

HOPE CAFÉ

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON REDUCING RECIDIVISM IN WASHINGTON STATE



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Secretary's Message



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
P.O. Box 41101 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1101

The summary you're about to read is a high-level overview of the community outreach conducted by the Washington Department of Corrections between June 2016 and May 2017. Interacting with the community is one of the values of our agency, and a way that our agency can promote public safety and provide greater public understanding of our operations with all Washingtonians.

Former Deputy Secretary Jody Becker along with many other agency leaders led this effort of community engagement, which has informed our path forward. I want to extend my appreciation to everyone who contributed to this important work.

Effective December 2017, the Department of Corrections has created a realigned Reentry Division to better provide a purposeful and strategic shift toward effective, efficient operations geared toward successfully reintegrating individuals post-release into the community. One of the agency's highest priorities, and one of the most consistent themes presented during the Hope Café tour, is to provide the highest quality reentry efforts so that individuals are more likely to succeed.

With the consolidation of case management services, education, Correctional Industries, work release, housing vouchers, veteran services, and family services under one division, the Department is working hard toward creating a continuum of reentry. There is a great deal that the Department can do to aid reintegration, but the Department sees great value in partnering with the community. It is essential that the Department collaborates with our local partners and communities to help bridge the gap between release and success. Releasing individuals need support from the communities into which they are releasing and of which they are becoming a vital part. The Department needs to work on the infrastructure and systems to connect and support people and community efforts.

As an agency, we have the access to the science, research, and data that tells us what works and allows us to implement best practices in correctional operations. Hope Café provided us a venue to communicate with our many local community stakeholders throughout our amazing state on the best practices. Thank you for your input, feedback, and participation. With community feedback and the agency's commitment to improving systems, the work continues to lower recidivism and increase success.

As a state agency, we couldn't be successful without your participation.

Steve Sinclair

Secretary

Executive Summary

In June 2016, while preparing for a Results Washington performance review of the Return to Institutions outcome measure, Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) executive leadership asked the following question:

“What have we done to engage people closest to the problem; those impacted by recidivism?”

The many factors that contribute to recidivism are well established in the literature, yet progress has varied in reducing rates of return to incarceration across the nation. DOC decided it was time to ask a wide variety of stakeholders – current and formerly incarcerated individuals and community supervised individuals, tribal leaders, law enforcement, agency staff members, and community members – their perspective on the challenges and potential solutions to reduce recidivism through collaborative conversations based on World Café-style methodology.

The response was overwhelming. Over the next year, 45 Hope Café events in 22 geographic areas were held across the state of Washington, engaging over 5,000 people in conversations about the factors that contribute to recidivism.

These discussions focused on the following areas:

- Social/Cultural Judgement
- Physical/Mental Health
- Life Skills
- Educational/Vocational
- Work Release
- Social Supports
- Housing
- Employment
- Legal
- DOC Role
- Reentry

Hope Café represented an important step in gaining a wide array of perspectives and experiences about the ongoing issue of recidivism. The interactions were a great success in encouraging positive interactions with the community, and promoting the importance of public safety, community protection, and public understanding. Participants under the agency’s custody learned that staff are genuinely interested in continuous improvement. Community partners, fellow state agencies, and tribal entities learned that the agency is open to innovative ideas to address persistent barriers to recidivism. Agency staff learned that some programs and services designed to address or assist with barriers require greater support and communication, and that many of the current and planned initiatives can reduce recidivism with sufficient partnerships, resources, and implementation.

Purpose

Recidivism is a persistent and complex national issue. About 96% of those incarcerated in Washington release from incarceration, and approximately 3 in 10 return to prison within 36 months. Reducing recidivism is a priority for both Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) and Governor Inslee. As he stated when discussing executive order 16-05 Building Safe and Strong Communities through Successful Reentry:

“One of the most significant public safety investments we can make to improve the lives of individuals and the safety of our communities is to do more to prepare people leaving our criminal justice system for a successful re-entry to society.”

DOC’s commitment to this issue is represented by the Results Washington measure to reduce recidivism to 25% or less by 2020. The Hope Café initiative began with (1) a genuine desire to engage in meaningful conversations about recidivism assumptions, challenges, and solutions to inform DOC strategies and (2) the belief that those incarcerated and/or supervised by DOC, staff, community partners, volunteers, families, tribal nations, and city, county, and state agencies may hold innovative answers. Both of these objectives are consistent with DOC’s mission, values, and goals as depicted below.

Sessions to gather feedback were held in correctional facilities, community field offices, and other community locations across the state from June 2016 to May 2017 with the participants listed above. They were based on the World Café format with a facilitator overview, small group discussions guided by three key questions, and summary report-outs. Each session began with the premise that all voices were equal, all ideas were welcome, and **HOPE** is the foundation of change (inspiring the Hope Café moniker).

Hope Café: Making connections to improve public safety



Word of the inspirational conversations spread quickly and in less than a year, 45 Hope Cafés involving an estimated 5,000 participants were held across the state. Participants were consistently passionate, engaged, and hopeful. This report represents an effort to share the common themes identified in the Hope Café discussions. While the themes are not new, the individual conversations and the aggregation of experiences specific to individuals within Washington State may inform practice and policy in unprecedented ways.

Guiding Questions

The sessions began with an overview of objectives, followed by basic statistics on recidivism and what to expect.

The discussions were guided by the following questions:

- What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about recidivism?
- What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity about recidivism?
- If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose to reduce recidivism?

A table host wrote down discussion highlights for each question. All participants but the host changed tables after each question as a way to diversify discussions and increase exposure to different perspectives. Groups then voluntarily reported out on their discussions. Participants were also encouraged to use the paper tablecloths and markers to share their thoughts (some examples are included in this report) and submit notecards with individual feedback.

References

- [Executive Order 16-05 Building Safe and Strong Communities Through Successful Reentry](#) (pdf)
- [Results DOC Goals & Measures Fundamentals Map](#) (pdf)
- [Department of Corrections Strategic Plan & Measures](#)
- [World Café Method](#)

Recidivism Factors

The Hope Café sessions included an array of perspectives and suggestions. Factors that surfaced repeatedly were grouped into the following areas of risk/need that impact recidivism:



Most factors listed above are established correlates of recidivism. Some are systemic issues for which a state or agency has limited ability to impact, such as nationwide educational and income disparities. However, there are practice and policy changes at the state and agency levels that may effectively reduce recidivism with the appropriate support. See [Appendix E](#) for a table summary of the factors.

It is important to note that DOC and its partners facilitate many programs that target the factors listed above, and have a number of enhancements and new initiatives under development at any given time. Examples of these efforts are included in [Appendix F](#).

Some participants were unaware of some programs, highlighting the need for DOC to improve awareness to these opportunities. Other participants were aware of such programs, and shared suggestions to improve them. Much like the Hope Café's purpose was to listen, the focus of this report is to summarize what was heard rather than inform readers about existing programs or assess the accuracy of perceptions or feasibility of suggestions.

