

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE & SUCCESS RESEARCH REPORT

PREPARED FOR THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND, CENTER FOR ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY



**COMMUNITY
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**COLLEGE
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AUTHORS**



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JANUARY 2021 | WASHINGTON, DC





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GRAPHIC DESIGN & GRAPHICS: DR. BRITANY J GATEWOOD

SUGGESTED CITATION

Muhammad, B.M., Gatewood, B.J., Turner, S. (2021). "*Children of Incarcerated Parents: Pathways to Resilience and Success- Research Report.*" Prepared for Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Center for Advancing Opportunity. Washington: DC.

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Executive Research Team



Dr. Bahiyah M Muhammad

Dr. Bahiyah Muhammad is an Associate Professor of Criminology and the Co-Founder of Project Iron Kids. Dr. Muhammad has worked globally with children of incarcerated parents since 2005 through her longitudinal and ethnographic research with families and children of the incarcerated. As co-founder of Project Iron Kids, she created and disseminated educational resources to children of incarcerated parents in third-world countries and in the United States. Dr. Muhammad's TEDx Howard University Talk entitled, *"Does the Apple Fall Far From Prison"* urges researchers to explore experiences among children of the incarcerated from asset-based perspectives. She has articles on the topic in the *Journal of Criminal Justice and Law Review*, *Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*, and *American University Business Law Review*. In addition, she has authored a variety of book chapters and culturally relevant books for children and families, such as *"Daddy is Coming Home"* (Muhammad & Lane Barber, 2020), *"Mommy is Coming Home"* (Lane Barber & Muhammad, 2020), *"The Prison Alphabet: An Educational Coloring Book for Children of Incarcerated Parents"* (2014). This semester she is teaching undergraduate and graduate courses entitled *"Children of Incarcerated Parents"* and *"Mass Incarceration and the Black Family"*, both courses center resilience, success and leadership. Dr. Muhammad is also teaching a one-credit college course, *"COIP: Empathy, Forgiveness & Resilience"* to approximately 90 incarcerated students.

Britany J. Gatewood, Ph.D., is a Post Doctoral Researcher at the Center of Educational Opportunities. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University. She earned her doctorate with a concentration in social inequality and criminology, and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies. She identifies as a Black queer woman scholar activist. She received her BA in Sociology at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and her MA in Liberal Arts at the University of Detroit Mercy. Her research interests include social inequality, criminology, social movements, and scholar activism. Her research focuses on social movements within carceral institutions as well as the political practice and tradition of resistance of Black women and their children. Dr. Gatewood's written work explores the impact of the criminal justice system on Black women. Specifically, how incarceration in conjunction with one's political, social, and economic position affects their activism and political participation, collectively and individually.



Dr. Britany J Gatewood



Sydni Turner

Sydni Turner is a second year Masters student at Howard University within the Sociology and Criminology department. In 2016, she received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice and a minor in Family Studies from Towson University. Her research focuses on the dynamic shifts in the political economy as it relates to mass incarceration, the Black family, and reentry. More specifically, her Master's thesis will explore the mass incarceration of Black fathers who successfully parent and maintain relationships with their children during incarceration. As a Prince George's county native, she currently serves as a reentry mentor at the Welcome Home Reentry Program. In addition, she is a Board Member and Secretary at It Takes A Village Collaborative non-profit organization whose mission is to provide individuals, families, and communities, with resources, services, and networks to empower them to reach their fullest potential. Long term, she aims to own a reentry non-profit organization that provides services such as employment, housing, and life skills to the formerly incarcerated population.

Letter from the Research Principle Investigator (PI)

When I set out to explore the experiences among children of incarcerated parents in 2005, I knew then, that speaking to children themselves would help realign research by providing more realistic perspectives of what their lived experiences really were. Back then, as a doctoral student, I found myself very uncomfortable with how children of incarcerated parents (COIP) were dehumanized, villainized, stigmatized and labelled as future prisoners. The research I was reading was oversaturated with negative outcomes and rarely mentioned the stories of those children who defied odds, were community leaders, ordinarily resilient and successfully thriving. These missing narratives mirrored stories I knew to be true in my own family and among individuals I attended school with. They were all a part of our fragile community. Through my dissertation study, *"Exploring the Silence Among Children of Prisoners"* (Muhammad, 2011), I was blessed to meet many resilient children who were young, empathic, intelligent and Black. These children and others have empowered me to continue this research, regardless of the negative feedback from individuals who argue that a prism of deficiency should remain standard.

This study has taught me that much more can be learned from asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives, especially when considering the collateral consequences of parental incarceration on children and young adults. I could not have imagined the dynamic, detailed and inspiring narratives of success that would be shared during this research project. I am especially pleased to have the inclusion of the voices of seventy-five resilient young adult COIP, who are successful in many areas of their lives, provide national context in this white paper, *"Children of Incarcerated Parents: Pathways to Resilience and Success"*.

This national study of COIP highlights the importance of gaining a fuller understanding of the pathways in which children of incarcerated parents successfully navigate into young adulthood and beyond. Findings show that COIP success pathways are unique, innovative and sometimes non-traditional. These pathways provide information and hope about proactive ways in which policy makers, practitioners, researchers and other children of incarcerated parents can be supported along the winding journey of life.

It is evident from this study that children of incarcerated parents are so much more than the limiting and negative labels that are placed upon them. The qualitative interviews conducted for this study, show that COIP are role models. Specifically, they shared longitudinal experiences as professors, lawyers, graduate students, research scholars, leaders in their communities, politically engaged, active citizens on their college campuses, activists, supporting siblings, loving support networks for their incarcerated parents and so much more.

Even in the midst of all these accolades, the children of incarcerated parents who participated in the study were honest, humble, self-reflective, empathetic, faithful, and eager to reach back and support others in similar situations.

It is a true travesty to limit COIP to what research hypothesizes they will become. There is much more we can learn from listening to children of incarcerated parents and empowering them to dream, achieve goals and continue to blaze paths forward.



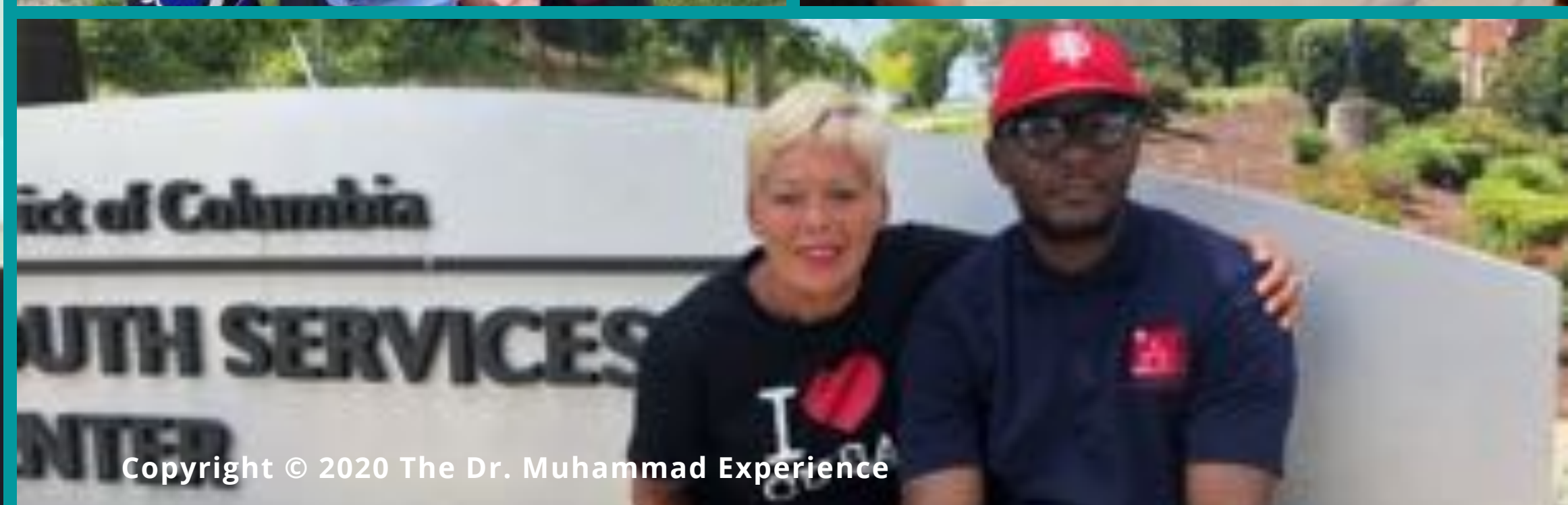
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WELCOME



Research Study



7M

children of
incarcerated
parents in the
United States

Approximately seven million children in the United States have an incarcerated parent, or a parent who has been recently released from incarceration. Research shows that the challenges that these children face are substantial, including difficulty with transitioning into their adult lives, lower graduation rates, higher rates of unemployment, and a higher risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system in their lifetime (Muhammad, 2011). Most of this information on prisoners' children is derived from surveys of their parents.

Few studies have directly examined the children themselves (Muhammad, 2007). The difficulties that prevent accurate counts of children of incarcerated parents also prevent the collection of representative descriptive data on these children (Johnston, 1995; Muhammad, 2009). Although the number of children affected by parental incarceration can be estimated, the scope of the problem is uncertain because few reliable statistics exist (Seymour, 1998). Despite this shortcoming, it is possible to obtain a rough sense of the problem by combining national and state level findings from the Bureau of Justice Statistics data (Mumola, 2000), to produce a formula for estimating the number of prisoners' children (Mumola, 2005). Currently, national estimates are the most concrete information that we have to identify this population. Unfortunately, such estimates provide limited information on children and their caregivers (Johnston, 1992), such as demographic data, geographical location, number of placements experienced and personal situations faced (Johnston, 2006). Most of the research on prisoners' children focuses on their problems and has not attempted to create a rounded picture of their lives (Muhammad, 2019).

Research shows that the challenges that these children face are substantial, including difficulty with transitioning into their adult lives, lower graduation rates, higher rates of unemployment, and a higher risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system in their lifetime.

Resilience and achievements are important concepts to understand in the lives of children of incarcerated parents, especially among young adults (Johnston & Sullivan, 2016). Not only does such insight provide balance to the current databank for scholarly works, it will help the children affected by this experience to also see themselves in a different light. Because incarceration is associated with racism, extreme shame, stigma and silence, how these particular children feel about themselves takes on a greater significance (Muhammad, 2018). Parental incarceration has been found to have indescribable and long-lasting effects on the child psyche, which serves as a disadvantage to their ability to achieve throughout their childhood and into adulthood. Understanding and becoming empowered to verbalize one's strengths may work to combat some of the negative effects experienced by children who have one or both parents serving a sentence of imprisonment.

The objective of this research project was to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence whether children will lead a crime-free life. This national study included 75 in-depth qualitative interviews with children of incarcerated parents (COIP) (defined as those 18 years or older) who self-identified as resilient and/or successful. At the onset of the study, which was prior to COVID-19, face-to-face interviews were conducted. All remaining interviews after CDC mandates, included virtual interviews via zoom and/or telephone interviews. These interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 2.5 hours. All interviews were voice and video recorded and transcribed in verbatim. In addition, subjects were asked to submit a minimum of five photographs that highlighted their journey toward success. The provided photos were then used to aid subjects in a qualitative life-history narrative with the interviewer. This methodology allowed for the centering of COIP storytelling through the use of PhotoVoice as a community-based participatory method.

What factors contribute to resilience in the lives of children of incarcerated parents?

What internal and external barriers do children of incarcerated parents overcome in their pursuits to success?

The study research questions were exploratory in nature and included the following: (1) What factors contribute to resilience in the lives of children of incarcerated parents? and (2) What internal and external barriers do children of incarcerated parents overcome in their pursuits to success? These two overarching research questions support the study framework of pathways to resilience among children of incarcerated parents. Study results present a counter narrative to current research by highlighting emerging pathways to success. This study is among the first to identify specific strategies for guiding COIP through processes of gaining long-term success.

In total, 93 people inquired about an interview for the research study. At the end of the study recruitment process, 63 one-on-one interviews and 1 focus group consisting of 12 members, equated to 75 interviews being completed by the research team. Although the focus group provided rich contextual information, it was omitted from the analysis for this report because it had a unique structure that differed from the traditional one-to-one interviews. Therefore, the statistics below are only based on the 63 one-on-one interviews. The demographic information provided in the charts below are a snap-shot of the preliminary research study findings.

Further analysis of the research study findings, as it relates to our proposed research questions is on-going. Updates will be provided through future publications. **This study was approved by Howard University's Institutional Review Board (IRB-19-CAS-68).** Additional study information can be found at www.drmuhammadexperience.com/COIPstudy.

75

completed
interviews

63

completed
one on one
interviews

DATA SNAPSHOT¹

Which parent is/was incarcerated?



