that were associated with membership in one group over the

other.

To further examine characteristics of high and low group members, logistic

regressions were run on high program involvement as seen in Table 4. In the full models,

there are a few variables to note. There was an association between some women's race

and ethnicity and programming involvement that emerged as marginally significant.

Specifically, there was a 2.78 increase in odds of the respondent being in the high

involvement programmer group if she indicated that she was Black (p<0.10) and a 3.36

increase in odds if she indicated she was in the Other race and ethnicity group (p<0.10)

relative to women who indicated they were White. In addition, there was a 3.52 increase

in odds of the respondent being in the high involvement group if she indicated that she

Table 3.

Chi-square and T-test Differences Between Low and High Program Involvement of Incarcerated Women

Variable	*Low Program Involvement (n=100)*	*High Program Involvement (n=100)*
Age (mean)	39.40	39.35
Race/Ethnicity		
White	54.55%	51.00%
Hispanic	28.28%	35.00%
Black	7.07%	12.00%
American Indian/Alaska Native	10.10%	7.00%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00%	2.00%
Other	4.04%	9.00%
Security Level		
Minimum	50.00%	50.00%
Medium	50.00%	50.00%
Education		
8th Grade or Less	10.00%	6.00%
Some High School	22.00%	18.00%
High School Diploma or GED	16.00%	25.00%
Some College	42.00%	41.00%
College Degree	9.00%	7.00%
Graduate Studies/Degree	1.00%	3.00%
Times to Prison (mean)	1.66	1.73
Current Time Served (mean)	3.07 years	3.79 years

had earned a high school diploma or GED ($p < 0.10$) relative to women who had an 8th

grade education or less.

Table 4.		
Logistic Regression for Program Involvement Among Incarcerated Women		
Variable	*Odds Ratio*	*Standard Error*
Age	1.00	0.02
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic	1.61	0.56
Black	2.78 +	1.59
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.68	0.37
Other	3.36 +	2.17
Medium Security Custody	0.83	0.28
Education		
Some High School	1.59	1.00
High School Diploma or GED	3.52 +	2.27
Some College	1.60	0.95
College Degree	1.62	1.29
Graduate Studies/Degree	7.65	10.05
Times to Prison	1.11	0.14
Current Time Served	1.00	0.00
n=200		
Notes: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander was omitted due to perfect prediction of the variable. LR chi2(13) = 15.42 Prob>chi2 = 0.28 Pseudo R2 = 0.06 + = p<0.10 * = p<0.05		

Q3: Identify the characteristics that distinguish women who are highly-prepared for reentry from women who are less prepared

The results for identifying the characteristics that distinguish high reentry preparedness from low reentry preparedness are presented in Table 5. These results are similar to what was found in the program involvement analyses. However, there are a few differences to note. Amongst women with high reentry preparedness, 39.39% identified as Hispanic whereas 24.00% of women with low reentry preparedness identified as Hispanic (p<0.05). Additionally, of the women who fell into the high reentry preparedness group, 12.00% stated that they had earned a college degree compared to

Table 5.		
Chi-square and T-test Differences Between Low and High Reentry Preparedness of Incarcerated Women		
Variable	*Low Reentry Preparedness (n=100)*	*High Reentry Preparedness (n=100)*
Age (mean)	40.64	38.13
Race/Ethnicity		
White	57.00%	48.48%
Hispanic *	24.00%	39.39%
Black	11.00%	8.08%
American Indian/Alaska Native	8.00%	9.09%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00%	2.02%
Other	4.00%	9.09%
Security Level		
Minimum	46.00%	54.00%
Medium	54.00%	46.00%
Education		
8th Grade or Less	6.00%	10.00%
Some High School	17.00%	23.00%
High School Diploma or GED	20.00%	21.00%
Some College	42.00%	41.00%
College Degree *	12.00%	4.00%
Graduate Studies/Degree	3.00%	1.00%
Times to Prison (mean)	1.72	1.67
Current Time Served (mean)	3.58 years	3.28 years
Notes: + = p<0.10 * = p<0.05		

4.00% in the low-preparedness group (p<0.05). That is, both being Hispanic and earning a college degree were statistically significant characteristics of group involvement: more women who were in the high preparedness group were Hispanic than in the low preparedness group, and more women in the low preparedness group had a college degree than women in the high preparedness group.

