Identifying Resiliency and Protective Factors of Recently Incarcerated: A Pilot Study RFP

February 2020
Background/Introduction

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy was founded in 1942. The AAMFT Research and Education Foundation was established by AAMFT with the purpose to produce research and education in marriage and family systems.

The Foundation exists to fund systemic and relational research, scholarship, and education to support and enhance the practice of systemic and relational therapies; advance the health care continuum; and improve client outcomes. The Foundation is committed to:

- Research on best practices, practice management, and MFT community—to strengthen the practice of marriage and family therapy and support the work of clinicians, educators and researchers;
- Promote education in systemic and relational practices;
- Engage in outreach to increase awareness of the marriage and family therapy practice and profession.

Scope of Study

The goal of this pilot project is to produce relevant information and data that are attractive to other potential funding sources and expand upon this study’s deliverables. The AAMFT Research and Education Foundation will provide seed money for a pilot study focused on the successful transition into society of incarcerated individuals. Such a study should satisfy the following:

1. Contribute to society in a healthy and productive manner.
2. Include a comprehensive focus on the role of relationships in supporting the transition back into society post-incarceration.
3. The study should generate key information that will allow for future funding partnerships including with other foundations or Federal funding agencies, so that continued work can occur.

Background

The U.S. Department of Justice (retrieved November 25, 2019) reported:

More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison every year, and studies show that approximately two-thirds will likely be rearrested within three years of release. The high volume of returnees is a reflection on the tremendous growth in the U.S. prison population during the past 30 years. For the communities to which most former prisoners return (communities which are often impoverished and disenfranchised neighborhoods with few social supports and persistently high crime rates), the release of ex-offenders represents a variety of challenges.

The U.S. Department of Justice reported (May, 2018) the following:

- 44% of released prisoners were arrested during the first year following release.
- An estimated 68% of released prisoners were arrested within 3 years, 79% within 6 years, and 83% within 9 years.
- Only five percent of prisoners were arrested during the first year after release and not arrested again during the 9 year follow up period.
Of interest, is the 17% never arrested after being released. If this population desisted, how did they manage? What coping skills or support systems were in place that helped them to desist? What were the internal and external resiliency and protective factors that contributed to recidivism?

While risk factors are predominant in research, and quite consistent in findings, protective or resilient factors are less researched.

**Risk factor**: Something that increases a person's chances of developing a disease. For example, cigarette smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer, and obesity is a risk factor for heart disease. Risk factors related to repeating criminal behavior include such factors as young age, prior criminal history, negative peer associations, substance abuse, and antisocial personality disorder. Specific risk factors focusing on family include, but are not limited to, family stress, fractured relationships and support systems.

**Protective factors** are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risks in families and communities. **Resilience factors** protect the individual against risk factors.

### Study Focus

The focal point of this pilot study is to identify protective/resiliency factors, including relational factors, that may possibly lead to further intervention research focusing on the incorporation of these factors prior to or immediately following prison release. The focal point would be on creating interventions that heighten family support factors, skills, and personal attributes related to resiliency and growth post incarceration.

**Jeff and Stacy Womack-Henderson**

Jeff Henderson grew up on the tough streets of South-Central L.A. and San Diego. At 19 he was running a $35,000-a-week drug operation. At 24, Jeff was arrested and sent to prison, where he spent the next ten years. Since he discovered his passion and gift for cooking in the unlikeliest of places – prison – Jeff has completely turned his life around, and today serves as a popular and powerful voice for self-transformation. Jeff became Executive Chef at Café Bellagio in Las Vegas, wrote a bestselling book, and now he is focusing on giving back. Jeff is a role model for anyone who needs the encouragement to reinvent their life after a traumatic and disruptive experience like incarceration.

The creator of Food Network's reality series, “The Chef Jeff Project,” host of “Family Style with Chef Jeff,” and the star of the TV series, “Flip My Food with Chef Jeff,” he is also the best-selling author of numerous books:

- *If You can See it You can be it.* (2014). Smiley Books.

Jeff was a keynote speaker during the AAMFT Leadership Symposium in 2019 where, through improvisation, Stacy was incorporated into the presentation and was hugely successful with her insights and comments.
Following the presentation, Jeff and Stacy expressed interest in working with AAMFT. In July 2019 AAMFT representatives (President Dwyer, Secretary/Treasurer Blow, and CEO Todd) met with Jeff and Stacy to discuss collaboration opportunities. Following the meeting, and through further discussions, Jeff and Stacy agreed to become Honoree Trustees of the AAMFT Foundation, providing financial support and technical consultation to the Foundation.

