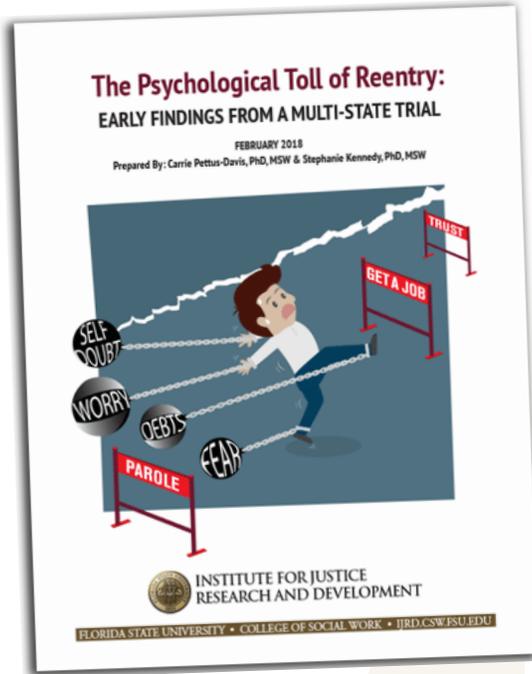


## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM QR 2

# THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL OF REENTRY



In the [second quarterly report](#), we explored the post-release experiences of our study participants in the comparison group – those who are not receiving the 5-Key Model. Using study participants' own reflections, we described the psychological toll that reentry takes on many individuals, underscoring their struggles to adapt to life after incarceration, to adjust to the slow pace of post-release stabilization, and to manage their worries and anxieties about their lives during the reentry period. We also examined how leaving incarceration affects not just study participants, but their families as well, who rarely receive any formal support as they welcome their loved one back home. Finally, we described the reentry service landscape that exists in the absence of the 5-Key Model and how men, in particular, struggle with the reality that they need help while wanting desperately to remain independent.

*Key takeaways include:*

Individuals leaving incarceration must psychologically transition from the prison setting back home. However, this transition is also experienced by their families and communities.

- Men and women are forever changed by the lasting effects of the incarceration experience.
- Prison life often alters how a person responds to other people, stressors, or life events.
  - Leaving prison requires individuals to make decisions and trust their choices, which may be overwhelmingly uncomfortable and difficult for them.
- The inability to rebuild a life and get basic human needs of food and shelter met by limiting employment and housing can lead to desperation to survive.
- Participants who receive tangible and/or emotional support from family experience reentry differently than participants whose families were not able to help or who were not active in their lives.
  - Those without strong family connections tended to be highly isolated and were frequently homeless.
- For some formerly incarcerated men, accessing services and needing help was experienced as a marker of failure as an independent and strong man. Other men who were desperate enough to seek out services needed for survival came up empty-handed and felt deceived.
- In the examination of the reentry experience in our 4 study states, four realities emerged:
  1. Recidivism has historically been blamed on the failure of individuals, yet recidivism is the result of a combination of systemic barriers and failures and the decisions of system actors as well as individual behavior on behalf of those who have gone to prison.
  2. Communities are not adequately holding themselves accountable for helping individuals succeed after prison.
  3. Unpredictable release dates often compounds the already existing challenges of reentry.
  4. Family support in reentry is largely invisible although reentry is typically a family experience - more attention is needed in this area.



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