

# **Straight-Up: (Expanding) Mentoring of Current and Formerly Incarcerated Adults**

*Key Components of Successful Relationship-  
Building to Support Positive Change*

Prepared by the National Coalition of Community-Based  
Correctional and Community Re-Entry Service Organizations  
(NC4RSO)

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## Table of Contents

	Page Number
Introduction.....	3
Research Findings: Mentoring as a Support for Positive Post-Prison Outcomes.....	4
The context for mentoring relationships within corrections and re-entry.....	4
What role does a mentorship-style of leadership play - both in custodial facilities and in the community - in successfully supporting individuals? What do we mean by mentoring?.....	4
To what degree is mentoring an effective tool within the incarceration and re-entry context? Who is most likely to benefit from mentoring relationships?	5
Identifying and Selecting Individuals for Mentor Guidance.....	6
What About Demographics and Mentoring.....	8
What do relationships between a mentor and a person in or leaving prison look like?	11
How to Mentor.....	14
About This Study.....	21
Background and Purpose.....	21
Study Parameters and Methodology.....	21
More About NC4RSO and This Study.....	22
Appreciation for External Support .....	22
Chart: Demographics of Study Participants.....	23
Bibliography.....	24
Contact the National Coalition of Community-Based Correctional and Community-Re-Entry Service Organizations (NC4RSO).....	25

## Introduction

A need exists for research about making mentoring an effective tool within corrections.

Existing literature identifies that mentoring *can* be a beneficial component of success for people re-entering the community after incarceration. Federal grant money is committed to studying and supporting mentoring. Private sector and nonprofit organizations study various aspects of mentoring. Numerous organizations deliver mentoring programs.

What more, then, can we identify about the key components that make mentoring successful? How, where, and when can mentoring be best incorporated into institutional and community rehabilitation processes? *This paper contributes to identifying the determinants and characteristics of successful mentoring in the corrections and re-entry context.*

*This analysis has application for formal mentors as well as for other front-line correctional staff and volunteers who seek effective interaction skills when engaging with current and formerly incarcerated individuals. Correctional administrators will also find value in this study.*

The approach taken in this study intersects two lines of inquiry. One is the broad evaluation of how the interaction of service providers with program participants/clients impacts client outcomes. The other is *if, how, how much, and when* mentoring – as a singularly specific activity – supports positive outcomes for current or recently-incarcerated individuals. While some view mentoring as a distinct subject for singular study, we believe that bridging these intersecting lines of inquiry has generated useful outcomes.

The word “mentor” conveys the concept studied in this project. When we interviewed formerly incarcerated individuals for this study, we chose to avoid or minimize use of the word “mentor” during the initial portion of interviews to avoid narrowing respondent’s perception of the interview topic. Rather, we began each interview by asking if they had interacted with *someone* during or after their most recent incarceration – citing several types of individuals such as volunteers, program staff, chaplains, and/or relatives - who had provided a particularly positive or helpful role in supporting a positive post-incarceration transition - someone who had “been there for them.” In other words, a guide or “mentor.” As will be shown, the results of this approach are revealing, hopeful, and tangibly useful.

Further information about this study – study parameters, demographics of study participants, etc. – are provided at the end of this report.

# Research Findings: Mentoring as a Support for Positive Post-Prison Outcomes

## The context for mentoring relationships within corrections and re-entry

There is a recognized need for mentoring – in terms of social relationships in general, staff interactions with incarcerated individuals more specifically, and in mentoring relationships particularly:

“There is a general consensus in the criminological literature that social ties are central to our understanding of crime and desistance. Social bond theory suggests that informal ties to individuals and institutions inhibit the impulse to commit crime (Hirschi, 1969; Kornhauser, 1978; Laub & Sampson, 2003). Such ties have the ability to change routine activities, mitigate negative peer contact, foster positive identities, and increase social capital (Coleman, 1988; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Warr, 1998). Because strong bonds provide individuals with a stake in conformity, those who lack such ties are most likely to (continue to) offend...As noted, prosocial relationships are an important social network for offenders returning home from prison. However, such relationships are not just relegated to informal social networks, like family, but may also apply to formal networks, such as supervising officers....” Source: Cobbina, J. (2010).

Further, a “Ready4Work Reentry Initiative” conducted by Public/Private Ventures reported (2009): “...previous work indicated to us that mentoring might benefit returning prisoners by offering them emotional support and practical advice to help them navigate the everyday barriers and frustrations they faced upon release. Mentors might also reinforce other program areas by supporting participants’ efforts to find a job or seek drug rehabilitation services....When we compare the outcomes of participants who received mentoring with those who did not, we find positive relationships between mentoring and participant outcomes. It appears that this effect may be due in part to the fact that participants who had mentors were more likely to find a job—a condition that, in turn, improved other outcomes. Because the people who voluntarily participated in mentoring may have been systematically different from those who did not, in ways we could not easily detect (for example, they may have been more motivated to reintegrate or more needy), we are unable to determine whether these outcome disparities were caused by mentoring or may be attributed to other differences between mentored and unmentored participants. However, the comparisons are suggestive and compelling enough to make a case for further exploration of the value of mentoring in prisoner reentry initiatives.” (Source: [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/265\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/265_publication.pdf))

Additional work is needed to understand – and to more broadly apply – the specific dynamics of mentoring relationships that result in positive outcomes.

## What role does a mentorship-style of leadership play - both in custodial facilities and in the community - in successfully supporting individuals? What do we mean by mentoring?

NC4RSO previously found that people delivering correctional programming often indicate that the most promising, positive, and/or effective factor(s) in their programs involve deeply and fully engaging program participants in the process of positive change. What is needed to generate such engagement? This study contributes to an understanding of this subject, with a particular emphasis on engagement and mentoring. The Department of Justice defines mentoring as follows (source: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/11SecondChanceMentoringSol.pdf>):

‘Mentoring’ refers to a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person helps a less experienced person develop an enhanced sense of self-worth and specific knowledge and skills to increase the chance of successful reentry. Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional and personal development with the primary goal of preparing an offender (pre-release) for reentry and supporting him/her during the reentry process to enhance success. Mentoring involves communication and is relationship-based. Mentoring can take many forms: it may consist of a one-to-one relationship or can sometimes occur in a smaller group setting. Mentoring must be delivered/provided in both a pre-release and post-release environment for all participants.

There are many who take a very particular view of who to define as “mentors.” Often, mentors are seen as community-based volunteers who provide individualized guidance independent of other roles such as correctional staff positions. As our research shows, such a narrow definition – while understandable – doesn’t fully capture the full sense of who provides mentoring-style guidance to current and formerly-incarcerated individuals. Therefore, we utilize a broad definition of “mentors.” Mentors, in our view, include individuals who provide individualized, transformative guidance to current or recently-incarcerated individuals - ranging from volunteer mentors to leaders of self-help groups to correctional officers, chaplains, social workers, educators, and even probation officers. Such “mentors” and mentor-like individuals are shown in this study to be a valued component of successful transitions away from prison for incarcerated individuals.

