Methods supplement
Bridges from prison: making the case for jobs and relationships

Appendix A: Research methods and samples

To arrive at the recommendations in this brief, we applied Strategic Frame Analysis® – an approach to communications research and practice that yields strategies for shifting the discourse around social issues. This approach has been shown to increase understanding of, and engagement in, conversations about scientific and social issues.

Below, we describe the research we conducted in which we designed and tested frames to address the obstacles in public thinking and leverage the openings about criminal justice, prisons, and people in and leaving prison. These frames were tested in 2021–2022 and refined using three methods: two rounds of peer discourse sessions (PDS), a type of focus group; survey experiments with a representative sample of the population in England and Wales; and usability trials, another type of focus group, with members of the criminal justice reform sector. In total, 6,855 people from across England and Wales were included in this research, as well as 25 members of the criminal justice reform sector.

This work builds on earlier research we conducted on criminal justice reform in the United Kingdom.[1]

Frame design

To identify effective ways of talking about people leaving prison and what they need, FrameWorks researchers developed a set of tasks that the frames needed to address and then brainstormed potential reframing strategies that might accomplish one or more of these tasks (for example, metaphors, values and narratives). After generating a list of candidate framing ideas to test, researchers solicited feedback on these ideas from project partners to ensure the frames were both apt and potentially usable for those working in the criminal justice reform sector. Based on this feedback, researchers refined a set of frames and brought them into empirical testing. The frames that we tested in both rounds of PDS are listed in Appendix B.

Peer discourse sessions

FrameWorks researchers conducted an initial round of PDS in April 2021 to identify mindsets relating to crime, criminal justice, prisons, and people in and leaving prison, as well as to test an initial set of frames. We conducted these sessions virtually over Zoom with 36 participants (six sessions with six participants each). A diverse sample of participants was recruited from across England and Wales in terms of geographical location, age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, education level and political party identification.

After an analysis of both waves of the survey experiment was conducted, FrameWorks researchers retested and refined frames that tested well in the experiment in a second round of PDS with 36 participants (six sessions with six participants each). These sessions were conducted virtually over Zoom in February and March 2022. A diverse sample of participants was recruited from across the United Kingdom in terms of geographical location, age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, education level and political party identification.

Both rounds of PDS involved two-hour-long sessions that included a variety of discussion prompts and activities designed to evaluate how the frames were taken up in social context and their usability during conversations with peers. We tested metaphors, values, issue frames and narratives. The frames we tested in both rounds of PDS are itemised in Appendix B.

Experimental surveys

After analysing how the candidate frames performed in the first round of PDS, FrameWorks researchers refined the frames to bring forward for testing in the survey experiment. Two online experimental surveys involving a total sample of 6,783 (Wave 1 N = 3,173; Wave 2 N = 3,610) adults from England and Wales were conducted between November 2021 and February 2022 to test the effectiveness of frames on shifting public understanding, attitudes and support for programmes and policies. Table 1 provides demographic information about the participants from the two experiments.

Table 1: National survey experiments – participant demographic information[*]

Variable	W1 Count	W1 Percentage	W2 Count	W2 Percentage
Gender				
Male	1,626	51	1,769	49
Female	1,541	49	1,832	51
Nonbinary/Other	n/a	n/a	9	<1
Country				
England	2,967	94	3,393	94
Wales	206	6	217	6
Scotland	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0
Region				
North East England	265	9	370	11
North West England	532	18	619	18

* Percentages may exceed 100 percent due to rounding.

East Midlands	350	12	443	13
West Midlands	405	14	479	14
South East England	552	19	640	19
South West England	303	10	289	9
Greater London	560	19	553	16
Age bracket (W1 Mean = 50) (W2 Mean = 49)				
Under 20	0	0	0	0
20–39	1,046	33	1,405	39
40–59	1,009	32	1,002	28
60+	1,118	35	1,203	33
Income				
Less than £15,600	511	16	770	21
£15,601–£31,200	998	31	1,162	32
£31,201–£46,800	703	22	790	22
46,801 or more	961	30	888	25
Education				
No formal qualifications	195	6	442	12
GCSEs or equivalent (e.g., O-Levels)	1,132	36	1,275	35
A Level, apprenticeship, or equivalent	651	21	667	18
Undergraduate or graduate degree	1,195	38	1,226	34
Ethnicity				
White	2,829	89	3,136	87
Asian/Asian British	206	6	234	6
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	79	2	118	3
Mixed/Multiple/Other	59	2	122	3
Party				
Conservative	1,345	42	1,469	41
Labour	1,127	36	1,421	39
Liberal Democrat	361	11	370	10
Other party	340	11	350	10
Personally spent time in prison				

Yes	249	8	189	5
No	2,924	92	3,421	93
Have family or close friends who spent time in prison				
Yes	632	20	771	21
No	2,541	80	2,839	79

Usability trials

After refining frames in the second round of PDS, FrameWorks researchers conducted usability trials, another type of focus group, with 25 members of the criminal justice reform sector who work with people leaving prison (some of whom have lived experience with the issue). We conducted four sessions in April and May 2022 virtually over Zoom. In these sessions, we had participants engage in structured activities and discussions to test the usability of the frames and test whether the frames were applicable to members of the sector. The frames we tested in the usability trials are listed in Appendix B.

Appendix B: Tested framing strategies
PDS Round 1

Metaphors:

Roundabout with exits: *Leaving prison is like exiting a busy roundabout. People have been going round and round in the prison system, and finally they can take the exit to leave it. Yet if the exits aren't clearly marked, wide enough, designed for safety and well lit, people won't be able to exit the roundabout or know what direction they're going in. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need the right supports of employment opportunities and family relationships to exit the roundabout of the prison system and head in the right direction back into society.*

Steep climb and descent: *Leaving prison is like descending from a steep climb. People have been struggling to climb up the mountain of the prison system, and they finally reach the top. Yet without stable terrain, good visibility and the right climbing gear, a climber won't be able to descend the mountain and reach level ground. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need the right supports of employment opportunities and family relationships to climb down from the prison system's mountain and reach bottom to make it back into society.*

Crossing over a wide river: *Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river. People have been on one side*

of the river in the prison system, and when they leave it, they need to be able to cross over safely. The more bridges to society are available, the easier it is to cross over. Yet if the bridges aren't there, if they're not built well, aren't maintained over time, or collapse, people are more likely to be stranded on one side of the river. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need well-constructed and maintained bridges to society that are built with the right supports of employment opportunities and family relationships so they can cross the river back into society.