16%

Mother



57%

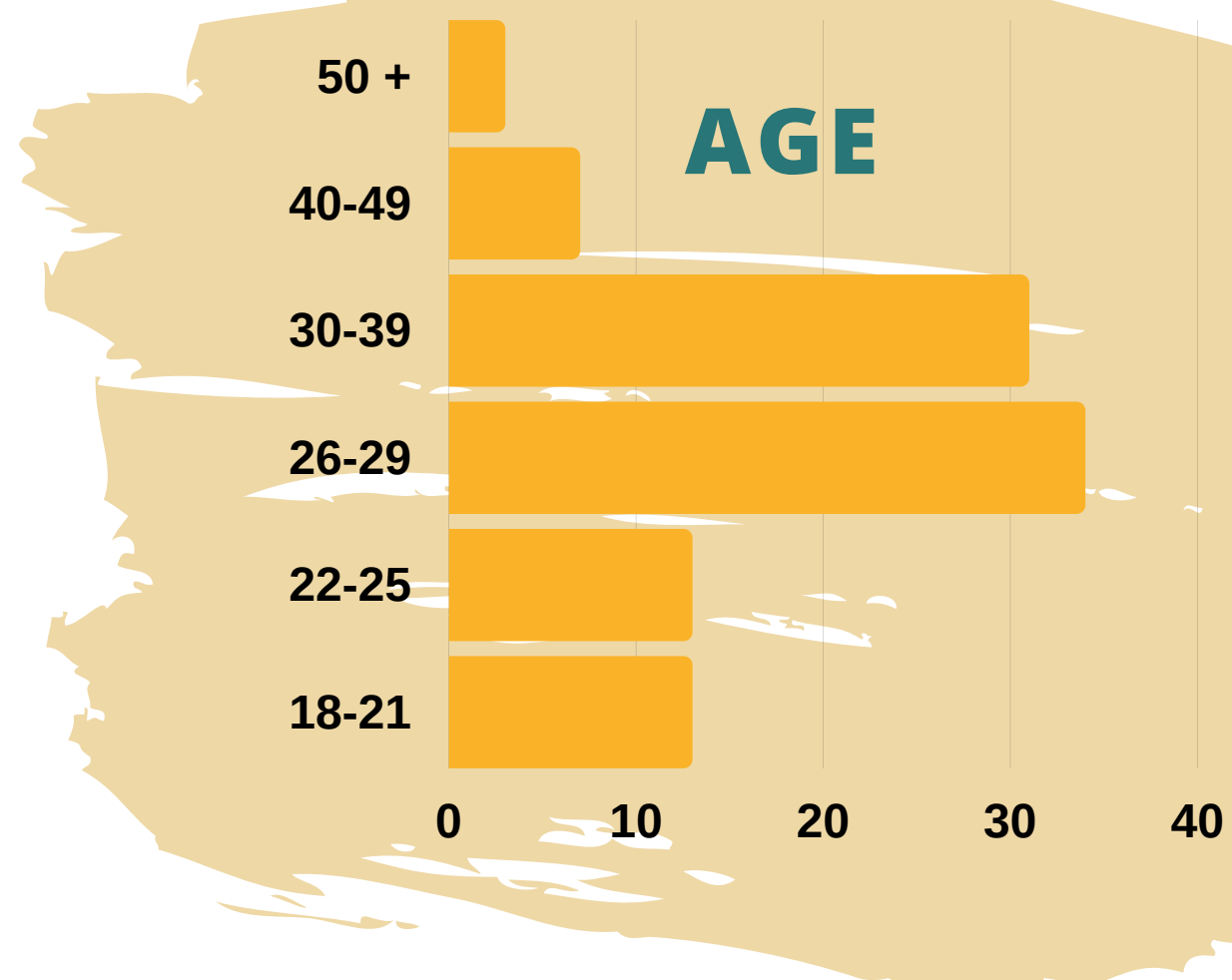
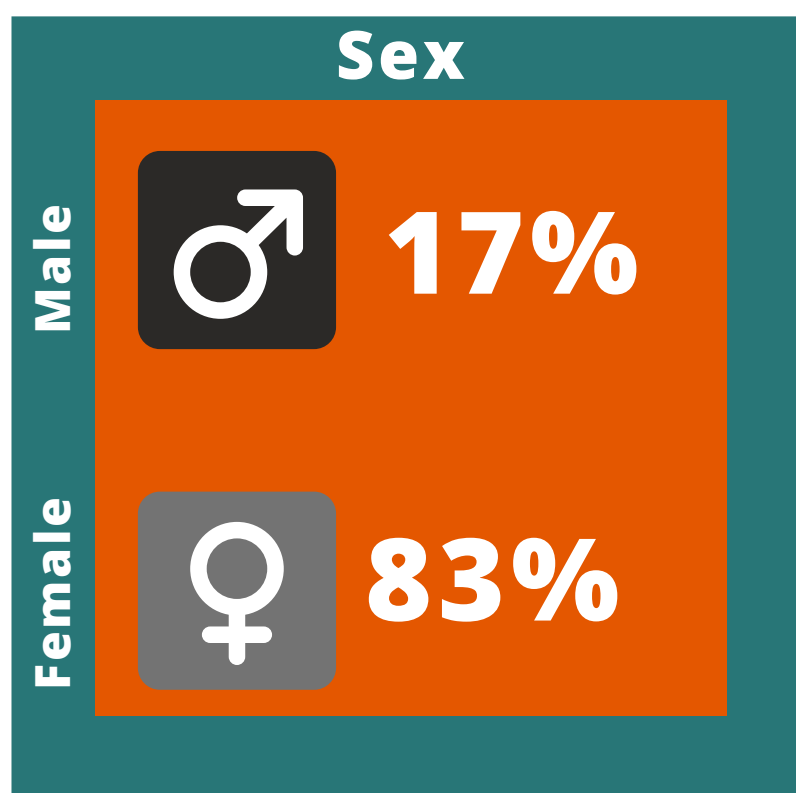
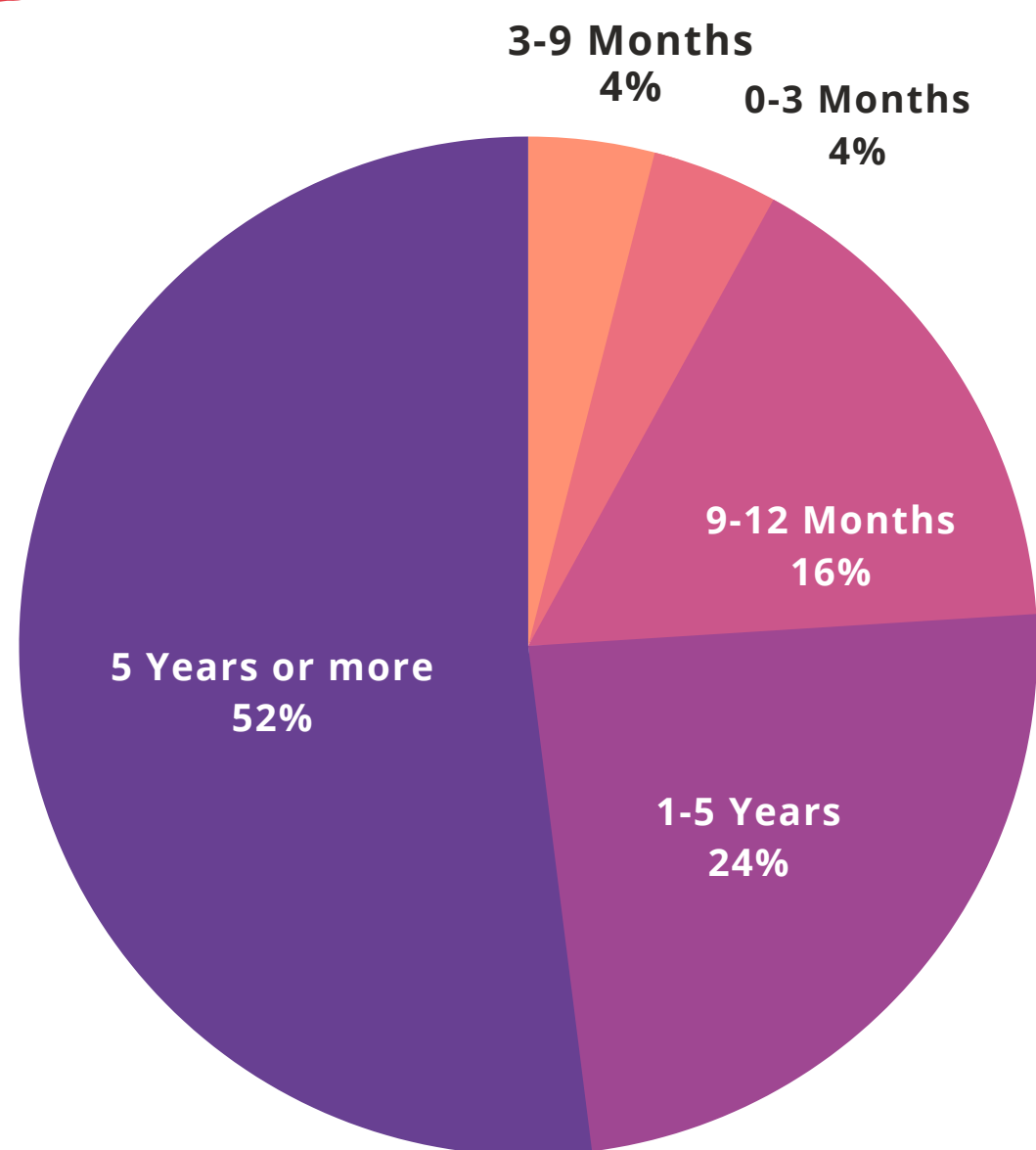
Father



