Trainer's Notes Working with Justice-Involved Participants Webinar

Purpose

This course assists you in applying resources and strategies when working with justice-involved W-2 participants.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Define basic justice-involved terminology;
- Apply case management strategies when working with justice-involved W-2 participants; and
- Identify resources to use when working with employers.

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Materials

- Trainer's Notes
- Participant Guide
- PPT
- Link to evaluation
- Sign-in Sheet
- Laptop
- · Zoom app installed

Suggested Pace

This is a 1.5-hour course. The following agenda is the suggested pace.

10 minutes	Welcome, Course Introduction, Opening Activity, Justice-Involved Statistics
20 minutes	Justice-Involved Terminology, Arrest vs. Conviction, Felony vs, Misdemeanor, Probation vs. Parole
15 minutes	Justice-Involved Case Management, Working with Participants, Resume Building and Employment Applications, Letter of Explanation
10 minutes	Energizer, Interview Skills
15 minutes	Working with Employers, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Selling Points
10 minutes	Resources, Collaborating Partners
10 minutes	Wrap-Up

Welcome and Course Introduction

PPT 1

Hello and welcome to the Working with Justice-Involved Participants Webinar! This webinar provides basic terminology and information that is helpful when working with justice-involved participants. Additionally, we will provide resources and strategies for you to use when working with justice-involved participants.

Note to Trainer: Have trainers turn on their webcams and introduce themselves prior to starting the Zoom walkthrough.

⇔ PPT 2

Throughout our webinar we use several different features in Zoom, including the chat, annotations, and reactions. Access the chat feature by clicking the Chat button at the bottom of your screen. This opens a conversation pane in your window. Everybody pick one person to say 'hello' to and put their name in the chat.

Note to Trainer: Pause to allow learners to find their chat and send a 'hello' to someone.

☼ PPT 3

You can access the Reactions feature by clicking on Reactions at the bottom of your screen. From here, you can use various buttons to provide us with quick feedback. Everybody click the reaction that best describes how you are feeling today.

Note to Trainer: Pause to allow learners to find their reactions and select one.

☼ PPT 4

Sometimes, we'll ask you to mark on the screen using annotations. To access annotations, Click View Options at the top of your screen. Select Annotate to open the annotations tool bar. Everybody select the draw annotation and mark up the screen.

Note to Trainer: Clear annotations before moving on.

Opening Activity - Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone

PG 3

☼ PPT 5

Estimated Length: 5 minutes

Materials: None

Purpose: Learners adopt a sense of empathy when working with justice-involved participants.

Directions to Trainer: Explain the concepts of comfort, learning edges, and danger zones. Instruct learners to use their stamp annotation tools to indicate their level of comfort for each statement. Pause after each statement to give learners an opportunity to think about why they made their selection. Clear annotations between each statement.

Trainer Instructions to Learners: We are going to start today by talking about the concepts of comfort zones, learning edge zones, and danger zones. The circles you see on the screen and in your Participant Guide represent the three zones.

The center circle is the comfort zone. Everyone has different comfort levels about certain topics and experiences. Sometimes, working with justice-involved participants puts us outside our comfort zone. However, moving beyond this zone to the learning edge opens us up to new challenges, knowledge, and awareness.

Being on this edge can be uncomfortable and feel out of balance. We may experience a variety of feelings, including annoyance, anger, anxiousness, surprise, confusion, and defensiveness. These reactions are a natural part of the process of expanding our comfort zones. The challenge is to recognize when we are on a learning edge, and then to stay there and learn from the experience to better serve justice-involved participants with whom we work.

The outer circle is the danger zone. This is too far outside our comfort zone, potentially causing us to shut down or have other strong reactions that make it difficult to work with justice-involved participants. It is important to recognize when you are in this zone, and reach out for assistance.

Justice-involved participants also have these zones. In a moment, I will read several statements. Use your stamp annotation tool to indicate where you are at regarding each statement. Keep in mind, the intention of this activity is not to see where other people are, or to judge them based on where they are, but to reflect on your own position and what is impacting your comfort level on each statement.

