



BRIEF REPORT: COVID-19's Impact on Reentry Research

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OVERVIEW

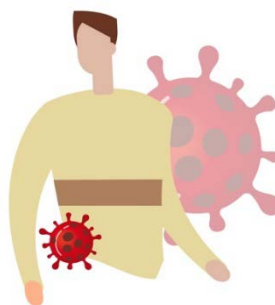
When the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact communities across the United States in March 2020, most community members were concerned about how their lives would be affected.

Researchers with ongoing studies were also concerned about how the pandemic would affect their ability to assess outcomes in their ongoing research. In March 2020, the **5-Key Model for Reentry** study was active in four states across the nation. We anticipated that the pandemic might make it more difficult to detect the impact of the 5-Key Model on well-being outcomes given how drastically everyone in the country's lives were impacted by the pandemic – and responses to control the pandemic – even those without a history of incarceration.

As approximately 30% of study participants in our first four states – Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Texas – were still being followed to assess how the 5-Key Model impacted their long-term reentry outcomes when the pandemic began, we chose to empirically examine the impact of COVID-19 to determine whether and how the pandemic compromised well-being for study participants. Our goal was to explore how study participants were experiencing COVID-19 and whether participation in the 5-Key Model was beneficial to them during this time.

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. Access our 10 previous reports [here](#).

The data presented below were collected from individuals after they had been living in the community after their incarceration for approximately 15 months.



AREAS WHERE 5-KEY MODEL PARTICIPATION APPEARED TO BE PROTECTIVE AGAINST THE IMPACT OF COVID- 19 FOR 5-KEY MODEL PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the 5-Key Model for Reentry appeared to have protective effects for individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. All participants included in the analysis had engaged with a 5-Key Model practitioner after leaving incarceration.

A greater proportion of members of the 5-Key Model group reported **having one or more jobs** during COVID-19 compared to those in comparison group.

Self-reported **drug use decreased** for members of the 5-Key Model group during COVID-19 but increased for members of the comparison group. A greater proportion of members of the 5-Key Model group recognized that they **needed help for their drug use** during COVID-19 when compared to those in the comparison group.

Study participants had been randomly assigned to receive either the 5-Key Model or to a comparison group, where they received standard reentry services in their communities.



Individuals in the 5-Key Model group reported having access to more **community resources** than those in the comparison group including housing, transportation, clothing, and food. In contrast, comparison group participants reported losing these same types of resources during COVID-19.

A greater proportion of those in the 5-Key Model group rated their general **physical health** as good or excellent during COVID-19 compared to those in the comparison group. Comparison group members were more likely to rate their health as poor or fair during COVID-19.

AREAS WHERE ALL STUDY PARTICIPANTS FACED CHALLENGES

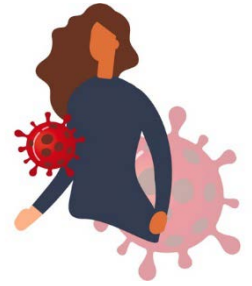
There were areas where all study participants appeared to be struggling when we interviewed them during the pandemic – whether they had been randomly assigned to receive 5-Key Model services or to the comparison group.

We compared data across these two groups pre-COVID-19 to post-COVID-19.

Although we noted above that a greater proportion of 5-Key Model participants were employed compared to members of the comparison group, overall, unemployment increased when comparing for all participants during COVID-19, but increased significantly more for members of the comparison group.

Participants interviewed during COVID-19 were more worried about money and struggled more to pay monthly bills compared to those interviewed before COVID-19.

Overall, housing stability decreased for study participants interviewed during COVID-19 compared to those interviewed before COVID-19. Fewer participants reported renting or owning their own home and more indicated that they were “doubling up” with friends or family.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Although the COVID-19 pandemic posed an unprecedented health crisis for all community members, we were eager to explore whether participation in the 5-Key Model would have benefits to participants during this time when community members were all grappling with the unique circumstances that COVID-19 posed.

There were certainly areas where all study participants experienced additional obstacles and barriers to well-being and community stability after COVID-19 began, however, it appears that participation in the 5-Key Model offered some protection to the individuals participating in the 5-Key Model.



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