Jumping off a plane: *Leaving prison is like jumping off a plane. People have been circling the sky in the plane of the prison system, and when they can jump out of the plane, they need a parachute and landing strip to safely land back into society. Yet if the parachute doesn't work properly or the radio connection to make the landing doesn't work, a parachuter will fall to their death. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need a functioning parachute of supports that includes employment opportunities and family relationships so they can safely land on the ground and re-enter society.*

Plugged in: *People leaving prison need to be plugged back into the power grid of society. Being in prison is like being unplugged from the everyday workings of society, and people leaving it need to be plugged back in. Yet without a power grid and available power stations and outlets, it's not possible to be plugged in. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need to be plugged into the grid of employment opportunities and family relationships to re-enter society.*

Building a house: *Leaving prison is like rebuilding a house from the ground up. The prison system is like an earthquake that destroys people's houses, and people leaving the prison system need to rebuild their lives, just as a new house needs to be constructed after disasters. Yet without a sense of what's left of the foundations, a new blueprint, and a team of professional builders, people can't rebuild a house that is safe and comfortable. The same is true for people leaving prison: They need the right supports such as employment opportunities and family relationships to rebuild the house of their lives back in society.*

Values:

National progress: Supporting people leaving prison can improve how our country does and is key to making progress as a society.

Human potential: Supporting people leaving prison ensures that all members of our society can reach their potential and add value to our society.

Problem solving: Supporting people leaving prison through step-by-step plans is a common-sense way to decrease crime and improve public safety.

Survey experiment

Wave 1

Metaphors:

Roundabouts + Exits (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like exiting a busy roundabout. People have been stuck in the prison system, and finally they can take the exit to leave it. Yet right now, we put up roadblocks in front of some of the exits, making it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities, so it's difficult for them to get going in the right direction.

We need to make sure the paths to a meaningful and productive life are open and easy to navigate. By providing people with the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, we can make sure they can get where they want to go and move in the right direction. And by making sure that people in prison can stay connected with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, we can ensure that they have help in navigating their way back into society.

We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison have clear paths forward and the help they need to move in the right direction.

Wide river + Bridges (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river. People have been stranded in the prison system, and finally they can cross back over to society. Yet right now, there aren't stable bridges back to society. We make it hard for people to get jobs and reconnect with their communities, so it's difficult for people to make their way back to stable ground.

We need to build safe and supportive bridges so that people can cross back to society and get to a meaningful and productive life. By providing people with the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, we can make sure they can get to a stable life. And by making sure people in prison can stay connected with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, we can ensure they have the support they need to make their way to solid ground.

We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison have supportive bridges that help them cross safely back to society.

Jumping off a plane (*N* = 225)

Leaving prison is like jumping off a plane. People have been circling the sky while they've been in prison, and finally they can make the jump back to society. Yet right now, leaving prison is like trying to jump off a plane without the right equipment or any help. We make it hard for people to get jobs and reconnect with their communities, so it's difficult for people to safely make their way back to solid ground.

We need to provide people with a parachute and a reliable guide so that they can land safely back in society and settle into a meaningful and productive life. By providing people with the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, we can ensure they have a working parachute to help them land safely in society. And by making sure that people in prison can stay connected with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, we can ensure that they have reliable guides to help them make the jump to back into society.

We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison have the equipment and help they need to land safely back in society.

Rebuilding a house (*N* = 225)

When people leave prison, rebuilding their lives is like rebuilding a house from the ground up. Yet right now, leaving prison is like trying to rebuild a house without a solid foundation or a team of people to help with construction. We make it hard for people to get jobs and reconnect with their communities, so it's difficult for people to build a stable life.

We need to make sure that people have a solid foundation and reconstruction crew to help them build meaningful and productive lives in society. By providing people with the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, we can ensure that they have a strong foundation for stable lives. And by making sure that people in prison can stay connected with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, we can ensure that they have a good team to help them successfully rebuild a place in society.

We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison have the foundation and crew they need to rebuild stable lives in society.

Values:

National progress (*N* = 225)

As a nation, it's important that we continue to move forward and make progress. Changing the way our criminal justice system works is vital to improving outcomes for our communities and making progress as a society. Right now, the criminal justice system doesn't set people up for success when they leave prison. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This makes it difficult for people leaving prison to become contributing members of society, and it holds our country back.

To help our nation move forward and fix our outdated criminal justice system, we must give people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and help them get a job when they leave. We

should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, so they can easily find a place in their community when they leave. By setting people up for success when they re-enter society, we can make progress as a nation and move our country forward.

Human potential (*N* = 225)

As a society, we know that reaching our collective potential requires helping everyone live up to their individual potential. Changing the way our criminal justice system works is vital for ensuring that all members of our society can reach their full potential and contribute to our communities. Right now, the criminal justice system doesn't set people up for success when they leave prison. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This makes it difficult for them to develop their talents and contribute to society in the most productive ways.

To make sure that people leaving prison can live up to their potential, we must give people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and help them get a job when they leave. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships, so they can find a place in their community when they leave and become the best version of themselves. By setting people up for success when they re-enter society, we can help them live up to their full potential and, in turn, help our society reach its potential.

Pragmatism (*N* = 225)

As a society, we believe in common-sense approaches to solving our problems. But right now, the way our criminal justice system works just doesn't make sense. When people leave prison, we expect them to become contributing members of society, but we don't set them up to for success. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This isn't practical, because if people don't have what they need to be successful after prison, they are more likely to end up right back in the criminal justice system.

A more practical solution would be to give people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and help them get a job when they leave. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they have good support and can easily find a place in their communities. By taking these common-sense steps, we can set people up for success when they re-enter society and make sure that once people leave prison, they don't go back.

Interconnectedness (general) (*N* = 225)

As a society, we are interconnected. What affects some of us affects all of us. That's why we all have a stake in improving our criminal justice system. Right now, the criminal justice system doesn't set people up for success when they leave prison. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. When we make it harder for people leaving prison to succeed, it strains our communities and hurts our society as a whole.

We are all in this together, and we need to welcome people back into society by giving them the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and help them get a job when they leave. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they have good support and can easily find a place in their communities. We're all part of one society, so setting people up for success when they leave prison is good for all of us.

Interconnectedness (safety) (N = 225)

As a nation, we are all interconnected. What affects some of us affects all of us. That's why we all have a stake in improving our criminal justice system. Right now, the criminal justice system doesn't set people up for success when they leave prison, which threatens everyone's safety. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This makes it more likely that they will commit another crime, which makes our communities less safe.

