



Understanding Post Incarceration Syndrome

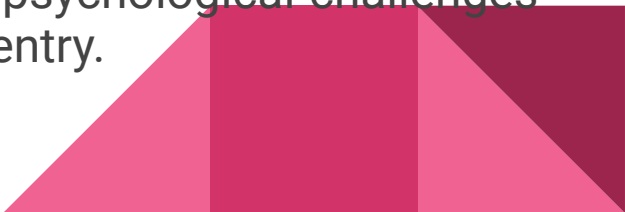
The Connection Between Mental Health and recidivism

WHAT IS POST-INCARCERATION SYNDROME

What is post incarceration syndrome?

Post-incarceration syndrome (PICS) is a psychiatric disorder that affects individuals who have been incarcerated and then are released back into society. It is characterized by a range of psychological, and social difficulties that arise as a result of being imprisoned. These difficulties can include depression, anxiety, difficulty adjusting to life outside of prison, and difficulty forming and maintaining relationships.

PICS is not currently a recognized psychiatric disorder. However, the term is used by researchers and practitioners to describe the very real psychological challenges that people who have been imprisoned may face upon reentry.



The Transition Out of Prison

A study conducted on prisoners released from Washington State Department of Corrections found that former inmates have a higher risk of death than the general population, especially within the first few weeks of leaving prison, with drug overdose and suicide among the leading causes.

Prisoners were also more likely to be victims of violent crimes in that span.



Individuals who end up in prison can be some of the most vulnerable or traumatized members of society, and the experience of prison itself is traumatic on top of that.

Former inmates face numerous psychological challenges when released from prison, including stigma, discrimination, isolation, and instability.

This, in addition to personal hardships and the stigma of having been incarcerated, makes it challenging for former inmates to:

- reintegrate into the former community
- achieve financial stability
- access proper health care
- foster healthy relationships




Recidivism is the outcome not the disease

Mental illness raises an individual's risk of recidivism or a relapse into criminal behavior. Psychiatric disorders, such as:

- alcohol and drug abuse
- personality disorders
- Hypersexuality
- ADHD
- Schizophrenia disorders

Symptoms of disorders or illnesses will become exasperated if untreated, especially if life circumstances become challenging and individual becomes stressed



Real life example

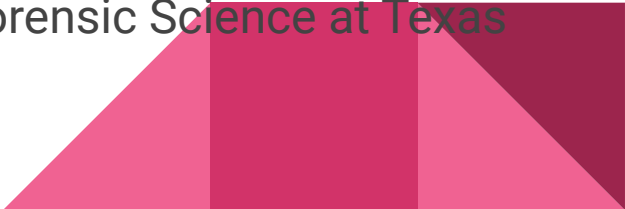
A former inmate who is unhoused and/or unemployed, may be preoccupied with obtaining food, housing, and work, and unintentionally neglect their mental health at a time its most critical.

This, in turn, accelerates their mental health problems and raises their risk of recidivism, including the risk of "survival coping" that can include petty crimes to acquire food or other necessities.



“The biggest problem is the criminal justice system and the mental health system are not closely aligned. We need to teach [former inmates] system management and how to cope. We need to teach them about their mental illness and make sure that they know once they leave, they need to reconnect with the mental health system.”

-Robert Morgan, PhD, chairperson and professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences, and director of the Institute of Forensic Science at Texas Tech University.



Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Gaps in Treatment

As soon as inmates leave prison, they lose their healthcare coverage, leading to gaps in care and treatment. For those taking medication, prescription renewal may no longer be possible without insurance. While healthcare coverage is available following release, former inmates must apply and secure a plan themselves, which isn't always easy, especially if they don't have access to a smartphone or computer.



Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Lack of Support

Not everyone in prison has a support system on the outside, and even those who do may not have the support they need to manage their mental health properly. Those with severe mental health conditions may not understand their own condition or how to treat it, let alone identify the right resources for getting help.



Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Stigma

Generally speaking, when you leave the prison system, you're on your own. As a country, we offer protections to incarcerated individuals, who are considered a vulnerable population, but we don't usually extend those protections to formerly incarcerated individuals. The stigma of having a criminal record can impact every aspect of your life.



Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Challenging Life Circumstances

Depending on how long you served, you may not understand social norms or expectations, let alone how to apply for a job or build a social network. You may also find yourself back in the same neighborhood where you offended, which can harm your mental health in a magnitude of ways. If you live in a high-crime area, you could witness violence, face an increased risk of death, and experience unexpected triggers.




Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Managing Relationships

Incarceration changes a family dynamic, and reconnecting with loved ones will be a challenge for former inmates. More than half of incarcerated adults in the United States have children, 55% of which are minors.

Even if they maintained contact throughout the sentence, former inmates experience feelings of shame and guilt having lost years with them. Some may have even lost children to the foster system and need legal support to reconnect with them.

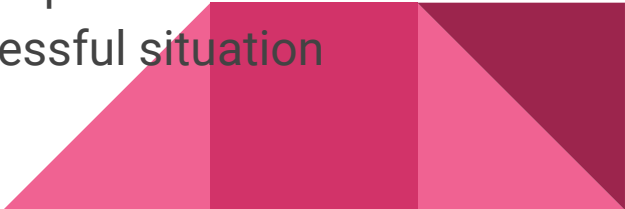


Problems Reintegrating Back Into Society

Managing Relationships

If your relationship survives incarceration, the dynamic likely won't be the same. You may no longer know your place in the family, how to handle the addition of new people in your loved ones' lives, or how to establish new expectations.

You may also feel the pressure to secure a job and provide for your loved ones but lack the resources, education, or skills to do so, which puts pressure on the relationship and adds stress and anxiety to an already stressful situation



10 MINS BREAK



The Crow Anthem: Your rules aren't the same, move accordingly



Trust your senses:
Read the room before you walk in



Hyper sexual due to lack of physical affection



You're a stranger:
Friends and family have romanticized memories



No more JPAY:
Learn how to budget and save.



Survivor's remorse as convict: Make them proud by staying out



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