Table 6.

Logistic Regression for Reentry Preparedness Among Incarcerated Women

Variable	Odds Ratio	Standard Error
Age	0.99	0.02
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic	2.18 *	0.78
Black	1.14	0.63
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.23	0.66
Other	2.78	1.84
Medium Security Custody	0.62	0.21
Education		
Some High School	0.93	0.59
High School Diploma or GED	0.70	0.44
Some College	0.70	0.41
College Degree	0.25	0.21
Graduate Studies/Degree	0.31	0.41
Times to Prison	0.98	0.12
Current Time Served	1.00	0.00
n=200		
Notes: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander was omitted due to perfect prediction of the variable. LR chi2(13) = 16.67 Prob>chi2 = 0.22 Pseudo R2 = 0.06 + = p<0.10 * = p<0.05		

The results of the logistic regression model for reentry preparedness can be seen in Table 6. There was a significant 2.18 increase in odds of the respondent being in the high-preparedness group if she indicated that she was Hispanic ($p<0.05$) relative to women who indicated they were White.

Table 7.		
OLS Regression of Reentry Preparedness Index on Program Involvement Index Among Incarcerated Women		
Variable	*Coefficient*	*Standard Error*
Program Involvement	-0.06	0.10
Age	0.00	0.03
Race/Ethnicity		
White	0.43	0.77
Hispanic	1.02	0.78
Black	1.29	1.09
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.63	0.95
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-1.15	2.21
Other	0.30	1.02
Medium Security Custody	-1.79 *	0.51
Education		
8th Grade or Less	-0.68	1.77
Some High School	-0.39	1.65
High School Diploma or GED	-1.13	1.64
Some College	-1.39	1.59
College Degree	-1.12	1.72
Times to Prison	0.03	0.20
Current Time Served	0.01	0.00
n=200		
Notes: Graduate Studies/Degree was omitted due to collinearity. Prob>F = 0.32 R2 = 0.10 + = p<0.10 * = p<0.05		

Multivariate Analyses

Q4: Assess whether levels of involvement in programming relate to levels of reentry preparedness

Lastly, an OLS regression and a logistic regression were estimated to determine whether levels of program involvement were related to levels of reentry preparedness. The results of the OLS model including the full indices can be seen in Table 7 and the

Table 8.

Logistic Regression of Levels of Reentry Preparedness on Levels of Program Involvement Among Incarcerated Women

Variable	Odds Ratio	Standard Error
Dichotomized Program Involvement	0.78	0.24
Age	0.99	0.02
Race/Ethnicity		
White	2.22	1.42
Hispanic	4.25 *	2.76
Black	2.39	1.93
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.90	1.30
Other	4.58 +	3.65
Medium Security Custody	0.61	0.21
Education		
8th Grade or Less	2.78	3.68
Some High School	2.73	3.39
High School Diploma or GED	2.14	2.66
Some College	2.07	2.53
College Degree	0.76	1.00
Times to Prison	1.00	0.13
Current Time Served	1.00	0.00
n=200		

Notes: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander was omitted due to perfect prediction of the variable. Graduate Studies/Degree was omitted due to collinearity.
LR chi2(15) = 18.83   Prob>chi2 = 0.22   Pseudo R2 = 0.07
 + = p<0.10   * = p<0.05

results of the logistic model including the dichotomous low and high variables can be seen in Table 8. The relationship between program involvement and reentry preparedness is negative in both models. Specifically, the OLS model finds that one unit increase in the program involvement index results in a 0.06 decrease in the reentry preparedness index, and the logistic regression finds that women in the high programming group were 1.28 times more likely to be in the low preparedness group. Further, the regressions did not demonstrate any statistically significant relationship between programming involvement

and reentry preparedness. This was consistent across the full indices and the dichotomized versions. That is, the current study does not find an association between levels of program involvement and levels of reentry preparedness.

