

Associations Between Well-Being & Reincarceration

EARLY DATA ON THE 5-KEY MODEL

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INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

With crucial support from the Charles Koch Foundation, the **Institute for Justice Research and Development (IJRD)** was launched in 2018 at Florida State University (FSU). The mission of IJRD is to use science to improve lives, communities, and institutions by developing and researching innovations that reduce unnecessary reliance on the criminal justice system and by offering solutions to produce equity and prosperity across race, socioeconomic class, and behavioral health status.

Within the first few months of its initiation, IJRD launched its flagship project – a multistate, multisite randomized controlled trial of the **5-Key Model for Reentry** delivered to individuals releasing from incarceration and back into their communities. The 5-Key Model trial provides research for the Safe Streets and Second Chances Initiative (S3C). S3C is an innovative, scientific approach to reducing recidivism. S3C uses academic research partnerships to refine a model of interventions during and post-incarceration. In turn, S3C simultaneously addresses policy reforms and enhances reentry supports.

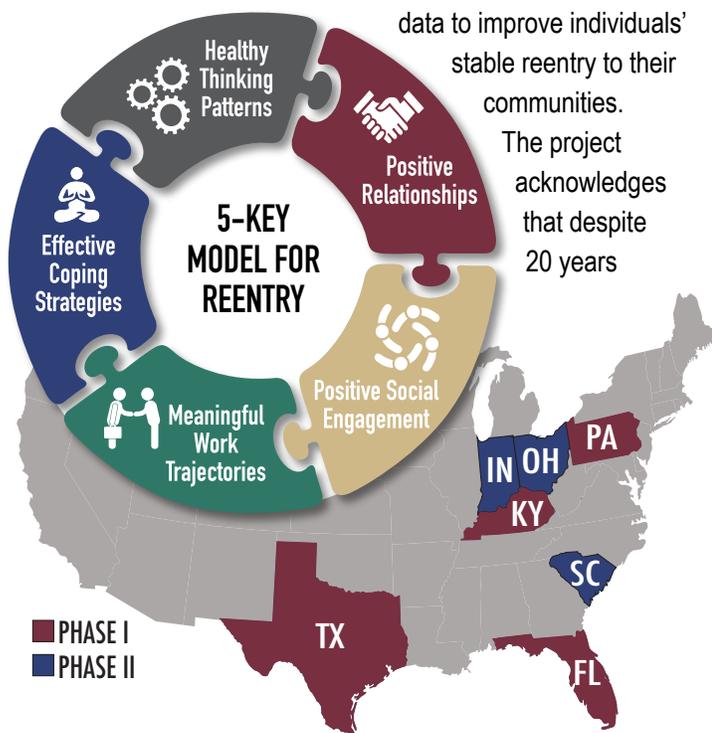
The 5-Key Model study was designed to produce actionable data to improve individuals' stable reentry to their communities.

The project acknowledges that despite 20 years

and over \$600 million dollars of federal funding efforts, no uniform and effective model of reentry exists. The 5-Key Model research occurs on a rolling basis – the knowledge generated from ongoing data collection with study participants allows IJRD to adjust the model and enable the model to evolve by testing and learning. This approach allows for community partners and policy makers to adopt research into real-world settings in real time. Ultimately, the study was designed to create a prototype for holistic reentry plans with targeted reentry services and interventions to be created and disseminated to stakeholders over a Four-Phased study. Evidence-driven reentry approaches from this study can be implemented with individuals concurrently with their admission to incarceration to shape their prison and post-release experience. During each Phase of the study, once actionable data is available, Safe Streets & Second Chances partners continue to adjust, test, learn, and evolve, with a goal of improving the efforts of targeted reentry services.

This is the ninth quarterly report which describes the inner workings and early discoveries of participants and researchers in the national groundbreaking longitudinal study officially titled, **A Multisite Randomized Controlled Trial of the 5-Key Model for Reentry**. Since May 2018, the study has enrolled 2,384 incarcerated individuals from more than 100 correctional facilities into the 5-Key Model study – 1,192 of whom were randomly assigned to receive the 5-Key Model across 7 states with the other 50% as a comparison group who did not receive any 5-Key Model interventions (these individuals released from prison and received existing services while incarcerated and in then in their communities).

Thus, the 5-Key Model study is a randomized controlled trial, also referred to as an experimental or clinical trial which is the gold standard research approach when examining interventions for human beings whether the intervention is medical, pharmaceutical, or behavioral in nature.