When one contemplates the concept of individualized, transformative guidance, this broadened definition of mentoring makes sense. Incarceration occurs “when informal relationships and sanctions prove insufficient to establish and maintain a desired social order” and an individual subsequently does something “seen as injurious to the general population or to the State (source: Wikipedia – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime>).” Mentoring can essentially provide a personally-relevant “informal relationship” to uniquely support incarcerated individuals’ move toward desired social and behavioral outcomes. Further, while incarceration separates individuals from communities where they have committed crime, it also separates them from pro-social community mechanisms such as family, social organizations, community centers, religious institutions, and social service agencies. While it’s not uncommon for incarcerated individuals to feel separated from mainstream social support mechanisms (incarcerated individuals often come from marginalized populations such as those living in poverty, the mentally ill, and minority groups), literally placing a wall between incarcerated individuals and pro-social support mechanisms further reduces access to such services – thus increasing the need for individualized guidance. *Simply having the willingness to successfully transition into society after incarceration is not enough for such transitions to occur. Mechanisms for building an inner transformation (i.e., motivation and life skills development) need to be matched with personal guidance (mentoring) to help build and/or sustain positive motivation, develop skills needed to navigate access to needed resources, and guidance on living life in the community.*

### **To what degree is mentoring an effective tool within the incarceration and re-entry context? Who is most likely to benefit from mentoring relationships?**

Previous research has identified the need to better understand the effectiveness of mentoring and to better identify where to focus mentoring resources for maximum benefit.

NC4RSO has found – as discussed more in later portions of this paper – that EVERYONE who successfully transitions away from incarceration has AT LEAST ONE PERSON (often multiple people) who provides meaningful, personalized guidance that supports their transition. Sometimes, such guidance is provided by a formal mentor. In other cases, such guidance is provided by a range of individuals who come into contact with current and recently-incarcerated individuals – correctional officers, institution-based educators, case workers, volunteer chaplains, etc. Individuals who accept such support are often seeking guidance (they either request guidance formally or appear interested in personal change), but in some cases mentors or mentor-like individuals offer guidance *without regard to whether they are expected to do so in the course of their regular duties and without assurance that their effort will be receptively accepted and used*. We found cases in this study – 20% of our respondents – in which uninvited mentoring proved to be a key motivating factor in encouraging individuals to change their lives for the better. Therefore, it is absolutely appropriate to encourage mentoring activity more broadly within corrections and to look for ways to maximize such activity. Providing mentoring as a central function can only add to the number of individuals who successfully transition away from incarceration and associated challenges. We look at the mechanics of this in this paper.

Who is most likely to benefit from mentoring relationships? This question sometimes arises when looking to maximize limited resources (i.e., if we have ten formal mentors available and eighty people to whom we might direct such mentors, to whom should formal mentors be directed?). While the question is easy to ask, the answer is somewhat more circuitous and perhaps somewhat inherently elusive. In analyzing our field interviews, our research indicated receptivity to mentoring across all demographic characteristics such as age, race, and gender. Further, an incarcerated individual's exhibited desire to change is not always the sole determinant of whether mentoring will be effective. When we interviewed formerly-incarcerated individuals who reported contact with someone who "made a difference" or "supported" their transition away from incarceration, they were later asked about their "state of mind" when their first relationship with such person(s) began to develop. Were they looking for their lives to change? A majority of respondents answered this question in the affirmative. Twenty percent of respondents, however, reported that their desire to change their lives occurred – at least in part – because a staff person or volunteer at their correctional facility took the uninvited initiative to take a personal interest in them (such as the case of a woman isolated in a prison segregation unit whose desire to change started partially because a GED educator made the extra effort to deliver academic material to her in segregation). When individuals decide they want to change their lives because such a connection is made with a mentor or mentor-like individual, the mentee then begins to seek out and connect with additional mentors or mentor-like individuals. In ALL cases, such connections were initially made during the person's incarceration – not after release. While a potential mentee's exhibited desire to change can increase the odds that formal mentoring will generate meaningful, immediate results, even informal mentoring can generate the desire to change that is associated with the effective use of mentoring support. Further, while some mentees and mentors in our study indicate that willingness to change is an observable phenomenon (and that mentors who report being able to spot such willingness devote their time to folks who they view as receptive to their effort), an increased – or even universal - availability of mentors increases the reach of mentoring and mentoring-like support to individuals who may become willing to change as a result of mentoring or mentoring-like support. We suggest, therefore, that broad encouragement occur *within correctional facilities* for staff and volunteers to foster positive, individualized mentor-like connections with incarcerated individuals as an everyday component of correctional facility operations. While this already happens spontaneously in some cases, observant individual(s) within correctional facilities could monitor such activity to identify volunteers and staff who are particularly effective at fostering such connections; such individuals, could become a valued resource for recommending individuals who may be most likely to benefit from further connections with a formal mentor.

### **Identifying and Selecting Individuals for Mentor Guidance**

As indicated in the previous section, our research is indicating that EVERYONE who successfully transitions away from the cycle of incarceration has at least one person in their life who acts as a transitional guide. In some instances, this transition starts because someone reached out to support an individual with no assurance that such support would be accepted or utilized. Furthermore, the interview we conducted with a formerly-incarcerated individual who has received no mentoring and who has continued to experience significant life challenges insightfully reported a "hindsight willingness to have had a mentor during/after imprisonment and a recognition that it could have been helpful," but, additionally, that he likely wouldn't have known how to recognize an informal offer of mentoring support. Therefore, a best-case scenario in the corrections/re-entry environment would be to have mentoring guidance made broadly available in correctional facilities through a combination of informal and formal mechanisms offered by a broad range of staff and volunteers. Individuals who are identified as responsive to guidance within such a broad range of support could be directed toward additional mentoring opportunities.

What factors can be used to identify an individual who may be responsive to additional and/or formal mentoring support?

## Timing of Mentor Relationships

In our study, we asked formerly-incarcerated individuals whether “there has been a person(s) in your life during or after your most recent incarceration that has been a particularly positive or helpful person in your life. Someone who has ‘been there for you’ in some kind of a leadership or mentoring role.” 100% of respondents who were staying out of prison and building a positive life indicated that there had been at least one person, often multiple people, who fit this description – with 100% reporting that their relationship with at least one of these people (i.e., mentors) began while they were incarcerated. Often, participants in our study had multiple mentors while incarcerated – in some cases, maintaining those mentoring relationships after release - then subsequently developing additional relationships with other mentors after incarceration.

Therefore, the key to initiating useful, positive mentor relationships lies in fostering such mentoring relationships during incarceration. Fostering such in-custody relationships can be a building block for fostering future relationships with additional mentors.

## Personal Readiness

Readiness to alter the direction of one’s life is a fundamental underpinning to change. Current and recently-incarcerated individuals sometimes reach a personal readiness to change on their own, while readiness to change sometimes develops as a result of unsolicited mentoring or mentoring-like support (particularly during their incarceration rather than afterward).