- Asking your parents or a close family member to cover your phone bill for a month.
- Interacting with a police officer.
- Telling a friend you can't attend their birthday party because it's at a bar.
- Explaining to a prospective employer why there is a three-year gap in your employment history.
- Walking or taking the bus to all places you need to go.

Debrief Questions:

As we read each statement, what did you notice about where you put your stamp?

Consider how justice-involved participants may rate themselves within these zones. How may their ratings differ from yours?

These statements may resonate very differently with justice-involved participants, depending on their own experiences, as your experiences impacted your level of comfort. Just like we encourage justice-involved participants to move past their comfort zones, we need to move past our comfort zones as well. Remember to challenge yourself to go into your learning edge as we move through the rest of the webinar.

Justice-Involved Statistics

☼ PPT 6

You may be wondering why learning about this is important for you. Let's look at a few statistics that may help you gain a little perspective on justice-involved individuals in Wisconsin, and how this may impact your role as a Case Manager.

In 2016, there were almost as many people on probation or parole in Wisconsin as there were people living in the city of Oshkosh. This means there were over 66,700 people in Wisconsin on probation or parole.

Wisconsin has the highest rate of parole supervision among its neighboring states, and the average length of parole is nearly <u>twice</u> the national average. This justice involvement includes W-2 participants as well. According to a Webl report from October 2021, approximately <u>20%</u> of W-2 participants have been or are currently involved with the justice system. Some counties have as many as <u>83%</u> of participants currently or formerly involved with the justice system.

Several studies have found that justice-involved individuals are less likely to be reincarcerated if they find employment. Individuals who find and maintain employment gain independence, earning potential, a set routine, interaction with others, and a sense of purpose and direction.

This is where you come in. You work with justice-involved participants, helping them obtain, and then maintain, employment.

Justice-Involved Terminology



Before we dive into working with justice-involved participants, we need to learn a few terms. Historically, individuals involved in the criminal justice system have been referred to as "criminals", "offenders", "felons", "convicts", "ex-cons", and "prisoners". These dehumanizing terms often label individuals as less than within society. The stigma stays with individuals, even after they serve their sentence and reintegrate into the community.

In recent years, there has been a push to change this stigma and, instead, focus on supporting them while they rebuild their lives. This humanizing shift is occurring throughout the criminal justice system. For example, individuals serving a sentence in Dane County jails are referred to as residents rather than inmates.

By using terms such as justice-involved, we acknowledge an individual's <u>full</u> identity rather than focusing on just one aspect of their identity.

Arrest vs. Conviction

⇔ PPT 8

Justice-involved is just one important term to know as we get started today. The next set of terms we are going to look at is arrest and conviction.

An arrest record could include when an individual is questioned about, apprehended for, or held for investigation regarding an offense by any law enforcement or military authority. It also includes if an individual was arrested, tried, or indicted for any offense.

A conviction record could include when an individual was convicted of or judged delinquent on any offense by any law enforcement or military authority. It also includes if an individual was less than honorably discharged, placed on probation or parole, fined, or imprisoned.

In general, employers can legally ask about convictions, not arrests. This is because all individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty. It is important to help participants differentiate between the two and only report convictions when asked about criminal background.

To Report or Not to Report Activity



Estimated Length: 5 minutes

Materials: None

Purpose: Learners differentiate between examples of arrests and convictions.

Directions to Trainer: Read the scenarios to learners. Have them use the thumbs up reaction if the participant should report it on a job application asking for criminal convictions and a thumbs down if they should not.

Trainer Instructions to Learners: Arrests and convictions tend to come up during the informal assessment and at other points throughout case management. Participants likely look to you for guidance on whether they need to report these on job applications. In a moment, I will read a scenario. Using your reactions, give a thumbs up if the participant should report it on an application asking for criminal convictions or a thumbs down if the participant should not report it.

Amani was pulled over right after she turned 18. The officer searched her car and found a trace amounts of weed. The amount was so small that the officer gave her a verbal warning and let her go. Should Amani report this on her job application?

Thumbs down **Say** No, Amani would not need to report this. It was a verbal warning, and she was not convicted.

Katey has been diagnosed with Bi-Polar Disorder and recently was put on new medication. During the adjustment period, she experienced an episode in which the police were called. Katey was issued a citation for resisting arrest and spent one night in jail. The judge ordered that she complete weekly counseling appointments and one year of probation. Should Katey report this on her job application?