Most behavioral research conducted is cross-sectional – that is, it gathers data and draws conclusions from research participants at only one point in time. The 5-Key Model study is a far more complex study. The study is a longitudinal experimental trial which assesses change in research participants' perceptions and behavior over time, gathering data from participants at multiple follow-up timepoints. In this way, we can understand the effect of intervention exposure over time as individuals leave incarceration and return home. The 5-Key Model study follows phases of these gold standard practices.

| Activities by Research Phase

PHASE 1: Identify areas not working fast, learn quickly, and refine; look at preliminary trends.

PHASE 2: Simplify the 5-Key Model and optimize the model; look at outcomes.

PHASE 3: Confirm effectiveness and compare outcomes to cost and impact of other models.

PHASE 4: National dissemination of a scalable model.

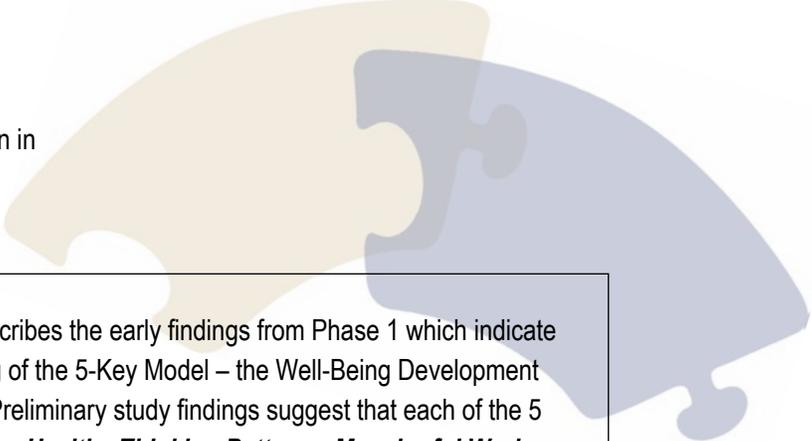
Phase 1 was recently completed in 12 urban and rural counties across four states – Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Phase 2 of the study began in August 2019 in Indiana, Ohio, and South Carolina.

The 5-Key Model is the first standardized and manualized approach to reentry that is based on the assumption that when the promotion of human potential is a core focus, reincarceration can be significantly reduced. **Given the dramatic findings of the most recent national report on recidivism – 5 out of 6 of those released from state prisons are re-arrested within a 9-year period – this new approach – paired with policy reforms – is critically needed.**

The data described in this report were collected directly from study participants during interviews conducted after individuals had released from incarceration. The current analysis is based on responses from individuals across the four Phase 1 states – Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

You can learn more about the overall 5-Key Model study methodology [here](#), how the 5-Key Model was developed [here](#), and the broader work of IJRD at ijrd.csw.fsu.edu.

You can access our eight previous reports – including one-page summaries of each report – [here](#).



This brief quarterly report describes the early findings from Phase 1 which indicate that the conceptual grounding of the 5-Key Model – the Well-Being Development Model – is being supported. Preliminary study findings suggest that each of the 5 Key Facilitators of Well-Being – **Healthy Thinking Patterns, Meaningful Work Trajectories, Effective Coping Strategies, Positive Social Engagement, and Positive Relationships** – are associated with increases in psychological, social, and occupational well-being. Further, findings indicate that well-being enhancement is associated with reduced rates of reincarceration.

| Key Preliminary Findings on Outcome Trends

Prior to reporting these early findings, it is important to revisit the purpose of Phase 1 of the study, which was largely about feasibility and piloting the 5-Key Model. Then, the purpose of Phase 2 is to further define, refine, and optimize the model. Therefore, outcome analyses in Phase 2 will speak more directly to the comparative outcomes between those who receive the 5-Key Model and those who do not. However, during a pilot phase it is appropriate to look at outcome trends, which is what we have examined. Listed below are the early findings about these trends.