### Identifying an Existing Readiness to Change

Detecting personal readiness – and capacity - to change is not a perfect art. Personal readiness, after all, is a fundamentally internal phenomenon that does not immediately result in a certain, absolutely definable outward measure such as a letter stamped by a notary. Moreover, readiness to change sometimes develops as a result of unsolicited mentoring. With that said, at least one mentee and two mentors interviewed for this study indicated a honed ability to identify “readiness to change” among current or recently-incarcerated individuals. Other study respondents spoke in varying degrees about personal factors associated with a readiness to change. Based upon these interviews – and supporting reflections from our experience - readiness to change can sometimes be estimated through observation of the following:

- 1) *Engaged participation in institutional or community-based programming* – particularly when another of the items on this list is also observed (one respondent in our study, a drug addict who is now clean and who has no history of mental illness, reported such an eagerness to change while incarcerated that she lied to get into an institutional recovery program for mentally-ill drug addicts because no institutional programming was available for drug addicts with no history of mental illness!).
- 2) *A request from the person that an individual mentor them.*
- 3) *Responses, when asked, as to whether or not an individual is interested in personal change.* A spectrum of both receptivity and capacity to change can range from fully affirmative answers to fully negative responses. At times, some people may be uncertain or ambivalent regarding interest in personal change. An individuals’ vision of change may also develop as a result of interaction with a mentor or guide whose positive influence makes change appear both possible and desirable.
- 4) *A self-perceived state of crisis.* Crisis sometimes provides the impetus for individuals to change. Getting incarcerated and the consequences thereafter sometimes provide sufficient impetus for change – depending upon the individual. Two of the mentored respondents in our study – a Native female and a Caucasian male – indicated that jail-induced separation from their young children was the crisis that made them willing to turn their lives around and accept support from a mentor. A third respondent indicated that getting thrown into a prison’s segregation unit was a “crisis” that helped prepare them for change.

- 5) *A personal state of gratitude.* Several of the mentored respondents in this study indicated having been grateful during their most recent incarceration for having been arrested. Rather than viewing their arrest and incarceration negatively, individuals sometimes recognize incarceration as an opportunity for change. Several of the mentored respondents in our study indicated that such a perspective coincided with beginning to change their lives for the better. Mentors also sometimes report looking for such an attitude when selecting who to work with (“I can tell the ones who are serious,” “a positive attitude makes a difference,” “gratitude is a component necessary for change,” etc.).

### **Encouraging Readiness to Change**

In some cases, the resources of mentors and mentor-like individuals limit the number of people they can support – such as formal mentor programs that have specified resources (limited numbers of either volunteers or a program slots available for participants). In such cases, programs must take on only the number of mentees that can be accommodated by available resources. In other cases, other volunteers or correctional staff sometimes choose to offer mentoring-like relationships in the course of their interactions with current or recently-incarcerated individuals. Our study shows that such voluntary offers of mentoring-like support sometimes result in individuals becoming willing to change the course of their lives. This should be encouraged.

### **What About Demographics and Mentoring?**

In the fore-mentioned “Ready4Work Reentry Initiative” mentoring study, the following is indicated:

Despite their surface similarities, deeper analyses revealed a few characteristics that did seem to differentiate mentored from nonmentored participants....Holding other factors constant, older participants, females and those expressing a higher level of religiosity at enrollment were most likely to engage in mentoring. Also, mothers were less likely to participate in mentoring than were women without children. Importantly, none of the other characteristics we considered, including ethnicity, level of education, criminal history or time of enrollment in Ready4Work, seemed to affect whether a participant engaged in the mentoring component of the program. The findings suggest that older individuals and women without children may have been more comfortable accepting support and guidance than were young males; young males may have been more likely to view the need for support as a sign of weakness. The fact that women with children were less likely to meet with a mentor than were childless women suggests that the mothers’ child-care responsibilities may have interfered with their participation in mentoring. Further indications of why certain participants may have been reluctant to take advantage of the mentoring component can be gleaned from interviews we conducted with 15 Ready4Work participants who declined mentoring, as well as our interviews with program staff. Their answers suggest a wide range of barriers, needs and misperceptions that may have prevented more men and women from getting involved: Some ex-prisoners considered mentoring more suitable for youth than for adults or viewed meetings as just one more form of institutional requirement. As participants worked to reestablish their lives, they often prioritized activities they felt were directly related to finding work. Between family obligations, jobs and other programs or classes, some ex-prisoners found little time to participate in mentoring. Some hesitated to discuss their problems with strangers, and others questioned the motivations and intentions of the FBOs that were providing the mentoring. The sites took steps to increase participation in mentoring and make it more appealing to participants. For example, to avoid the association of “mentoring” with youth programs, six sites used terms such as “life coach,” “career coach” or “transition coach” to refer to mentors. As one mentor explained: “Life coaching is what we call it. [Participants] can buy into that. (pg. 10 - 11)

## **Our Study – Further Demographic Analysis**

In our study, we took a distinctive approach to studying mentoring within prisons and re-entry. Rather than selecting interview subjects from the narrowly-defined perspective of having enrolled in a formal mentoring program, we interviewed former inmates who were measurably succeeding in community re-entry. As indicated, we began our interviews with a broad question of “I’d like you to think about the people you know from various settings – home, friendships, community organizations, and corrections. Has there been a person(s) in your life during or after your most recent incarceration that has been a particularly positive or helpful person in your life? Someone who has ‘been there for you’ in some kind of a leadership or mentoring role?” **When approached in this way, we have found that 100% of individuals who have stayed out of prison for at least two years and who are meeting multiple measurable criteria of positive self-improvement and who have no re-arrests *unanimously* report having had a minimum of at least one person who provided positive guidance in a manner that could be described as mentoring - *whether or not the relationship was formally called a mentoring relationship. This unanimity existed across demographic lines of age, gender, and race.***