Thumbs up **Say** Yes, Katey would need to report this. Her judge ordered probation and it would show as a conviction on a background check.

Fredrica's ex-boyfriend frequently watched her children while she worked. One day, she came home to police at her house who told her the young children were left home alone all day. She explained that her ex-boyfriend was supposed to be watching them, but she was still arrested for child neglect. Fredrica's charges were dropped after she agreed to cooperate in the case against her ex-boyfriend. Should Fredrica report this on her job application?

Thumbs down **Say** No, Fredrica would not need to report this. Even though she was arrested, the charges were dropped, and she was not convicted of the crime.

Kamilla's son had a bad cough for several months, and she could not afford to take him to the doctor. So, she stole some cough syrup from the local grocery store to help him sleep at night. She was caught and convicted of retail theft. Should Kamilla report this on her job application?

Thumbs up Say Yes, Kamilla would need to report this. She was arrested and convicted of retail theft.

Misdemeanor vs. Felony



☼ PPT 10

Katey's and Kamilla's scenarios are just two examples of possible convictions you may come across while working with justice-involved participants. However, not all convictions are the same. Many convictions are categorized as either misdemeanors or felonies. In Wisconsin, the most notable difference between the two is the potential length of incarceration and the type of facility in which the sentence would be served.

Wisconsin statutes define a <u>felony</u> as a crime whose punishment could potentially result in a prison term of one year or longer. Individuals convicted of a felony typically serve sentences in the prison system, rather than a county jail.

A misdemeanor is any crime not punishable by imprisonment in the prison system. Individuals convicted of a misdemeanor typically serve sentences in a county jail, or don't serve time at all.

It is important for both you and participants to know what type of conviction they received, as this may affect their job search in several ways. For example, some applications ask only if an individual has been convicted of a felony. If the participant was convicted of a misdemeanor, they would respond "no" to that question.

Probation vs. Parole

☼ PPT 11

The final terms we need to differentiate between are probation and parole. Both terms are sometimes called community supervision because justice-involved individuals fulfill a sentence within the community.

<u>Probation</u> typically refers to supervision given to an individual in lieu of a prison sentence. Usually, the court orders individuals to do certain things, such as paying restitution or attending treatment, along with probation.

Parole refers to supervision following a period of incarceration. A parole commission board sets the parole conditions for justice-involved individuals, not the court.

Justice-Involved Case Management



☼ PPT 12

Understanding and using the proper terminology is only a portion of what you need to know when providing justice-involved case management. As a Case Manager, you need to provide many of the same services you provide to other participants. You also need to offer specialized services geared toward this population's specific needs. This includes services provided to the participant, along with how you interact with employers on the participant's behalf.

Working with Participants

☼ PPT 13

Working with justice-involved participants is quite similar to working with other participants, but there are some key differences that may require some extra attention.

For instance, justice-involved participants may need assistance in obtaining their vital documents for employment, such as their state ID or driver's license, Social Security card, or birth certificate. Often, these documents are lost or misplaced, and while some participants can get new copies while incarcerated, others may require help in obtaining these items. This may mean providing participants with contact information for the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Social Security office, or the vital records office in the county or territory in which they were born.

Ensuring participants have these documents available can expedite the hiring process.

Additionally, you may want to check the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access system, formally known as CCAP, with justice-involved participants to ensure everything listed is accurate. This allows participants to know what an employer might see if the employer searches their name in the system.

Resume Building and Employment Applications

☼ PPT 14

One of the first things to work on with justice-involved participants is updating or creating their resume and determining how to best answer common questions on employment applications.

Recently released participants may be unsure of what to include on their resume or employment applications, especially if they were incarcerated for a significant amount of time and have gaps in their employment.

Ask What sort of information do you believe recently released participants should include on their resume?

Possible Responses:

- Transferrable skills and/or abilities
- Education and/or certifications
- Relevant work history

It is possible that participants maintained employment while incarcerated, either within the institution or through a work release program. In this case, it is important to know how to list jobs that participants had while incarcerated. For participants who worked within the jail or prison system while incarcerated, avoid automatically listing Badger State Industries as their employer. While many jobs are overseen by Badger State Industries, this is not the case for all jobs. Instead, the participant may choose to use the State of Wisconsin as the employer.