Social/Cultural Judgment

Social/cultural judgement was often the first topic that arose related to assumptions and barriers to success. There was a shared sense that a conviction is terminal in consequences, even if the sentence is not (see box to the right). The impact of judgment by one's family and friends, DOC staff, and society as a whole was repeatedly expressed and linked with other emotions and behaviors that can undermine success after release, including fear, self-loathing, low self-esteem, hopelessness, anger, depression, and substance abuse.

According to many participants, this persistent social judgment manifests mainly in the challenges to obtain employment, housing, and support services following release. Convicted individuals report being treated as untrustworthy and dangerous when their past is uncovered, regardless of whether they volunteer the information or it is discovered through a background check. Some participants also believed this judgment impacts the amount and consistency of funding for programs that address related issues (e.g., substance abuse, education, cognitive thinking, trauma, etc.).

Suggestions to address social stigma focused on:

- Educating the public about systemic social issues that contribute to crime and recidivism, the various challenges of reentry, and the cost savings achieved by investing in effective programs and treatment;
- Programs that empower individuals to recognize their worth and advocate for themselves in the face of social/cultural judgment.

Physical and Mental Health

Physical and mental health needs were another recurring factor in the recidivism discussions. These included medical, dental, substance abuse, mental health, trauma, disabilities, and cognitive impairment and/or functioning issues. Justice-involved individuals have a higher prevalence of need in most of these areas compared to the general population, and it is an ongoing challenge to efficiently and effectively provide services, both within facilities and in the community. When any of these needs are not addressed, they can directly impact one's engagement in programs while incarcerated, and the likelihood of success in the community.

Some participants reported that the public often assumes all these needs are met while incarcerated, but felt this is rarely the reality. Identifying needs in a timely manner, prioritizing them, and placing individuals where they can receive the services is complex. Justice-involved individuals shared frustration that their needs were not being met prior to release, and that it was difficult to navigate programs and referrals by themselves in conjunction with supervision conditions and other responsibilities.

Participant quotes:

"I am not my crime."

"I am not a lost cause. Please don't give up on me because I made a mistake. My future depends on me but with your help & guidance I can be everything I know I can be."

"I am not defined by the worst mistake of my life."

Hope Café participants had the following suggestions regarding physical and mental health needs:

- More resources to address the array of physical and mental health needs for justice-involved individuals both inside facilities and in the community;
- Making justice-involved individuals feel their needs were identified, prioritized into a plan, and that they had a voice in that plan;
- Assistance in making community connections for services, and an advocate when needs are not being met;
- Expansion and strengthening of state agency and community healthcare and social service partnerships could reduce the impact of these factors on recidivism.

Life Skills

Life skills deficits were also discussed as contributing to challenges faced by community-supervised individuals. Skills such as budgeting, cooking, time and stress management, decision making, problem solving, resume writing, and job interviewing skills were common areas of need among individuals. Lacking these skills can significantly impact one's ability to function independently and successfully. For example, those who struggle to follow a schedule will find it difficult to meet supervision requirements and hold a job. For some, the frustration of not being able to do such "simple" things can exacerbate feelings of low-esteem and hopelessness, leading to poor choices that result in new offenses or technical violations.

One issue described by multiple people was that individuals are expected to transition from a lifestyle with limited structure to one that is highly regulated, and then release back to one with little structure. Most could adapt to the DOC rules, but do not learn how to establish their own priorities and create a plan and schedule to meet their goals.

Suggestions to address life skill deficits included:

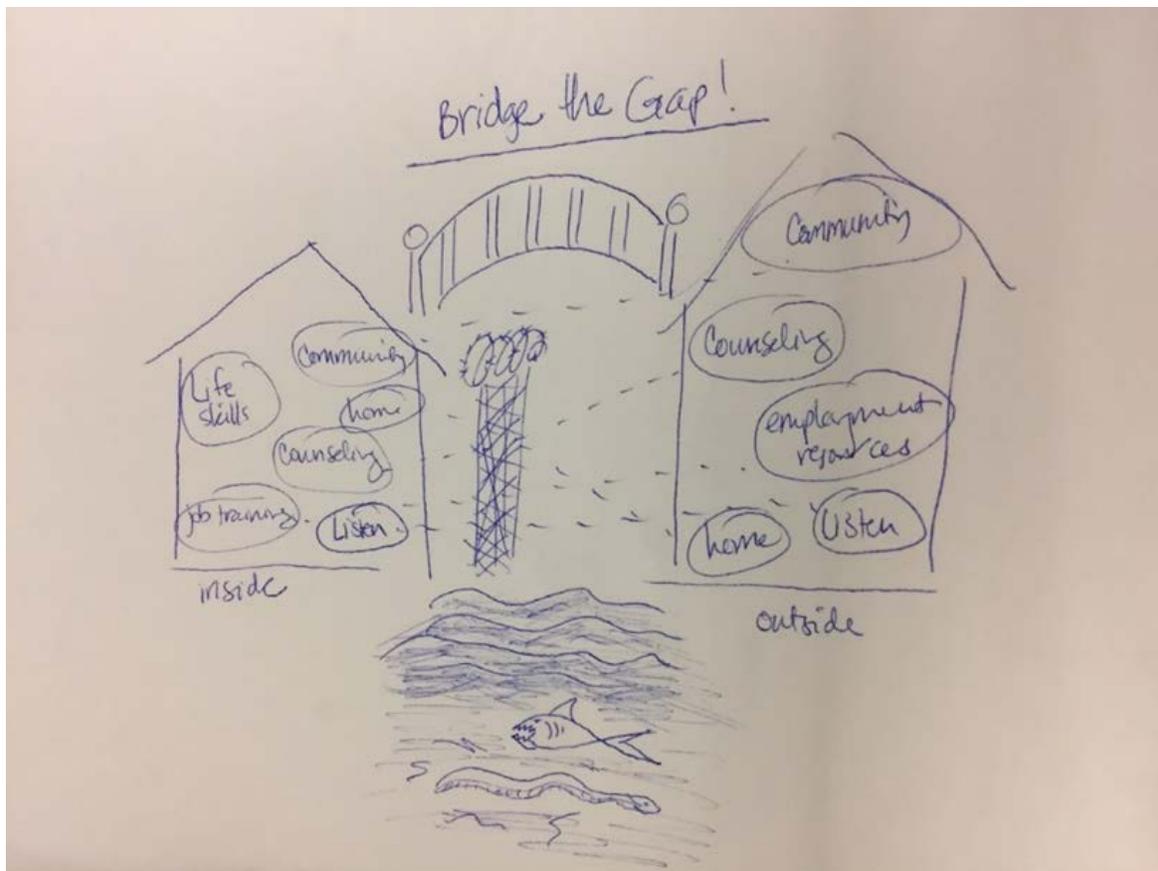
- More life skills programs to set the foundation of success for justice-involved individuals;
- Since these skills are foundational to a multitude of goals, DOC should consider some life skills programs as a requirement before taking part in other educational and vocational opportunities;
- Individuals who have the relevant skills to serve as mentors to others in the group and those who lack them will acquire abilities that greatly improve their prospects of success.