With that said, the younger men in our study were most likely to report a desire or ability to connect with a mentor or mentor-like individual if they could identify with the person based upon demographic commonalities – such as a shared history of incarceration or a history of problematic drug/alcohol abuse. While older respondents and female respondents also sometimes value or connect with at least one mentor based upon shared commonalities, women and older respondents indicated more (although not exclusive) receptivity to accepting direction based solely on the mentor’s knowledge and leadership availability (100% of the women interviewed had at least one mentor with whom they did not share demographic or life similarities). Furthermore, analysis of the interviews with mentors demonstrates a more frequent sharing of demographic characteristics between male mentors and their mentees (75%) than is the case with female mentors. In the case of male mentors, two of the four mentors interviewed (50%) shared a minimum of one demographic commonality with their mentees of either prior drug use or incarceration and, in one case, the additional shared commonality of ethnicity (Native status); the Native mentor works with both males and females. An additional male mentor interviewed (25%) indicated that he only works with male sex offenders “because I come from a middle class background and most sex offenders also come from a middle class background; we can find a basis of commonality from which to communicate. I don’t have a drug background and I don’t understand the druggies – many of whom come from economically poor backgrounds. People from middle class and poor backgrounds experience different cultures; we don’t understand each other.” On the other hand, neither of the two female mentors interviewed come from any sort of disadvantaged background and neither have experienced incarceration, drug/alcohol abuse, or other challenges common among incarcerated individuals. One of the two female mentors – a Caucasian who volunteers as a Christian chaplain for Native women – makes a conscious effort to identify with the women she works with upon the shared basis of “I’m a sinner too. We’re both sinners before God. That puts us on the same playing field.” She uses this approach despite differences in ethnicity, age, and life experience. The other female mentor interviewed likewise has no personal background of conflict with the law; she works with individuals re-entering her local community after incarceration based upon geographic proximity rather than upon any personal demographic characteristics such as age, gender, or shared life experience. It is also worth noting that our respondents identify some of their mentor-like supporters coming from outside of formal mentoring programs; demographic populations who are not active participants in formal mentoring programs may simply be connecting with mentor-like supporters through other channels that are somehow viewed as more preferable, accessible, or convenient (self-help groups for younger men, parent support groups for mothers, etc.).

### ***Gender***

Formal mentoring programs within corrections, as elsewhere, often match mentors and mentees based on gender – women with women and men with men. There are sometimes policies, preferences, or an intentional bias in this regard among both paid staff and volunteer organizations based on a perception that this is the most socially appropriate course to take and/or of only allowing same-gender volunteers to enter gender-specific correctional facilities. What we are seeing in this study, however, is that mentoring relationships do not necessarily need to be gender dependent. A majority of our study participants who have been mentored (70%) report having been mentored by at least one person across gender lines (women have reported being mentored by men, men have reported being mentored by women, and some have reported being mentored successfully by married couples), while responses of an additional 10% suggest the possibility of cross-gender mentor having occurred (i.e., incidences of multiple mentors beyond those mentioned by name). Likewise, 50% of interviewed mentors report mentoring both men and women.

### ***Age***

Our study included interviews with formerly-incarcerated individuals ranging in age from young adult (age 18 – 30) to older adults (age 51 – 60). Respondents of all ages report having connected with someone who has guided their move toward positive reintegration in the community.

### **So What Does This Tell Us About Demographics and Mentoring?**

It appears that developing a willingness to change one's life is more central to mentor responsiveness than the demographic characteristics of mentored individuals such as age, gender, or ethnicity. With that said, there seem to be at least two variations pertaining to the demographics of mentoring and mentoring-like relationships within corrections:

- 1) Who mentees connect with for mentor and mentor-like relationships?
- 2) Where and how do these relationships develop?

As indicated in our study, incarcerated individuals whose lives positively transform DO connect with individuals who provide personal guidance. Our interviews indicate that the first of such relationships begin during incarceration. Additional relationships can and do occur post-incarceration – building upon the first mentoring and mentoring-like relationships that occur in custody. Further, these relationships develop both within and outside of formal mentoring programs. Therefore, a formal look at the use of mentoring needs to broaden the scope of how and where mentoring takes place. Such a broadened look could, for example, allow for the identification of incarcerated individuals who connect with supportive individuals outside of mentoring programs when identifying who benefits from such relationships. We think there could be value in conducting further research on these often organic relationships that occur during and after incarceration.

## **What do relationships between a mentor and a person in or leaving prison look like?**

What do mentor and mentor-like relationships look like? Mentoring relationships are frequently mentioned, but need to be described in more detail. This current research is a step toward phenomenologically identifying participants' experiences of beneficial mentoring relationships and the characteristics of those relationships that contribute to positive outcomes.

The interpersonal dynamics, both positive and negative, that develop between staff/volunteers and currently/recently incarcerated people vary broadly – sometimes intentionally, sometimes not.

From the mentor's perspective, factors affecting a relationship include:

- Institutional influences within the correctional setting (rehabilitative vs. punitive environment, etc.)
- The formal role of the mentor (formal mentors; various volunteers; front line correctional staff such as correctional officers, psychologists, social workers, paid deliverers of programming, chaplains, and correctional staff in the community)
- The persons' intentions within a mentoring relationship
- Communication styles
- Commitment to a mentoring or mentoring-like relationship
- Degree of mentor training (or lack thereof)
- Personal temperament

From the mentee's perspective, factors include:

- Degree of interest in and capacity for personal change
- Commitment to a mentoring or mentoring-like relationship
- Communication styles
- Personal needs brought to the mentoring or mentoring-like relationship
- Personal temperament

## **What an *effective* mentoring role doesn't look like:**

### ***It isn't paternalistic.***

When we reviewed the results of our survey about “what works” in Cascadia-region corrections, two distinct writing styles were clearly present among the responses received. All organizations communicated an intention to support the possibility for positive change in people's lives. One style describes supporting individuals in their own process and shares a sense of “our program is delivered or made available to empower participants to develop positive change in their lives.” *Empowerment and self-direction*. The other writing style communicated a sense of “we, as a delivery provider, provide direction that program participants need. Participants need us – or need our guidance – to change their lives.” In the second instance, service providers discussed their programs with paternalistic vocabulary such as “giving a voice to the voiceless.”

In another look at paternalism, one of the reports from the “Ready4Work Reentry Initiative” looking at mentoring formerly incarcerated adults (source: [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316_publication.pdf) ) mentioned concerns about paternalism in formal mentor programs as communicated by formerly-incarcerated individuals. This was quoted as a reason some individuals declined to participate in formally-available mentor options within a re-entry program:

“Some ex-prisoners [who chose not to participate in mentoring] indicated that participating in mentoring “can feel like being treated like a child. For some participants, having a mentor seemed more suitable for youth than for adults. They felt it was unnecessary or even would reflect negatively on the mentee. Participants said that, as adults with life experience, they could

take care of themselves; they did not like talking to strangers about their problems; or they already had a close friend or family member they talked to about personal issues.”

Rather than delivering paternalism, what people need for their lives to positively change – regardless of the mechanism used to deliver personal guidance – are people who will walk **with** them through their change process rather than paternalistic input.

***It doesn't encourage 'entrenched dependencies.'***

In *Doing Time on the Outside – Deconstructing the Benevolent Community* (2006), author Madonna Maidmont identifies a common theme of 'entrenched dependencies' upon state and community agencies among women who stay out of prison post-incarceration (pg. 4). She also found “four intersectional patterns chronicling women's lives post-prison.” One of the patterns relating to post-incarceration relationships: “Among women who do manage to stay out of prison, a majority remain tightly entangled in other state-sponsored control networks. Patterns of dependency, medicalization, and infantilization persist in the treatment of women at a local level.....(p. 6)”

Effective mentoring needs to support individuals' transitioning toward use of the broader community's resources for self-improvement/guidance (community centers, pro-social community networks, self-help groups, religious bodies, etc.). Such transitional guidance supports a move away from 'entrenched dependencies.'