Because we are all connected, to keep our communities safe we must give people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and help them get a job when they leave, so they don't turn back to crime. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they have the support they need to make good choices. When people leaving prison are set up for success, it's good for all of us, because it helps make our communities safer.

Issue frames:

Rehabilitation (N = 225)

Criminal justice should be about rehabilitation. But right now, the criminal justice system is only about punishment, and it doesn't help people move in the right direction or build better lives after they leave prison. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This punishes them further and does nothing to rehabilitate their lives and help them avoid past mistakes.

We need to change our criminal justice system to focus on rehabilitation. This means giving people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave so they can build a positive life. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they have good support and can easily find a place in their communities. We need to support rehabilitation and give people leaving prison a real chance to restore their lives when they re-enter society.

The economy (N = 225)

Criminal justice is an economic issue. Right now, the criminal justice system doesn't help people become financially stable when they leave prison, which makes it harder for them to contribute to the economy. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities, which hurts the economy as a whole.

We need to take seriously the economic impact of the criminal justice system. This means giving people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, so that they can become financially stable and contribute to the larger economy. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they can easily find a place in their communities' day-to-day life and business. We need to ensure that people leaving prison are able to contribute to our economy.

Children's issue (*N* = 225)

Criminal justice is a children's issue. Right now, the criminal justice system keeps parents in prison from staying connected with their children, which can harm child development by causing psychological issues, health problems, and difficulty adjusting. The system also makes it hard for parents to get a job when they leave prison, which makes it difficult for them to support their children, and ultimately harms kids. This adds up to a "hidden sentence" for the children of parents in prison and makes it more likely that the children will end up in prison themselves.

We need to take seriously the impact of the criminal justice system on children. This means giving people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave, so that parents can support their children. We should also make sure that people in prison have the opportunity to connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships. This will help parents remain in their children's lives while in prison and successfully transition back into family life when they leave. By maintaining connections with loved ones and supporting parents leaving prison, we can better support children and their healthy development.

Inequality (*N* = 225)

Our criminal justice system perpetuates racism and racial inequality. BAME groups are more likely to be arrested and imprisoned, and also receive longer and tougher sentences than non-BAME groups. And right now, the criminal justice system makes it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs and to reconnect with their communities. This makes the effects of unequal treatment in the system even worse and more harmful for BAME people.

There are lots of things we need to do to address racism in the criminal justice system, but one step we must take is to better support BAME people when they leave prison. This means giving people the chance to gain work experience and skills while in prison and helping them get a job when they leave so that, like others, they can support themselves. We should also make sure that people in prison can connect with their loved ones and develop the skills they need to strengthen these relationships so that when they leave, they have good support and can easily find a place in their communities. By taking these steps, we can start to unravel the inequalities in our current criminal justice system and ensure that BAME people in prison are set up for success when they re-enter society.

Wave 2

Metaphors:

Wide river + Bridges (broad) (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river. People have been stranded in the prison system, and finally they can cross back over to society. Yet right now, there aren't stable bridges back to society. We make it hard for people to re-enter society when they leave prison, and it's almost impossible for them to find steady ground.

We need to build safe and supportive bridges so that people leaving prison can cross back to society and get to a meaningful and productive life. When people are making their way back from prison, we make it hard for people to get jobs or housing because of their criminal records, which means they can't gain their footing in society. If we build bridges back to solid ground, offering people education, helping them gain useful skills, and connecting them to supportive networks and relationships, they'll be able to successfully make their way back into society.

Right now, our justice system makes it hard for people to cross back to society when they leave prison. We need to redesign the justice system so that people have supportive bridges that help them find their footing and put their lives on stable ground.

Wide river + Bridges (jobs) (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river. People have been stranded in the prison system, and finally they can cross back over to society. Yet right now, we make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs—the bridges people need to find their way back to a stable life.

We need to help people leaving prison get jobs, which serve as bridges that enable people to cross back to society and get to a meaningful and productive life. When we make it hard for people to get jobs because of their criminal records, they can't gain their footing in society. If we build bridges back to solid ground by giving people the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience while in prison, and by helping them find jobs when they leave, they'll be able to successfully make their way back into society.

Right now, our justice system makes it hard for people to cross back to society when they leave prison. We need to redesign the justice system to help people more easily get jobs, which act as bridges that help them find their footing and put their lives on stable ground.

Rebuilding a house (broad) (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like rebuilding a house from the ground up. Yet right now, leaving prison is like trying to rebuild a house without a solid foundation. We make it hard for people to re-enter society when they leave prison, and it's almost impossible for them to build a better life on sturdy ground.

We need to make sure that people have a solid foundation for them to build up meaningful and productive lives after they leave prison. When people are making their way back from prison, we make it hard for people to get jobs or housing because of their criminal records, which means they don't have steady ground where they can rebuild their life. If we help people lay a strong foundation by offering them education, helping them gain useful skills, and connecting them to supportive networks and relationships, they'll be able to successfully rebuild their lives back in society.

Right now, our criminal justice system leaves people without a stable base when they leave prison. We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison have the strong foundation they need to rebuild stable lives in society.

Rebuilding a house (jobs) (N = 225)

Leaving prison is like rebuilding a house from the ground up. Yet right now, leaving prison is like trying to rebuild a house without a solid foundation. We make it hard for people leaving prison to get jobs – the foundation they need to rebuild a stable life.

=We need to help people leaving prison get jobs, which serve as the foundation that enable people to rebuild their lives in society and get to a meaningful and productive life. When we make it hard for people to get jobs when they leave prison, they don't have stable ground in society. If we help people lay a strong foundation by giving them the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience while in prison, and by helping them find a job when they leave, they'll be able to successfully rebuild their lives back in society.

Right now, our criminal justice system leaves people without a stable base when they leave prison. We need to redesign the justice system so that people leaving prison can more easily get the jobs they need to rebuild stable lives in society.

Values:

Pragmatism (jobs) (N = 225)

As a society, we believe in common-sense approaches to solving our problems. But right now, the way our criminal justice system works just doesn't make sense. When people leave prison, we expect them to become contributing members of society, but we don't help them build the skills they need to contribute, and we make it hard for them to get jobs. This isn't practical, because if people don't have what they need to be successful after prison, they are more likely to end up right back in the criminal justice system.

A more practical solution would be to offer the education and resources that people need to successfully re-enter society after they leave prison. This means giving people the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience while in prison and helping them find a job when they leave. It also means making sure that a person's criminal record doesn't prevent them from getting a job, so that people who are eager to work after leaving prison can find employment and live meaningful lives.