Educational/Vocational Programs

Educational and vocational programs were described as key factors in the effort to reduce recidivism. Participants emphasized the importance of using incarceration time to advance education or learn a marketable trade, and were supportive of programs that improved the likelihood of obtaining gainful employment. It was stated repeatedly that the assumption of the public is that incarcerated individuals have many educational and vocational opportunities, but participants felt that there are not enough programs and/or the capacity to meet demand. They also shared concerns about eligibility criteria, preferential treatment (i.e., lower risk individuals being bumped down waitlists to serve a higher risk individual), and program limitations (i.e., some programs are limited to certain facilities, requiring transfers that can negatively impact other programming underway, etc.).

Suggestions to address these concerns included:

- Increase programs offered;
- Prioritize education and vocational needs in the individualized plans during intake;
- Expand programs across facilities to diminish limitations, and reconsider program eligibility/prioritization requirements.



Work Release

Work release was another popular topic across Hope Café sessions. Participants emphasized the importance of work release in serving as a bridge between prison and the community. Work release allows individuals to demonstrate responsibility and accountability, gain job experience, and helps them accumulate more savings to assist with reentry. A number of participants expressed concern about the limited availability of work release, restrictive eligibility requirements, and work release timeline (i.e., that eligible individuals cannot be on work release until the last six months of incarceration).



Participants had the following suggestions to improve work release:

- Expansion of work release - expanding capacity and eligibility could be a useful incentive to motivate individuals to work on their programming plans at the time of admissions, which could decrease infractions during incarceration;
- Most also agreed that they would benefit from more community involvement and an earlier start date (e.g., 12 months from release instead of six).

Social Supports

Social supports was another important theme when discussing factors related to recidivism. For most people, past and present relationships influence individual expectations, self-esteem, and values. Humans are resilient, but the importance of a solid support system cannot be overstated. The DOC population has a higher prevalence of being victimized by physical and sexual abuse, addiction, trauma, and abandonment in their past compared to the general population. These experiences leave scars that continue to impact relationships. Some participants expressed that family and friends directly or indirectly contributed to their criminal involvement, and they were fearful that dysfunctional relationships would negatively impact their future success. Others shared that they felt remorse for bringing shame to their family, or being an absent parent. Still others stated they do not know how to establish and maintain healthy relationships and find themselves repeating negative relationship patterns.

Participants also pointed out that the public is often unaware of the difficulty in maintaining relationships while incarcerated. Individuals may be incarcerated away from family and friends, which can be a challenge to find means of transportation, money, and time off work to visit. While phone calls and video visits might assist in maintaining relationships, they are expensive and can be difficult to coordinate.

Recommendations to improve and enhance social support included:

- Placement closer to home;
- Expanding visitation;
- Decreasing phone and video costs;
- Providing programs that help individuals identify and address unhealthy relationships and establish and strengthen healthy ones;
- Specifically, programs to address anger management, trauma, domestic violence, and teaching prosocial coping skills would assist in improving social support networks.

Housing

Housing challenges were also discussed as a barrier for justice-involved individuals. Related to the social support network challenges, staying with family or friends may not be viable (e.g., if relationships are fractured) or may be counter-productive to success (e.g., criminal involvement of other occupants).

In addition, rental entities are less likely to lease to those with a felony conviction and require proof of employment or income. Sex offenders specifically have a particularly difficult time due to the stigma of their crime, the need to register their address, and residential legal restrictions. For these reasons and others (e.g., substance abuse and mental health issues), a portion of incarcerated individuals are released homeless and/or supervised as homeless in the community. Having a safe home is a basic need, and if this is not met, successful reentry and supervision compliance are compromised.



Stable housing is a key component for success. While participants were very supportive of the housing voucher program, which addresses some of the housing challenges, they expressed concern that vouchers are limited in eligibility, quantity, and duration (up to three months).

Suggestions to enhance housing options included:

- Increased opportunities for the incarcerated to save more toward housing prior to release through increased wages for prison jobs and expanded work release;
- Additional partnerships with housing entities, including the model some businesses are using to hire former felons and provide housing on a temporary basis;
- Increase the number of housing vouchers, extend the vouchers support to six months, and expand the eligibility criteria to include those not supervised in the community.

Employment

Employment was a factor that research and studies demonstrate is fundamental in reducing the recidivism rate. While public perception is often that jobs are readily available, the options for former felons are considerably fewer compared to individuals without a criminal history. Those who participated in educational courses, completed treatment programs, and/or acquired working experience and certificates expressed frustration at the difficulty of obtaining employment, particularly jobs with an adequate living wage. For individuals with less education, treatment, and work experience, the difficulties were greater.

A repeated theme was that employers don't give former felons a chance. Some participants believed it did not matter whether a conviction is addressed upfront or later in the interview process – once the employer found out about a criminal record their chances of being hired plummeted. The social support network on which many depend for job connections may also be limited if gainfully employed friends and family are reluctant to vouch for them.

Participants also felt that some educational and vocations programs provided in prison are of limited use in the community, either because of where they live or few available jobs that fit those skills. Their excitement at acquiring a skill quickly dissipates if it does not translate to employment, and the erosion of confidence and self-worth can lead to behaviors that further undermine success (e.g., substance abuse, crime, failing to follow conditions of supervision).

Participants shared the following recommendations:

- Educating the public that individuals formerly involved in crime are worth a second chance and emphasizing the impact of jobs in reducing crime and recidivism;
- This awareness could also lead to more support to “ban the box”;
- Expanding direct partnerships with businesses that hire former felons;
- Providing regular job fairs with employers across the state;
- Allowing opportunities to interview for jobs while incarcerated;
- Aligning job training to employment opportunities readily available in the job market



Note: Staff from Employment Security Department's WorkSource attended several Hope Cafés, and since then have been working with DOC staff on partnership strategies to boost employment rates for justice-involved individuals.

“[Ban the box](#)” is a movement to prohibit criminal history disclosure on job applications.

Legal Factors

Legal factors were also discussed among Hope Café participants. Many outside the criminal justice system are not aware that a conviction often means legal issues beyond the sentence of incarceration or supervision.

Legal financial obligations (LFOs) such as restitution, court fees, and fines can be a great burden and source of stress to those released and those under community supervision, and the interest associated with these debts can be daunting. Other sources of frustration were the requirement to release to the county of origin, which can be a barrier to success for a variety of reasons, including lack of social support (or social support with a negative influence), limited housing and employment opportunities, and the outstanding warrants upon release making individuals subject to immediate arrest.

The unintended effects of complex sentencing laws were also discussed among participants, including confusion about lengths of stay, consecutive and concurrent sentences, and the tendency of sentencing alternatives to absorb a disproportionate share of treatment resources. The negative impact of Swift and Certain (SAC) on success was stated repeatedly, usually related to the perceptions that sanctions and the charge of failure to obey all laws (FTOAL) for violations were unfair and counterproductive.