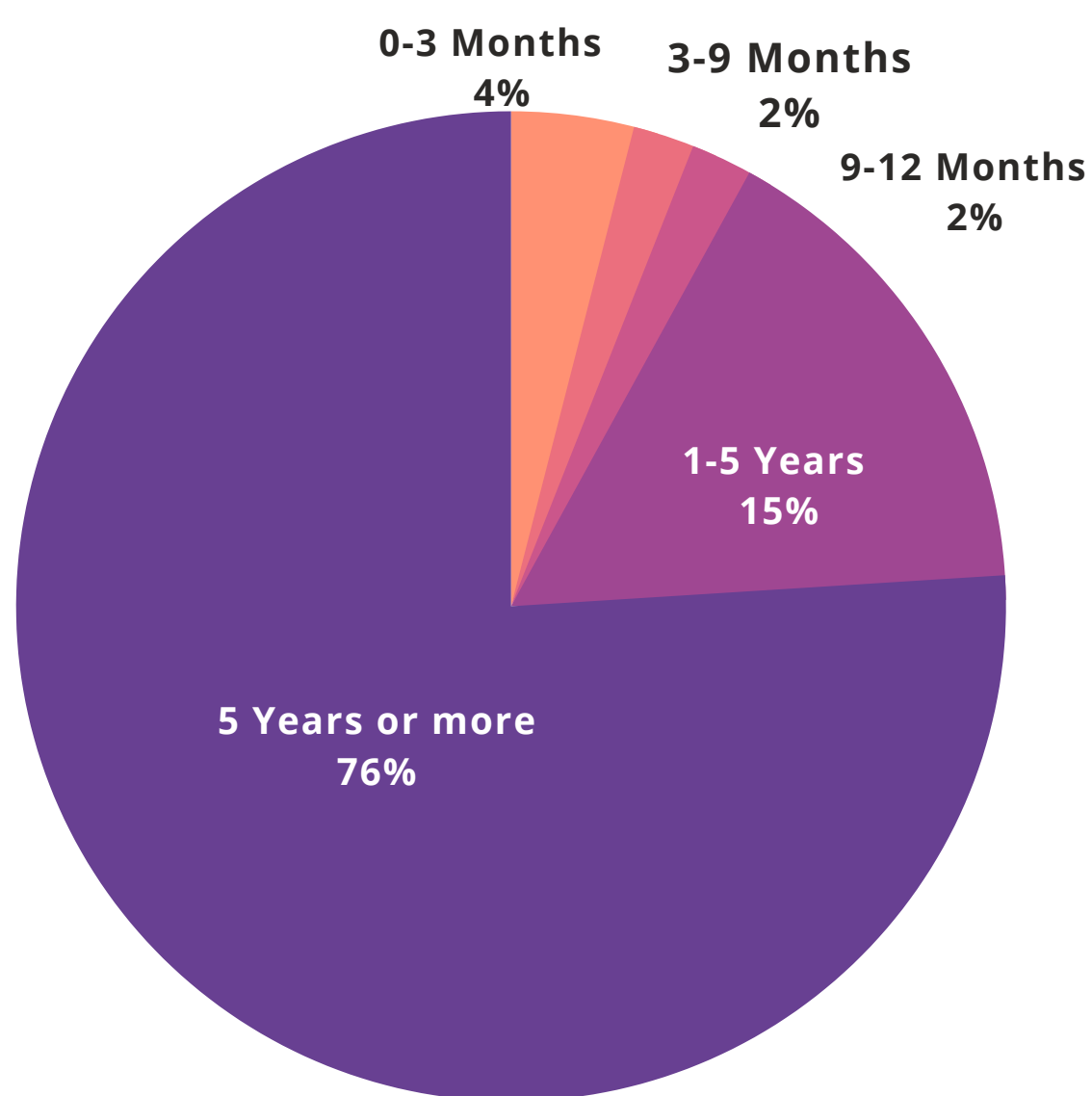
27%

Both Parents

Length of Mother's Incarceration

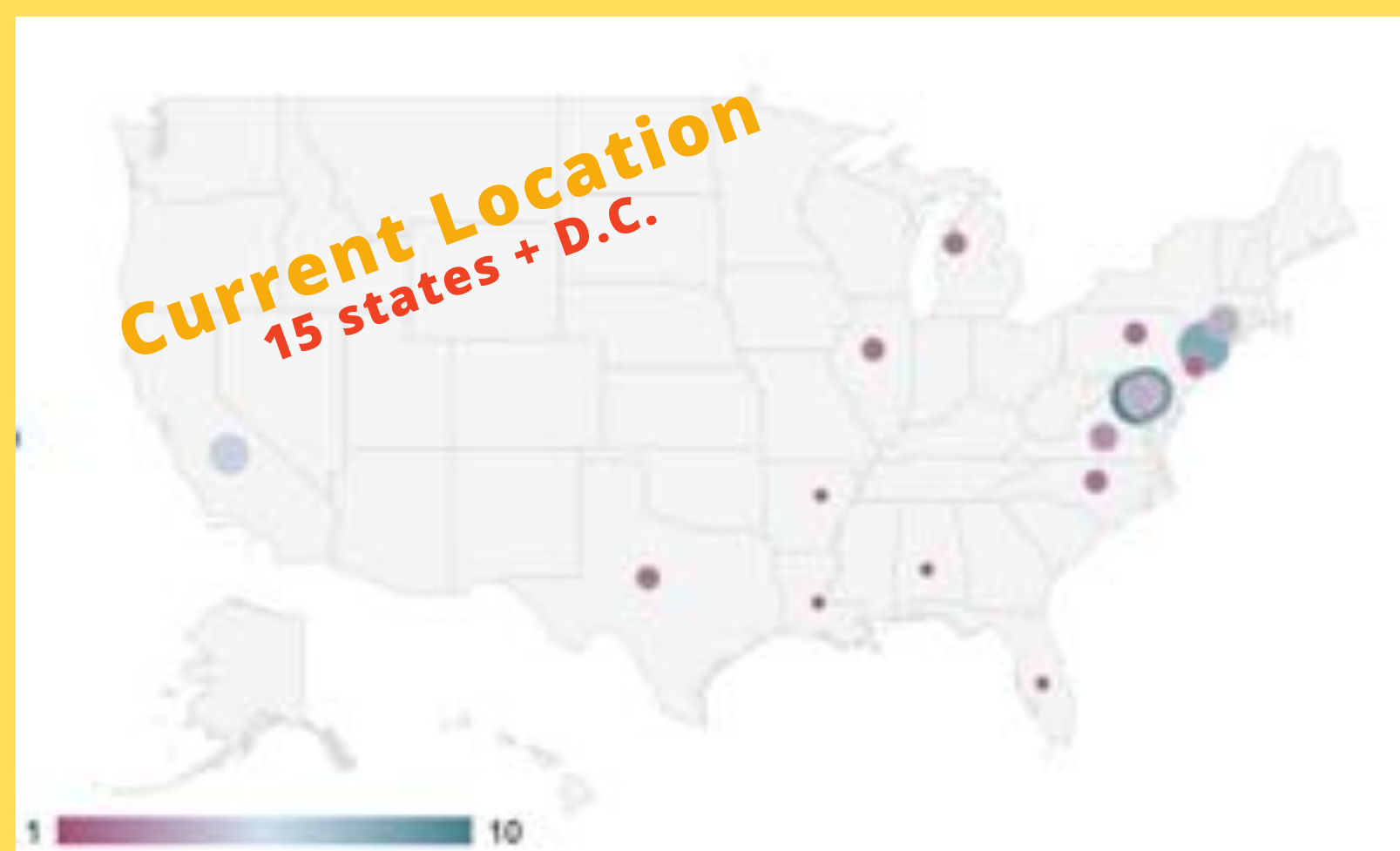


Length of Father's Incarceration



Race

94% Black 6% White

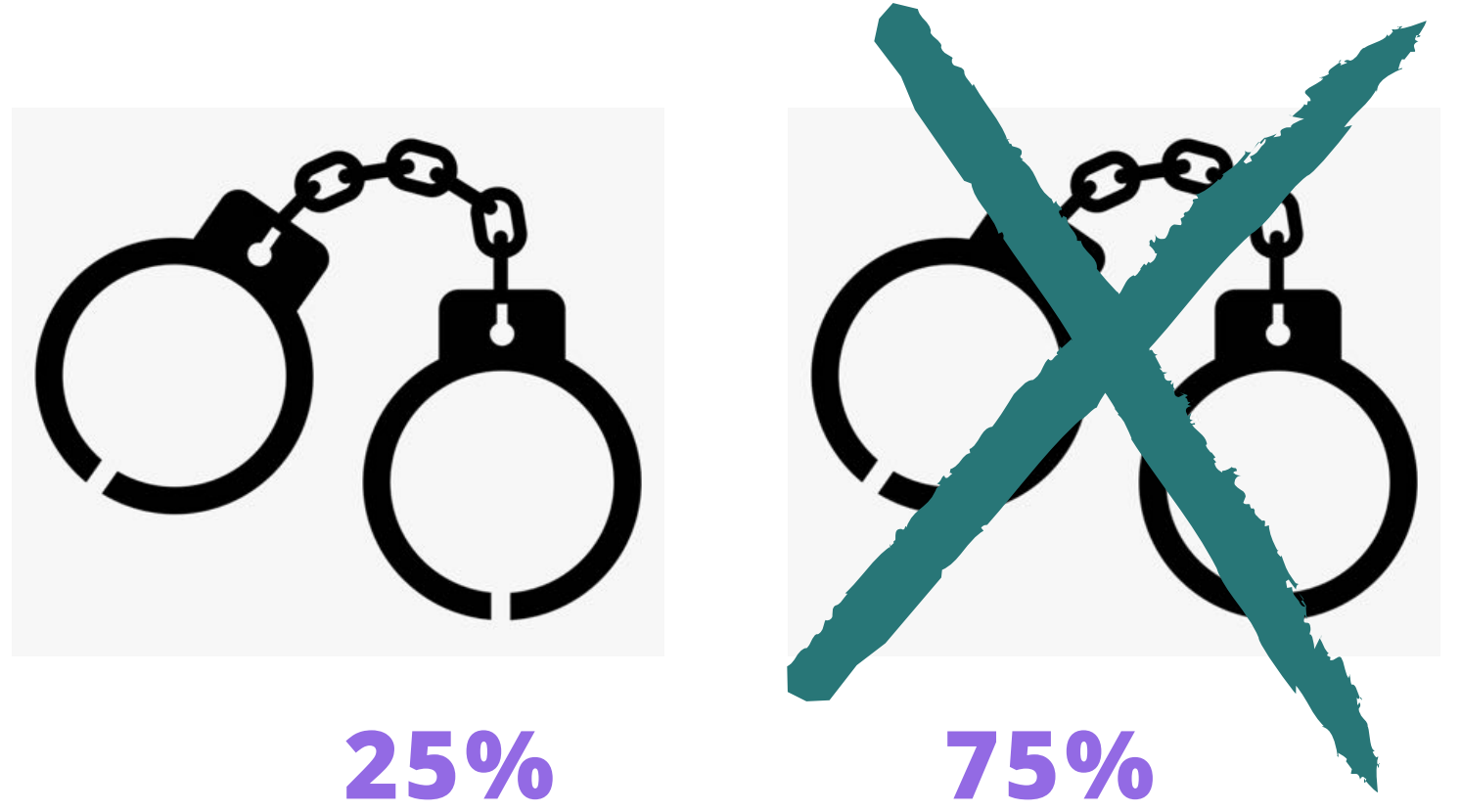


1. Does not include missing data

DATA SNAPSHOT¹

How did you stay in contact?

	Mother	Father
 in person	73%	55%
 call	58%	55%
 mail	54%	66%
 no contact	12%	19%



Have you ever been arrested, detained, and/or incarcerated?

What areas have you been successful in?



Adverse Childhood Experiences Score (1-10)



1. Does not include missing data

Due to the rise of mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex, trends in the U.S. show that Blacks are disproportionately incarcerated. Since the 1970s, the numbers of Black people who are incarcerated continues to increase across the decades. Therefore, the numbers of Black children with incarcerated parents has upsurged. This study reflects a similar disproportionality among the race of subject. Specifically, 94% of participants (59) self-identified as Black. To the contrary, only 6% of participants (4) were white.

Race

	Frequency	Percent
Black	59	94%
White	4	6%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	63	100%

AGE

Age of COIP is represented as the current age at the time of interview. The age variable was broken into nine categories for ease of conducting developmental micro analyses. Study participation required that the interviewees be at least 18 years or older. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 53 years. Thirty-three percent (33%) of those sampled fell within the range of 26-29 years. The average interviewee was approximately 30 years old. The study recruitment process was mainly drawn from social media outlets. Therefore, the majority of the sample was younger than 35 years. This reflected ages of individuals with the propensity towards social media use. In addition, study flyers named college, university students and recent graduates as potential study candidates. Snowball sampling was also used to recruit potential subjects.

	Frequency	Percent
18 to 21	8	13%
22 to 25	8	13%
26 to 29	21	33%
30 to 34	11	17%
35 to 39	8	13%
40 to 44	4	6%
45 to 49	0	0%
50 and up	2	3%
Unknown	1	2%
Total	63	100%

The societal stigma and gender stereotypes surrounding male self-expression, embracing emotions, and engaging in dialogue about personal life has been shown to decrease the likelihood of male participation in qualitative research studies. Black men are often forced to be silent and suppress their emotions, otherwise, they may be perceived to be weak. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, participants were required to talk about events within their life, which included questioning around adverse childhood traumatic experiences. Consequently, the number of male subjects was tremendously lower than that of female participants. For example, eleven COIP (17%) were males, using pronouns he/him. Compared to fifty-two COIP (83%) who self-identified as female and used the pronouns she/her. None of the study participants identified as gender non-conforming, transexual, and/or other.

Sex

	Frequency	Percent
Female	52	83%
Male	11	17%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	63	100%

Education

Highest Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Less than high school	0	0%
Some high school	2	3%
GED/high school diploma	15	24%
Associates Degree	3	5%
Bachelor's Degree	21	33%
Master's Degree	16	25%
Ph.D.	3	5%
Other Professional Degree	1	2%
Unknown	2	3%
Total	63	100%

Currently in School For Higher Degree	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	37%
No/Unknown	40	63%
Total	63	100%

Research on education and COIP is typically limiting in that it focuses primarily on youth and young adults with low educational attainment, truancy issues and/or high school drop-out status. However, this study identified that some COIP advanced through high levels of educational attainment. Specifically, within this sample (65%) of subjects at the time of interview, held Bachelor's degrees or higher. In fact, only (3%) of the entire sample did not complete high school. More specifically, the majority of participants (67%) with high school diplomas and/or Associates degrees, were matriculating toward a Bachelor's degree at the time of interview. In addition, (17%) of those participants with a Bachelor's degree were working toward obtaining their Master's or Ph.D. degrees. Furthermore, three participants had successfully completed their graduate programs and received Ph.D.'s (2 COIP), while another subject had recently finished law school and graduated with a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) Degree.

Location

Current Location	Frequency	Percent
Alabama	1	2%
Arkansas	1	2%
California	5	8%
Connecticut	4	6%
Florida	1	2%
Illinois	2	3%
Louisiana	1	2%
Maryland	13	21%
Michigan	2	3%
New Jersey	2	3%
New York	8	13%
North Carolina	2	3%
Pennsylvania	2	3%
Texas	2	3%
Virginia	3	5%
Washington DC	14	22%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	63	100%

All 63 COIP were residing in the United States (U.S.) at the time of interview. For this national study, face-to-face and virtual interview sessions were conducted with COIP located in 16 states across the U.S. The study's home, Howard University is located in Washington D.C. As a result, the majority of participants held residence in Washington D.C. (22%) and Maryland (21%). In addition, the largest numbers of participants were living in the Washington Metropolitan area (DMV) at the time of interview. Through the use of snowball sampling, individuals clustered around the DMV area. As such, peer study participants often recruited and referred other COIP, who were from neighboring geographical locations, including Virginia (5%). For other states across the nation, promotion on all social media platforms gained attention as study participants completed their interviews. New York (13%), California (8%), and Connecticut (6%), held the next highest rates of participation.

Criminal Justice System

Parent Incarcerated	Frequency	Percent
Mother	10	16%
Father	36	57%
Both Mother and Father	17	27%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	63	100%

The number of COIP experiencing paternal incarceration (57%) was much higher than those COIP who had experiences of maternal incarceration (16%). With racist policies governing mass incarceration through the targeting of Black males, this finding was no surprise. However, with women being the fastest growing population of incarceration, study findings were aligned with this trend. Specifically, twenty-seven (43%) study participants had incarcerated mothers. Furthermore, an experience among COIP that has received less attention, is the incarceration of both parents. Over a quarter (27%) of participants had both of their parents incarcerated at some point in their lives.