DISCUSSION

Correctional program involvement is often assessed through a simple dichotomous measure of whether or not the respondent is enrolled in programming without much emphasis placed on how, why, or to what degree their participation is meaningful. This fails to take into consideration that individual respondents are just that: individuals. Without consideration to these individual-level differences, there may be a variety of positive (and negative) signals that go unnoticed. The view of programmers as a homogenous group obstructs a more nuanced understanding of how programming can prepare people who are incarcerated for successful eventual reentry into society. This study found characteristics of programmers that made them more likely to be involved in either programming or preparing for reentry, and there may be a number of others that provide insight on how to make programming more desirable and beneficial for people who are incarcerated. Based on this study's analyses, it is evident that more complex and diverse measurements of incarcerated populations are needed, as there are a multitude of indicators of program involvement and reentry preparedness that should be considered.

There are a few interesting findings of this study that emerge. First, there are some characteristics that are significant in predicting program involvement and reentry preparedness, specifically in regard to education and ethnicity. Respondents who earned a college degree were significantly more likely to be in the low reentry preparedness group than in the high reentry preparedness group. This may be due to a more realistic

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perspective on the challenges and barriers that will come after release than less educated women, which may affect their answers to how confident they feel that they will be successful, for example. Additionally, Hispanic women were found to be significantly more prepared for reentry in both models as compared to women who identified as White. There are a variety of reasons that this may be the case, such as more investment in opportunities during their incarceration to better prepare them for the future, a stronger connection to a community of support, or perhaps unrealistic expectations for life after release. This sample contained a sizeable representation of both White and Hispanic women, so this finding is particularly intriguing. Future research should look more closely at racial and ethnic differences in program involvement and reentry preparedness to understand the implications of this finding further.

Second, although there was no statistically significant relationship found between the two primary indices, the variation across them illustrates that there are different types and levels of engagement with programming and preparation for reentry. The sample used in this study is relatively small and the data were gathered cross-sectionally. Additionally, the sample was non-random as respondents self-selected into participation. Even so, the respondents fell across a spectrum of involvement and preparedness, indicating that there may also be variance in broader and more inclusive samples. There is a possibility that using larger samples with a longitudinal design may contribute to the results found here. Comparisons with administrative or self-reported recidivism data could provide insight on how one's involvement or preparedness levels translate to life on the outside. Additionally, a variety of more, or different, variables could be included in indices created for future studies. Relationships with others who are highly-involved in

programming or actively preparing for reentry may encourage women to engage more opportunities, for example. As these lines of research continue, there may be any number of indicators that signal potential reentry success.

The present study does provide evidence that considering only simple program participation can be misleading. This simple measurement damages the potential for programmers to signal a variety of investments they have made in themselves during their incarceration, which can affect their payoff after release. Additionally, a lack of complex measurement for reentry success may prevent correctional staff or researchers from identifying risks while there are still opportunities to address them on the inside. The greater our understanding of within-programmer group differences, the more likely we will be able to provide the right tools to people on the inside so that they are not left blindfolded to the barriers that await them on the outside.

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM INVOLVEMENT INDEX CONSTRUCTION

Independent variable. Program involvement was measured through an index composed of points accumulated based on individual responses to the interview questions that make up the index. Each of those variables and their corresponding points are described below.

Current program participation. Question: "Are you participating in any programs (educational, substance abuse, peer-to-peer, job training) currently?" Answer Options: Yes, No.

One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent answered Yes.