Participants had the following suggestions to reduce the impact of legal factors on recidivism:

- Statute changes to decrease the burden of LFOs (e.g., more reasonable payment plans, credits for timely payments, lower interest rates) and address outstanding warrants;
- Simplifying sentencing;
- Reconsideration of the requirement to release to county of origin and FTOAL;
- Restructuring SAC to revise the sanction grid, allow for compliance credits, and include incentives.

DOC Staff Role

DOC staff and their role in reducing recidivism was a regular topic of discussion. Both staff and those under DOC care consistently expressed gratitude in feeling they had a voice and were genuinely heard. Some staff acknowledged that even though DOC does not have all the answers or required resources, they felt a key part of their job is to assist in reducing the number of people who return to prison. Some of those under DOC care were surprised by this notion, reinforcing the importance of the Hope Café discussions and the need to consistently communicate and demonstrate DOC's commitment to successful reentry.



There was frequent discussion about the DOC responsibility to address a wide variety of population needs, balance safety with rehabilitation, and the resource limitations in accomplishing both. Some staff were described as being more concerned with following rules and curbing violators rather than addressing root causes, problem-solving, and supporting positive change. The assumption that strict prison rules translate to structure and self-discipline after release was considered unrealistic; at the same time, some who suggested more autonomy and laxer rules acknowledged such changes could impact safety.

Conditions of supervision are also more challenging to abide than those who have never been under supervision may believe – conditions such as reporting to community corrections, staying away from those with criminal records, abstaining from all substances, and participation in treatment are a few conditions that may be required over and above the ongoing challenges related to employment, housing, transportation, medical/mental health issues, and child care.

The Hope Cafés yielded some positive acknowledgments for the DOC as well. A few participants noted the Hope Cafés showed that DOC is trying to make positive changes, particularly by including those who are often left out of such discussions, including incarcerated individuals or those under community supervision. Several staff indicated that Advance Corrections will substantially reorient the DOC culture into one that balances accountability, safety, and support.

A number of suggestions were provided to improve the role of DOC in reducing recidivism:

- Smaller caseloads to allow more time with each individual;
- Expand collaboration with those in the custody of DOC, families, and the community to navigate barriers to positive change;
- Increase flexibility in supervision to allow more individuals to meet supervision conditions without compromising other responsibilities;
- Consider incentives to reinforce positive behavior change;
- Consider hiring former felons who can mentor and model change;
- Work with state government partners to facilitate law changes that would assist individuals to be successful (the legal factors listed in the previous section).

Reentry

Reentry support and services were also a prevalent theme in the sessions. Reentry is often viewed as if it is one program, entity, or moment in time, but the simple term belies its complexity – it is a massive and delicate coordination of resources designed to address the needs of each individual during and after incarceration to decrease recidivism. Participants shared the vision that a successful reentry program focuses on case management from admission to the end of incarceration or community supervision, including DOC programs and referrals to partner programs.

Variations of “Reentry should begin on Day One” were a common refrain heard throughout Hope Cafés. While most agreed this is the gold standard for DOC to reach, some expressed frustration at how difficult this is to achieve with the wide range of needs and limited time and resources. Participants also expressed a range of perceptions that those under DOC jurisdiction don’t need help, don’t want help, or don’t know where to go for services.

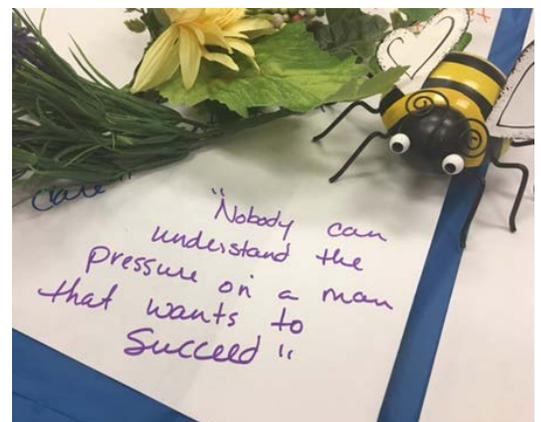
A few incarcerated individuals explained that they didn’t think they needed help at their last release, but the fact that they were back indicated they actually do. Others said it is hard to ask for help and even if they do reach out, getting help is harder than they thought, requiring persistence and advocating for oneself.

Suggestions to help with reentry included:

- More collaboration among state agencies and non-profit partners to provide services across the needs spectrum;
- True individualization of the programming and treatment plans;
- Expansion of program capacity and eligibility criteria;
- Not waiting until the last part of the sentence to address needs;
- Incarcerated individuals also believed more mentorship programs with successful individuals would inspire and motivate them;
- A packet with resources at release or upon admission to supervision, including but not limited to transportation, housing, job centers, clothing and food sources, and treatment facilities;
- Centralized location of services within the community.

Participant poem:

*He made a bad decision
He was sent to prison
He was categorized as 2A
“You’ll get programs another day”
All he did was sit and wait
Until the day he got the gate
When he left he was the same
As the first day, when he came.
-Recidivism*



Reflection

At the end of each Hope Café session, participants were asked to share their thoughts on the day. People were overwhelmingly grateful for the opportunity to share their opinions and suggestions. Some were also skeptical that any changes would occur, highlighting the importance that this report be the first of many tangible outcomes that result from this effort.

Much like the focus of Hope Cafés was to listen, the focus of this report was to summarize what was heard rather than inform readers about existing programs or assess the accuracy of perceptions or feasibility of suggestions. However, it must also be acknowledged that there are a number of programs and services in operation designed to address many of the issues discussed (see [Appendix F](#)).

A key outcome of the Hope Café sessions was that seeds of optimism were planted across the state. Incarcerated individuals from the Washington Corrections Center for Women, the Washington Corrections Center, and the Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women were inspired to create a Hope quilt and two painted Hope banners, each of which were hung as centerpieces for sessions across the state. DOC staff received correspondence from energized participants eager about next steps. Several staff inquired about applying the Hope Café model to include a variety of participants in facility and field-based problem-solving efforts. Incarcerated individuals in the Special Offenders Unit at Monroe Correctional Center started a “Think Positive Newsletter” to share stories and ideas to reduce recidivism. Several internal news stories were posted on the intranet and the Hope Café initiative was also recognized by external news stories.

DOC is charged with a lot of responsibilities: to incarcerate and protect, to correct and rehabilitate, to discipline and mentor, to supervise and reintegrate. The Hope Cafés served a reminder to all participants that with collaboration and innovation with justice-involved individuals, state agency and community partners, and committed staff, we will keep striving to better meet these needs. The hope seedlings are precious in the world of corrections, and some can flourish by identifying and implementing modest solutions. Not all solutions will work, but if we keep trying some of these seedlings will grow into trees.