Involvement in Criminal Justice System	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	24%
No	46	73%
Unknown	2	3%
Total	63	100%

One agreed upon metric of success among COIP is having no criminal justice involvement. With much of the research scholarship focusing on a deficit-based model, it fails to take into consideration, why some COIP do not enter the juvenile or criminal justice system. Furthermore, in limiting the livelihood of COIP to negative outcomes, it leaves little room for exploring the experiences among COIP who have never had any interaction with law enforcement, which is the entry into the criminal legal system. In our study, **the majority of participants (73%) did not have any involvement within the criminal justice system.** This groundbreaking narrative sheds light on a different story than the typical stigmatizing framing that has oversaturated past and current scholarship on the topic. This particular study finding is evidence that there is much more to learn from asset-based inquiry with COIP.

Length of Parent Incarceration: Father	Frequency	Percent
0-3 Months	2	4%
3-9 Months	1	2%
9-12 months	1	2%
1 year to 5 years	8	15%
5 years or more	39	74%
Unknown	2	4%
Total	53	100%

Length of Parent Incarceration: Mother	Frequency	Percent
0-3 Months	1	4%
3-9 Months	1	4%
9-12 months	4	15%
1 year to 5 years	6	22%
5 years or more	13	48%
Unknown	2	7%
Total	27	100%

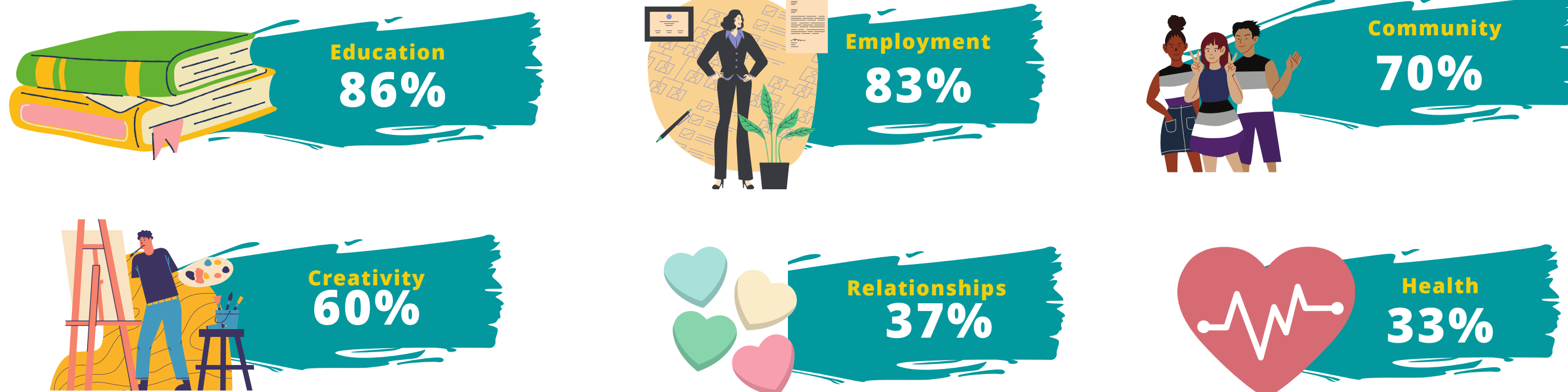
The majority of COIP reported that their parents were incarcerated for 5 years or more. The reason for their arrests were overwhelmingly drug charges, assaults, and/or larceny. These charges typically carried a sentence of one or more years. Among the sample, there were COIP who did not know the length of their parent's incarceration. This was typically due to their age at time of arrest, lack of contact with incarcerated parent, and/or because a parent served multiple sentences. Despite incarcerated parents spending years and even decades in jail or prison, COIP reported success in a variety of areas.



Study Results



In what areas have COIP been successful?



Areas of Success	Frequency	Percent
Education	54	86%
Employment	52	83%
Community	44	70%
Creativity	38	60%
Relationships	23	37%
Health	21	33%
Other	4	6%
Unknown	0	0%
Total²	236	375%

² Will equal more than 63 participants and 100% because of multiple areas of success

Overall there were six areas of success that were identified within the study. These categories were explored through a Positive Youth Justice framework. Specifically, education, employment, community, creativity, relationships, and health were the six categories that the majority of identified successes clustered around. Each of the upcoming sections of this report will outline research findings based on the six emergent thematic areas of success outlined above. This white paper highlights the successes, triumphs and resilience of COIP, which many times is in direct opposition to previous deficit model research.

The majority (95%) of the participants had multiple areas in which they believed they were successful. Of the three participants who reported success in only one area, they all chose education. Education was the highest ranking area among success categories, with the majority of participants (86%) claiming educational success and endeavors. Employment (83%), community (70%), and creativity (60%) successes were among the next highest modes of identified resilience among study subjects.

Educational Attainment Among COIP

Education has long been considered a pathway to success. As one's education rises, their income increases and their risk of unemployment decreases (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Thus, success in education leads to success in employment. This study showed that participants and their incarcerated parents were aware of the importance of education in their future success. The majority of participants (83%) reported that they have had success in education. This was the highest success category within the study. The majority of participants had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 37% were currently in school to obtain a higher advanced degree. Of the 15 COIP with high school diplomas, the majority (60%) were in school for a bachelor's degree, and 5 COIP (31%) that have master's degrees were in graduate school for a Ph.D. or a second master's degree.

*I FEEL LIKE MY COMMUNITY IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF ME GOING TO COLLEGE. I HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS -- OR I'M NOT GOING TO SAY A LOT OF FRIENDS. OUT OF 30 PEOPLE THAT I SAY I PROBABLY HUNG WITH, OR WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL WITH, ONLY FOUR OR FIVE OF US WENT TO A COLLEGE. FOUR OR FIVE OF US OUT OF 30 PEOPLE WENT TO A COLLEGE. THEY'RE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THE ONES THAT ARE IN COLLEGE. I FEEL LIKE THEY PROTECT THOSE JEWELS.
- FEMALE, 18, WASHINGTON DC*

Incarcerated parents have been found to have low levels of education with 41.3% having less than a high school education (Wolf Harlow, 2003). In addition, incarcerated males tend to have lower educational attainment than females (Wolf Harlow, 2003). Studies show that those with incarcerated fathers tend to have lower educational attainment (Dallaire et al., 2010; Miller & Barnes, 2015). Within this study, male COIP had lower educational attainment than female COIP and those that had their fathers incarcerated were more likely to have less than a B.A. degree. However, the overwhelming majority of participants had higher education levels than their parents.

Highest Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Less than high school	0	0%
Some high school	2	3%
GED/high school diploma	15	24%
Associates Degree	3	5%
Bachelor's Degree	21	33%
Master's Degree	16	25%
Ph.D.	3	5%
Other Professional Degree	1	2%
Unknown	2	3%
Total	63	100%

Currently in School For Higher Degree	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	37%
No/Unknown	40	63%
Total	63	100%

83%

reported success in education

Research has shown that the educational attainment of children is influenced by parental attitudes towards education and the quality of their relationship, not just by the parent's educational status (Spera et al., 2009; Yuan et al., 2016). Within this study, participants highlighted close relationships with their incarcerated parents and shared experiences in which parents encouraged them to succeed in school, even though they were incarcerated. For example, COIP discussed how parents studied with them from prison, were aware of their college deadlines and upcoming projects, and constantly asked about how they were doing in classes. Research shows that Black parents are diligent and invested in the education of their children, contrary to popular beliefs (Fields-Smith, 2020). Regardless of educational attainment, incarcerated parents are highly capable of assisting their children within all levels of academia.

I SWITCHED FROM BIOCHEMISTRY PRE-MED TO FORENSIC SCIENCE, AND THEN THAT'S WHEN MY BRAIN GOT TO THINKING. I WAS LIKE, "WAIT A MINUTE. FORENSIC SCIENCE IS RELATED TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE." I TOOK MY FIRST CRIMINOLOGY CLASS AT BAYLOR [UNIVERSITY], HAD AN AMAZING PROFESSOR. AND I WAS LIKE, "WAIT A MINUTE, I'M NOT GONNA CHANGE MY MAJOR 'CAUSE I'M LIKE... LOOK, I'M CLOSE TO THE FINISH LINE, SO HOW CAN I USE THIS TO MY BENEFIT? THERE NEEDS TO BE BLACK STEMS, SO LET ME FINISH THIS SCIENCE DEGREE, AND THEN I CAN PIVOT FROM FORENSIC SCIENCE INTO CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND I HAVE ANOTHER AVENUE OF WHAT I CAN DO." BUT THAT'S WHEN I FOUND MYSELF WAS AT BAYLOR.
- FEMALE, 37, TEXAS

Research shows that when viewing the educational attainment of COIP, we must also consider environmental factors outside of parental incarceration. For example, race, gender, location, and socioeconomic status are known to influence educational successes. It has also been argued that social identities are a larger influencer than parental incarceration (Miller & Barnes, 2015; Murray et al., 2012a, 2012b; Nichols et al., 2016; Turney & Goodsell, 2018). Study interviews revealed that participants spoke more about how class and race influenced their time within the educational system than the incarceration of their parent(s). Specifically for COIP who grew up within fragile communities where educational attainment is lower (Center for Advancing Opportunity & Gallup, 2020). These COIP spoke about their lack of access to educational resources, how they endured racism from teachers and students, and various other struggles concerning the affordability of college and extracurricular activities. Research about COIP and educational attainment typically blames incarcerated parents for the lack of educational success achieved by their children. However, this study shows that societal factors had greater influence on school performance and opportunities for COIP. Despite parental incarceration, mothers and fathers were present in their children's lives, even from a distance. Although, incarceration greatly limited interaction between children and parents, they still found various ways to encourage COIP toward their educational endeavors.

HE USED TO HELP ME WITH MY HOMEWORK OVER THE PHONE. YEAH, HE HELPED ME WITH MY HOMEWORK FROM ELEMENTARY ON UP, MIDDLE SCHOOL.
-FEMALE, 27 LOUISIANA

Employment Success Among COIP

Research studies have reported that parental incarceration causes familial financial instability and negatively impacts the socioeconomic status of COIP (Geller, et al. 2009; Travis and Waul, 2004; Arditti, 2003). According to Murray and Farrington (2008a), children of incarcerated parents have a greater risk of being unemployed during adulthood. Although this may be true for some COIP it is not the experience for them all. In fact, this study found that participants continued had great success and achievements in the area of employment. Within the study sample educational attainment coincided with high levels of occupational success. For example, 83% of COIP reported stories of success and triumphs connected to their careers, jobs and intermittent employment. Research supports the assumption that higher educational achievements can lead to higher income and more employment opportunities. For example, COIP who attended 4 year universities or colleges, discussed being offered internships, externships and work study opportunities. In addition, they learned networking skills that helped them tremendously as they made advances in the employment sector. These experiences were used as springboards to more advanced jobs and long-term career opportunities. COIP felt they were afforded these opportunities because of their status as college students or graduates. Furthermore, the majority of COIP described their profession as careers rather than jobs. COIP also served as community leaders, entrepreneurs, authors, social workers, teachers, etc. Some COIP even indicated that their incarcerated parents changed the trajectory of their life and influenced their career path and choices that ultimately contributed to their employment success.

83%

reported success in
employment

SO, DEFINITELY PROUD OF MY SUCCESS AND JUST MY LEARNING TO NETWORK, MEETING PEOPLE. I COLLECTED LIKE 15 BUSINESS CARDS WHEN I WENT TO THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS RECEPTION AT HOWARD. GOT LIKE, TWO DIFFERENT MENTORS THAT CONNECTED ME WITH SOME GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AFTER THAT. I'M ACTUALLY LEGALIZING MY OWN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION CALLED TRAP. IT STANDS FOR TRUE REHABILITATION AND PROSPERITY.

- FEMALE, UNKNOWN AGE, WASHINGTON DC

The colleges that COIP attended, were said to have prepared them for entering the workforce. COIP referred to the many professional development resources that were available to them through their respective college/university campuses. Upon graduation from college, COIP gained more confidence in their futures. This increased belief in self was attributed to the direct results of their secured employment opportunities. The cultural and social capital they received during matriculation made them competitive within the workforce.

JUST TALKING TO MY DAD, LIKE, REALLY PUTS ME IN A DIFFERENT STATE OF MIND, LIKE, MAKES ME HUMBLE, MAKES ME WANNA WORK HARDER.

- MALE, 25, PENNSYLVANIA

COIP were happy and excited to share the beneficial ways in which their incarcerated parents motivated them from a distance. This study found that COIP engaged in critical dialogues with their incarcerated parents about the many social injustices in America, specifically those surrounding the criminal legal system. This unique finding serves as yet another example of the importance of moving from a deficit to asset-based perspective when exploring the collateral consequences among COIP. Here we see that COIP attribute a percentage of their success to the roles that their incarcerated parents played in socially and financially supporting them through their journeys to sustained success. In doing so, COIP were shaped by their parent's experiences. This resulted in them being empowered to enter social service programs that led to careers as social workers, advocates and activists for systemic change. Many COIP argued that they would not be involved in their current work without the love, motivation, support and knowledge shared from their incarcerated parents about the true experience of being locked up in America .

