



the NATIONAL REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER

— A project of the CSG Justice Center —

How and Why Probation Departments Should Partner with Families:

A Conversation with San Francisco Chief Adult Probation Officer Wendy Still
and New York City Department of Probation Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi



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Presentation Outline

INTRODUCTION

- Margaret diZerega, Family Justice Program Director, Vera Institute of Justice

MODERATED DISCUSSION

- Yali Lincroft, Policy Consultant, First Focus; Consultant, San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership and the New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents
- Wendy Still, Chief Adult Probation Officer, City and County of San Francisco
- Vincent Schiraldi, Commissioner, New York City Department of Probation

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Background of Moderators



- **Margaret diZerega** is the Family Justice Program Director, Vera Institute of Justice. Before starting the Family Justice Program at Vera, Margaret was the director of training and technical assistance at Family Justice where she led the development of the Relational Inquiry Tool as well as ongoing work with the Michigan Department of Corrections and California’s Division of Juvenile Justice. As a member of the Reentry Resource Center’s advisory board, Margaret chairs the Family and Community Committee. Contact: mdizerega@vera.org



- **Yali Lincroft** is a Private Children’s Policy Consultant. Her clients include First Focus, a Washington DC-based children’s advocacy organization. She is a consultant for the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, the Osborne Association, and Arkansas Voices for Children Left Behind. She is a founding member of the Alameda County Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership. and the Migration and Child Welfare National Network. She recently wrote “When A Parent is Incarcerated: A Primer for Social Workers” for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Contact: yalil@firstfocus.net

Audience Poll

What best describes where you work?

- Inside a prison/jail
- Parole or probation department
- In the community with justice-involved individuals (nonprofit, faith-based organization, etc.)
- I do not interact directly with incarcerated individuals or their families but support those agencies that do

Eight Evidence-based Principles for Effective Interventions*

- Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs
- Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
- Target Interventions
- Skill Train with Directed Practice
- Increase Positive Reinforcement
- Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities
- Measure Relevant Processes/Practices
- Provide Measurement Feedback

*The Crime and Justice Institute, “Implementing Evidence-Based Principles in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention,” available online: <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/019342.pdf>
See also information on how to “Engage Informal Social Controls to Facilitate Community Reintegration” in Urban Institute’s *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes*, available online: http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411791_public_safety_first.pdf

Families Can Help Improve Community Supervision Outcomes

- Family connections can motivate probationers to refrain from committing new crime as well as provide the support to do so (Farrall & Calverley, 2006).
- During six months of family case management at La Bodega de la Familia, arrests rates were 11%, in contrast with 21% in a comparison group (Sullivan, 2002).
- Family relationships can be a significant influence in preventing relapse among parolees dealing with addiction (Slaght, 1999).
- Family support identified by formerly incarcerated people as “most important factor” in successful reentry (Visher, et al, 2004).

Audience Poll

Where do you have the greatest opportunities to engage families in your work?

- At the point of an arrest
- Pre-trial
- During incarceration
- During probation/parole supervision
- Shaping policies and practice

Background of Presenters



- **Wendy Still** is the Chief Adult Probation Officer of the City & County of San Francisco. Her department serves 7,000 adults on court-ordered probation supervision and diversion programs. Chief Still has worked with the California Federal Prison Health Care Services, and was the Governor appointed Associate Director-Female Offender Programs & Services, Southern Regional Prison Administrator for 10 prisons, Chief of Regulation and Policy and Chief Financial Officer for the California State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.



- **Vincent Schiraldi** is the New York City Commissioner of Probation. and has more than 25 years of experience and a record of reform and success. He led Washington DC's Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, where he turned a troubled agency that was on the verge of being placed under court supervision into a national model. His reforms were recently recognized by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government "Innovations in American Government" awards program for being among the "Top 50" most innovative programs in the country.

Leadership and Organizational Culture

What in your past experience as reformers makes you so passionate about working with families?

What's the biggest challenge for probation agencies that are trying to adopt a family-focused approach?

Time of Arrest

Probation and parole officers are law enforcement officers and can make arrests for probation and parole violations. How can we reduce the trauma to children and families during an arrest?

Innovations in the Field

Tell us about two innovations in your departments:

- considering the impact of incarceration on children and families during the pre-sentence investigation, such as the family impact statement
- making probation offices more family-oriented by co-locating them with community agencies

Governmental and Philanthropic Partnerships

How do partnerships with other child- and family-serving agencies help your department become more family-focused?

- Child welfare
- Sheriff's department
- Juvenile justice
- Schools
- Private funders

County-based Reentry

How can an emphasis on county-based reentry task forces generate family-focused strategies for reentry?

Data Collection

How has your data collection system been revised to reflect your new practices and policies? What new family information do you think is important to track?

Resources

- Christine Toner and Tracy Mullins, *Implementing the Family Support Approach for Community Supervision*. (2008) Available online:
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/FamilySupport_CommunitySupervision.pdf.
- NY Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents/Osborne Association, *A Call to Action: Safeguarding New York's Children of Incarcerated Parents*. Available online:
www.osborneny.org/NYCIP/ACalltoActionNYCIP.Osborne2011.pdf.
- Ryan Shanahan and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo, *Close to Home: Building on Family Support for People Leaving Jail*. (Oct 2011). Available online:
www.vera.org/content/close-home-building-family-support-people-leaving-jail.
- Video of how the Oklahoma Department of Corrections is integrating a family-focused approach during incarceration and community supervision:
www.vera.org/videos/family-justice-program.
- *Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers*, published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center,
www.reentrypolicy.org/jc_publications/federa_action_plan_.

Resources for Families

- San Francisco Re-entry Council, *Getting Out and Staying Out – A Guide for San Francisco Resources for People leaving Jails and Prisons*. Available online: <http://sfreentry.com/resource-guide/>.
- National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated has a number of resources for Children and Families:
<http://fcnetwork.org/resources/library/children-of-prisoners-library>.
- Rise - A Magazine By and For Parents in the Child Welfare System (Summer 2008 Issue – Parenting from Prison). Available online:
http://www.risemagazine.org/issues/Issue_10/issue_10.html.
- Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, *Incarcerated Parents Manual: Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities* (2007). Available online:
www.prisonerswithchildren.org.



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