The Fine Line Between Perpetration and Victimization

*Dr. Elena Quintana, Adler University*

- Our main concern in the commission is to reduce the number of those in prison without affecting public safety
- In order to promote public safety we must address and understand trauma and through this we may reduce victimization
- Complex trauma
  - Ongoing, very deep trauma
  - Results from physical/sexual/emotional abuse
  - Very prevalent in the court system
  - Impedes in executive functioning capability as well as attachment
- Trauma has a large impact on brain development
- Epigenetics-large, stressful impacts in our life (like incarceration) can imbed itself into our genetic code and impact future generations
- All trauma experiences affect brain development as well as brain mass and the brain’s ability to adapt
- PET scans of the brain show huge disparities between children who have experienced trauma and those who have not
- Trauma is hardwired into our brain
- Viewing/experiencing trauma can impede your vision, long term memory, abstract thinking, abstract hope, executive functioning
  - Brain is trying to adapt to the environment you have continually been exposed to
- Those who have experienced a lot of trauma are quick to get upset and slow to soothe because how their brain has developed around their experiences of trauma
- ACES (adverse childhood experiences) Study shows a cluster effect of adverse childhood experiences
  - Those who experience one, are likely to have experience others as well
• People with numerous (6+) adverse childhood experiences tend to die earlier than those who have low ACES
  o Due to health disparities throughout their lifetime
• Higher likelihood of being raped with higher ACES
• Juvenile offenders
  o 84% of girls 81% of boys have experienced family violence
  o 68% of girl and 65% of boys have had a household member who has been incarcerated
  o 31% of girls and 7% of boys have been sexually abused
• Adult offenders
  o Have 4x the number of ACES
• Trauma of correction officers
  o 34% of correction officers suffer from PTSD
  o Suicide risk for correction officers is 39% higher than all other positions
• Trauma Informed Care
  o “What happened to you?” NOT “What’s wrong with you?”

The Prison Letters
Dr. Elena Quintana, Adler University & Ray Robinson
• Surveys sent out to 25 penitentiaries throughout Illinois
• Over 1200 letters/surveys were sent back
• Responses pertain to healthcare, education programs, length of sentencing, family programs
• Length of sentencing
  o Long sentences debilitate prisoners
  o “Start giving sentences of goals”
  o 94% did not believe sentences were fair
  o Accountability laws unfair
  o Racism plays large part in length of sentencing
  o Did sentencing improve community?
    ▪ Many responses indicated that the same behavior is ongoing in the community
  o Many long sentences fail to acknowledge ability to rehabilitate
• Many denied basic programming or educational support
• Healthcare access?
  o 94% said they have had access to healthcare
  o Very long wait times for treatment
  o Ibuprofen given for almost all ailments
  o Some conditions may go untreated for years
• Programs?
  o Want more education, mental health, substance abuse programs
• Planning for return to community?
  o 31% say yes, 59% no
  o Need to prepare inmates for re-entering or they will quickly recidivate
• Family programming?
  o Most have not participated in reunification programs
  o Belief that IDOC tears families apart
    ▪ Do not facilitate visits with family members
Criminal Justice Reform and the Perspectives of Victims

Vicki Smith, Executive Director of Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- Speaking on the experiences of victims of domestic violence
- Topic of domestic violence began to gain prominence in the early 1970s
- Domestic violence is used as a control mechanism over their victims
- 1980s-Mental health services has been shifted to community based programs, however this is difficult to access, especially for those in domestic violence shelters
- 1990s-Welfare reform has eliminated the safety need victims need to be independent from their abuser
- Black women who are victims of domestic violence often to not report black male abuser because they do not want to add to the number of black men in prison
- Jail and prison have *not* been effective for domestic violence cases because:
  - System doesn’t take domestic violence seriously, little understanding that this IS a serious crime
  - Focus is usually on minority populations
  - There are few programs within prison that hold abuser accountable
- Children need to be educated on domestic violence so that they not commit it when older
- What rehabilitative efforts are available/needed?
- Only model used to combat domestic violence is for male abusers against female
  - Duluth model: groups of batterers brought together to speak on responsibility, accountability
    - Lack of cultural sensitivity within the program
    - Many other shortfalls of this program
- Those who have experienced trauma throughout their life need different type of programming/education regarding domestic violence