YOU KNOW, I REALLY WANTED TO BE ABLE TO PASS MY BUSINESS DOWN TO MY SON, OR, YOU KNOW, WE COULD BUILD ON THAT BUSINESS AND LIKE REALLY, REALLY, REALLY BE SUCCESSFUL.- MALE, 28, WASHINGTON D.C.

In addition, COIP reported becoming entrepreneurs as a means to give back to their communities and to create generational wealth for their families. COIP built companies and nonprofits from the ground up, which typically were made to serve a need in the community. Successful COIP were determined and showed resilience in assuring that others benefited from their assets. This was a strong theme that was prevalent throughout multiple interviews. COIP were not self occupied with ways in which they could benefit, but also concerned with the wellbeing of their siblings, family members, other COIP across the nation and their incarcerated parents.

Furthermore, the study revealed that incarcerated parents, who were active in their child's lives, instilled a strong sense of work ethic in them. In addition, they advocated for higher education and healthy lifestyle habits. Some incarcerated parents also encouraged their children to continue seeking higher education and employment supports to supplement their educational efforts. Although most incarcerated parents had less formal education than their children, this did not stop them from advising their children to do the things they never accomplished. Overall they desired for their children to have prosperous careers and gain employment opportunities.

I GRADUATED FROM THERE, GOT MY CERTIFICATION, AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE SO MANY GOOD CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WHERE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD SIMILAR EXPERIENCES THAT I'VE HAD, OR THAT MY MOM HAS HAD. I'VE WORKED IN VICTIM ADVOCACY AND WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, RAPE.- FEMALE, 27, MARYLAND

Community Relations Among COIP

100%

believed that it was important to give back to the community

Activists and advocates have championed for criminal justice reform due the detrimental ramifications on individuals and communities. However, gaps in social movement research lack the analysis of children of incarcerated parents' political activity. Extensive research shows parental incarceration has affected the outcomes of their children. The political practices of parents influence the community engagement of their children (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Dalhouse & Frideres, 1996; Hatemi et al., 2009; Tedin, 1974). Research falls short of viewing incarcerated persons as political actors before, during, and after their confinement. Thus, researchers do not explore how political activity or attitudes of incarcerated parents influence their children.

HAVING A PARENT INCARCERATED, THAT IS THE FUEL FOR EVERYTHING THAT I DO. IT'S THE FUEL FOR WORKING WITH THE PARENTS WHO ARE INCARCERATED, IT'S THE FUEL FOR ME HOSTING THINGS WITH CHILDREN, IT'S THE FUEL FOR ME WANTING TO GO INTERNATIONALLY AND GO LOOK AT OTHER PROGRAMS AND DO STUDIES WITH THEM. IT'S THE FUEL FOR ALL OF THAT. BECAUSE TO ME, IT'S LIKE MY LITTLE PIECE OF CHANGE, IT'S MY LITTLE TOKEN. SO YEAH, WILL EVERYTHING I DO CHANGE EVERYTHING? MAYBE NOT, BUT IT'LL BE MY PART THAT I PLAY IN IT, SO YES, I DO ADVOCATE AND SHOUT AS LOUD AS I CAN WHEN IT COMES TO PARENTAL INCARCERATION, AND THE WORK THAT I DO IN THE COMMUNITY, AND MOVING THE MISSION FORWARD IS VERY, VERY VITAL.

- FEMALE, 34, VIRGINIA

Children of incarcerated parents, such as Tony Lewis Jr. and Bree Anderson, have become activists and political leaders for criminal justice reform. Movements such as #WeGotUsNow, led by Ebony Underwood, are led by these COIP. When asked if they viewed themselves as activists or advocates, 71% said they did. The majority claimed to be advocates over activists, because they stated that they were not doing enough to be considered an activist. However, 63% have attended a march or protests and 30% attended multiple demonstrations.

Self-Described Activist or Advocate	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	71%
No	5	5%
Do Not Know/Undecided	5	8%
Unknown	8	13%
Total	27	100%

COIP have been influenced by the lives of their parents and have chosen to advocate for the lives of incarcerated persons and COIP, in addition to various other social justice subjects. When asked which social justice issues were important to them, the majority of participants had multiple focus areas (32%), however criminal justice reform was one of the main priorities to most COIP. Furthermore, community work around criminal justice issues was mostly inspired by their parents incarceration. For example, forty-eight percent (48%) of COIP said that it was because of their experiences with parental incarceration, that influenced their criminal justice work.

Important Social Issues	Frequency	Percent
Housing/Homeless	1	2%
Domestic Violence	1	2%
Health	3	5%
Criminal Justice	14	22%
More than One Issue	20	32%
Other	3	5%
I Do Not Know/Undecided	6	10%
Unknown	15	24%
Total	63	100%

*PEOPLE IN POWER NEED TO
HEAR MY VOICE
-MALE, 25, PENNSYLVANIA*

The social, political and economic activism of these children of incarcerated parents was evident within the interviews. This differs greatly from current scholarship stating that contact with the criminal justice system leads to less political participation (Lee et al., 2014; Sugie, 2015). The majority of COIP did not see themselves as leaders within the community, however they described countless acts they did for the community and on behalf of their incarcerated parent(s). They are leaders within their community and nationwide and we should recognize their power and agency.

*I THINK THAT IT TAKES A VILLAGE. I THINK ONCE YOU BECOME AN ADULT, YOU DON'T STOP NEEDING THE VILLAGE. [THAT'S TRUE] BUT IT BECOMES YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ALSO ASSIST THE VILLAGE, BUT YOU DON'T STOP NEEDING THE VILLAGE. YOU DON'T STOP NEEDING HELP. YOU STILL NEED THE COMMUNITY, BUT YOU THEN ALSO BECOME A PART OF THE RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY TO GIVE BACK. SO THE GIVE AND TAKE REMAINS INTACT.
- FEMALE, 53, CALIFORNIA*

Attended a March or Protest	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	63%
No	11	17%
Unknown	12	19%
Total	63	100%

Creativity Among COIP

COIP reported high levels of success through their creativity. This is a characteristic among COIP that has been missing from research. Very little is known about the creative nature among children of incarcerated parents and how creativity that be leveraged to help COIP gain success and remain resilient. In this study, creativity was found to serve as a protective factor.

Participants shared their use of creative methods that helped them navigate along pathways toward success. Specifically, COIP used their creative ideas as a form of self-expression, for compensation and to connect with others who shared similar experiences. For example, COIP were artists, poets, rappers, chefs, jewelry designers, purse manufacturers, hair and braid stylist, film makers, radio show hosts, models, community leaders, and authors of creative works. As visionaries, COIP created platforms to promote their creativity. Rejecting the societal stigma surrounding parental incarceration and criminal involvement, COIP transformed their childhood trauma into purpose as they have dedicated their life's work to artistically sharing their narratives.

60%

reported success in
creativity

Research literature has indicated that parental incarceration causes a greater likelihood for intergenerational offending and contact with the criminal justice system (Huebner and Gustafson 2007; Murraray and Farrington 2005, 2008a, b; Roettger and Swisher 2011). However, COIP in this study chose innovation over incarceration. In fact, a total of 60% of participants reported creativity success.

I'M A CREATIVE, SO I'M TOO EMOTIONAL TO LIKE BE MARCHING ON THE FRONT LINES 'CAUSE I'M JUST, I GET MAD. BUT I THINK I'M AN ADVOCATE. I THINK I DO THAT THROUGH MY ART. I THINK I ADVOCATE THROUGH MY PROJECTS. I THINK I ADVOCATE THROUGH ALSO LIKE, I VOLUNTEER FOR A LOT OF PROGRAMS AND STUFF. SO YEAH, I THINK I'M MORE OF AN ADVOCATE. I'M WILLING TO SPEAK UP FOR OTHERS WHEN THEY'RE NOT WILLING TO SPEAK UP FOR THEMSELVES. I HAVE NO PROBLEM HAVING THOSE CONVERSATIONS OR WRITING CHARACTERS THAT REFLECT THOSE EXPERIENCES.

-FEMALE, 31, CALIFORNIA

Being a child of an incarcerated parent has heavily influenced the ways in which they expressed themselves. According to participants, artwork was a pathway to success. It allowed COIP to explore their identity, organize thoughts and cope with the trials and tribulations of parental incarceration. For example, to express her innermost thoughts and feelings, mixed media artist Shanell, creates highly saturated paintings portrayed in abstracted forms. In addition, Ife Kira, uses artistic mediums such as poetry, rap and visual art to connect with others who come from various walks of life.

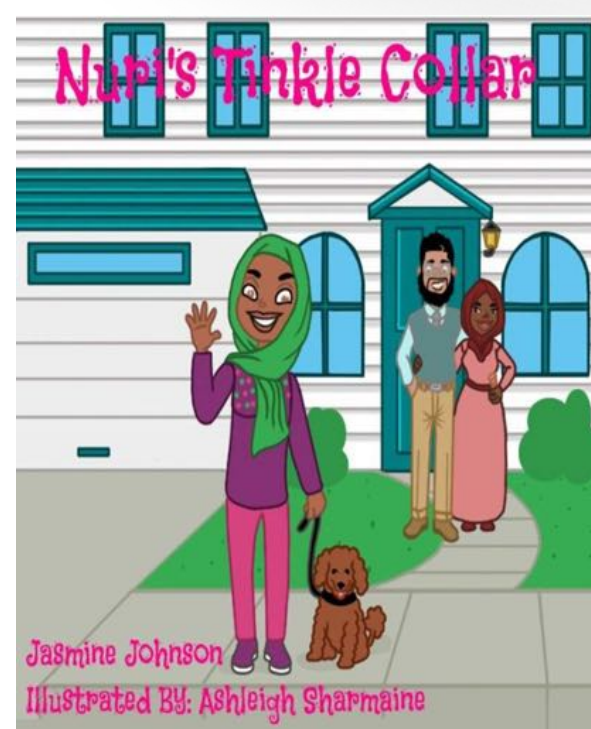
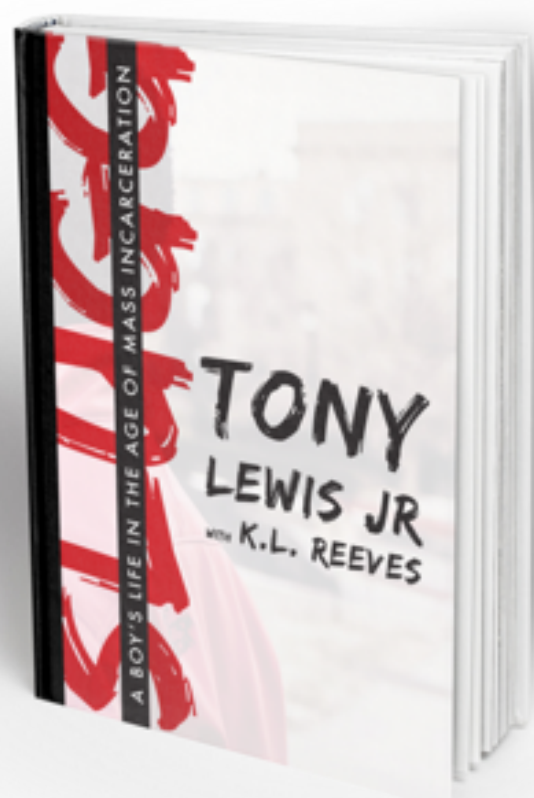
I'M ALSO LIKE RAPPER. I SPOKE OF ONE ARTIST WHERE I USE, WHERE I TRY TO TELL THE STORIES OF THOSE, OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO I KNOW ARE GOING THROUGH THE FIRE RIGHT NOW WITH INCARCERATION.

-MALE, 29, MARYLAND

I'VE CREATED OVER 500 ARTWORKS. I FEEL THAT MY ART IS A SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION. AND I'M JUST, YOU KNOW, LEARNING TO ACCEPT THAT I AM ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH COLOR, AND I'VE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE, THEY CAN UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE MESSAGES OR THEY CAN INTERPRET WHAT I'M SAYING THROUGH MY ART.

-FEMALE, 30, NEW YORK

Authors like Tony Lewis Jr., Jasmine Johnson, Anye Young, and Author Q have become trailblazers within their communities and across the nation. During interviews, other COIP expressed their love and passion for authorship. They shared their desires to positively touch the lives of others through their biographies and children's books. By sharing their personal unique story, COIP are motivating and inspiring others, especially those who are directly impacted by parental incarceration. Within their books, COIP offer tips, tools, and coping strategies to help others overcome challenges and to ultimately succeed in life.



In order to escape their reality, COIP creatively used their imagination to mentally navigate through the chaos in their environments. In doing so, they gained expertise in re-imagining, role playing, and storytelling which ultimately created pathways forward. This ultimately led them to a variety of successes. For example, in seeking to entertain, educate, and enlighten through her films, participant, Akiya McKnight, used her childhood experiences to write and produce award winning film festival shorts.