This applies to job applications as well. Recommend that participants include a copy of their resume, professional references, and letters of recommendation with their application.



☼ PPT 15

On the screen are additional tips for justice-involved participants to consider when filling out job applications or choosing references. Read through all the tips in your Participant Guide and use your stamp annotation tool to mark on the screen the top three tips you would share with participants.

Ask Why do you believe those three are the most important to share with participants?

Participants may also need to consider what type of jobs they wish to apply for and whether they will be a good fit for that job. If the participant's crime is related to their preferred employment, it severely limits their ability to get that type of job or even work in that field. Further review career assessment results with justice-involved participants in this situation and explore other employment opportunities.

Letter of Explanation



☼ PPT 16

Some justice-involved participants may struggle with how to explain their conviction to employers. These participants may find it helpful to write a letter of explanation or conviction statement. The purpose of a letter of explanation is to give the participant the opportunity to take ownership of their crime, reflect on the positive changes they have made, and offer insight into their goals for the future. The letter should be concise and truthful, but not offer more information than is necessary.

We're going to add a link in the chat to an example letter of explanation. Review the letter, and take notice of key points the author included and how the letter is constructed. You have five minutes.

Note to Trainer: Put the example letter of explanation link in the chat. (https://www.fairshake.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Letter-of-Explanation.pdf). After 5 minutes have passed, continue on.

Ask What is your initial reaction to the letter?

Ask What key points does the author highlight?

Possible responses: participant's values (honesty, integrity, directness), description of crimes committed, acknowledgment of missteps, education and personal achievements, work experience, information on Fidelity Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credits, offer to provide letter of recommendation)

Ask How can you use this example letter with participants moving forward? Possible responses: use the letter to create a template for participants, show to participants as an example

Writing a letter of explanation is a deeply personal experience, and while some participants may find it helpful, others may not feel comfortable writing it or see the value in having one. Keep in mind that if a participant takes the time to write a letter, it is up to them to decide when and how to use it.

Those who find value in a letter of explanation may attach the letter to an application or resume. Others may bring it along to an interview to provide a copy to the interviewer, or simply use it as a personal reference when answering questions about their conviction. Alternatively, others may write the letter as a means for personal reflection and choose to keep the letter to themselves. Some may not like the paper trail, and in turn offer a verbal statement.

Energizer: Word Association

☼ PPT 17

Estimated Length: 5 minutes

Directions to Trainer: Click the PPT to display a word. Give learners 30 seconds to shout out or put in the chat their associated word before moving onto the next one.

Trainer Instructions to Learners: You may hear a variety of terms when working with justice-involved participants on their letters of explanation. In a moment, you will see a word appear on the screen. Shout out or type in the chat the first thing that comes to mind when you see that word.

- Tard (Back, Sale, Stick)
- Bats (Animal, Vampire, Baseball)
- Ticket (Movie, Concert, Speeding)
- Grapes (Fruit, Wine, Red)
- Blues (Clues, Music, Sad)
- Cell (Phone, Brain, Battery)
- Dime (Coin, 10 cents, Franklin D. Roosevelt)
- PC (Computer, Politically Correct, Gamer)

All of these are fairly common words that may hold a different meaning, depending on the context in which they are used. However, to justice-involved individuals, these words may have a completely different meaning. Let's look at what these words could mean for justice-involved participants.

- Yard Nickname for a fenced in area for outdoor recreation
- Bats Cigarettes
- Ticket A disciplinary report
- Grapes Information or gossip

- Blues Prison outfit; name derived from the color of the clothes
- Cell Prison cell or jail cell; may also be referred to as "house"
- Dime A ten-year prison sentence
- PC Protective custody; a form of solitary confinement when an inmate needs protection from other inmates

When working with justice-involved participants, being aware that some words may have a different meaning can be helpful. If you notice participants using a lot of slang terms with you, you should address this. It is important that they avoid using those terms when speaking with employers. Encourage participants to practice what they will say in an interview by doing a mock interview. Mock interviews can also help participants improve their interview skills.