By making these common-sense changes to our criminal justice system, we can set people up for success when they leave prison, and reduce the likelihood that they'll go back.

Pragmatism (broad)

As a society, we believe in common-sense approaches to solving our problems. But right now, the way our criminal justice system works just doesn't make sense. When people leave prison, we expect them to become contributing members of society, but we don't help them build the skills they need to contribute, and we make it hard for them to live productive lives. This isn't practical, because if people don't have what they need to be successful after prison, they are more likely to end up right back in the criminal justice system.

A more practical solution would be to offer the education and resources that people need to successfully re-enter society after they leave prison. This means helping them gain useful skills and work experience while they are in prison. It also means making sure that a person's criminal record doesn't prevent them from getting a job or housing after they leave prison. And, if we help people build supportive networks and relationships while they are in prison, they are more likely be successful when they re-enter society.

By making these common-sense changes to our criminal justice system, we can set people up for success when they leave prison, and reduce the likelihood that they'll go back.

Community connections (social) (*N* = 225)

As a society, we believe in the power of community connection. When people feel connected to each other and supported by their communities, friends, and loved ones, they live happier, more meaningful lives that are free of crime. But right now, our criminal justice system keeps people in prison isolated from their communities and strains their relationships with loved ones. This means that, when people leave prison, they don't have the connections or support they need to build meaningful, happy lives back in society.

Instead of keeping people in prison away from their loved ones, we should be offering resources and opportunities for people to connect with others so that they are better able to successfully re-enter society after they leave prison. This means making sure that people are not sent to prisons that are far from their communities and giving people in prison regular chances to connect with loved ones. It also means helping people in prison develop the skills they need to strengthen their personal relationships so that when they leave prison, they have good support and can easily find a place in their communities.

We believe that community connections help us live better lives. If we help people in prison maintain important relationships and stay connected to their communities, we can make sure that when they leave, they can build happy, purposeful lives that are free of crime.

Prosperity for all (jobs) (*N* = 225)

As a society, we believe that our prosperity comes from harnessing everyone's skills and energy to help us grow. When everyone has opportunities to develop their skills and contribute, this helps our whole society succeed. But right now, our criminal justice system doesn't help people in prison learn new skills or gain work experience, and we make it hard for them to get jobs when they leave. This means that when people leave prison it's hard for them to contribute to our shared prosperity, and it holds us back.

To promote our collective prosperity, people in prison need to be able to develop their skills so that when they leave prison, they can help our society thrive. By providing the chance to learn new skills, opportunities to gain work experience while in prison, and helping them find a job when they leave, we can make sure that people leaving prison are prepared to contribute to society. And if we make sure that a person's criminal record doesn't prevent them from getting a job, people who are eager to work after leaving prison will be able to find employment where they can use their skills and help our whole society succeed.

We believe that when everyone can contribute fully, our society is more likely to succeed. If we help people in prison improve their skills and focus their energy, we can make sure that when they leave, they find purpose in helping our society grow and thrive.

Fairness (broad) (*N* = 225)

As a society, we believe in fair treatment for everyone. But right now, our criminal justice system isn't fair. When people leave prison, we expect them to become contributing members of society, but the criminal justice system makes it nearly impossible for them to successfully re-enter society after they leave. This isn't fair, because people shouldn't have to face a second sentence in society after they've already served their time.

Instead of making it hard for people to re-enter society after prison, we should give them a fair shot at success. This means that instead of focusing only on punishment, the criminal justice system should help people gain useful skills and work experience while they are in prison, so they have a reasonable chance of finding a job after they leave. It also means making sure that a person's criminal record doesn't prevent them from getting a job or housing after they leave prison. And, if we help people build supportive networks and relationships while they are in prison, they are more likely be successful when they re-enter society because they've been given a fair chance to reconnect with others. By providing the right supports to people when they leave prison, we can make sure that they have a reasonable chance to build a life free of crime and become a contributing member of society.

If we truly believe in fairness, we need to make changes to our criminal justice system so that people leaving prison have a real chance to succeed once they re-enter society.

Valence:

Positive valence (broad) (*N* = 225)

It's good for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society. But right now, we don't help people re-enter society after prison, and it means that nearly 50% of the people released from prison commit another crime and go back to prison within just one year. Providing support for people when they leave prison has major benefits. If people leaving prison can get good jobs, housing, and are able to connect with their communities, they can become productive members of society and are less likely to re-offend, which is good for all of us.

For people to successfully re-enter society after prison, they need to be able to find stable housing and meaningful work so that they can make a living and contribute to our economy. They also need strong relationships with loved ones so that they can find purpose in their communities and are less likely to re-offend. We need to make sure that our criminal justice system is not only focused on punishment, but also offers the education, skills, and resources people need to successfully re-enter society after they leave prison. We must make sure that people leaving prison are able to live crime-free lives and contribute to our communities and economy. If we do this, more people in England and Wales will have more successful lives, and it will help all of us.

Negative valence (broad) (*N* = 225)

It's bad for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can't successfully re-enter society. But right now, we don't help people re-enter society after prison, and it means that nearly 50% of the people released from prison commit another crime and go back to prison within just one year. Failing to provide support for people when they leave prison has major costs. If people leaving prison can't get good jobs, housing, or connect with their communities, they can't be productive members of society and are more likely to re-offend, which is bad for all of us.

When people can't find stable housing or meaningful work after they leave prison, they can't make a living or contribute to our economy. And when they've been isolated from their loved ones, they have less support when they leave prison and can't find purpose in their communities, which means they are more likely to re-offend. When our criminal justice system is only focused on punishment and doesn't provide education, skills, or resources for prisoners, we are essentially ensuring that when people leave prison, they won't be successful. We must make sure that people leaving prison are able to live crime-free lives and contribute to our communities and economy. If we don't, more people in England and Wales will have less successful lives, and it will hurt all of us.

Narratives:

Narrative 1 (positive, jobs)

It's good for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society. Providing support for people when they leave prison helps them become productive members of society and makes them less likely to re-offend, which is good for all of us.

Michael's story shows us how the justice system can help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Michael was in prison, he was given the opportunity to take part in a programme that allowed him to take classes and learn trade skills that interested him. The prison also had an apprenticeship programme where Michael was able to make connections with local business owners, receive on-the-job training, and practice his newly learned skills. Because of this programme, Michael was able to apprentice with a local carpenter, build his carpentry skills, and make community connections. This opportunity helped him quickly find a good job in construction once he was released from prison.