***It isn't dependent upon a particular formalized role or level of education.***

There is broad range of people who have the capacity to support currently and formerly-incarcerated individuals in moving forward positively. In this study, individuals mentioned as having filled a primary or secondary mentoring role include: mentors from formal mentor programs, chaplains (paid and volunteer), leaders of self-help groups, correctional officers, educators, Native liaisons, staff who deliver or refer alcohol/drug programming, case managers, counselors, other therapeutic staff, leaders within community re-entry programs, relatives, and community individuals such as university instructors. Any or all of these individuals have the potential to play a positive role – *if their role is approached effectively*.

The authors of this paper have seen individuals wearing varying formal “hats” in the correctional context who have provided an effective supportive (mentoring) role – such as volunteers (nonprofits, self-help groups, etc.), recreational therapists, chaplains, and probation officers. The organization that conducted the “Ready4Work Reentry Initiative” looking at mentoring formerly incarcerated adults did their study working with nonprofits that recruited volunteers – many from churches - to perform a mentoring role for formerly incarcerated individuals.

## **What an effective mentoring role *does* look like (what we know so far):**

### ***It requires an interactional commitment***

In some cases, a chance one-time interaction between two people can spur a desire and/or beginning toward change. Examples of this include hearing a motivational speaker or a chance meeting with a dynamic person during a heightened period of personal crisis. Making that change happen, then, is an unfolding process. People's lives take time to change and mentoring is intertwined in that process. It is the ongoing mentoring relationships that support this unfolding process that we are evaluating. A mentor or mentor-like individual needs to commit to an ongoing relational interaction.

### ***It is flexibly responsive to the needs of the mentee***

Mentoring, by its nature, is responsive to the needs of a mentee.

Effective mentoring uses a communication style that reaches the mentee (gentle or firm, packaging dialog within life experiences and/or academic levels that match the mentee's frame of reference, etc.) while also guiding or "stretching" the mentee to expand their communication level and life experience. This is covered in more detail in the next section ("How to mentor").

Mentoring addresses the practical needs of the mentee. In what areas does the mentee need guidance? Do they need suggestions on how to interact better with people (social skills, anger management, child-rearing skills, etc.)? Do they need practical re-entry support for getting a driver's license, opening a bank account, and getting appropriate clothing for job interviews? What about coaching for job interviews and supporting access to housing and education?

In addition, it is a maxim that mentors and mentees are often both givers and receivers within mentoring relationships. In the project we did earlier this year with program delivery providers, several providers made comments along themes of "How much I learn from those I serve" and "mutually transforming lives, one relationship at a time" – as well as indicating that providers "meet people at their point of need." One of the mentors interviewed for this mentoring study reported that people in the community ask her (about her correctional volunteering), "Don't you get discouraged? Don't you want to give up?" I tell them, "NO! It's a privilege to go in and watch people's lives change."

### ***It encourages hope***

The fact that a mentor takes the time to participate in a mentor's life – and shows a genuine interest in the person - often provides hope. This concept is discussed variously among people who work with current and recently-incarcerated individuals. As an example, an individual had been volunteering in correctional facilities over several years. At one point, she found herself sitting with a woman who had been incarcerated repeatedly. The woman commented, "I remember you from when you were going into 'x' jail across town. That was way back when... You're still here....Oh, somebody actually cares." *The fact that the volunteered cared enough to continue showing up – rather than the particular service being provided - was what got the attention of the incarcerated individual.*

### ***It encourages self-determination***

Just as mentoring does not encourage 'entrenched dependencies,' mentoring guides individuals toward self-determination. What life skills – specifically – need to be developed for an individual to take charge of one's own life and feel a sense of personal empowerment? To the extent that a mentor has these skills, they can identify which of these skills need to be developed in a mentee. They can then provide verbal guidance and demonstrated application of such life skills.

## How to Mentor

Study participants who were mentored repeatedly mention that mentors were “straightforward” or “straight up” with them. Some mentors also mentioned being “direct” with the people they mentor about changes that need to be made – also often indicating that they do this within a context of establishing (or having already established) a relationship with the mentee that indicates “I support you and want the best for you.” With varied descriptors, mentees have described “straightforwardness” or “straight up” as an honest, direct mentoring approach of being told what they are doing wrong and what they need to change. In some cases, mentees also make direct or indirect references to having this “directness” communicated in simple, understandable terms. Mentees who have been incarcerated often come from backgrounds where such direct feedback hasn’t often been provided (or provided in a manner that is negatively perceived). Furthermore, nuanced communication does not always effectively reach people who have been incarcerated; their demographic backgrounds are often such that they don’t recognize or engage with nuanced suggestions. At the same time, mentees who report straightforwardness as having been helpful also variously describe mentors as having had communication styles that range from “nurturing” to firm – indicating that straightforward communications can be delivered within any number of interactive approaches.

We start this section with a look at straightforwardness, then move on to other practical aspects of mentoring.

### 1) Be Straightforward.

Use a direct communication style with the people you mentor. Study participants who were mentored have repeatedly mentioned that mentors were “straightforward” or “straight up” with them and that they find this beneficial. Some mentors also mentioned being “direct” with the people they mentor about changes the mentees need to make. Mentors often indicate that they do this within a context of establishing a rapport with the mentee that includes parameters of “I support you and want the best for you.”

With varied descriptors, those mentored have described “straightforwardness” or “straight up” as an honest, direct approach of being told what their mistakes are and what they need to change. In some cases, mentored individuals describe “straightforwardness” as being “direct,” being simple, understandable communication that they can grasp in their own terms (frame of reference). Nuanced communication (i.e., indirect suggestions) does not always effectively reach people who have been incarcerated. People who experience incarceration DO understand – and are often most receptive to – “what you see is what you get” in terms of social interaction.

As an aside, people interested in this topic of differences between people of varying backgrounds may wish to read Ruby Payne’s book “A Framework for Understanding Poverty.” While not corrections-specific, this book is a relevant resource in that it describes “cultural differences” within varying strands of American life – such as describing hidden rules among economic classes. For example, individuals living in poverty “know how to keep my clothes from being stolen at the laundromat,” pt “know where the free medical clinics are,” and “know how to live without a checking account.” People living within the middle class “know how to order in a nice restaurant,” “know which stores are likely to carry the clothing brands my family wears,” and “understand the difference among the principal, interest, and escrow statements on my house payment.” Wealthy individuals “know how to enroll my children in the preferred private schools,” “can read a menu in French, English, and another language,” and “know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty from my domestic staff.” (A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Pages 38 - 40).

