



Facilitating Re-entry: A Prison-based Case
Managed Re-entry Program for Low Income
Pregnant Women and New Mothers

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- Over 1.5 million children have a parent in prison
- More than one in five of these children is under five years old
- For many, incarceration may last for a significant part of their child's formative years
- Over half of female prisoners have never had a visit from their children



- MCC provides direct services, research and advocacy for pregnant and postpartum low-income women
- Trademark home visiting program the “MOMobile”





The MOMobile at Riverside

- The MOMobile® at Riverside Correctional Facility for Women (RCF) began operations in November 2006
- The only program of its kind in Pennsylvania
- Located within RCF
- Works with pregnant and newly parenting women while they are incarcerated and provides a year of transitional case management following their discharge



Objectives

- Linking women to prenatal care, family planning, and well baby services
- Helping women overcome barriers to receiving medical care
- Increasing access to and enrollment in health insurance and public benefits
- Reducing harmful behaviors, including smoking and substance abuse, and promoting healthy behaviors, such as preparing and eating nutritious food
- Improving knowledge of parenting, including child development, mother/child bonding, positive discipline skills, and health and safety



Specific Outcomes

- Birth outcomes
- Bonding/attachment
- Support systems
- Medical home (mom and baby)
- Health insurance (mom and baby)
- Prenatal and well-baby visits
- Tobacco use and smoke exposure
- Sleep environment
- Breastfeeding initiation and duration
- Immunizations
- HIV knowledge and testing behavior
- Family planning
- Perinatal depression



Current Status

- The program has served over 160 clients
- Sixty-one clients currently in case management services
- Only 16 program participants have been readmitted to RCF
 - None of the 16 had fully completed the MOMobile program
- MCC has now requested access to the state prison system's tracking database so that we can more comprehensively monitor our clients' recidivism rates



Advocacy

- Shackling
 - Was the norm until two years ago; only the support of a Correctional Officer during labor and delivery
 - Now inmates give birth with MOMobile's specially trained Doula and no physical restraints
- Nutrition
 - currently working to create menus and meal schedules appropriate to pregnant women



Implementation

Specific evaluation objectives:

- Identifying barriers encountered during implementation
- Identifying elements that facilitated development, implementation and service delivery
- Identifying strategies used by project staff in navigating relationships with coworkers, prison staff, and agency staff
- Documenting any unexpected issues that arose during implementation



Methods

- Multiple data sources including open-ended structured interviews, staff logs, and reviews of agency documents
- A purposeful sample of appropriate key stakeholders from among the staff of Maternity Care Coalition selected
- Structured open-ended interviews conducted individually with each stakeholder



Findings

- Factors Facilitating Program Development, Implementation, and Service Delivery
- Barriers to Implementation and Service Delivery
- Navigating Relationships and Coping Strategies
- Unexpected Issues



Factors Facilitating Program Development, Implementation, and Service Delivery

- Internal and External Support
- Unique Qualities of Program
- Background of Staff
- Synergy of Organization



- **Internal and External Support**

- Tremendous level of support for this program both internally and externally
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Initiative Funding Partners matching grant



Internal and External Support (continued)

Prison initiated idea for program

“There was tremendous support within the city. The [Prison Commissioner] came for our meeting and said ‘this is exactly the kind of program we’re looking for’. And he talked about, the prison has to reach into the community and the community needs to reach into the prison”.



- **Unique Qualities of Program**

- Operating full-time within prison walls
- Provides continuity of care as women transition from incarceration to life back in their families and communities



- **Unique Qualities of Program** (continued)

- Building trusting relationships with the women while they are incarcerated will, we believe, help to keep them engaged in continued services once they are released

“It’s not just that we operate in the prison but that we provide a bridge to the community...I think that is really an enormous strength that has real potential to make it kind of a national model that we would want to replicate elsewhere.”



- **Background of Staff**

- The case managers providing direct service at the prison bring a rich variety of social and human services knowledge and experience to this program
- Each had prior experience working with the criminal justice system in some capacity, typically in case management
- Low staff turnover



- **Background of Staff** (continued)

- Most importantly, staff clearly share a passion and commitment to helping this population and making the program work. And, as several subjects noted, they believe this enthusiasm feeds back into the program and ultimately makes it stronger:

“Helping people in need; that’s my job”.



- **Synergy of Organization**

- Everyone involved with this project is committed to the mission of the program and to the larger mission of MCC, not only among the Riverside staff, but throughout the entire organization
- Each of the subjects commented on the leadership and support offered to them by the organization as a whole, and more specifically, their direct supervisors



Barriers to Implementation and Service Delivery

- Challenges of Physical Environment
- Culture Clash
- Communication and Relationships with Prison Staff



- Challenges of Physical Environment
- Small and confining
 - not originally intended to be offices
- Prison work environment
 - cannot move freely about

“I need someone to open that door and the elevator. I get downstairs. I need someone else to open another door...Go through that door, then another door has to be opened and then another door has to be opened...you go through four doors to get out of there. Not being able to push the door and walk out when you want to...you take that for granted.”



- Culture Clash

- Hierarchical nature of prison environment versus open system of MCC
- Routine tasks require and extensive approval process
 - The warden must approve everything that comes into the prison from internet access to paper clips



- Communication and Relationships with Prison Staff
 - Strong support at upper levels of prison, not necessarily communicated to all staff at outset of program
 - Agency staff expected a warm welcome and were frustrated by initial lack of enthusiasm by prison staff
 - Building relationships takes time and patience



- **Unexpected Issues**

- Preparation for Working in a Prison Environment
- Prison Staff Issues





- **Preparation for Working in a Prison Environment**
- Most direct service staff had prior experience working with individuals in the CJ system; none had ever worked full-time in a prison
- Routine elements of office life -- like coffee, food and chewing gum are not allowed in prison. Even water is restricted to one four-ounce bottle:
“Simple things like a peppermint, a piece of gum, your lip gloss. All these things are considered contraband. So, I’ve gotten creative and I’ve found myself sneaking candy up to my office...you just have to learn to do these things to make it somewhat livable.”



- Prison Staff Issues
 - Navigating boundary issues
 - Developing clear communication
 - Prison staff's overwhelmingly large caseloads



Conclusion

- The results of this study outline some of the factors involved in implementing a community-based program into a complex prison system
- Anecdotal findings indicate preliminary success with stated goals
- Next step is to analyze hard data on outcomes
- Long-term sustainability of program



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