Today, Michael is thriving in his work and is an important member of his community. He makes a good living and has not committed another crime since leaving prison. We need to make sure that all prisons offer education and vocational training programmes like the one Michael had access to. If we do this, we can make sure that people in prison have the supports they need so that they can successfully re-enter society after prison and live productive, crime-free lives.

Narrative 2 (negative, jobs)

It's bad for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can't successfully re-enter society. Failing to provide support for people when they leave prison makes it hard for them be productive members of society and means they are more likely to re-offend, which is bad for all of us.

Michael's story shows us how the criminal justice system is failing to help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Michael was in prison, he aspired to turn his life around, but had no opportunities to take classes or finish his GCSEs. He also didn't have the option to learn any valuable trade skills or gain job training that could help him do well once he left prison. For the most part, Michael spent his days bored. Because Michael wasn't given the opportunity to be productive or learn new skills during his time in prison, he had a hard time finding a job when he was released.

Today, Michael is back in prison. Without critical job skills, he couldn't find a stable job or pay for housing and ended up committing another crime just to survive. If Michael had access to education and vocational training programmes while he was in prison, his life might look very different today. Instead, he didn't have what he needed to live a productive, crime-free life. We need to make changes to our criminal justice system so that people in prison have opportunities to build skills and turn their lives around. If we don't do this, more people will end up like Michael.

Narrative 3 (positive, social)

It's good for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society. Providing support for people when they leave prison helps them become productive members of society and makes them less likely to re-offend, which is good for all of us.

Michael's story shows us how the justice system can help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Michael was in prison, he was given the opportunity to attend individual and family therapy sessions that helped him repair trust and build strong connections with his loved ones. These sessions were made easier for his loved ones to attend because Michael was deliberately placed in a prison that was close to his community. The prison also had a programme that allowed extended

visitation and gave Michael access to computers and cell phones so that he could stay connected with his loved ones more frequently. Because of this programme, Michael was able to build and maintain strong relationships with his loved ones and community, and it helped him more easily transition back into society after he was released from prison.

Today, Michael is thriving as a productive member of his community and has not committed another crime. The strong relationships he built with his loved ones helped him stay positive and productive during his time in prison. And, with the support of his community, he was able to build social connections that helped him find a stable job and decent housing after he left prison. We need to make sure that all prisons offer individual and family therapy, as well as programmes that allow for prisoners to connect more frequently with their loved ones. If we do this, we can make sure that people in prison have the supports they need so that they can successfully re-enter society after prison and live productive, crime-free lives.

Narrative 4 (negative, social)

It's bad for everyone in England and Wales if people leaving prison can't successfully re-enter society. Failing to provide support for people when they leave prison makes it hard for them be productive members of society and means they are more likely to re-offend, which is bad for all of us.

Michael's story shows us how the criminal justice system is failing to help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Michael was in prison, his relationships suffered, but he had no opportunities to attend individual or family therapy to rebuild trust or connection with his loved ones. And, since he was placed in a prison located far away from his community, his loved ones couldn't visit often. He also didn't have access to computers or a cell phone so that he could stay connected to his loved ones more frequently. For the most part, Michael spent his days feeling lonely. Because Michael wasn't given the opportunity to build and maintain good social connections during his time in prison, his relationships suffered, and he had little support when he was released.

Today, Michael is back in prison. Without strong relationships, Michael felt isolated after leaving prison. With no social support, he had a hard time finding a stable job or housing and ended up committing another crime just to survive. If Michael had been given access to therapy and easier ways to connect with his loved ones while he was in prison, his life might look very different today. Instead, he didn't have what he needed to live a productive, crime-free life. We need to make changes to our criminal justice system so that people in prison have opportunities to build and strengthen important relationships and turn their lives around. If we don't do this, more people will end up like Michael.

PDS Round 2

Metaphors:

Crossing over a wide river: *Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river. People have been stranded in the prison system, and finally they can cross back over to society. Yet right now, there aren't stable bridges back to society. We make it hard for people to re-enter society when they leave prison, and it's almost impossible for them to find steady ground.*

We need to build safe and supportive bridges so that people leaving prison can cross back to society and get to a meaningful and productive life. When people are making their way back from prison, we make it hard for people to get jobs or housing because of their criminal records, which means they can't gain their footing in society. If we build bridges back to solid ground, offering people education, helping them gain useful skills, and connecting them to supportive networks and relationships, they'll be able to successfully make their way back into society.

Right now, our justice system makes it hard for people to cross back to society when they leave prison. We need to redesign the justice system so that people have supportive bridges that help them find their footing and put their lives on stable ground.

Bridges: Version 1 – networks and relationships: Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river, and people leaving prison need bridges – such as supportive networks and relationships – to make their way to stable ground.

Bridges: Version 2 – jobs: Leaving prison is like crossing over a wide river, and people leaving prison need bridges – such as jobs and employment opportunities – to make their way to stable ground.

Narratives:

Positive + jobs: It's good for everyone if people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society. Michael's story shows us how the justice system can help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Michael was in prison, he was given the opportunity to take part in a programme that allowed him to take classes and learn trade skills that interested him. The prison also had an apprenticeship programme where Michael was able to make connections with local business owners, receive on-the-job training, and practise his newly learned skills. Because of this programme, Michael was able to apprentice with a local carpenter, build his carpentry skills, and make community connections. This opportunity helped him quickly find a good job in construction once he was released from prison. Today, Michael is thriving in his work and is an important member of his community.

Negative + jobs: It's bad for everyone if people leaving prison can't successfully re-enter society. Jonathan's story shows us how the criminal justice system is failing to help people successfully re-enter society after prison. While Jonathan was in prison, he aspired to turn his life around, but had no opportunities to take classes or finish his GCSEs. He also didn't have the option to learn any valuable trade skills or gain job training that could help him do well once he left prison. For the most part,

Jonathan spent his days bored. Because Jonathan wasn't given the opportunity to be productive or learn new skills during his time in prison, he had a hard time finding a job when he was released. Today, Jonathan is back in prison.

Values:

Common sense/pragmatism: As a society, we believe in common-sense approaches to solving our problems. Making common-sense changes to our criminal justice system, like giving people the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience while in prison and helping them find a job when they leave, are practical solutions to help people successfully re-enter society.

National progress: As a nation, it's important that we continue to move forward and make progress. To help our nation move forward and fix our outdated criminal justice system, we must give people the chance to learn new skills and gain work experience while in prison and help them find a job when they leave. This will set people up for success when they re-enter society.

Appendix C: Sample survey items

Note: this includes a sample of the items we included in the experiment. It is not an exhaustive list.