Program types. Question: "Which types of programs are you involved in currently?" Answer Options: Education, Substance abuse, Peer-to-peer, Job training, Self-help, Other.

Points were awarded towards the index based on quantity of program types indicated. If the respondent answered Other, each type mentioned was awarded an additional point.

Current employment. Question: "Are you currently working in here?" Answer Options: Yes, No.

One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent answered Yes.

Interest in future leadership and success programming. Question: "How likely would you be to participate in programming focused on tools for leadership and success if it was voluntary?" Answer Options: Not very likely, Not likely, Neutral, Likely, Very likely.

The five-point scale was later dichotomized where an answer of Not very likely, Not likely, or Neutral was given 0 points towards the index and a response of Likely or Very likely was given 1 point.

Interest in future self-employment programming. Question: "How likely would you be to participate in programming around small business or self-employment?" Answer Options: Not very likely, Not likely, Neutral, Likely, Very likely. The five-point scale was later dichotomized where an answer of Not very likely, Not likely, or Neutral was given 0 points towards the index and a response of Likely or Very likely was given 1 point.

Motivations for programming. Question: "What are three of your biggest motivations to participate in programming in prison?" Answer Options: Respondents could give as few as 0 motivations and as many as 3.

Responses were coded into a total of 12 themes: to gain confidence, for the classes themselves, for early release, education, for family or children, to help others, for reentry or the future, self-improvement, to "show" others, to stay busy, for tangible certifications, and to gain work skills. Seven were coded as 0: to gain confidence, for the classes themselves, for early release, for family or children, to help others, to "show" others, and to stay busy. All other themes were coded as 1. If the respondent's answer fell within the seven themes coded as 0, no points were added towards the index. If the respondent's answer fell within one or more themes that were coded as 1, they were added for a total composite score for the variable. This variable had a range of 0 to 3, meaning that the responses fell in as few as 0 of the considered 5 themes, and the responses fell in as many as 3 of the 5 themes.

Satisfaction with available resources. Question: "Are you satisfied with the current resources in prison available to you?" Answer Options: Yes, No.

Responses were reverse coded. One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent answered No.

   Desire for more programs. Question: "What is one program you wish you had in here, but don't currently?" Answer Options: Respondents could give 0 programs they desired or provide 1.

One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent provided a program that they desired to have in prison.

APPENDIX B

REENTRY PREPAREDNESS INDEX CONSTRUCTION

Dependent variable. Reentry preparedness was measured through an index composed of points accumulated based on individual responses to the interview questions that make up the index. Each of those variables and their corresponding points are described below.

Live after release. Question: "Do you know where you will live when released?" Answer Options: Yes, No.

One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent answered Yes.

Jobs desired after release. Question: "What kind of job do you want when released?" Answer Options: Respondents could provide 0 jobs they desired or provide 1. One point was awarded towards the index if the respondent provided a job that they desired to have after release.

Interest in types of jobs. Question: "I'm going to read off some types of jobs. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents not desired and 10 represents extremely desired, how much do you desire to pursue the following jobs?" Answer Options: Mental health or substance abuse supporter, Healthcare jobs, Retail jobs, Labor jobs, Food service jobs, Self-employment, Corporate/administrative jobs, Creative/design jobs, IT/technology jobs, and Customer service/sales.

For each job type, the respondent gave an answer between 1 and 10 to rate that job type's desirability to her. The mean score given to each job type was used as a way to dichotomize the variable. If the respondent provided a job type a score that was below the mean, they were coded as not finding that job desirable (0). If they provided a job type a score that was equal to the mean or higher, they were coded as finding that job desirable (1). The total number of job types that each respondent found desirable were added for a

total composite score for the variable. This variable had a range of 0 to 10, meaning that the respondents rated as few as 0 jobs desirable, and as many as 10 desirable.

Preparation for release. Question: "How confident are you that you will stay out of prison after you're released?" Answer Options: Respondents could provide an answer as low as 0% and as high as 100%.