I HAVE A SHORT FILM CALLED SERVE, WHICH EXPLORES THE JOURNEY OF TWO SISTERS, TWO YOUNG SISTERS WHOSE MOM GETS ARRESTED FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND THEY KIND OF HAVE TO NAVIGATE THIS EXPERIENCE AND ALSO, UM, IT EXPLORES THEIR INNER EMOTIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE FEELING AS THEIR MOM IS PREPARING TO GO TO PRISON.

-FEMALE, 31, CALIFORNIA

Positive Relationships Among COIP

Relationships were found to be an important factor in contributing to the resilience and success of COIP. In this study, COIP highlighted the ways in which the relationship with their incarcerated parents contributed to the success they achieved. COIP reported that they had success in familial, peer and professional relationships. The relationship most discussed during interviews with COIP was the parental relationship, followed by peer and romantic relationships.

COIP reported that when their incarcerated parent maintained contact with them, it promoted a sense of pride that increased their self-esteem and confidence. This increased sense of self was said to be helpful in warding off negativity and stigma. Thus, COIP attributed some of the success in their lives to the close relations with their incarcerated parents. In addition, incarcerated parents' advice was helpful to their children. Although advice was limited to the context of mail, call and/or visits, the messages communicated were carried by COIP into their daily lives.

Contact with Father During Incarceration*	Frequency	Percent
In Person	29	55%
Mail	35	66%
Call/Video	29	55%
No Contact	10	19%
Unknown	0	0%
Total¹	103	194%

¹Will equal more than 100% because of multiple ways of contact

Contact with Mother During Incarceration*	Frequency	Percent
In Person	19	70%
Mail	14	52%
Call/Video	15	56%
No Contact	3	11%
Unknown	1	4%
Total¹	52	193%

¹Will equal more than 100% because of multiple ways of contact

WE TALK DAILY AND ARE REALLY CLOSE NOW. HE REFERS TO ME NOW AS LIKE HIS BEST FRIEND AND I THINK THAT'S REALLY POWERFUL AND PROFOUND.

- MALE, 25, PENNSYLVANIA

Peer and romantic relationships were also very important in the lives of resilient COIP. During interviews COIP shared dynamic stories about their friends and associates who helped them think through difficult times in their lives and/or served as a listening ear during their times of need.

I TELL MY FRIENDS EVERYTHING. WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THEY KNOW ABOUT MY DAD BEING IN PRISON. THEY TOTALLY UNDERSTAND MY SITUATION. MY BESTIE WENT WITH ME TO VISIT MY DAD IN PRISON BEFORE.

-FEMALE, 27, NEW JERSEY

**MY WIFE WENT TO VISIT MY DAD IN PRISON ON HER OWN.
THEY HAVE THEIR OWN RELATIONSHIP.
-MALE, 39, WASHINGTON**

The majority of COIP (83%) who participated in the study had contact with their incarcerated parent. Findings indicate that (70%) of children with incarcerated mothers maintained contact through in-person visits, (56%) phone calls/videos (52%) through mailed letters, and (11%) had no contact at all. Closely aligned to findings on maternal incarceration, COIP with incarcerated fathers, received mailed letters (66%) the most, followed by in-person visits (55%) and phone calls/videos (55%), and (19%) had no contact with their incarcerated fathers. Study participants had a variety of ways in which they kept in touch with their incarcerated mothers and fathers. By maintaining contact, COIP described incarcerated parents as being their role models, mentors, tutors, and confidants in the time of need. In this instance, maintained bonds between COIP and their parents was beneficial to their narratives of success.

83%

reported to have
contact with their
incarcerated parent

**WELL SHE KNOWS I'M LIKE SENSITIVE ABOUT THESE THINGS, SO SHE TELLS HER TO
MAKE SURE THAT YOU FOCUS ON THIS. SHE'S LIKE VERY STRATEGIC. SHE'S VERY
INTELLIGENT, AND SHE WAS PARENTING FROM PRISON. MAKE SURE YOU GO TO CHURCH,
WHAT ARE Y'ALL FOCUSING ON IN CHURCH THIS MONTH? SHE WAS SENDING US BIBLE
QUOTES, GIVE US A DIRECTION, ALMOST LIKE A LESSON PLAN. SO SHE WAS VERY
DIRECTIONAL FOR SURE.
-FEMALE, 37, MARYLAND**

Study participants reported success within their personal and professional lives as a result of healthy relationships with their incarcerated parents. COIP had open communication and confided in their parents by sharing intimate details of the happenings in their lives. This included details about their daily life, successes, failures, and goals for the future. The level of understanding between the incarcerated parent and their child(ren) was described as being beyond measure. Although parents were incarcerated they still maintained close relationships with their child in the limited means of communication they were afforded. During their incarceration, parents were said to have successfully executed certain parenting practices through careful planning and instructing their child and caregiver.

**ALTHOUGH HE'S BEEN INCARCERATED FOR NOW 30 YEARS, HE'S NEVER STOPPED BEING A DAD.
LIKE HE WAS VERY, VERY ADAMANT ABOUT EDUCATION, ABOUT HEALTH, ABOUT LIFESTYLE.
-FEMALE, 43, NEW YORK**

Health & Wellness Among COIP

Health and wellness was the category in which COIP had the least amount of success. Outside of parental incarceration, direct and indirect factors, such as healthcare, living situations, schooling, employment, and social identities, all influence COIP. Research has shown that directly impacted populations tend to experience barriers to accessing healthcare benefits, have increased dosages of drug use, and/or engage in risky behaviors that can jeopardize their health (Heard-Garris, Winkelman, Choi, Miller, Kan, Schlafer, and Davis, 2019). For this study, the majority of participants grew up in fragile communities where there was a lack of access to quality healthcare services, healthy foods, housing, and economic opportunities (Center for Advancing Opportunity & Gallup, 2020).

*I KNOW THAT THEY TEACH US IN THE WORK LIKE, YOU KNOW, LIKE SELF-CARE IS A PART OF LIKE WHAT WE UNDERSTAND TO BE LIKE THE REVOLUTION, RIGHT, LIKE WE HAVE TO DO THE WORK WITHIN OUR SELF WHICH I DO, YOU KNOW. I DO, DO A LOT OF SELF-CARE THINGS.
-MALE, 29, MARYLAND*

When referring to health, the majority of COIP referred to their mental health. During interviews there were limited discussions of physical health. Although scholarship has provided insight into the negative mental outcomes resulting from parental incarceration, a closer look is still warranted. In exploring positive and negative mental health outcomes among COIP, analysis should go beyond diagnosis, and incorporate one's overall thinking and thought processes. According to this study, it is important to consider all aspects of one's mental capacity.

In this study researchers found that both environmental and personal challenges affected the mental health of children of incarcerated parents. For example, COIP stated that their focus during parental incarceration was self-care, which included counseling, therapy, exercise, and healthy eating. Therapy included mending or ending relationships with their incarcerated parents, confronting and working through past trauma, and gaining emotional intelligence.

33%

reported to have success in health

*"I THINK THE TWO THINGS THAT HAVE HELPED ME ARE THERAPY AND COUNSELING. THAT'S ALSO A HELP. I THINK THOSE ARE THE TOOLS AND SUPPORT THAT HAS HELPED ME GET WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW."
-MALE, 32, ILLINOIS*

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood that can be "linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood" (pg. 7, 2019). Sixty-two percent (62%) of U.S. adults have at least 1 ACE and almost 1/3rd had 3 or more (CDC, 2019). ACE can impact a child's ability to thrive as they become an adult. The ACE Score Survey, is a ten point questionnaire that scores participants on the potentially traumatic events in their childhood. Questions range from physical and mental abuse to divorce and imprisonment of family members.

Participants within this study were asked to complete the ACE survey. Most of the COIP (49%) scored between a 3 and 5. Although the COIP generally scored higher than the national average, they still displayed success and resiliency within their lives. This shows that despite childhood circumstances, COIP were resilient and found ways to succeed in lieu of their negative and traumatic experiences. Even among COIP who reported an ACE score between 8 and 10 (15%), they shared numerous categories of achieved success. This highlights that in the face of adversity, COIP remained resilient and found ways to give back to their communities. This was in addition to the social, economic and physical support they provided their incarcerated parents during and after their incarceration.

During interviews COIP reflected on traumatic childhood experiences and shared strategies in which they adopted to counter these experiences as a means to achieve their long and short-term goals.

ACE Score	Frequency	Percent
0	1	2%
1	2	3%
2	2	3%
3	12	19%
4	5	8%
5	14	22%
6	2	3%
7	7	11%
8	4	6%
9	4	6%
10	2	3%
Unknown	8	13%
Total	63	100%

*I WENT AND GOT MY CERTIFICATION AS A TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA INSTRUCTOR. [MM] AND I TALK ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLNESS. UM, THE BIGGEST THINGS FOR ME IS, UM, I CHANGED MY DIET FROM EATING ALL THOSE DIFFERENT MEATS AND STUFF. AND YOU KNOW, A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT I DID IT TO BE HEALTHY BUT I ACTUALLY DID IT FOR ENERGY REASONS, BECAUSE YOU KNOW, LIKE I, WE ALWAYS EAT THAT STUFF AND JUST BECAUSE I SUFFER FROM DEPRESSION. SO I LEARNT THAT, YOU KNOW, DIFFERENT FOODS AFFECT YOUR MOOD, RIGHT?
-FEMALE, 30, D.C.*



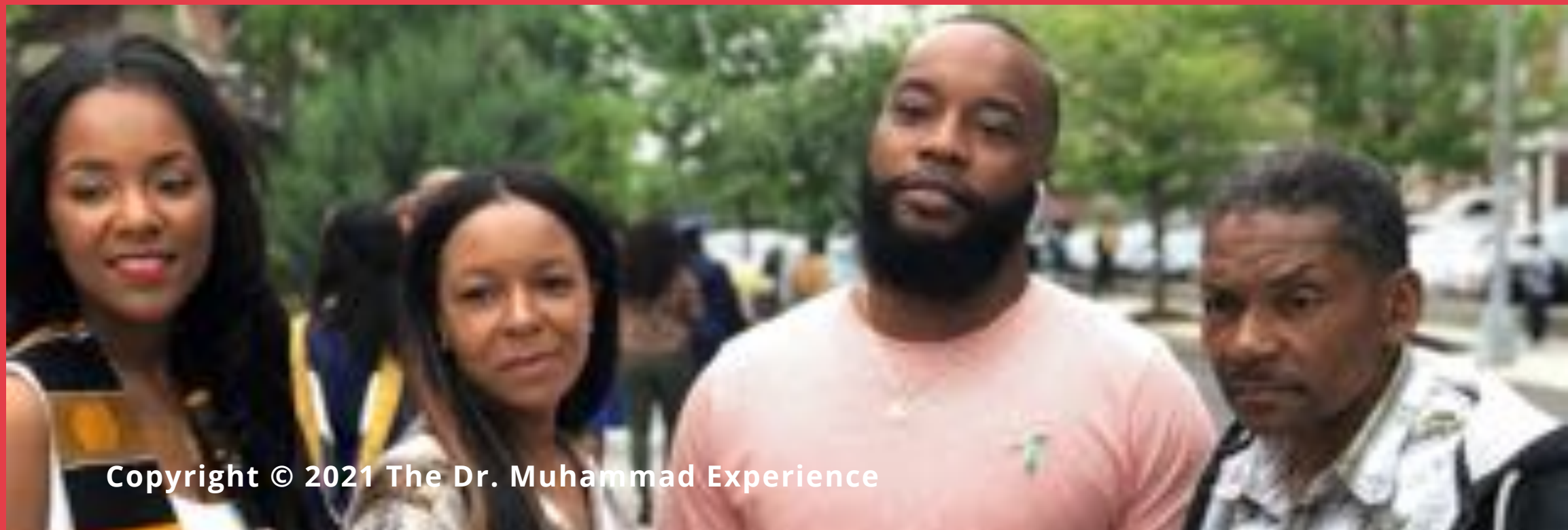
Digital Conference



They only guy I grew up with who graduated from college 🍷

HouzmazooNetwork @Ho...