Examples of "Straight Up" Communication	
Effective Approaches	Ineffective Approaches
<p>Be specific and direct when talking to a person. Use declarative sentences.</p> <p>Make it about the person you're mentoring – reference their actions and the context in which they are behaving.</p> <p>Display confidence about what you communicate. Look the person in the eye when speaking to them. Not displaying confidence lessens the impact – your communication could be viewed as indecisive or weak.</p>	<p>Ramble, hint at your main point.</p> <p>Use suggestive sentences, make inferences.</p> <p>Look at the floor or play with a distracting hand-held item while talking.</p>
<p>"What you are doing – x - doesn't work. That's not going to help you succeed in the community. Here's another way to handle this same situation."</p>	<p>"...A popular way of dealing with x is to do y..." (<i>What does other people's behavior have to do with me?</i>)</p>
<p>"What's your plan for when you get out? How are you going to change your life?"</p> <p>"How are you going to handle 'x' situation?"</p>	<p>"Let's hope things go well for you..."</p> <p>"Any thoughts on where you'd like to be in ten years?" (<i>I don't know what I will be doing in two years...</i>)</p>

## 2) Take an Individualized Approach to Interacting with Mentees

This study was intentionally open-ended – allowing respondents to respond to our interview questions in ways that were relevant to their experience. As such, the direction and substance of individual interviews varied based upon what seemed important and/or relevant to each individual at the time of the interview. As a consequence, the substance – and topics - of each interview varied. Some subject themes are touched upon by multiple respondents, indicating a clearly broad relevance of such themes. Other subjects were touched upon by fewer respondents; one would have to re-interview other study participants to find out whether such subjects were only relevant to some individuals or if the subject is a universally relevant subject that simply wasn't thought of by other respondents during our interviews. With that said, analysis of our completed interviews does provide preliminary “food for thought” about the dynamics of successful mentoring.

Mentoring and mentoring-like relationships have been identified as successful when a mentee's first mentoring relationships start during incarceration rather than after re-entry into the community (additional mentoring and mentoring-like relationships can and do happen after incarceration!). Mentees of varying genders, ages, and races report needing to become accountable and responsible. The types of relationship dynamics within which clear/straightforward communication and accountability takes place, however, varies among responding demographic groups.

Sometimes, individual demographic groups may simply be using different nuanced ways of getting to the same point. For example, two women reported that mentors helped them build “self-respect,” while a male indicated that he needed to build “self-esteem.” In other cases, genuine differences among differing groups of formerly-incarcerated individuals seem to be present. Women often (but not always) broadly indicate that nurturing mentoring relationships are effective with them (“gentle,” “caring,” “not judging,” “they make suggestions rather than give orders,” “the mentor built trust”), while some men have reported that “mentors are not buddies” (a mentee) or “I'm not there to be their friend” (a mentor). Mentees of both genders (and of all ages), though, have reported that a mentor's style of relating – or the fact that they were supporting me – was more important than the particular issues that the mentor helped the mentee to work through. Precisely half of all female mentees responded that mentor(s) have been more important and/or more helpful than family, while precisely half of all male mentees counted a relative among their mentors.

We summarize some of the results of our interviews with mentees here. We then provide further mentee responses about their successful mentoring relationships on the following pages.

- Thirty percent (30%) of respondents – Caucasian and Native women of all ages – indicated that mentor(s) have been more important and/or helpful than family.
- Twenty percent (20%) of respondents – Caucasian men in their 30's – indicated that at least one mentor was a relative.
- Forty percent (40%) of respondents – Caucasian and Native women of all ages – indicated that mentor(s) “believed in me” (i.e., believed in my ability change).
- 50% of respondents – Caucasian and Native women of all ages – reported that mentors “don't judge us” (i.e., view us unfavorably because of our choices, incarceration).
- As mentioned, younger men are most likely to report a desire or ability to connect with a mentor if they identify with the person based upon commonalities such as a shared history of incarceration or a history of problematic drug/alcohol abuse. While older respondents and female respondents also sometimes value mentors based upon shared commonalities, they indicate more (although not exclusive) receptivity to accepting direction based solely on the mentor's knowledge and leadership availability (100% of the women interviewed had at least one mentor with whom they did not share demographic or life similarities).

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Mentor(s) more important and/or helpful than family	Mentor(s) “believed in me” (i.e., in my ability to change)	Mentor(s) “don’t judge us” (view us unfavorably because of our choices, incarceration)	Mentor(s) style of communication made relationship more effective	Mentor(s) took a genuine interest in me	Mentor(s) helped me access resources (treatment, personal arrangements such as getting a driver’s license and bank account upon release, etc.)	Mentor must be happy for my successes, have no ulterior motives when working with me
Native female 18 – 30	x	x	x		x	x	
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)			x				
White female 18 – 30	x	x	x			x	
White female, 51- 60	x	x	x			x	x
Black Male 31 – 40							
White male 31 – 40				x			
White female 31 – 40							
White female 41 – 50		x	x	x			
White Male, 41 – 50				x			
White male 31 – 40 (#2)					x		

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Mentioned a spiritual component within mentor relationship(s)	Mentor(s) pushed me to move forward (“challenge me to reach higher,” “ask me what my post-prison plan is, etc.).	Mentor(s) are/were consistently available	Mentor’s helped build my self-respect (trusted me with their phone number, asked me to help with their programs, etc.)	Mentor’s style of relating – or the fact of them supporting me - is more important than the particular issues they help me with.	What can I give in a mentoring relationship?
Native female 18 – 30	x		x			
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)				x		
White female 18 – 30			x	x		
White female, 51- 60			x			
Black Male 31 – 40						
White male 31 – 40						
White female 31 – 40						
White female 41 – 50	x					x
White Male, 41 – 50						
White male 31 – 40 (#2)	x		x			

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Mentor(s) are “partners” not “bosses”	The relationship fostered openness and honesty	Mentor(s) were gentle or caring with me	Mentor(s) offer suggestions rather than orders, accept my mistakes.	Mentor must be loving for me to accept assistance	Mentors to treat me with respect	Being strict with us won’t work	Mentoring about holding mentee accountable; not a “buddy” or to be manipulated. Friendship must be earned.
Native female 18 – 30								
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)		x	x			x	x	
White female 18 – 30				x		x		
White female, 51- 60	x				x			
Black Male 31 – 40								x
White male 31 – 40								
White female 31 – 40						x		
White female 41 – 50		x	x					
White Male, 41 – 50								
White male 31 – 40 (#2)			x			x		

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Mentoring relationships are about accountability, becoming responsible	Mentor(s) were “straight up” or “straight-forward” with me	Mentor(s) communicated in a way I could understand (broke things down)	The fact that a peer mentor’s life had changed provided me with incentive to change	How do I treat mentor(s)? I have to develop integrity, treat people with respect	Mentor relationships are about me becoming part of a community	Mentee has to develop self-esteem
Native female 18 – 30		x					
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)				x			
White female 18 – 30							
White female, 51- 60	x	x					
Black Male 31 – 40	x					x	x
White male 31 – 40			x	x			
White female 31 – 40	x				x	x	
White female 41 – 50	x	x	x				
White Male, 41 – 50				x			
White male 31 – 40 (#2)							