Interview Skills

☼ PPT 18

Meeting with a potential employer for an interview can be nerve wracking for just about anyone, but justice-involved participants have another obstacle to overcome. Participants should be up-front with employers about their convictions from the beginning. This helps build trust with the employer and shows that the participant is not trying to cover up or hide their past.

If participants answered yes to being convicted of a crime on an employment application and indicated they will explain, but the prospective employer does not bring it up in interview, the participant should address it. This allows participants the opportunity to start the conversation on their terms.

Ask What key points do you think justice-involved participants should bring up to the employer?

Possible Responses:

- Acknowledge previous mistakes
- Take accountability for actions
- Mention relevant skills gained while incarcerated
- Reinforce commitment to be a hardworking and valuable employee

As we stated earlier, participants should only disclose convictions, not arrests. Employers cannot ask about past arrests that did not lead to a conviction unless they need the information to license or bond an employee. Employers can ask about pending arrests and past convictions because it could affect the job. They may ask about when the pending arrest or past conviction occurred, the nature of the charges, and the outcome.

Working with Employers



☼ PPT 19

Although developing strategies for working with justice-involved participants is important, you must also develop strategies for working with employers to hire them. There are perks for employers when hiring justice-involved participants. It is important to know and understand these perks so you can help participants market them to employers. The first perk we are going to talk about is Fidelity Bonding.

Fidelity Bonding

☼ PPT 20

The Federal Bonding Program provides Fidelity Bonds to individuals who are not eligible for commercial bonding at no cost to the employer or employee. It is a type of insurance policy which protects employers in cases of loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. The \$5,000, no deductible bond insures employers against items such as theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement. It does not cover liability due to poor workmanship, job injuries, or work accidents.

Anyone can benefit from the bond, but it is especially helpful for individuals whose background may cause employers to question their honesty. The Department of Workforce Development specifically identifies six groups of individuals who may benefit most from this bond. We are putting the link to the DWD website in the chat. Click the link and find the six groups of individuals. When you find them, put them in the chat.

Note to Trainer: Put the DWD link in the chat (https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/bonding/#2). After learners identify all six groups of individuals, or 3 minutes have passed, continue.

The six groups of individuals are:

- Individuals with a record of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment, individuals who have been on probation or parole, or individuals with a police record;
- Individuals who have been rehabilitated through treatment for alcohol or drug use:
- Individuals with poor credit records or those who have declared bankruptcy;
- Individuals dishonorably discharged from the military;
- Individuals lacking work history who are from low-income families; and
- TANF recipients.

Both employers and individuals can apply for a Fidelity Bond by contacting their local Job Center. The individual must be registered with the Job Center, and then they must complete a Fidelity Bond Certificate form and turn it in. The Job Center then contacts a local bonding representative who submits the proper paperwork. Prior to issuing the bond, the individual must receive a job offer, and the employer must schedule a start date.

The Fidelity Bond is good for six months as of the start date. A renewal bond may be issued if there is sufficient need, or the employer can choose to purchase continued coverage.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

☼ PPT 21

The next perk we are going to talk about is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. This is a federal income tax credit designed to help individuals gain experience and achieve better employment outcomes by offering employers a tax credit as an incentive for hiring a variety of individuals.

These individuals include:

- Justice-involved individuals who have been convicted of a felony or released from prison for a felony within one year of the hire date;
- TANF recipients;
- Qualified veterans;
- Food Stamp recipients;
- SSI recipients;
- Cong-term family assistance recipients; and
- Long-term unemployed recipients.

Employers can claim a maximum credit of \$2,400 per new hire. Several larger employers are aware of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and screen for it in their hiring process. If the employer is not aware of it, the DWD website has detailed information on how to apply.

Selling Points

☼ PPT 22

PG 10

There are a variety of other selling points in addition to the monetary perks of hiring justice-involved individuals. We just pulled up several statements. Use your stamp annotation tool to mark the statements you believe are selling points that you and participants can market to employers.

Note to Trainer: Give learners 2 minutes to read the statements and stamp the ones they believe are selling points.