Battery A: Support for specific policies
How much do you favour or oppose the following policies? In considering these policies, please keep in mind that putting these policies in place might in some cases involve **increasing taxes**. [*7-point Likert scale: 'Strongly oppose'; 'Oppose'; 'Somewhat oppose'; 'Neither favour nor oppose'; 'Somewhat favour'; 'Favour'; 'Strongly favour'*]

Social connections

1. Increase the number of opportunities available for people in prison to visit with loved ones

2. Offer counselling sessions that prisoners and their loved ones can attend together to help them maintain positive relationships during the prisoner's sentence

3. Provide people in prison with opportunities to temporarily leave prison and spend time with loved ones

Employment opportunities

4. Provide tax incentives for employers to hire people with criminal records after they leave prison

5. Provide people in prison with opportunities to temporarily leave prison to gain work experience and job training

6. Increase funding for education services in prisons to improve people's ability to get jobs after they leave prison

Battery B: Effects of systemic obstacles to reintegration

When people are leaving prison, different factors can make this transition harder or easier. Please indicate, for each of the following options, what kind of effect you think it would have on people's ability to **successfully re-enter society after they leave prison.** [*7-pt Likert scale: 'A large negative effect'; 'A moderate negative effect'; 'A small negative effect'; 'no effect'; 'A small positive effect'; 'A moderate positive effect'; 'A large positive effect'*]

1. Being able to find a good paying job

2. Strong social and community support

3. Being able to find safe and affordable housing

4. Being able to find a stable job

Battery C: Understanding structural drivers of crime

1. Which statement is closer to your opinion?

— Bad decisions and personal values better explain why some people are more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system than others.

— Underlying societal issues like racism, classism, and poverty better explain why some people are more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system than others.

2. Please indicate, for each of the following options, how much of an effect you think it would have on the **likelihood that someone becomes involved with the criminal justice system**. [*7-pt Likert scale: 'Much less likely'; 'Less likely'; 'Somewhat less likely'; 'Neither unlikely nor likely'; 'Somewhat more likely'; 'More likely'; 'Much more likely'*]

— Experiencing poverty

— Living in unsafe or unstable housing

— Experiencing prejudice and discrimination

Battery E: Understanding why reintegration after prison matters

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: [*7-point Likert scale: 'Strongly disagree'; 'Disagree'; 'Somewhat disagree'; 'Neither disagree nor agree'; 'Somewhat agree'; 'Agree'; 'Strongly agree'*]

1. If people have strong relationships with their loved ones when they leave prison, they are more likely to become productive members of their community.

2. If people have strong community connections when they leave prison, they are more likely to find stable jobs and housing.

3. If people can quickly find jobs that pay a decent wage when they leave prison, they are less likely to commit crimes in the future.

4. If people can quickly find stable work that pays a decent wage when they leave prison, they are more likely to live meaningful, productive lives.

Battery F: Collective responsibility for reintegration

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: [*7-point Likert scale: 'Strongly disagree'; 'Disagree'; 'Somewhat disagree'; 'Neither disagree nor agree'; 'Somewhat agree'; 'Agree'; 'Strongly agree'*]

1. It is our government's responsibility to ensure that people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society.

2. Our government is to blame if people leaving prison don't successfully re-enter society.

3. Our government has an obligation to ensure that people leaving prison can successfully re-enter society.

Battery G: Collective efficacy for reintegration

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: [7-point Likert scale: 'Strongly disagree'; 'Disagree'; 'Somewhat disagree'; 'Neither disagree nor agree'; 'Somewhat agree'; 'Agree'; 'Strongly agree']

1. I am optimistic that we, as a society, can ensure that people leaving prison are able to successfully re-enter society.

2. It is realistic to think that we, as a society, can ensure that people who have spent time in prison successfully re-enter society.

3. We, as a society, can ensure that people leaving prison successfully re-enter society

Appendix D: Data supporting recommendations

Evidence supporting recommendation 1: Talk about people leaving prison as *people* first

In both rounds of PDS, we found that talking about people leaving prison in this way – as people – rather than as 'ex-offenders', helped participants think about what people leaving prison need and how they should be supported. In short, talking about 'ex-offenders' otherises people who have been in prison, whereas talking about them as people elicits empathy and understanding.

Evidence supporting recommendation 2: Focus on progress for our society to show why supporting people leaving prison matters

In wave 1 of the experiment, we found that the value of National Progress expands people's understanding of the structural drivers of crime, such as poverty and inequality. Participants in the National Progress condition were nearly one and a half times more likely than people in the control condition to say that the causes of crime are caused by structural/systemic/societal issues (see Graph 1). This value also helps people understand the importance of social connections for people leaving prison.

In PDS, we refined the frame and found that talking about progress helps people understand why supporting people leaving prison is important and should be something we address as a society. In the usability trials with members of the sector, we refined the frame from talking about 'national progress', which participants pointed out could trigger nationalistic 'us' vs 'them' thinking about who composes the 'nation' in England, Wales and the United Kingdom more broadly. Instead, we focused on the value of Progress – that we, as a society, can make progress by fixing our outdated criminal justice system.

We found that talking about people leaving prison and what they need as an economic issue or as a matter of economic prosperity didn't shift thinking in productive ways. In both waves of the experiment, the Economy issue frame and Prosperity for All value didn't shift thinking for the full sample of participants. Moreover, in wave 1, the Economy issue frame backfired for people with experience with the criminal justice system. For this group, framing supporting people leaving prison as an economic matter backfired to build a sense of collective responsibility and to build an understanding of rehabilitation as a goal of the criminal justice system (see Graph 2).

Evidence supporting recommendation 3: Use the metaphor of 'bridges' to explain what supports are needed

We found that the 'bridges' metaphor leverages people's basic understanding of rehabilitation and shifts people's understanding towards wider responsibility for people leaving prison. In wave 1 of the experiment, the metaphor helped build support for specific policies aimed at improving social connections for people leaving prison. By explaining what people leaving prison need – especially in terms of employment and relationships – the metaphor helps fill in the gaps in understanding what supporting people leaving prison looks like (see Graph 3).

Evidence supporting recommendation 4: Emphasise that reforming the way we support people leaving prison is pragmatic, to expand understanding

In our research, we found that using the idea of pragmatism – that there are practical, common-sense ways we can fix the criminal justice system (and, crucially, explaining what those practical responses are) – expands people's understanding of the problems with the current system. In wave 1 of the experiment, people in the pragmatism condition were one and a half times more likely than people in the control condition to understand the structural drivers of crime (poverty and inequality) and understand how those same issues are obstacles to rehabilitation. The pragmatism value also helped build support for specific policies to enable social connections for people leaving prison (see Graph 4).

