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**Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC)
on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities**



The Politics of Disability, Ex-Offender Status, and Employment: What Every Rehabilitation Counselor Needs to Know

Presenters: Glacia Ethridge, Angel Dowden, & Michael Brooks
LU-RRTC State-of-the-Science Conference
September 28-29, 2017
Atlanta Georgia

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- + To increase awareness of barriers to employment for ex-offenders with disabilities.
- + To identify how racial/ethnic minority ex-offenders are disproportionately unemployed and earn less than their white counterparts.
- + To identify the importance of including criminal history data as part of RSA-911 data collection.



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NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY,
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BACKGROUND

- + There are 6,851,000 individuals or 1 in every 36 under some form of correctional supervision (e.g. probation, parole, jail or prison; U.S. Department of Justice, 2016).
- + These individuals experience significant barriers toward gainful employment due to their criminal history. Several of the major barriers to employment include limited education, sporadic work history, inadequate job skills and training, and employer discrimination (Rodriquez & Emsellem, 2011).
- + Barring individuals from employment based on their criminal records disproportionately excludes African American and Latino populations because they are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.



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BACKGROUND

- + According to The Pew Center on the States (2009), 1 in 106 White men, 1 in 36 Hispanic men, and 1 in 15 African American men are incarcerated. Additionally, 1 in 45 White adults, 1 in 27 Hispanic adults and 1 in 11 African American adults are under correctional supervision.
- + Western and Pettit (2005) found that White men's hourly wages exceeded Black men by 30% between the years of 1985–1999.



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STUDY OBJECTIVES

- + What impact does the race/ethnicity of ex-offenders have on employability?
- + Does disability type impact the employability of ex-offenders?
- + How does race/ethnicity impact wage earnings for ex-offenders?



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METHOD

- + Data was derived using RSA 911 data for years 2004-2013.
- + Participants were Caucasian, African American, and Latino ex offenders seeking state vocational rehabilitation services.
- + One-way ANOVA, Chi Square, and Logistic Regression data analyses were used to address the three research questions.
- + For comparisons, the variable-adult correction, was used to differentiate those persons who were living in a non-adult correctional facility and correctional facility.



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KEY INFORMANT CHARACTERISTICS

Profile of Participants

Variables	Label	n	%
Living Arrangement at Application	Adult Correctional Facility	32,825	0.58
Gender	Male	27,319	83.23
	Female	5,506	16.77
Race	White Non-Hispanics	5,466	38.37
	Black (Non-Hispanic)	7,756	45.89
	Hispanic	556	33.13



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KEY INFORMANT CHARACTERISTICS (continued)

Profile of Participants

Variables	Label	n	%
Disability	Visual	176	0.54
	Hearing	170	0.52
	Orthopedic	1,277	3.89
	Mental Retardation/Intellectual/ Developmental Disability	1,818	5.54
	Substance Abuse	13,606	41.45
	Mental Health	11,101	33.82
	Learning Disability	1,332	4.06
	Traumatic Brain Injury	109	0.33
	Other	3,236	9.86



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METHOD (continued)

- + A multivariate logit model was developed that included race/ethnicity, disability, and wage earned as it relates to the employability of ex-offenders seeking vocational rehabilitation services.
- + The weekly earnings at closure variable was recoded as wages earned.



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RESULTS

Research Question	Identified Challenges
1. What impact does the race/ethnicity of ex-offenders have on employability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hispanics had the lowest successful employment rate (33.13%);▪ Non-Hispanic White ex-offenders (38.37%).▪ Non Hispanic Black ex-offenders had the highest employability (45.89%)



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RESULTS (continued)

Research Question	Identified Facilitators
2. Does disability type impact the employability of ex-offenders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The results of the logit model suggested ex-offenders with substance abuse diagnoses are less likely (OR=0.897) to achieve employment outcomes when compared with otherwise similar ex-offenders with sensory, physical, intellectual, and other type of disabilities.▪ There is no difference in the employability for ex-offenders with mental health diagnoses and with sensory, physical, intellectual, and other types of disabilities.

RESULTS (continued)

Research Question	Identified Facilitators
<p>3. How does race/ethnicity impact wage earnings for ex-offenders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One way ANOVA test was conducted to compare differences in hourly wage among the three racial/ethnic groups.▪ The results suggested that the differences were statistically significant.▪ Black ex-offenders had the lowest hourly wage (\$8.05).▪ Hispanics had an hourly wage of \$8.86.▪ White ex-offenders had significantly higher hourly wage (\$9.24) compared with Blacks and Hispanics.

Conclusions

- + Ex-offenders with disabilities experience substantial criminal justice and reintegration issues related to their disability. Those who receive vocational rehabilitation services experience significant internal and external barriers to employment (Harley, Cabe, Woolums, & Whittaker, 2014).
- + Regarding the next steps for research, grantors should issue a call to the rehabilitation profession to consider focusing on ex-offenders with disabilities as populations deserving of attention. Furthermore, there is a need for an analysis of models that are applicable to community reintegration and inclusion. An initial strategy is replication of models as applied to African American and Latino populations with culturally sensitive indicators. Research on “Ban the Box” rules may prove fruitful for understanding the impact on African American and Latino ex-offenders with disabilities.

Conclusions (continued)

- + Rehabilitation counselors may need to strengthen their social justice advocacy.
- + Specific advocacy practices for rehabilitation counselors could include: (a) identifying potential barriers and biases within the criminal justice system that adversely affects minority groups, (b) determining the effect of advocacy efforts on the criminal justice and VR systems and constituents, and (c) recognizing the impact of oppression and other barriers to health development.

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