News Article Links

- [Event looks at ways to reduce recidivism](#) (Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle)
- [Putting the Power of Self-Knowledge to Work](#) (New York Times)
- [Hard times: Former inmates, officials talk transition from prison](#) (Daily Sun News)

Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation and gratitude goes out to everyone who hosted, participated, and volunteered at the Department of Corrections (DOC) conducted Hope Café events. Your time and contributions were integral to the success of this effort. A special thanks to those who shared their life experiences and viewpoints with honesty and vulnerability.

Participant Gratitude:

"We are ONE! One family. Share the load. Let us be more involved in the situation. P.S. This is a great start. Thank you for this."

"I appreciated the few staff here actually listened. This shows that some people, other than friends and family, care enough to advocate in an effective manner. We need more of it, as felons, as humans, in general."

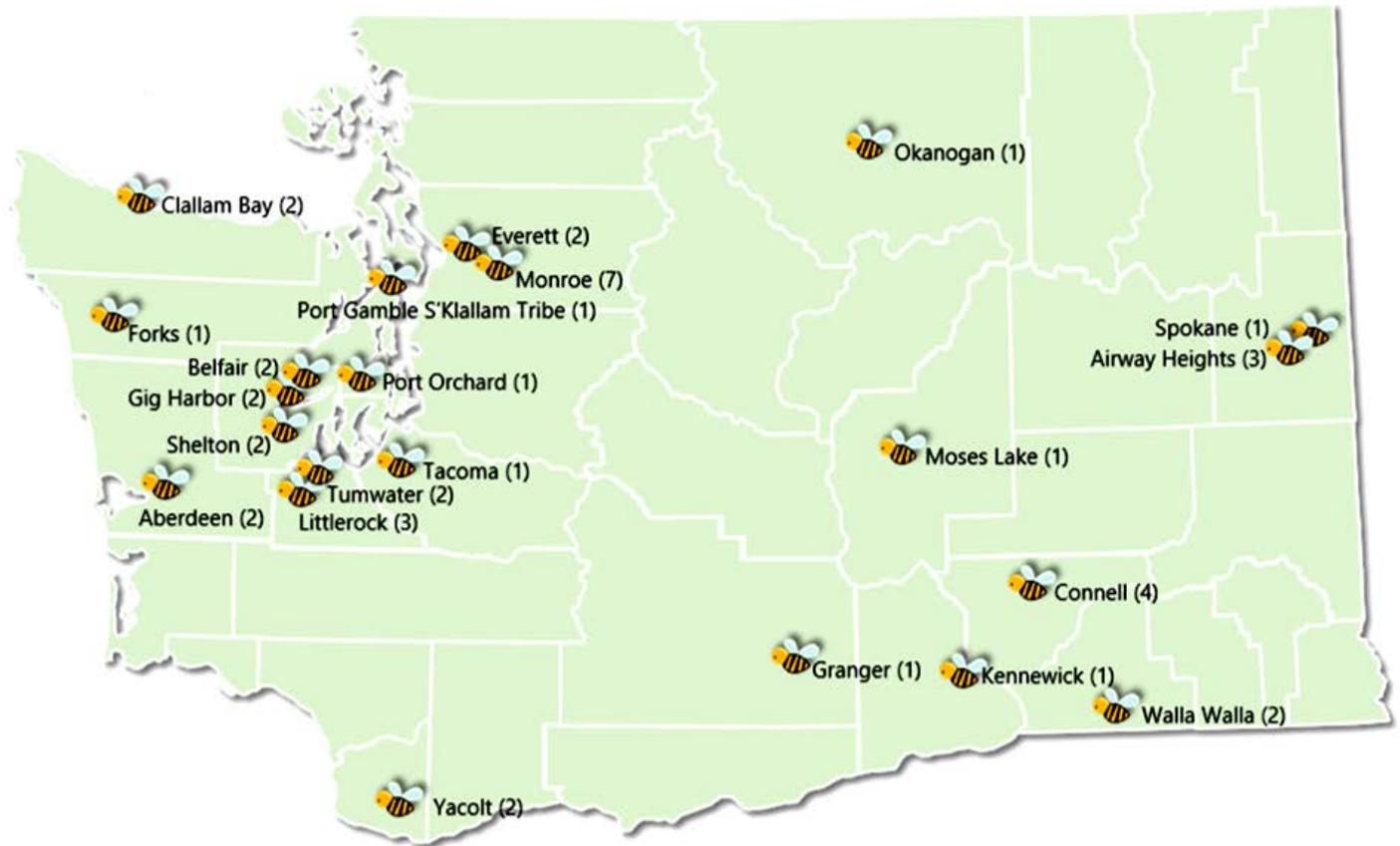
"Thank you for allowing our voices to be heard. I have been in prison for 7 years without feeling that we have much of a voice."

"I was sincerely listened to!"

"Thank you for looking past the inmate and helping the person."

Appendix A: Map of Hope Café Locations

45 events in 21 cities and 1 tribal nation across Washington State



Participating Communities

- Aberdeen (2)
- Airway Heights (3)
- Belfair (2)
- Clallam Bay (2)
- Connell (4)
- Everett (2)
- Spokane (1)
- Tacoma (1)
- Forks (1)
- Gig Harbor (2)
- Granger (1)
- Kennewick (1)
- Littlerock (3)
- Monroe (7)
- Tumwater (2)
- Walla Walla (2)
- Moses Lake (1)
- Okanogan (1)
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe (1)
- Port Orchard (1)
- Shelton (2)
- Yacolt (2)

Appendix B: Methodology

The 45 Hope Café sessions produced about 2,500 information artifacts, including 920 discussion host summaries completed by table hosts, 920 chart paper tablecloths with quotes and art, and 684 notecards. Photos were taken of the art and quotes from the paper tablecloths, some of which are included in this report. Also included are several photographs submitted by participants.

To identify prevalent themes, a 10% random sample (n=92) of discussion summaries was drawn. At least one summary was selected from each session, and most had more than one. Two staff reviewed the summaries and listed themes under each of the three main questions in an Excel sheet.

These questions were:

- What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about recidivism?
- What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity about recidivism?
- If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose to reduce recidivism?

Research & Data Analytics (RDA) staff studied the excel sheet and identified a set of initial themes to guide the second review. For the second review, another 15% sample (n=138) of discussion summaries was selected (those in the first review were excluded from sampling). In addition, 14% (n=96) of notecards were selected. Five (5) staff volunteers from the Prisons Division, Offender Change Division, and the Office of the Deputy Secretary each received a packet with a portion of the sampled items. They were asked to independently review their materials for common themes around recidivism assumptions and barriers, to identify solutions.

A facilitator from the Lean team at DOC Headquarters led the group through an exercise to identify prevalent themes. The two (2) staff from the first review were also included in the discussion, for a total of seven (7) participants. Focus group participants were asked to write a sticky note for key assumptions and barriers in their review, and then to compare with a partner and group them into larger themes. Each group participant also identified the top 10 ideas from their review and narrowed these down to the top 20 ideas.