We further refined this frame in the second round of PDS and found that the value of Pragmatism helped build understanding of and support for jobs and employment opportunities for people leaving prison. Framing these policies as 'practical' and 'common-sense' approaches to supporting people leaving prison was effective at helping participants understand the importance of employment opportunities and skills development for people in and leaving prison.

Evidence supporting recommendation 5: Tell stories that show how solutions work

In wave 2 of the survey experiment, we found that both positive and negative narratives helped build support for specific policies related to social connections and employment opportunities (see Graph 5). In the second round of PDS, we found that both types of narrative helped to build understanding of societal and governmental responsibility to support people leaving prison generally. But the positive narrative led to thinking about more specific systemic solutions and also helped people think about collective efficacy – making it a more effective strategy for enacting change.

In particular, we found that in the second round of PDS, a positive narrative that highlighted the benefits of providing education, skills training and job opportunities to people leaving prison helped shift people's thinking away from viewing people leaving prison as a 'risk' to employers to being understood as a benefit to society.

Graph 1: Data supporting recommendation 2

National Progress
Prosperity for All

+ = *p* = .05 to .08
* = *p* < .05

% Difference from Control

4.6

3.45

2.3

1.15

0

+ **4.53**

2.82

Social Connections
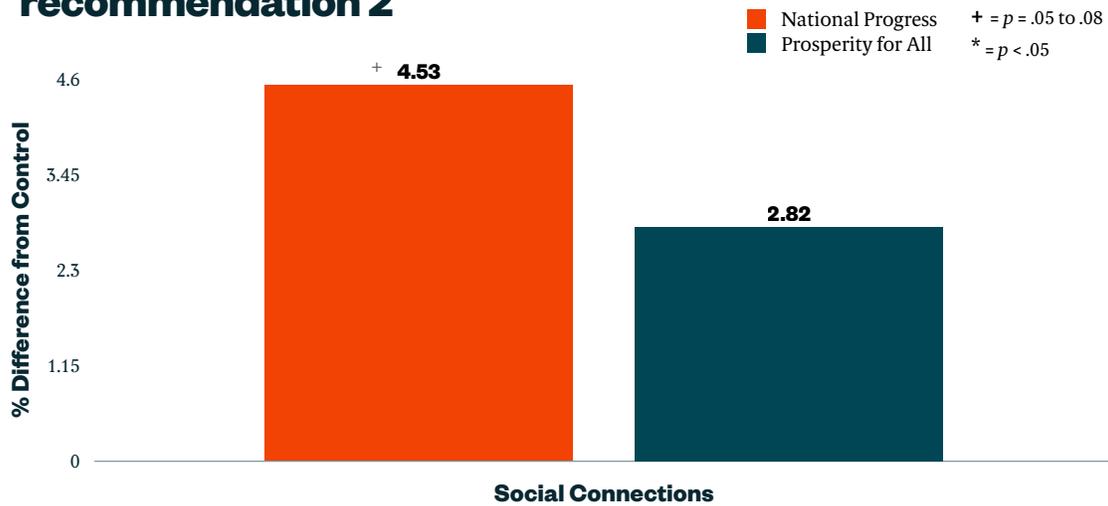
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Graph 2: Data supporting recommendation 2, lived experience

Economy

+ = *p* = .05 to .08
* = *p* < .05

% Difference from Control

3

1

0

-1

-3

-5

-7

-9

* **-6.83**

* **-5.92**

Collective Responsibility

Goals of the CJ System
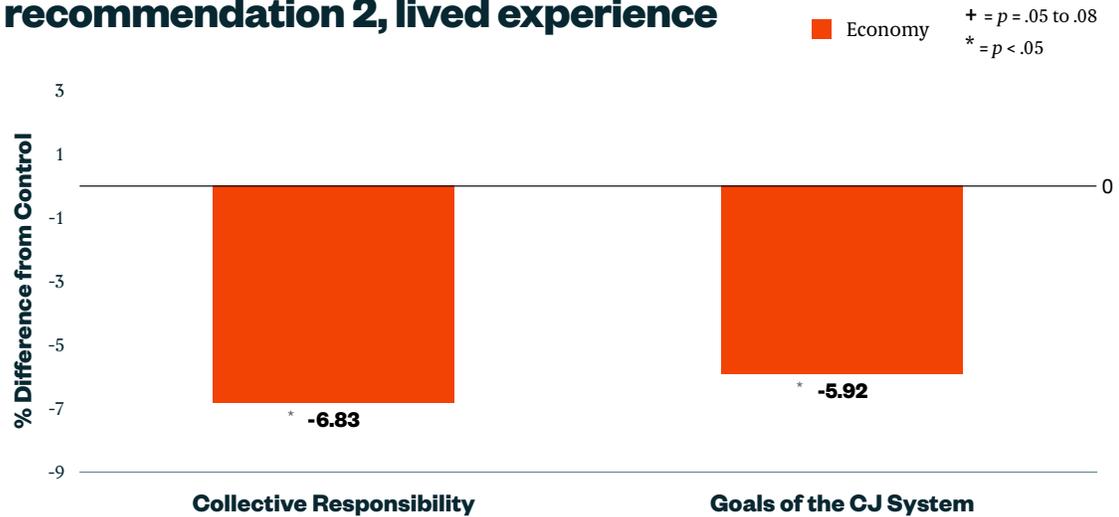
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Graph 3: Data supporting recommendation 3

Legend:
- Wide River + Bridges (orange)
- River + Bridges (Jobs) (dark teal)
- Roundabouts + Exits (yellow)

+ = p = .05 to .08
* = p < .05

% Difference from Control (y-axis: 7, 4.75, 2.5, 0.25, -2)