- At both 8 and 15 months after their release from incarceration, fewer people assigned to the 5-Key Model group report a reincarceration event than those in the comparison group who were eligible to receive standard available services.
 - At 8 months, 18% of participants assigned to the 5-Key Model group reported a reincarceration event compared to 28% of participants assigned to the comparison group.
 - At 15 months, 28% of participants assigned to the 5-Key Model group reported a reincarceration event, compared to over 40% of participants assigned to the comparison group.
- Among participants assigned to the 5-Key Model group, higher levels of reported well-being on each of the 5 Keys was associated with reduced likelihood of reincarceration.
- Across both 5-Key and comparison participants, higher levels of overall well-being were associated with reduced likelihood of reincarceration. At 15 months after release from incarceration, participants in the 5-Key Model group reported higher levels of overall well-being.
- Across both groups of participants, having a job was not associated with reincarceration or well-being.
- At 15 months after release from incarceration, a slightly higher percentage of participants in the 5-Key Model group reported active employment (78%), compared to participants in the comparison group (74%).
- Each of the 5 Key Facilitators of Well-Being – *Healthy Thinking Patterns, Meaningful Work Trajectories, Effective Coping Strategies, Positive Social Engagement, and Positive Relationships* – are associated with increases in overall well-being. The positive association between Meaningful Work Trajectories and well-being occurred through reported employment aspirations and did not show associations from the presence of having a job.
- There appears to be significant underreporting of substance use by both groups of participants – wherein 80-90% report no alcohol or drug use respectively. Among those who do report substance use, participants in the 5-Key Model group are more likely to report using substances. Possible explanations for this might be that these individuals have greater frequency or quantity of substance use or it could be that these individuals are more likely to report substance use because of greater trust in the research team through their engagement with the 5-Key Model practitioners.
- Participants of color, older participants, and participants with multiple incarceration histories were more likely to engage in 5-Key Model programming and receive more sessions than those without these characteristics.
- The amount of program engagement with the 5-Key Model varies, but findings suggest that at 15 months after release from incarceration, individuals who received more sessions of 5-Key Model programming report higher levels of employment, overall well-being, and less substance use (among those who reported any substance use).

| Other Actionable Research Findings

In addition to the preliminary trends in outcomes, to date, several actionable research findings have surfaced that have informed policy in states where the 5-Key Model is being tested and in states where the 5-Key model is not being tested, as well as being referenced in federal reentry planning committees under the leadership of [John Koufos](#), National Director of Reentry Initiatives at Right on Crime and S3C. Among the major preliminary findings that can or have informed policy changes are the following:

- In 3 of the 4 Phase 1 states, approximately 50% of study participants were not released at their predicted release times for various reasons, making it difficult to implement holistic reentry plans – both within and well beyond the study period.
- There is an overemphasis on minor technical violations (in two states by halfway houses in addition to post-release supervision) resulting in unnecessary reincarceration in some states.
- Communities are not creating opportunities to support rehabilitation progress that was initiated during incarceration, which diminishes the impact of holistic reentry plans as there is not enough follow-through, opportunity, or support in the communities to which individuals release.
- Death rates are incredibly high after release from incarceration. Many deaths are preventable.
- Despite high need for mental health and substance use disorder treatment during and after incarceration, incarcerated and recently released individuals have limited access to effective treatment in correctional facilities or in their communities.
- Conditions of release make high and sometimes unrealistic compliance demands that interfere with a major goal for successful reentry – such as employment or treatment for behavioral health disorders.
- Although it has long been known that reentry services need to begin prior to release and that continuity in reentry supports by the same provider are critical, actual practice does not overcome the geographic distance barriers between prisons and communities. At IJRD/in the 5-Key Model study, we have implemented pre- and post-release virtual and mobile supports that are bridging this barrier and establishing lessons to be shared with community partners and policymakers.
- State identification and other critical reentry documents are still not getting into the hands of individuals releasing from prison in many cases, making it more difficult for individuals to secure employment, housing, and other critical reentry services.
- Facility administration and staff, existing administrative records, and study participants all have different perceptions of how much pre-release reentry planning is occurring and there may need to be increased capacity to provide holistic reentry planning support pre-release.

The 5-Key Model research and the S3C initiative are uncovering programming and policy changes that must occur if reductions in reincarceration rates are to happen on a national scale. The findings in this report that a well-being development approach – the conceptual lens underlying the 5-Key Model – reduces reincarceration is promising, especially the more people engage in the model. Our hope is that rapid dissemination of research findings to policymakers will facilitate a groundswell shift in current reentry approaches.

The report was prepared by:

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IJRD is a research center housed within the College of Social Work at FSU. IJRD team members reside in communities across the nation and are currently implementing the 5-Key Model for Reentry trial as well as research on other pressing issues relevant to data driven criminal justice reform.