These reviews and the resulting materials guided the organization and content of this report. While it is not possible to present all the assumptions, barriers, and suggestions shared in the Hope Cafés, this product reflects a good portion of them. It is our hope that participants across the state could read the report and conclude that they were heard.

Appendix C: Hope Café Pamphlet



Welcome to the Hope Café. We need your help to reduce recidivism. Today, we are asking you to participate in a conversation. Our goal is to reduce the number of individuals who return to prison. We need your help to achieve this goal.

“One of the most significant public safety investments we can make to improve the lives of individuals and the safety of our communities is to do more to prepare people leaving our criminal justice system for a successful re-entry to society.”

Governor Inslee

The Facts

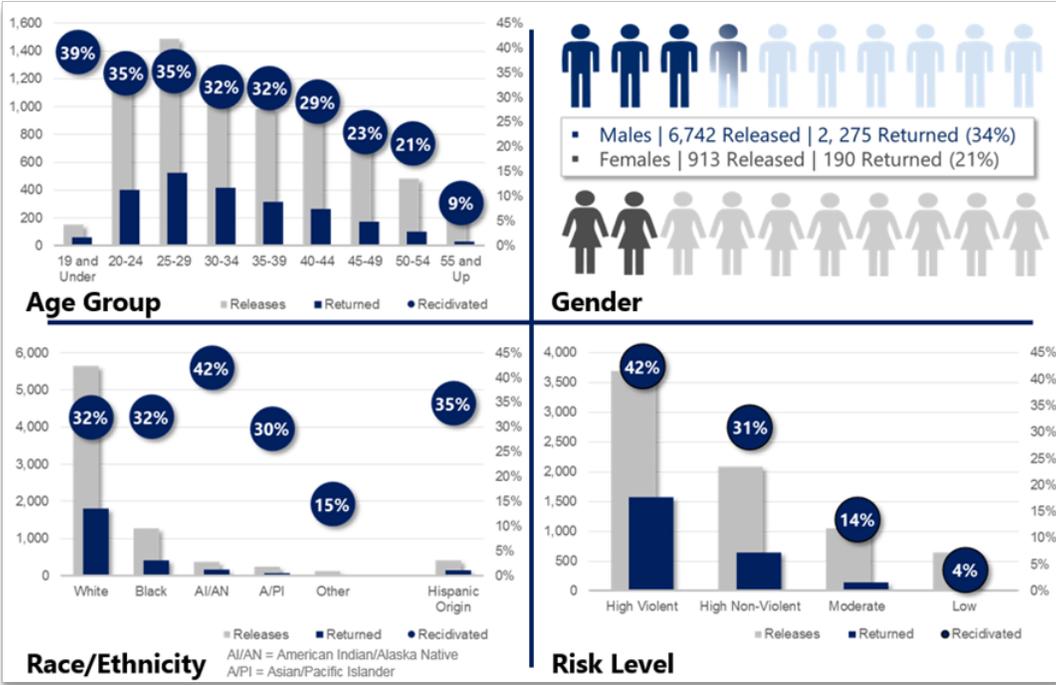
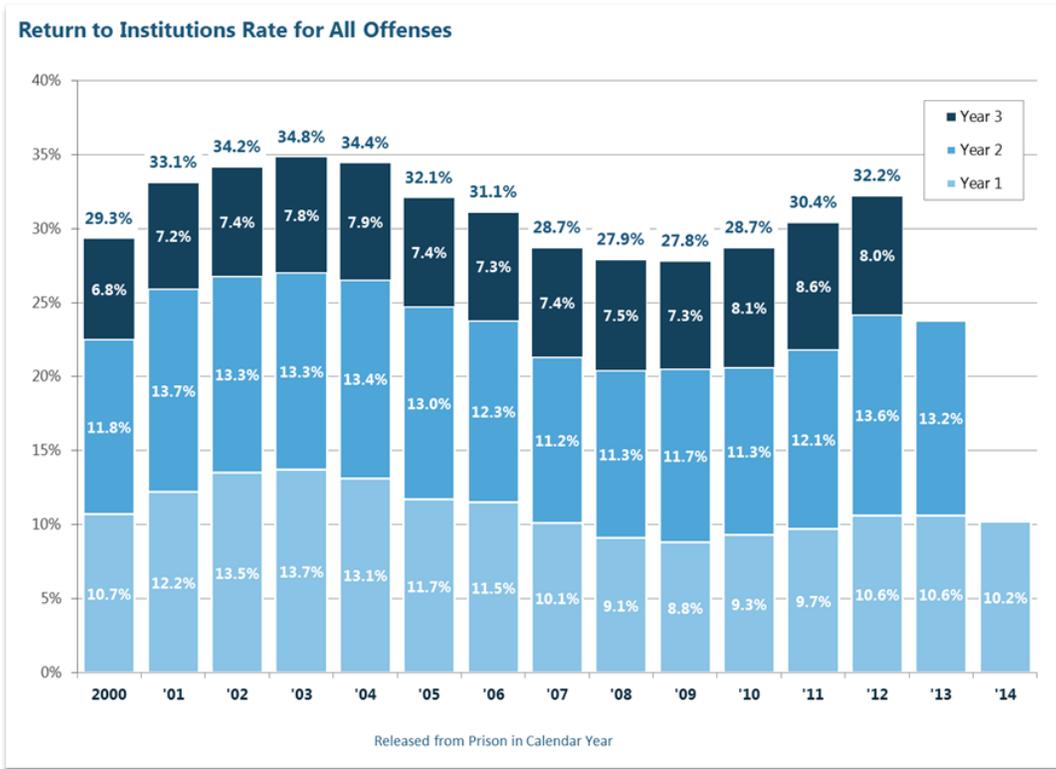
- 96 percent of people incarcerated today will eventually release.
- 3 out of 10 people released will return to prison.

The message behind the logo



- Hope is defined as “a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.”
- Trees and plants symbolize growth, strength, stability, and perseverance.
- Bees are resilient, task-oriented, and represent a sense of community, hard work, cross-pollination, and adaptability.

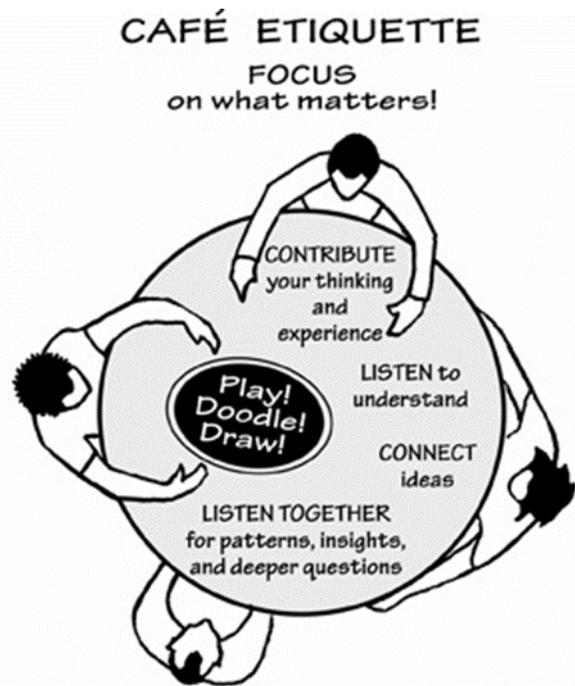
Pamphlet Page 1



Demographics are based on Demographics for CY2012 Releases (Source | OMNI)
 Facts are based on history.
 We cannot change history, but we can make positive changes for the future.