Responses were dichotomized so that anything 99% or lower was coded as 0 and 100% was coded as 1, which was considered a point and awarded towards the index.

Reasoning for confidence after release. Question: "In a few words, can you tell me why?" Answer Options: Respondents could provide reasons for their confidence level that fell in as few as 0 themes related to reentry preparedness and as many as 11. Responses were coded into a total of 15 themes: they had made changes, they were determined not to come back, their age, kids/family, they had support, sobriety, they can't get the time incarcerated back, they had received services, release was a second chance, their incarceration was not their fault, their incarceration was due to a mistake, they acknowledge challenges and obstacles ahead, they did not have any programming, they were not prepared to be released, and they still need time incarcerated. Four were coded as 0: their incarceration was not their fault, they did not have any programming, they were not prepared to be released, and they still need time incarcerated. All other themes were coded as 1. If the respondent's answer fell within the four themes coded as 0, no points were added towards the index. If the respondent's answer fell within one or more themes that were coded as 1, they were added for a total composite score for the variable. This variable had a range of 0 to 4, meaning that the responses fell in as few as 0 of the considered 11 themes, and the responses fell in as many as 4 of the 11 themes.

Struggles with release. Question: "What are the one or two struggles that you foresee about your release?" Answer Options: Respondents could provide foreseen struggles that fell in as few as 0 themes related to reentry preparedness and as many as 14.

Responses were coded into a total of 16 themes: employment, education/skills, parole, housing, transportation, family, substance abuse, mental health, their mindset, old environments, idle time, men/domestic abuse, discrimination, lack of social support, no struggles, and they did not know. Two were coded as 0: no struggles and they did not know. All other themes were coded as 1. If the respondent's answer fell within the two themes coded as 0, no points were added towards the index. If the respondent's answer fell within one or more themes that were coded as 1, they were added for a total composite score for the variable. This variable had a range of 0 to 3, meaning that the responses fell in as few as 0 of the considered 14 themes, and the responses fell in as many as 3 of the 14 themes.

Five-year projections after release. Question: "Thinking about your career, where do you see yourself in five years?" Answer Options: Respondents could provide reasons that fell in as few as 0 themes related to reentry preparedness and as many as 9. Responses were coded into a total of 12 themes: school, just starting their career, working, in a specific job or career, owning a business, a general state of happiness, at a job that helps others, not incarcerated, retired, with their family, still incarcerated, or they did not know. Three were coded as 0: not incarcerated, still incarcerated, did not know. All other themes were coded as 1. If the respondent's answer fell within the three themes coded as 0, no points were added towards the index. If the respondent's answer fell

within one or more themes that were coded as 1, they were added for a total composite

score for the variable. This variable had a range of 0 to 4, meaning that the responses fell

in as few as 0 of the considered 9 themes, and the responses fell in as many as 4 of the 9

themes.

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY APPROVAL FOR HUMAN SUBJECT TESTING

APPROVAL: MODIFICATION

Kevin Wright
Criminology and Criminal Justice, School of 602/496-1294
kevinwright@asu.edu

Dear Kevin Wright:
On 8/21/2019 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Modification/Update
Title:	Putting Second Chances to Work: Increasing the Employment Prospects for the Women of Perryville.
Investigator:	Kevin Wright
IRB ID:	STUDY00008660
Funding:	Name: Arizona State University (ASU)
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• 190126_Perryville_HRP-503a Protocol.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • PV_RecruitmentFlyerInterviews_edited.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Letter of Support Arizona Department of Corrections, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • 180909 Shortened FG Document.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Cat 7 Kevin Wright.pdf, Category: Sponsor Attachment; • 190118_DESCONSENT SCRIPT_Interviews.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • PV_RecruitmentFlyer.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • 190215_FinalASUDESSurvey.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions
	/interview guides/focus group questions); • 180813_DES_CONSENT SCRIPT (1).pdf, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB approved the modification.

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