



Impact of Criminal Records on Employment and Housing

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Programs and Services

- ▶ Institutional services
- ▶ Post-Incarceration and Transitional Housing Support Programs
- ▶ Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program
- ▶ Anger Management
- ▶ Relapse Prevention Program
- ▶ Adult Diversion Program
 - Anger/Substance Awareness Program (ASAP)



Pre-Employment & Development (P.E.D.) Programs

- ▶ Strategies Towards Employment and Anger Management (S.T.E.A.M.)
- ▶ Finding Employment for Men with a Criminal Record
- ▶ Record Suspensions (formerly Pardons) services



Impacts of a Criminal Record

- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Educational requirements
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Citizenship
- ▶ Child custody, visitation, adoption
- ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Travel to the United States
- ▶ Stigma, discrimination
- ▶ Self-respect, shame



Record of Non-Convictions

- ▶ Withdrawn
- ▶ Dismissed
- ▶ Stay of Proceedings
- ▶ Peace Bond
- ▶ Absolute Discharge
- ▶ Conditional Discharge
- ▶ Acquittal



Police Checks

- ▶ Criminal Record Check
 - Convictions only
- ▶ Police Information Check
 - Convictions and findings of guilt
- ▶ Vulnerable Sector Screening/Check
 - Convictions, findings of guilt, non-convictions, police contacts



Police Disclosures

- ▶ No comprehensive legislative framework governing police record checks
- ▶ Widespread misconceptions about what a criminal record is
- ▶ Practice varies across all police forces



Record Suspensions

- ▶ Formerly known as a pardon
- ▶ Does not delete or erase a criminal record
- ▶ Sealed and removed from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC)
- ▶ Parole Board of Canada – sole authority
- ▶ Fees
 - Fingerprinting (records check with RCMP): \$75 – \$105
 - Local Police Records Check (municipal police): \$0 – \$100
 - Application fee: \$631
 - Service fee
 - JHST: \$325



Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ Pre-screen for eligibility:
 - Completion of sentence
 - Jail, probation/parole, fines/restitutions/surcharges
 - Wait period
 - 5 years for summary convictions
 - 10 years for indictable convictions

- ▶ Ineligibility:
 - *More than three* (i.e., 4 or more) indictable charges and sentenced to *two+ years* for each charge
 - Sexual-related conviction against a minor
 - Within five (5) years of age
 - Not in position of custody or authority
 - No violence or threats



Legislation

- ▶ June 15, 2010, Bill 168
- ▶ March 13, 2012, Bill C-10
 - Criminal Records Act



JohnHoward

SOCIETY OF TORONTO

PREVENTION ▪ INTERVENTION ▪ REINTEGRATION

Pre-Employment



Acknowledgment

- ▶ Acknowledge that having a criminal record is a barrier, but it does NOT mean you can't get a job
- ▶ Work with this barrier to overcome it – just as there may be other issues
 - Ex. Substance use, gaps in employment, lack of experience, mental health issues
- ▶ It is important to address all issues impacting employment



Finding Employment

- ▶ “I AM employable → Increasing self-esteem
- ▶ Be aware of own skills, strengths and interests
- ▶ Try not to be picky
- ▶ Re-educating self for a field that won't look at a criminal record
- ▶ Focus on employable qualities, rather than barriers
- ▶ Know your criminal record
- ▶ Work with a job developer



The Resume

- ▶ Be creative
 - Consider odd jobs at home, for friends or family
 - Volunteer work
 - Education & training
 - Hobbies
 - Work in jail
 - Informal employment
- ▶ Make sure there are no gaps in employment history
- ▶ Chronological, Functional & Hybrid resumes



Talking about your Criminal Record

- ▶ Do NOT bring it up if an employer does not ask
- ▶ Be honest
- ▶ Do not gloat
- ▶ Take responsibility – do NOT make excuses
- ▶ Keep it brief
- ▶ Moving forward
- ▶ Show remorse
- ▶ Acknowledge employer's concerns
- ▶ Make your pitch and close