Social Connections
- * 4.88
- * 4.42
- 2.64

Employment Opportunities
- 1.05
- * 4.25
- -0.26

Collective Responsibility
- -1.27
- * 4.48
- -1.24
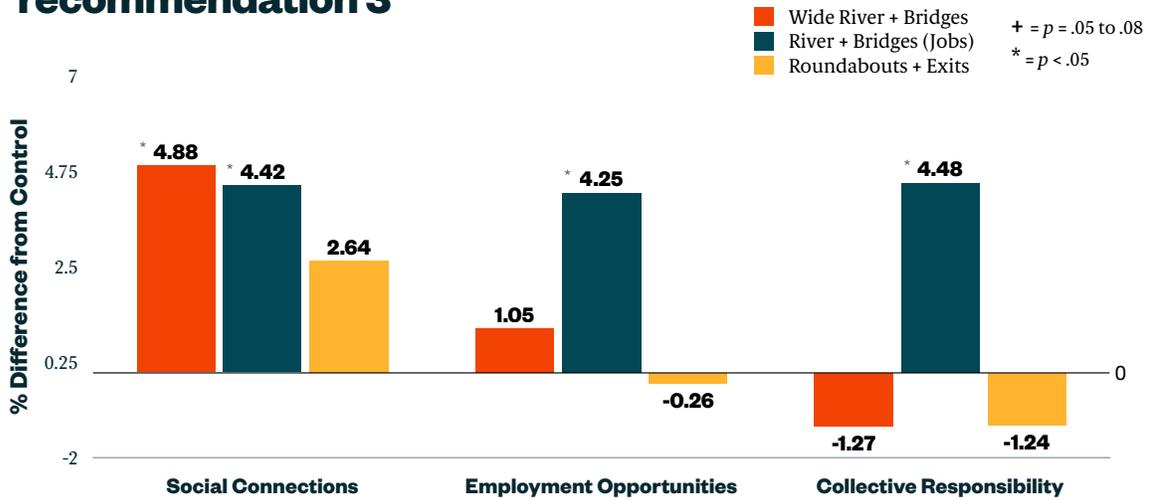
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Graph 4: Data supporting recommendation 4

Legend:
- Pragmatism (orange)
- Human Potential (dark teal)
- Rehabilitation (yellow)

+ = p = .05 to .08
* = p < .05

% Difference from Control (y-axis: 6, 4.5, 3, 1.5, 0)

Social Connections
- * 5.49
- 2.88
- 3.46

Systemic Obstacles to Reintegration
- * 4.72
- 1.17
- 0.43
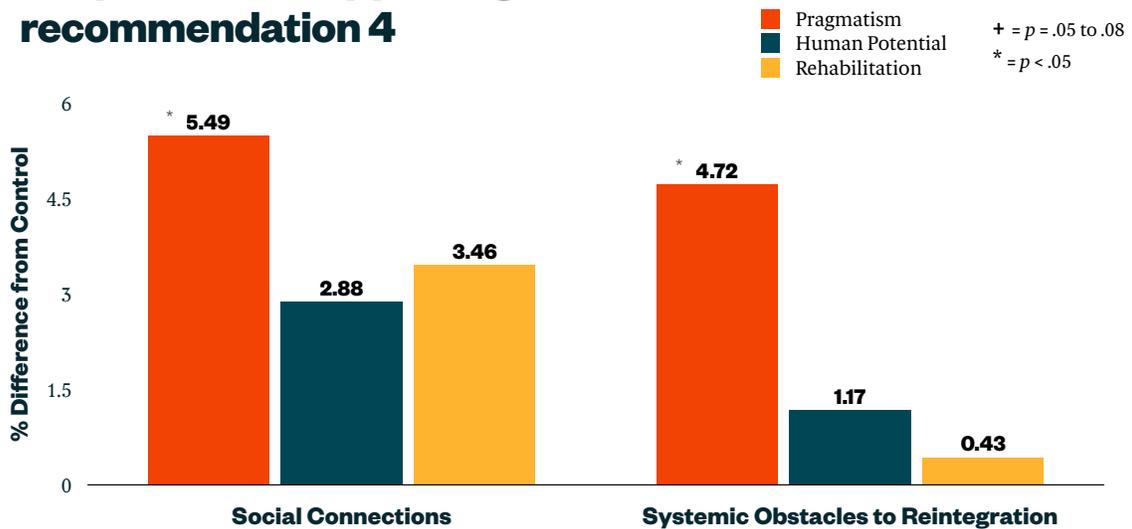
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Graph 5: Data supporting recommendation 5

Legend:
- Positive Narrative (Jobs)
- Negative Narrative (Jobs)
- Positive Narrative (Social)
- Negative Narrative (Social)

$+ = p = .05$ to $.08$
$* = p < .05$

% Difference from Control

* **3.87**
* **4.18**
* **4.9**
* **3.96**

Axis values: 5, 3.75, 2.5, 1.25, 0

Social & Employment
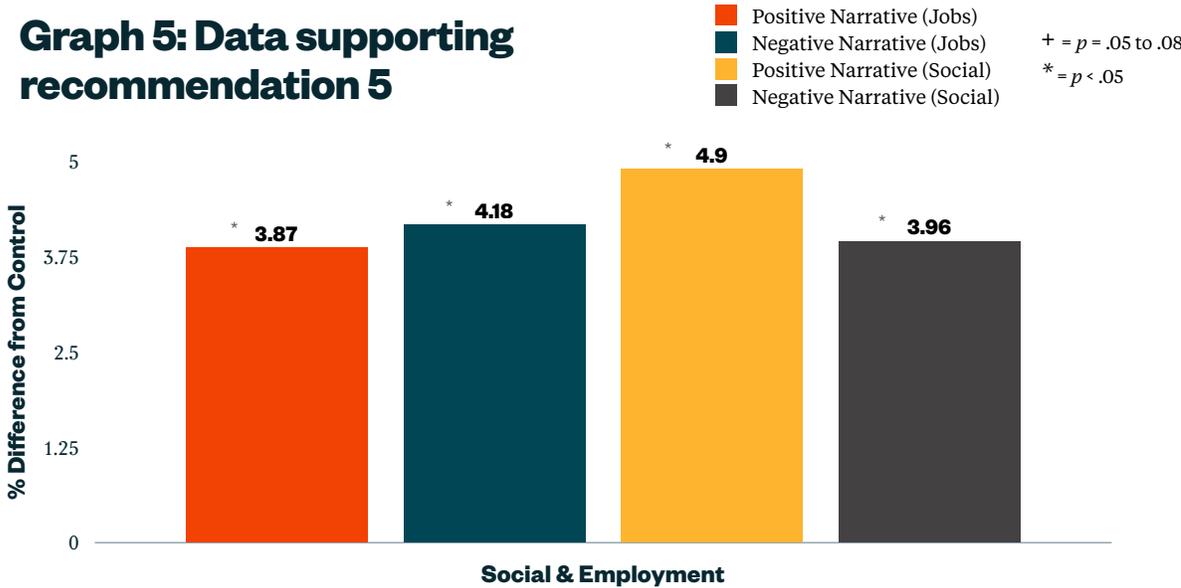
Endnotes

1. 1 O'Neil, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., & Volmert, A. (2016).
    New narratives: Changing the frame on crime and justice.
    Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.