**Study Details**

**Deliverables**
Post incarceration is laden with risk factors that severely challenge the possibility of desisting from criminal activity. Yet, approximately 17% of those incarcerated do not return to prison. What internal and systemic (external) factors contribute to desisting? This pilot study should identify resiliency and protective factors (with an emphasis on systemic factors) playing a robust role in helping with eliminating recidivism.

The desired deliverables are the specific identification of resiliency and protective factors of those previously incarcerated and living a successful post incarcerated life. For instance:

1. How is successful post incarcerated life being defined/operationalized?
2. Identification through literature research as well as first party report what protective factors (internal, relational, family/systemic) have been instrumental in desisting and leading a successful post incarcerated life?
3. These factors should be identified in such a manner that intervention research developing tools and skills can be pursued in future studies.
4. Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity issues that impact or bias resiliency and protective factors.
5. The final product should provide a solid launching point for partnerships and further investigative funding for intervention-based research for the prison population.

The award will be given to the researcher that can complete the following:

- Provide literature outlining hypothesized resiliency and protective factors for previously incarcerated,
- Provide a research model that will add to the body of knowledge involving resiliency and protective factors,
- Use the research model to generate pilot data that will lead to some tentative conclusions and provide the platform from which to launch larger studies and innovations,
- Provide Foundation staff with talking points that can be used for future fundraising efforts related to studies involving incarcerated or once incarcerated,
- Provide stakeholders of this subject matter with enough information and data points that open up possibilities for further research, partnerships and collaboration with the Foundation.

The balance of feasibility of completion with potential data collection will be weighed in making the award.
Anticipated Selection Schedule

February and March 2020

- RFP Announcements

April 5, 2020

- Due date for RFP submissions

May 1, 2020

- Awardee notified

Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

Interested parties should submit their proposal [here](#) no later than **Sunday, April 5, 2020, 11:59 p.m. Eastern.**

Timeline

May 1, 2020

- Announce winning proposal
- Orientation meeting with Foundation team to present and collaborate- **Mandatory attendance is required for the winning proposal. Meeting will be Monday, May 18 2:00 p.m. Eastern, via Zoom (video conference platform) for one hour. Meeting details will be sent to the winning proposal.**

June, July, August, September, October, November 2020

- Study executed
- August – Consultation- **Mandatory attendance is required. Meeting will be Tuesday, August 11, 2020 3:00 p.m. Eastern, via Zoom (video conference platform) for one hour. Meeting details will be sent to winning proposal.**

January 1, 2021

- Final report delivered

Elements of Proposal

The following will be requested in the [application](#) portion of your submission that will not be considered part of your ten-pages:

1. Investigators:
   a. Name, degree
   b. Email, phone, SIM
   c. Institution
   d. Position
   e. Previous history of research with this subject matter
2. Study overview (100 words or less): if selected, this may be used for publicity purposes.
3. Budget for the study
   a. Identifying indirect contributions from researcher/organization such as phones, computer, software, office space, etc.
4. CVs, or resumes, of key staff and study leaders.
Using the 2020 FND Proposal template, which can be found on the website, please make sure to address the following mandatory sections. You may write up to ten pages, double-spaced.

1. Title and purpose of study: state the study objectives concisely
2. Description of the study
   a. Goals
   b. Research methods, research questions, data collection procedures and methods of analysis.
   c. Specific deliverables accompanying final report
3. Timeline and work plan to accomplish objectives
4. Expected impact: If possible, quantify the expected impact. What measures will you collect to monitor and report your progress and outcomes?
5. Description of previous success with research studies.
6. Description of willingness to incorporate ideas and suggestions of oversight team.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Alignment between the submitted proposal and Foundation goals and study specific goals.
2. Deliverables that maximize the potential to create future partnerships and collaboration with the AAMFT Research and Education Foundation,
3. Previous success with research studies,
4. Willingness to incorporate ideas and suggestions of oversight team,
5. Indirect support from researcher/organization.

Possible Roadblocks
The AAMFT Research and Education Foundation is making $10,000 available to support a pilot study. All studies must demonstrate the possibility of future partnerships and collaboration efforts. There is no room for the Foundation to award more funding if a study cannot be completed within the $10,000 maximum.

Budget
$10,000

Any questions about this pilot study should be submitted to foundation@aamft.org.

End Note
The Foundation operates within the overarching values of AAMFT and will not engage in the following:

- Contribute or participate in funding for programs, projects, or activities that are not aligned with the AAMFT Strategic Goals;
- Accept corporate funding for programs, projects or activities that comes from a corporation engaging in practices that are directly in conflict with or violation of AAMFT’s mission, strategic plan, social policies or ethics;
- Accept corporate funding for programs, projects, or activities that are not in the best interest of AAMFT.