To All The Youth Out There Anything Is Possible Once You Apply Yourself Don't worry about what the HATEFUL say, They Wasn't Raised Right So They Won't Understand... #TossbackTuesday

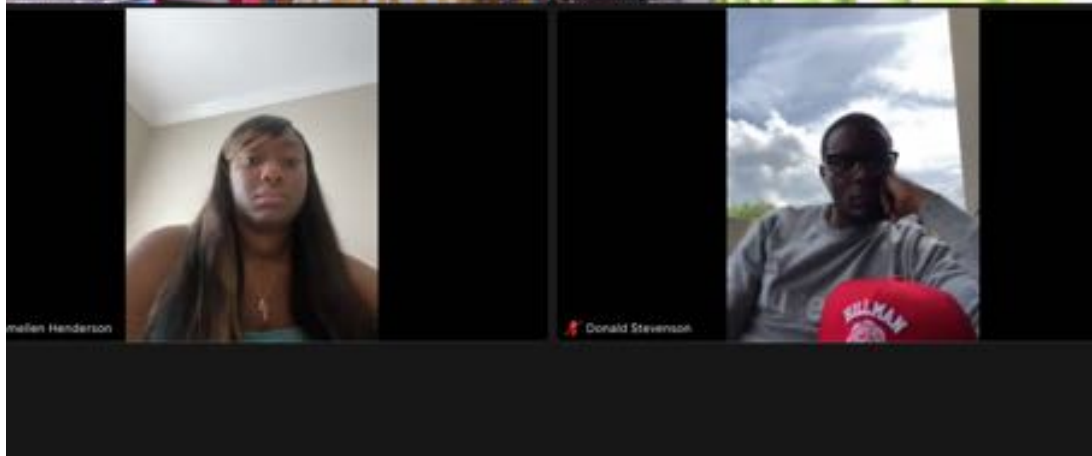
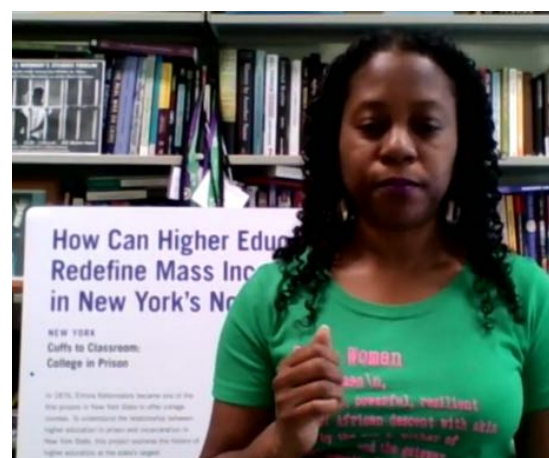
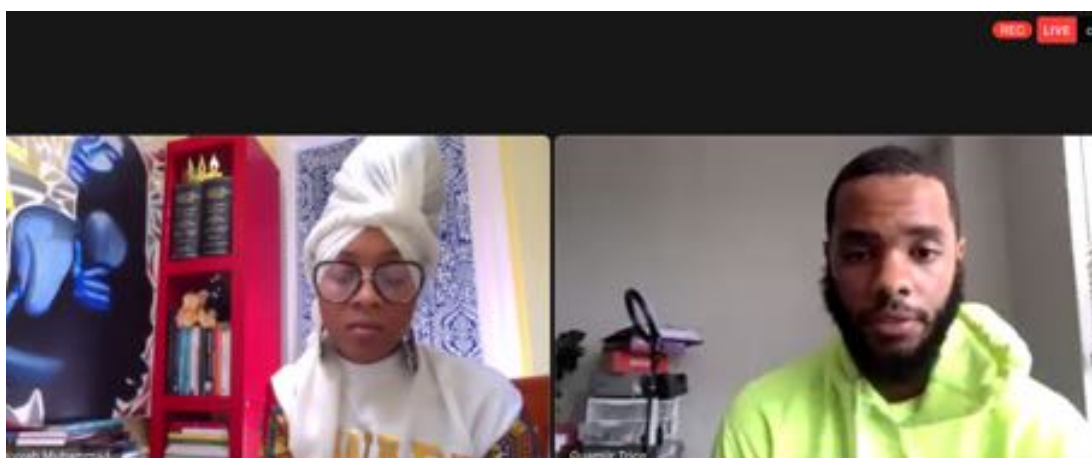
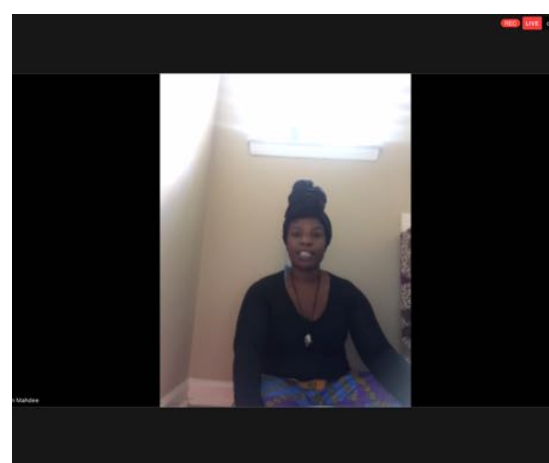
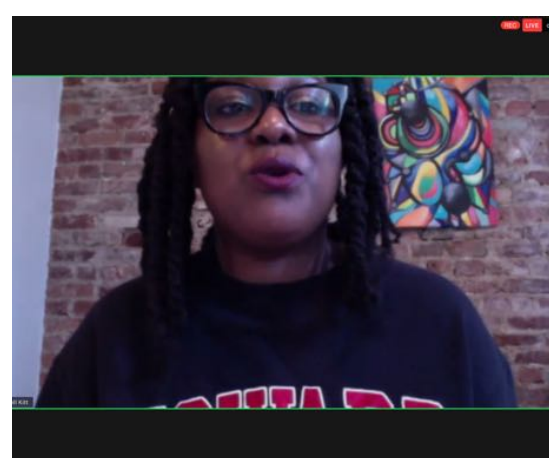
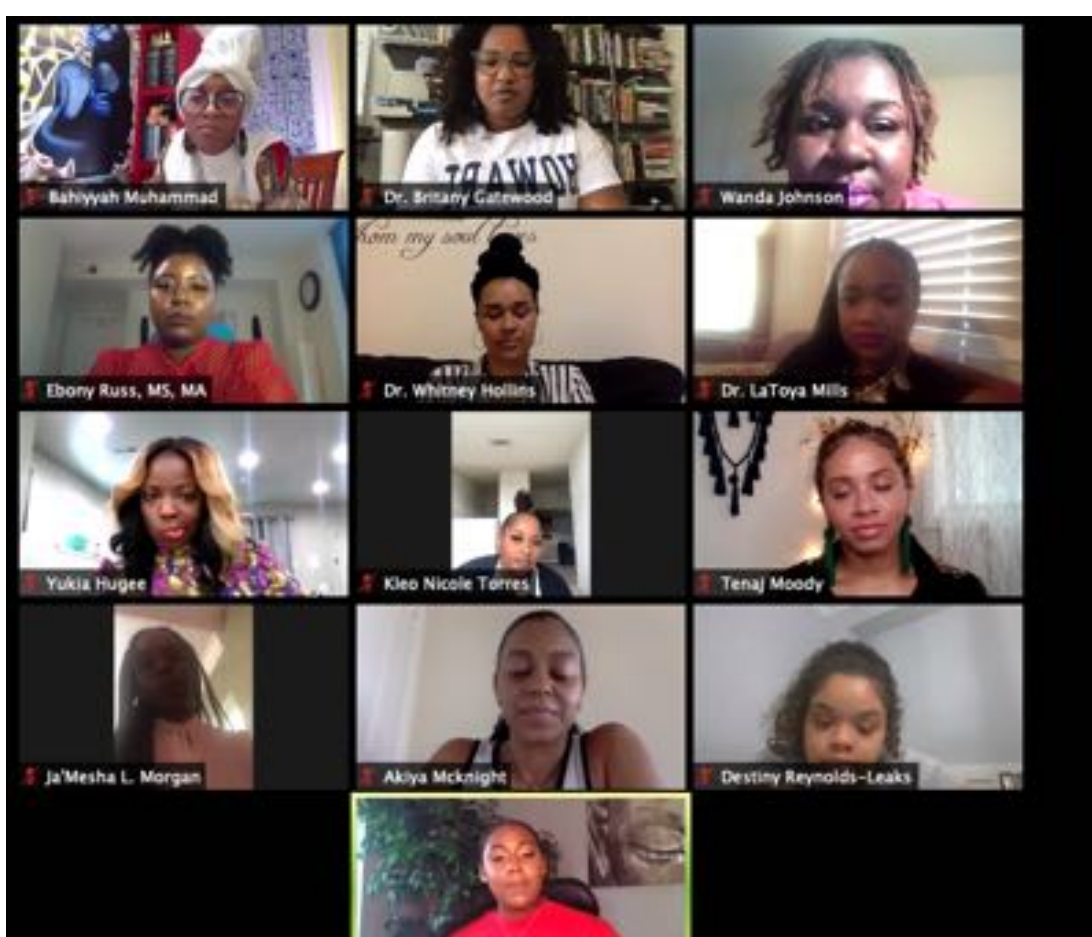


CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: RESILIENCE, SUCCESSES, & TRIUMPHS DIGITAL CONFERENCE

HELD JUNE 17-19, 2020

At this time, when the world is being reminded that Black Lives Matter, our national research project takes on greater significance because of its focus on centering the narratives of Black children of incarcerated parents across the nation. Thus, over three days we curated digital panel discussions, keynotes, plenary sessions and artistic performances that are representative of the themes that emerged from our data collection. Although the study was ongoing, we felt it important to share preliminary findings to show the urgency for a paradigm shift around the current deficit-based model that has oversaturated work on this topic. As a means to humanizing this hidden population our work brings the faces and experiences of resilient children of incarcerated parents to the forefront.

It is our hope that our research and the stories told by presenters inspired future studies, practitioners, policy makers, incarcerated parents and the children themselves to envision lives of success, triumphs and resilience. To accomplish this, each conference day has a guiding theme. Day one focused on **Resilience**, Day two focused on **Respect** and Day 3 focused on **Responsibility**. These overarching themes served to frame daily presentations and were reflective of the conversations the research team held with children of incarcerated parents during the data collection phase.



In addition to the various presentations we made available a plethora of research videos that further contextualize information shared during panel sessions. On the conference website and on YouTube we shared short research videos that highlight panelists and other interviewees who share their insight on the roles in which resilience and parental incarceration affected their lives. Lastly, we have made a digital book exhibit available for viewing. All book authors are children of incarcerated parents. Each of whom have created video messages with research team members to help you gain better understanding of their publication and motivation behind their works. On the final conference day, we commissioned Yoga and Meditation, spoken word, artistic expression and a specially curated digital tribute to signify gratitude to all our research subjects who shared their intimate narratives of success that allowed us to create this safe online space for dialogue.

Resiliency

Respect

Responsibility

Conference Schedule

Day 1 | June 17 | Resiliency

OPENING: Shifting the Negative Paradigm: One Narrative At A Time
KEYNOTE: Maintaining Hope in the Age of Mass Incarceration by Tony Lewis Jr.
PANEL: It Takes A Village: Family and Community Supports for Children of Incarcerated Parents
SESSION: I Define My Own Success: Personal Definitions from Children of Incarcerated Parents
PANEL: My Rib: Marriage, Love & Relationship Success Among Children of Incarcerated Parents
SESSION: Flipping the Script: Centering Positive Outcomes Among Black Children of Incarcerated Parents
PANEL: Not A Statistic: Success and Resilience Among Children of Incarcerated Parents
PLENARY: Prison Is My Family Business: Longitudinal Reflections From A Child of An Incarcerated Parent Into A Resilient Black Woman with Dr. Breea Willingham

Day 2 | June 18 | Respect

OPENING: Black Lives Matter: Social Justice Advocacy Among Children of Incarcerated Parents
KEYNOTE: The Time Is Always Now: Action Today, Tomorrow & Forever by Ebony Underwood
PANEL: We Got Us Now: The Power of WE as Policymakers
PANEL: We Got Us Now: Healing through Wellness & Artistic Expression
PANEL: We Got Us Now: Mass Incarceration through the Generations
SESSION: The Path of Research: Paving The Way to Respect, Accountability & Recognition
PANEL: From Trauma to Resiliency And Beyond: Narratives Among Children of Incarcerated Parents
SESSION: Put Some Respect on Their Names: Strategies for Conducting Research with Children of Incarcerated Parents
SESSION: Navigating Ivory Towers: Pathways to Education Among Children of Incarcerated Parents
PANEL: We Got Us Now: Know Your Worth: Entrepreneurial Actionists
PLENARY: Black Girl Magic: Sisters of Parental Incarceration Blazing Trials Forward

Day 3 | June 19 | Responsibility

OPENING: It Is Our Responsibility: Working Together For Children of Incarcerated Parents
YOGA: Relax, Relate, Release: Yoga & Meditation to Heal Stress Associated with Parental Incarceration
PANEL: Brothers of Parental Incarceration: Black Male Children of Prisoners Who Defy All Odds
CREATIVE ARTS: Hear Me Through My Art: A Spoken Word Performance
SESSION: Parenting Behind Bars: Maintaining Positive Relationship With Our Children
CREATIVE ARTS: Scattered Thoughts: Memories of Our Father's Incarceration
CREATIVE ARTS: Art as a Tool for Healing: A Focus on Parental Incarceration
CREATIVE ARTS: Ye Are Gods: Reiki Session by Queen Mahdee
TRIBUTE: When You See Me, See My Resilience: A Tribute to Your Journey To Success and Beyond
CLOSING: Where Do We Go From Here? Maintaining The Paradigm Shift to Focus On Resilience Among Children of Incarcerated Parents

Audience Reactions

How powerful it is to hear from people with lived experience.

We are not statistics, we are resilient, our stories need to be told and our stories don't end with incarceration.