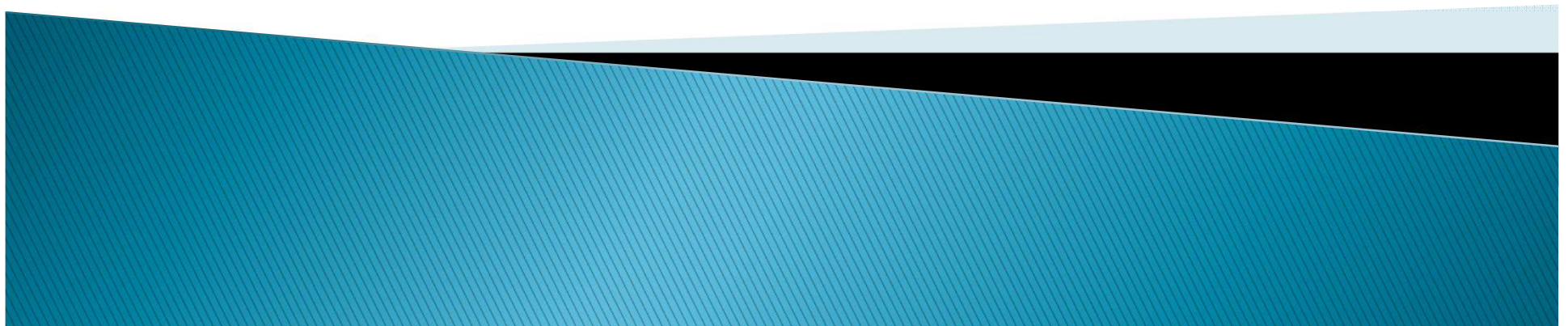
Social Media/Internet

- ▶ Google yourself to see what employers might see
- ▶ Shut down accounts/profiles which may hinder your search
- ▶ Open new accounts/profiles and alter name if necessary (e.g. use maiden names, middle names, reverse names, etc.)
- ▶ Be careful of what you post even after you have obtained employment





Post-Incarceration Housing Program



Justice and Injustice, 2006

- ▶ Exploratory research, the 1st of its kind in Canada
- ▶ Multi-method study, looks at various aspects of the relationship between homelessness and the CJS
- ▶ Literature review
 - Analysis of administrative data (MCSCS and T.O.HS),
 - Review of over 870 client files
 - Survey of 57 homeless people
 - 22 in-depth interviews with homeless people
 - 23 key informant interviews
 - Extensive compilation of prevention programs



Key Findings

- ▶ 1 in 5 homeless people directly from corrections (City of Toronto SNA supports similar numbers).
- ▶ Cost of incarceration; Approximately \$183/day,
Significantly higher than
transitional and/or supportive
housing



Homeless and Jailed, 2010

- ▶ Comprehensive study consisting of 363 interviews with sentenced prisoners within one week of release



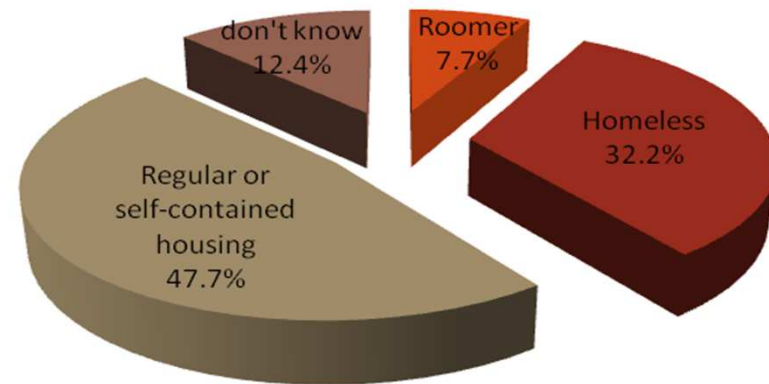
Key Findings

- ▶ John Howard Society of Toronto's clients who were homeless at intake had fewer violent, but more property-related, charges than those who were housed
- ▶ Lack of service co-ordination and inadequate discharge planning are major barriers to the community integration of ex-prisoners and contribute to homelessness



Key Findings

- ▶ 22.9% (roughly 1 of every 5, in line with City of T.O. SNA findings) was homeless when incarcerated
- ▶ Overall 32.2% (roughly 1 of every 3 prisoners) had plans upon discharge to go to a shelter, live on the street, or couch surf. Another 12% did not know where they would go. *If these two groups are combined, a total of 44.6% of released inmates will be homeless or at risk of homelessness*