What to Expect

Welcome & Purpose	20 minutes
Question One.....	20 minutes
Travel	5 minutes
Question Two	20 minutes
Travel	5 minutes
Question Three.....	20 minutes
Reflection	10 minutes
Report Out.....	40 minutes
Next Steps & Thank you!	10 minutes



Hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers."

Robert Green Ingersoll



Question 1:

What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about recidivism?

Question 2:

What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity about recidivism?

Question 3:

If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose to reduce recidivism?

Reflection and Report Out

What did you most appreciate about the conversation?

What had real meaning for you from what you've heard? What surprised you?

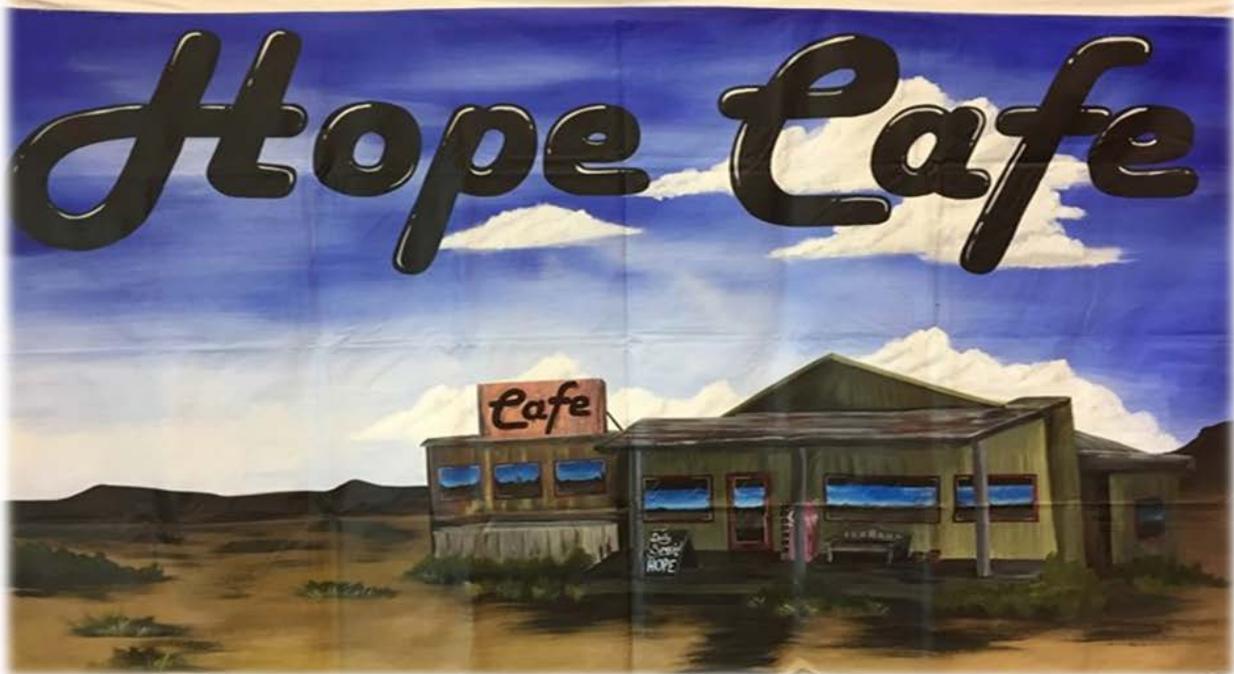
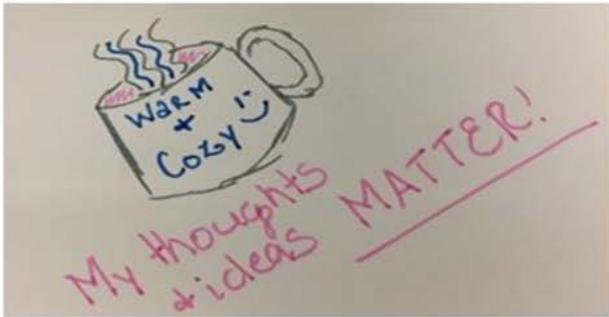
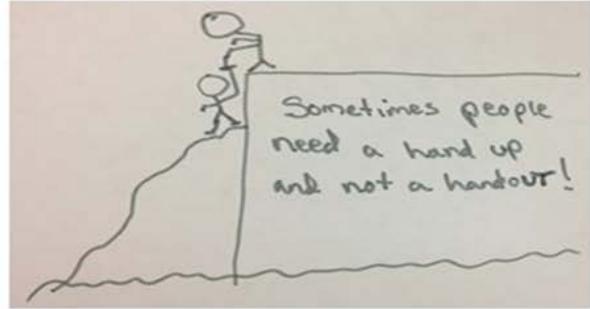
What challenged you?

What is missing from the conversation?

*Thank you for your active participation
in the conversation!*

Hope
CHANGES EVERYTHING

Appendix D: Inspiration from Hope Café Participants



Appendix E: Summary of Prevalent Assumptions, Barriers, and Recommendations

Table below is a snapshot of perspectives and solutions expressed during Hope Cafés. It does not represent all points of view or describe existing programs that address some areas of risk/need.

Area of risk/need	Assumptions	Barriers	Recommendations
Social/Cultural Judgment	Once a criminal, always a criminal	Judgment undermines progress – it’s hard to fight a label	Change attitudes with education about reentry, benefits of program investments
	Lawbreakers do not deserve “extra” services	Optimism at release worn down by negative interactions, ongoing barriers	Empower individuals by providing programming that promotes their value
Physical and Mental Health	Needs are accurately identified and prioritized at admission	Needs are complex and dynamic	Improve processes to identify and sequence needs, and update as needed
	Incarcerated individuals receive all the services they need	Treatment varies across facilities and communities due to capacity, location, and resources challenges	Improve facility coordination to place individuals where they need to be to receive services Expand and improve treatment inside and out through community partnerships
	Incarcerated Individuals don’t deserve the services they receive	Individuals who are not physically and mentally well are less likely to successfully navigate reentry challenges	Educate the public about the link between physical and mental health challenges and successful reentry
Life Skills	Incarcerated individuals have the life skills they need to succeed	Life skills limitations (e.g., budgeting, cooking, time management) compound other reentry barriers	Expand life/soft skill programs both in facilities and the community
Educational/ Vocational	Facilities have many opportunities, but people aren’t motivated	Opportunities limited due to capacity, eligibility requirements, facility transfers, treatment and programming needs	Plan educational and vocational opportunities alongside other treatment and programming needs
	Need more trade apprenticeships, certificates, and training for living wage jobs	Programs and capacity are limited and eligibility requirements can be restrictive	Expand programs that provide certificates/experience to obtain living wage jobs
Work release	Work release should be expanded and start earlier	Capacity is limited, and eligibility requirements can be restrictive	Expand work release capacity, allow earlier in incarceration, and reconsider eligibility
Social Supports	Relationships are minimally impacted by incarceration	May be incarcerated far from home, making visits challenging Phone calls and video phone options are expensive and unreliable	Placement closer to home, and expanding extended visitation Consider options to reduce costs and improve access/quality