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Ongoing mentor relationships have to adapt as I grow	Mentor(s) built trust into our relationship	Mentor helped me financially (relative)	Mentor(s) helped me work through the things that were bothering me	Mentor(s) can support me by helping me learn to feel again (not suppose to “feel” in jail)	Prison programming is most effective when staff make an effort to engage participants
Native female 18 – 30						
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)		x				
White female 18 – 30		x				
White female, 51- 60						
Black Male 31 – 40						x
White male 31 – 40						
White female 31 – 40	x					
White female 41 – 50						
White Male, 41 – 50						
White male 31 – 40 (#2)			x	x	x	

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	At least one mentor shared a common background (prison, alcohol/drug recovery, Native, etc.)	At least one mentor did <i>not</i> share a common background (prison, alcohol/drug recovery, Native, etc.)	Expressed need for mentor(s) to not be correctional staff	At least one mentor was a correctional staff person	At least one mentor was from an organized mentor program	At least one mentor was a relative	At least one mentor was a peer (former inmate, 12 step group, etc.)	At least one mentor was a volunteer not from a mentor program
Native female 18 – 30	x	x						x
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)	x	x		x			x	x
White female 18 – 30		x			x			
White female, 51- 60		x			x			
Black Male 31 – 40		x		x				
White male 31 – 40	x		x			x	x	
White female 31 – 40				x	x		x	
White female 41 – 50		x		x				
White Male, 41 – 50	x			x			x	x
White male 31 – 40 (#2)	?	x		x		x		x

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)	Grateful to have gotten incarcerated	Was in crisis when I became willing to change and/or when a mentor connected with me	Knew I wanted to change when a mentor connected with me	A mentoring relationship can have value even if mentee isn't ready for help yet; they may refer to the help later	Became willing to change because someone took time to work with me	Mentee has to be willing to change	Mentee has to be willing to "open up"
Native female 18 – 30	x	x	x				x
Native female 18 – 30 (#2)						x	
White female 18 – 30	x			x			
White female, 51- 60			x	x		x	
Black Male 31 – 40			x			x	
White male 31 – 40			x				
White female 31 – 40					x		
White female 41 – 50		x	x				
White Male, 41 – 50					x		
White male 31 – 40 (#2)							

Demographic Characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age range)

### What does it mean to say that someone “is there for you?”

White male 31 – 40	"'There for me' means that someone will listen to me. I may not need anything else when I get out, I just need someone to listen. There's a lot of frustration, etc - need to get it out. A person needs an ear [to listen] - not a friend (old friend from before) or DOC authority figure; maybe have a "Big Brother" program for folks coming out of prison. Need someone who's done time - they understand. Folks who haven't done time might act like they understand, but the best they can do is understand pieces of what I'm experiencing."
White female 41 – 50	"Being able to listen empathetically....Positive, provides feedback. They are "straight up" - I can be accountable to them. "Works with me," provides positive guidance."
White Male, 41 – 50	"It means that someone is available emotionally, can answer my questions."
White male 31 – 40	"While inside, it means "provide financial support, phone calls, monetary support. Chat, be there when I need to cry, whatever is needed. Be there to talk about anything. Provide letters, books. On the outside, it means providing references, rides to jobs, moral support."

### 3) Be Prepared to Offer Alternatives and Guidance on Changing Behavior.

One doesn't have to be a trained psychologist to be a mentor. Rather, mentors offer life experience and knowledge on handling life's situations.

Make such guidance straightforward, insightful, and practical. For example, if a mentee is having a difficult time making positive choices, suggest pausing to make a mental (or print) list of things to do right when things seem to be going all wrong.

When You Say.....	What You May Need to Provide Next			
	Be available to explain why alternative behaviors are necessary.	Be prepared to model change.	Help get to the root of problem behaviors (behavior evaluation). Work with the individual to evaluate why they are behaving inappropriately.	Be prepared to suggest alternatives and/or additional resources.
Your behavior doesn't work. That isn't going to get you anywhere on the outside. You need to change.	<p>“Why is it inappropriate to get angry and walk out of a job interview if I don't like the way I'm treated during the interview?”</p> <p>“Why shouldn't I yell or quit talking to my spouse if I don't like the subject that they want to discuss?”</p> <p>“Why shouldn't I be resentful if my probation officer wants me to do something unreasonable?”</p>	<p>“When I get angry, I respond to the person involved by doing or saying ‘x’ rather than yelling, hitting, or threatening. If I can't resolve the situation by dealing directly with the person involved, the next thing I try is ‘y.’ My decision-making process when I do ‘x’ or ‘y’ is ....”</p>	<p>When individuals become willing to change, such change can require them to develop an understanding of behavior patterns and motivations, not just individual behaviors. The person may or may not be aware of their motivations that drive their behavior. Is the person doing something because they are angry or fearful? Because they're doing what they were taught to do as children or by their “partners in crime?” Awareness of behavior patterns and motivations can help change patterns that go beyond specific behaviors.</p>	<p>When people engage in problematic behaviors, they are sometimes handling situations in the only way they know how. Therefore, you may need to suggest alternate behaviors. If necessary, direct them to community resources that can suggest or support new behaviors (counseling centers, self-help groups, etc.).</p>

## About this study

### Background and Purpose

It is well documented that various post-incarceration resources – such as housing, employment, education, and health care – are critical factors in post-incarceration success. A focus on the interactive dynamics of ensuring delivery of such services came to NC4RSO's attention after two of our leaders surveyed several community organizations and correctional bodies in preparation for a presentation at a 2011 "Prisons, Peace, and Compassion" conference hosted by the UNESCO Chair for Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue, and Peace (University of Oregon). We asked participating organizations what they do that "works" and what they find to be the most valuable and helpful aspects of their work. A strong theme that came out of this is that programming effectiveness depends *as much or more* on how program providers engage with program participants as upon the type of services delivered. After some internal discussion about this, NC4RSO developed an interest in the dynamics of one particular type of interactive relationship within corrections and re-entry – mentoring. Specifically, what components make mentoring relationships - and other, similar relationships - successful?

### Study Parameters and Methodology

This study consisted of a series of qualitative field interviews and subsequent data analysis. Four distinct groups of people – seventeen people in total - were interviewed between July and September, 2011. The groups interviewed include ten formerly-incarcerated individuals who've been out of prison between roughly two - seven years and who are successfully moving away from the incarceration experience, one previously incarcerated who continues to experience challenges associated with potential re-imprisonment, five mentors who mentored several of the previously incarcerated individuals interviewed for this study, and one additional person who has mentored current or formerly incarcerated individuals. When we designed the study we chose an interview model that has – as hoped – proven to be especially insightful. Specifically, we chose not to limit our interviews to formerly incarcerated respondents who were known to have been mentored. Rather, we interviewed individuals who had been out of prison for approximately two to seven years, who had not been remanded (re-arrested), and who each met any of *several* criteria that measurably demonstrate a pathway of positive reintegration in society as outlined in the following paragraph. Supplementary interviews with the other demographic groups provided opportunities for comparative analysis.