Using Public Safety Dollars to Promote Public Safety

Dr. Dan Cooper & Kathryn Bocanegra

- Million dollar blocks
  - Spending millions of dollars incarcerating people from one block
  - Investment in removing individuals from communities and placing them in prisons
  - 851 blocks in Chicago where over 1 million dollars was committed to incarcerating people in one year
    - Consists of average cost of incarcerating 1 person/year in prison
- Neighborhoods themselves can have criminogenic effects
- Incarceration rates have negative health effects on neighborhood
  - Increased levels of stress have longstanding effects
- Social Capital
  - Measures the density of community organizations and non-profits within an area
- High incarceration rates can also make neighborhoods more dangerous in million dollar blocks
  - Incarceration disrupts informal social controls which undermines public safety
  - Lack of male leaders in the area, as they are in prison
  - Need to look at informal social control networks in order to make communities safer
- Importance of Community
  - Reinvestment strategies
    - Critiques of Justice Reinvestment Program
• Little evidence that data is being used through mapping to make reinvestment back into the community
• Money instead goes back into law enforcement and probation
• Many financial incentives for locking people up, but little incentive for doing something different
  ▪ Think smaller!
  • Find strong community programs to do small comprehensive projects within the community

  o Courts
    ▪ How can courts address quality of life within the community
    ▪ Community prosecution
      • Prosecutors located within high risk neighborhoods
    ▪ Community sanctioning
      • Prioritizes needs of communities and restores the community from the losses it has incurred from the crimes

  o Corrections
    ▪ Supervising probationers and parolees where they live
      • Satellite offices within neighborhoods
    ▪ Community supervision

• Evaluation of Programs
  o Need to divert corrections, housing, social services, education, community services money into the community structure
  o Gauge the communities want in terms of public safety
  o Importance of prioritizing programs for spending money on children in order to avoid spending more money in the long run for incarceration.

Commission Discussion
• Focus on the high incarceration areas for reform measures
• Should offenders return to the communities from which they came? Will this cause the same cycle?
  o Community members want these people to return rehabilitated and as a changed person
• There is no shared understanding of a goal for public safety
  o There is a need for a mission statement of some sort so that all are accountable for the same goal
  o Numerous different groups need to be included in on this goal
    ▪ Law enforcement, community members, housing, corrections, etc.
• The Commission needs to create a mission statement that will include performance measures
  o “Reducing victimization by increasing functionality”
• Discussion of million dollar blocks in Chicago
  o Looking into these blocks and seeing what is there in terms of law enforcement
  o Belief that there is an overreliance on law enforcement on these blocks
• Too much reliance on corrections for several different functions
• We need to provide grants for workshops for judges, law enforcement, leaders in community and social service programs to collaborate with each other to promote public safety
  o Incentivize collaboration
• We need to get beyond just talking about the issues, we need to begin making recommendations
• We need one case manager per offender/parolee to map and track their progress, not case managers for every different aspect of their reentry
• We need to implement a spoke model of community justice programs
  o One central community service program located at the center
• Focusing on Cook County and Chicago is important
  o Start out small with the highest crime communities
• Getting OMB involved will be of the utmost importance
• Addressing to the public that probation and other alternatives are actually harsher and harder than life in prison
  o We are trying to make people accountable and rehabilitate into society

Public Comment
• Creation of a “Marshall Plan” to help provide money and support for high crime/high incarceration communities
• We need to implement new and innovative programs for these million dollar blocks
  o Place investment back into community members, stop studying the problems and work to fix the programs
• Idea that offenders are worth more in prison than they are walking down the street
  o Many say that if they had been making from their job what DOC spends on them, they would have never gone to prison
• Safe from the Start Program
  o Works with children, 0-5, who have been exposed to domestic violence in their homes on these million dollar blocks
  o Wanting to expand this program throughout the whole state
• We need to invest in people
• Most people leaving from prison do not have the support of friends and family when they get home
  o Community support and programs are so important in ensuring people stay on the right track and do not recidivate
• Prisoners need the ability to learn computer programs like Word and Excel in order to be more marketable once they are released