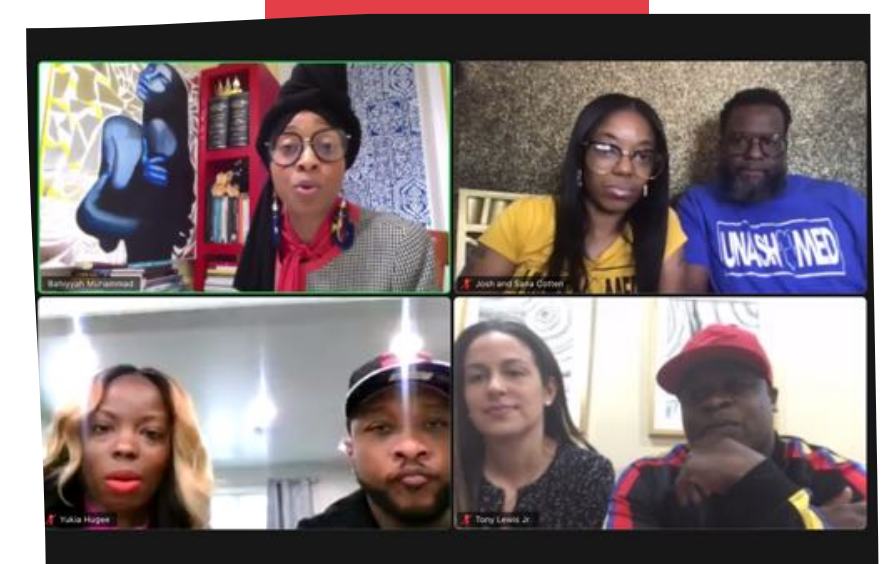
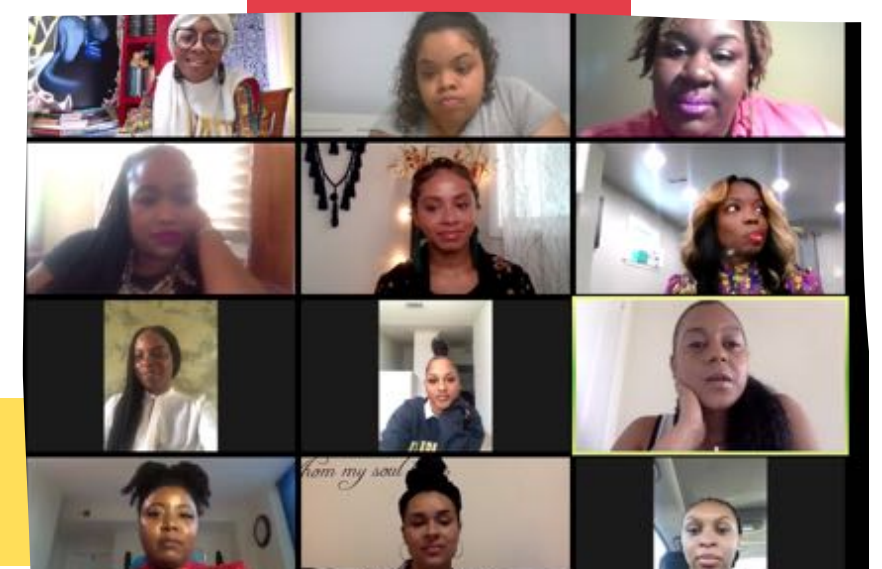
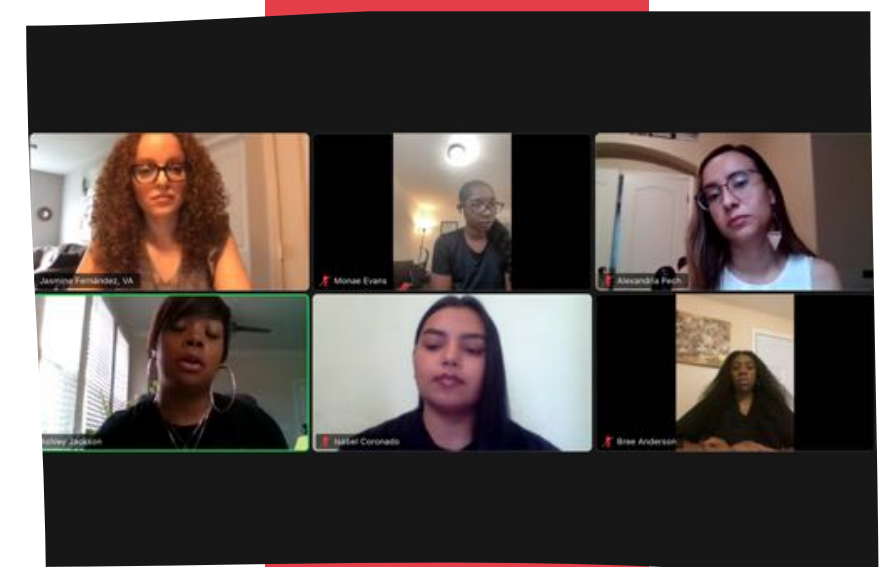
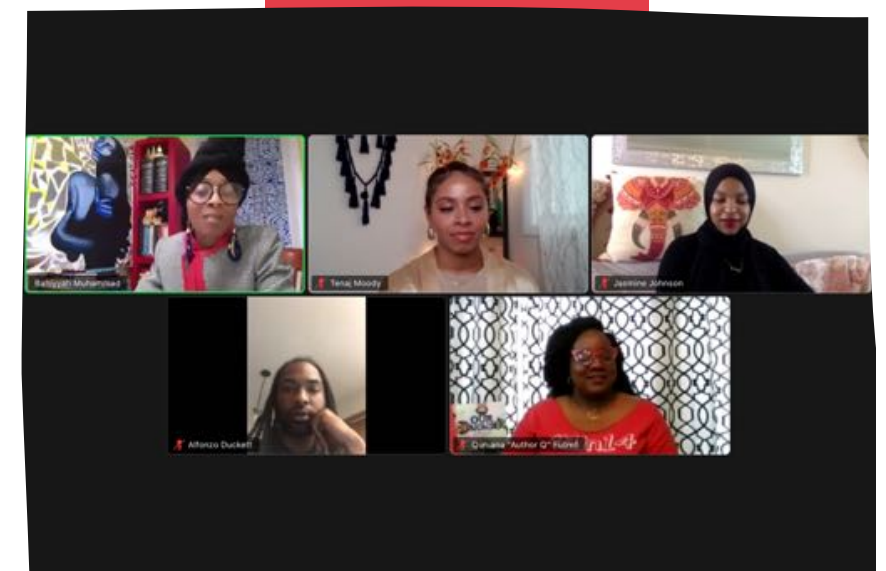
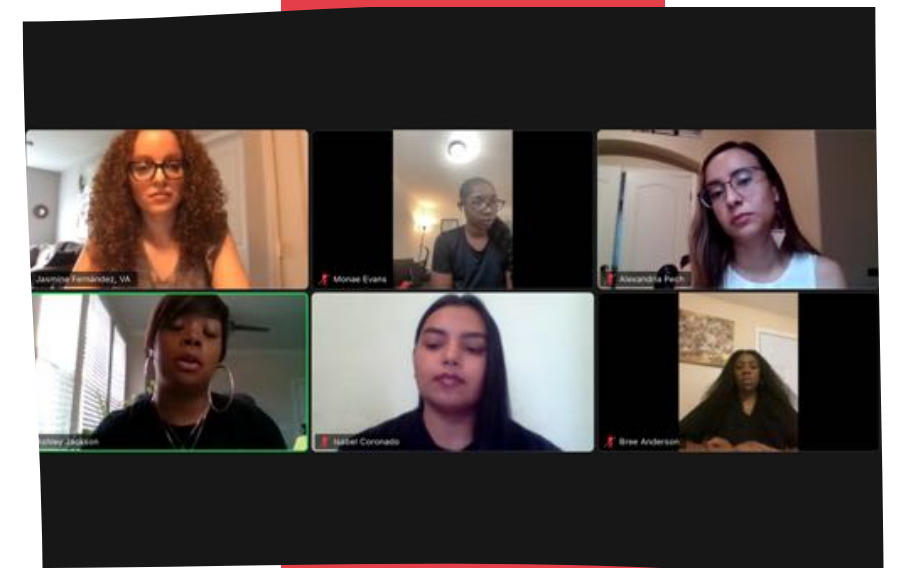
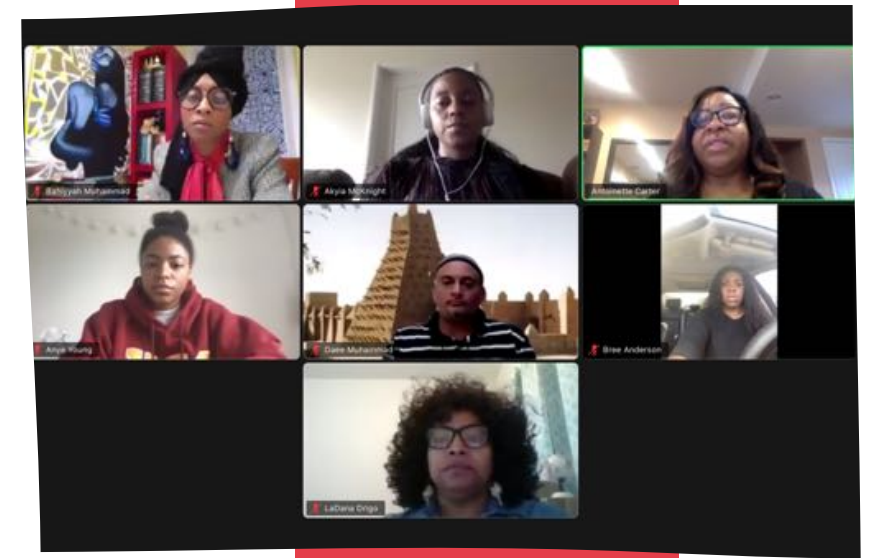
It was like nothing I've experienced. Very resourceful & encouraging.

From Trauma to Resiliency And Beyond: Narratives Among Children of Incarcerated Parents this session was absolutely incredible!
 it is the first of the kind where Black people were able to share their stories and resources to help current resilient leaders that are impacted by incarcerated parents or even family members.

want conference to continue. Not ready for it to end. Not ready for it to end

Excellent Programming

Phenomenal



This study shows the importance of gaining better understanding about success, triumphs and resilience among COIP. Research has failed to explore the crime-free lives of COIP. This has resulted in the majority of research about COIP focusing on deficit-based frameworks rather than asset-based perspectives. As a result, creating programs and policies that address proactive solutions becomes a challenge. The current study serves as evidence that the benefit of using asset-based frameworks is that strategies can be uncovered from the lived experiences of COIP. In other words, when COIP share their pathways to success, they can be implemented by others in similar situations.

Many of the COIP discussed how they become successful. This included the kinds of friends and peers they engaged with, the colleges and universities they attended, the jobs and careers they worked within and the details of their personal relationships with their incarcerated parents. COIP also provided advise for other children of incarcerated parents who may find themselves facing similar challenges. Through a lens of resilience, COIP from across the nation were able to proudly share their narratives that have often been suppressed. This study highlights how vital these stories are. Not just because these stories empowered interviewees, they also served to inspire other with hope. During the virtual study conference held in June 2020, participants shared sentiments that they were moved from the testimonies of the many COIP who served as panelist during the online sessions. One scholar participant, shared "this is the first time I felt in a decade a sense of hope. For so many years I have feared children of incarcerated parents because we are never presented with a softer side of who they really are. The research is harsh and instills a sense of fear that children will one day become offspring versions of their criminal parents" ----COIP Research Expert, Arizona.

It is worth reiterating that the majority of COIP (73%), reported that they did not have ANY involvement with the criminal justice system. In other words, more than half of the national sample of COIP were never detained, arrested, or incarcerated. This groundbreaking finding sheds light on a different side of the story. The study moves beyond the typical stigmatizing narrative that has oversaturated past and current scholarship on the topic. This particular study finding is evidence that there is much more to learn from asset-based inquiry with COIP.

More than half of the national sample of COIP were never detained, arrested, or incarcerated. This groundbreaking finding sheds light on a different side of the story.

Deficit-based perspectives are dangerous in that they elicit a sense of fear in the hearts of individuals. This fear is then used to cast blame on the innocent bystander, those children of incarcerated parents who deserve to live without the negative labelled placed on them as a result of their status as offspring to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated loved one's. This research project has uncovered many reasons why research must pivot and begin to focus on resilience as a way to balance the dialogue about those children and young adults who are not truthfully described through the literature. The young adult COIP who participated in this study were role models, community leaders, college graduates, trustworthy friends, loving children and just all around exemplary citizens. They are solving the issues that research fails to address and they continue to reach back and help those who have been unable to help themselves.

Resilience and achievements are important concepts to understand in the lives of COIP, especially among young adults. Not only does such insight provide balance to the current databank for scholarly works, it will help the children affected by this experience to also see themselves in a different light. Because incarceration is associated with extreme shame, stigma and silence, how these particular children feel about themselves takes on a greater significance. Parental incarceration has been found to have indescribable and long-lasting effects on the child psyche, which serves as a disadvantage to their ability to achieve throughout their childhood and into adulthood. This study shows that understanding and becoming empowered to verbalize one's strengths can work to combat some of the negative effects experienced by children who have one or both parents serving a sentence of imprisonment.

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