These are all selling points for hiring a justice-involved individual. Unfortunately, justice-involved individuals have a much smaller pool of potential jobs for their employment search. This means that when they find a job, they are much more likely to stick with it. Having to maintain employment as a condition of probation or parole provides even more incentive for them to stay after being hired.

Note to Trainer: Clear annotations before moving on to the next slide.

Resources

☼ PPT 23

Thankfully, you are not alone in helping justice-involved participants with whom you work. There are several resources you can tap into for information and many collaborating partners throughout Wisconsin. First, there is a list of all the resources we used in the development of this course in your Participant Guide. Check those out to read more on the various topics we discussed.

Additionally, the Job Center of Wisconsin website has a toolkit full of resources for justice-involved individuals titled "Ex-Offender Toolkit". These resources range from general tips, to links, to external websites which focus on helping justice-involved individuals successfully reintegrate into society. There are also links to fact sheets called "Reentry MythBusters". These fact sheets were designed by the Federal Interagency Reentry Council to clarify federal policies that affect justice-involved individuals and their families.

Collaborating Partners

☼ PPT 24

All these resources are great tools in learning more about how we can help justice-involved participants; however, we can't do it all. It is important to collaborate with anyone else justice-involved participants may be working with to ensure they receive a full range of appropriate services.

Probation and Parole Officer (PO)

☼ PPT 25

Perhaps one of your biggest collaborating partners is justice-involved participants' probation and parole officers or POs. Begin by asking participants to sign a Release of Information, or ROI. This opens the door for you to begin working together to help justice-involved participants succeed.

Work with the POs to find out what types of activities or conditions justice-involved participants engage in as a requirement of their probation or parole. Often, individuals on parole may be ordered to attend treatment programs, pursue educational opportunities, complete community service, take part in parenting classes, or go to therapy or counseling sessions. All these activities can be W-2 activities and should be used to align participants' W-2 activities with the conditions related to their probation or parole.

Work with POs to determine whether participants have any restrictions that may impact their ability to participate in W-2 activities. For instance, if a participant was convicted of retail theft, it would not be appropriate to assign this individual work experience at a retail store.

Ask What other restrictions might you have to consider when placing justice-involved participants at a work experience site? *Possible Responses:*

- Justice-involved participants classified as sex offender cannot volunteer where children and/or vulnerable population may be present.
- Justice-involved participants with drug felonies may not be able to volunteer at a senior center or assisted living facility.
- Justice-involved participants with OWI or DWI convictions may not be able to volunteer at a restaurant or banquet facility.

Other Collaborating Partners





Justice-involved participants may be utilizing supports other than their PO throughout the community as well. These supports vary depending on the community.

Partners in Hope is a faith-based program based in Milwaukee, which helps formerly incarcerated individuals become productive citizens. They do this through a series of workshops, resume and job search assistance, mentoring, referrals to housing assistance programs, and weekly dinners and support groups.

Another resource in Milwaukee and the surrounding area is an app called, The Way Out. The app uses a gamified approach to engage justice-involved individuals while they achieve their goals. They get started by completing an application, and then The Way Out works to partner with local employers to hire them at a livable wage. The Way Out also provides resources for other types of support, such as housing assistance, financial management, family and AODA counseling, transportation, and healthcare services.

Justice-involved participants may also want to check out local support groups, such as Circles of Support. These groups provide a network of local volunteers who provide guidance as they re-integrate into society. Local Circles of Support groups can be found statewide. To find a Circles of Support group nearest you, check out the 2-1-1 website.

Wrap-Up

☼ PPT 27

We packed in a lot of information into our time together today. First, we discussed some basic justice-involved terminology and other "good to know" information when working with justice-involved participants. Then, we dove into justice-involved case management by exploring resources and other useful strategies.

☼ PPT 28

Take a moment to think about everything we covered, and choose one word or phrase to sum it all up. After you choose a word, use your text annotation tool to type it on the screen so everyone can see.

Note to Trainer: Wait for most learners to put a word or phrase on the screen. Encourage learners to expand and/or share if needed.

Thank you all for sharing your phrases and for your participation today! We are putting a link to our course evaluation in the chat. Please click the link to complete the evaluation, as we value your opinion. Have a great rest of your day!