Making Toronto Safer, 2011

- ▶ Cost benefit analysis commissioned and consulted on by JHST
- ▶ Focus on the cost of transitional housing and supports for two types of homeless ex-prisoners (homeless, s810 sexual offenders)
- ▶ Framed subsidized/transitional housing as a public good and a service to the community as well as the ex-prisoner and assessed the benefit with public stakeholders in mind



Key Findings

- ▶ With transitional housing and supports in place, **better outcomes can be achieved at lower costs**
- ▶ Such benefits are enjoyed by the **public** first and foremost
- ▶ The likelihood of re-offending decreases thereby creating safer communities
- ▶ At the same time, tax dollars spent on prisoners throughout the criminal justice process and beyond is far less than the alternative of continued re-incarceration
- ▶ The per-person estimated savings are estimated to be:
 - \$350, 000 for a homeless person; and
 - \$109, 000 for a Section 810 prisoner



Research-Informed Practice Lead to Evidence-Based Programs:



Issues Facing Clients Upon Release

- ▶ House Arrest
- ▶ D.O. Status and 810's
- ▶ Access to medication (mental and physical health)
- ▶ Illness (TB, Hep C, HIV/AIDS, poor health linked to poverty) and Lack of Harm Reduction
- ▶ Addiction



Issues Facing Clients Upon Release

- ▶ Clothing
- ▶ I.D.
- ▶ Stigma
- ▶ Subculture
- ▶ Area restrictions



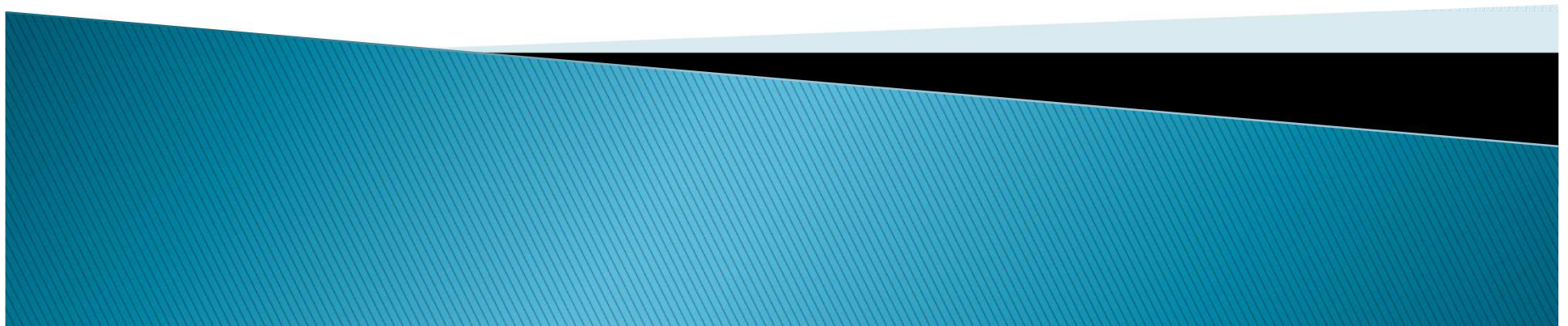
Post-Incarceration Housing Support Program

- ▶ Target population is homeless men involved with the criminal justice system
- ▶ The goals of the program include
 - Helping individuals secure and maintain housing
 - Providing follow up support services to increase positive reintegration and decrease recidivism
- ▶ Process including first contact and follow-up support
 - Intakes provided across the city including institutions and the Reintegration Centre to determine client needs
 - Clients placed on housing connections wait list as well as any other appropriate housing list available
 - Provides clothing, tokens and furniture bank to those who require





Case Management and Follow-up Supports



Services available

- ▶ Eligible for program for 1 year
- ▶ Case management
- ▶ Assistance with daily living skills
- ▶ Referrals to appropriate community resources
- ▶ 1 on1 counseling
- ▶ Client centered approach
- ▶ Re-housing and eviction prevention
- ▶ Advocacy



Questions?

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