It is relevant and useful to communicate the selection criteria of participants included in this study. Two previously published studies reviewed for this project include Madonna Maidmont's "Doing Time on the Outside – Deconstructing the Benevolent Community (2006, University of Toronto Press) and "Mentoring Previously Incarcerated Adults" from the Public/Private Ventures' Ready4Work Reentry Initiative – Field Report Series (2009). Madonna's study included twenty-two women who had been out of prison for two years (along with a comparison group of women who hadn't stayed out of prison) to evaluate the overall post-incarceration experience of these women. The Public/Private Ventures' study included "newly released inmates" who participated in "traditional employment and training services as well as mentoring and other 'wraparound' social services...." In this NC4RSO study, interviews centered primarily around individuals who had been out of prison for +/- 2 – 7 years; respondents were selected were those whose lives were moving in a measurably positive trajectory [they were learning and applying positive life skills; going to school, becoming employed, and/or becoming full-time parents; and incrementally completing community ties to the correctional system (finishing probation or parole, graduating from half-way houses into independent housing, regaining full custody of children, etc.)]. Respondents were not screened to include only participants who had received mentoring,

although the nature of respondent selection (i.e., respondents were identified primarily through a network of community nonprofits) was such that a majority were likely to have encountered potential mentors. These baseline interviews were supplemented with the additional interviews already described.

Our interviews with respondents who had been incarcerated did *not* begin by asking whether they had ever had a mentor – so as to avoid biasing the interview process. Rather, respondents were asked whether they had encountered *anyone* – either in prison or after release – with whom a positive and impacting relationship had developed (i.e., a relationship that might be defined as a mentoring). Respondents were also asked whether they had participated in programming in which mentoring relationships might be likely to develop. This allowed us to question if, why, and how mentoring-style relationships did or didn't develop – and how they were helpful when they did develop. When feasible, respondents' "mentors" were interviewed to comparative responses of paired mentees and mentors.

### **More About NC4RSO AND This Study**

The National Coalition of Community-Based Correctional and Community Re-Entry Service Organizations (NC4RSO) is an umbrella organization for U.S. community-based corrections-related and community-reentry service organizations. Our objective is to be inclusive of the varied community organizations that deliver corrections and justice-related services - from large state-wide or national organizations to small, local community-driven groups that deliver local programming - and to be a service-providing coalition for these organizations. As such, it fits within our mandate to conduct studies on topics that intersect corrections and communities. This study on mentoring is our introduction to delivering such studies and, simultaneously, to introduce NC4RSO's think tank.

The lead investigator of this study, Kim Burkhardt, and the lead supporter who provided contextual dialog, Alison Granger-Brown, have both been delivering correctional services since the 1990s. As such, they have direct experience working with the population interviewed for this project. Their combined research experience spans involvement in a corrections-related university-based participatory action research team, employment with a federal statistical agency, private-sector market research, publication of a business research book used as a university textbook, and Ph.D. research involving the study of human behavior. Ms. Burkhardt and Ms. Granger-Brown co-developed and co-presented a project earlier this year on "what works" in program delivery within Cascadia-region corrections (Washington State, Oregon, British Columbia). That precursor project was academically reviewed for the type of ethics approval that would occur within an IRB process; that level of standards was adhered to on this project to ensure the well-being of respondents while interviewing a vulnerable population.

### **Appreciation for Supporters of This Study**

This study would not have been possible without the voluntary cooperation of interview respondents. While privacy considerations do not allow us to publicly identify study participants by name, we appreciate their cooperation. We also appreciate the authors of supporting literature (see the bibliography) and to individuals who provided contextual support, including:

Ray Beribeau, a volunteer who mentors through Prison Fellowship Ministries, provided early dialog on project development and recommended a useful reference text.

Touss Sepehr, former Senior Editor at OPEC, for generous editorial review of this report.

## Demographics of Study Participants

	Formerly Incarcerated Individuals		Mentors
	10 Primary Participants	1 Secondary Participant	6 Participants
Female	6	0	2
Male	4	1	4
Caucasian	7	0	4
Native	2	0	1
Black	1	0	0
Hispanic	0	1	0
Female Caucasian	4	0	2
Male Caucasian	3	0	3
Female Native	2	0	0
Male Native	0	0	1
Male Black	1	0	0
Male Hispanic	0	1	0
Age Range: 18 - 30	3	0	0
Age Range: 31 - 40	4	1	0
Age Range: 41 - 50	2	0	1
Age Range: 51 - 60	1	0	0
Age Range: 61+	0	0	5
Time Out of Prison: 17 - 24 months	2	0	N/A
Time Out of Prison: 2 - 4 years	6	0	N/A
Time Out of Prison: 5 - 7 years	1	0	N/A
Time Out of Prison: 7 - 8 years	1	0	
Time Out of Prison: 8+ years	0	1	N/A
Official Title/Role is "Mentor" or "Mentor"-Related	N/A	N/A	2
Official Title/Role has a Mentoring Component	N/A	N/A	4
Mentor's Capacity is Entirely Volunteer	N/A	N/A	3
Mentor's Capacity is Entirely Paid	N/A	N/A	1
Mentor's Capacity has Paid and Volunteer Components	N/A	N/A	2
Population Mentored: Chaplain to Native Community	N/A	N/A	1
Population Mentored: Incarcerated Natives	N/A	N/A	1
Population Mentored: Re-entering population locally	N/A	N/A	3
Population Mentored: Male Sex Offenders	N/A	N/A	1
Alcohol/drug use history mentioned, clean/sober now	8 (now clean)	1	0
Mentor mentioned a history of challenges (incarceration, drug/alcohol use, etc.)	N/A	N/A	2
Time Out of Prison and/or Clean/Sober: 25 years	N/A	N/A	2
Current Residence Demographics of Study Participants	Washington State, Colorado, Arizona, British Columbia		

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The Department of Justice, Mentoring Definition:  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/11SecondChanceMentoringSol.pdf>

Wikipedia – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime>

## **Contact the National Coalition of Community-Based Correctional and Community-Re-Entry Service Organizations (NC4RSO):**

The mission of the National Coalition of Community-Based Correctional and Community-Re-Entry Service Organizations (NC4RSO) is to support existing local, regional, and national corrections-related community-based organizations and to support the growth of additional community-based services around the U.S. NC4RSO, as an umbrella organization for community-based corrections-related organizations, recognizes the need for communities to engage in making communities safe, supporting tangibly corrective paths for current and former offenders, and creating community contexts that reduce the potential for high-risk demographic groups to head toward paths of crime and incarceration. Individual organizations work toward specific aspects of these topics; as a coordinated network, NC4RSO works to increasing the national scope of community-based corrections-related services, advocate for objectives identified as being of common interest for member organizations within the corrections and corrections-related contexts, broaden corrections-related community engagement, and directly or indirectly support the development of topic and/or region-specific corrections-related initiatives.

### **National Coalition of Community-Based Correctional and Community-Re-Entry Service Organizations (NC4RSO)**

250 H St. #224

Blaine, WA 98230

(360) 734-1236

<http://www.nc4rso.org>