	Justice-involved individuals have adequate support system and healthy relationships	Dysfunctional relationships can aggravate behavior and compromise success while incarcerated and on supervision	Expand programs to support and strengthen healthy relationships
Housing	Incarcerated individuals have a place to go after release	Family and friends may not be willing to help Can be held past Earned Release Date (ERD) pending address approval Landlords/management companies may be reluctant to rent to former felons	Expand partnerships with housing entities Expand work release so individuals can save more toward housing prior to release Educate public about housing challenges; seek partnerships with employers that will co-sign for or provide housing
	Housing vouchers are sufficient for those releasing	Limited availability and duration of housing vouchers Unsupervised releases ineligible	Increase housing vouchers and extend period to six months Make available to those not supervised
Employment	Jobs are readily available to justice-involved individuals	Employers don't want to hire former felons	Expand partnerships with employers, host regular job fairs inside and out with employers across the state Ban the box Provide opportunities to interview while still incarcerated
	Jobs in prison provide skills needed for outside jobs	Skills/certificates don't translate to a job, or a job in the area of residence	Tailor job training to job openings in the communities where people are returning
Legal	Legal issues are over once sentence to prison or supervision is done	Legal financial obligations (LFOs), child support, and outstanding warrants can impede success	More support (inside and out) to address outstanding legal issues
	Legislative requirements have unintended effects	Sentencing is unnecessarily confusing to all and makes DOC's job harder Swift and Certain sanctions can undermine success Failure to Obey All Laws (FTOAL) is double sanctions, and not swift	Simplify sentencing structure Consider incentives, compliance credits or resets, revisit sanction grid Eliminate FTOAL
	Legal requirement to return to county of origin supports successful reentry	For some, this increases their chances of failure (e.g., lack of support and opportunity, returning to the old lifestyle)	Base release on where individual is most likely to succeed (social support, education, jobs, treatment availability, etc.)

DOC Role	DOC knows how to reduce recidivism	<p>Recidivism is complex</p> <p>Program resources are limited and coordination to address all individual needs is complicated</p>	<p>Hope Cafés are designed to hear fresh perspectives and solutions</p> <p>Identify solutions within DOC purview with low impact on existing resources and significant impact on recidivism</p>
	Staff are punishment-oriented and/or want to see individuals fail	Some staff aren't modeling behavior to promote positive change	<p>Advance Corrections is primed to institute a balance of accountability and support; similar sustained efforts can gradually change culture</p> <p>DOC should hire former felons – they can relate to individuals on different level</p>
	Strict rules/structure teach discipline (both in prison and on supervision)	<p>May be effective while in prison, but doesn't teach independence and responsibility</p> <p>Difficult to balance the requirements of supervision and meet other pressing needs (job, household, transportation, etc.)</p>	<p>Rules are necessary, and can be enforced with clarity, consistency, and compassion</p> <p>More support and flexibility from DOC to assist individuals meet conditions and other responsibilities</p>
Reentry	Justice-involved individuals don't want to change and/or don't need assistance	Many released believe they are prepared to succeed or are reluctant to access services	<p>Improve collaboration among state agencies to close program and service gaps</p> <p>More mentorship programs in prisons and community with people who have succeeded</p>
	Incarcerated individuals don't know where to go for needed services, particularly after release	One basic need (e.g., housing, treatment, transportation, treatment) going unmet has a ripple effect and can quickly unravel the best laid plans	<p>Provide packet with resources on release from prison or admission to supervision: transportation, housing, job centers, clothing, food, medical, treatment, etc.</p> <p>Centralize services in one community location</p>

Appendix F: DOC Activities to Address Areas of Risk and Need

DOC has a wide array of programs and initiatives designed to address the areas of risk/need identified in the Hope Café discussions. While these are too extensive to list, the table below provides a few examples for each area of risk/need. Efforts to improve current programs and institute new ones are ongoing and central to the DOC mission to improve public safety.

Area of risk/need	Actions
Social/Cultural Judgment	Beginning in November 2016, the Department began to stress to internal and external stakeholders the need to reframe thinking from “offenders” to individuals who have committed crimes, have already or are currently serving their legally obligated time under supervision, and will then return to society as neighbors and fellow community members. The effort to change attitudes regarding labeling have been addressed through memorandum, policies, and other agency-crafted publications.
Physical and Mental Health	<p>Secretary Steve Sinclair, to better create a continuum of behavioral health care, streamlined and combined substance abuse treatment as well as sex offender treatment into the health services division. By focusing on holistic health care and services through the combined efforts of physical, mental, and addictions, the Department will be better able to treat individuals and prepare them for release.</p> <p>In preparing for release from incarceration, the Department provides Medicaid enrollment assistance to those transitioning into the community. Also, some transition and housing support services are provided to defined special populations (i.e., ORCS, HIV patients, etc.).</p>
Academic/Vocational Education	<p>With recent legislation and in partnership with the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, the academic education afforded to the incarcerated population is being expanded to include some college curriculum, including Associates degree work.</p> <p>Secured electronic tablets for academic educational instruction are being piloted at select correctional facilities to determine if the tablets can provide needed additional education capacity.</p> <p>The Department is continuing to assess and provide GED and other long-standing academic education to the incarcerated population.</p> <p>The Department is working with trades unions and other vocational trainers to offer vocational education that meets needs for certification and job-readiness so that individuals are more likely to gain employment soon after release.</p>
Work Release	<p>Efforts are underway to make sure that all available beds in work release are being filled and that maximum effort is achieved to fill beds soon after there is a vacancy in work release.</p> <p>The Department is proposing during the 2018 legislative session a graduated reentry program that could allow individuals to enter work release facilities sooner so that they can gain additional work experience.</p>

Area of risk/need	Actions
Social Supports	<p>The Department continues its commitment to visitation and extended family visitation programming, remaining one of only four states that provides extended family visitation within a state correctional system.</p> <p>The Department also continues to support and co-facilitate regular family council meetings at both local and statewide levels, as a resource for families and support systems.</p>
Housing	<p>The agency's housing voucher program continues to build relationships with property owners willing to rent to recently release individuals. The housing voucher program also continues to subsidize, in part or totality, the first three months of rent for eligible released individuals.</p> <p>In recent months, the housing voucher program administrator has conducted interviews with external media to expand awareness of the housing voucher program to property owners who may be interested in participating and renting available properties.</p>
Employment	<p>Correctional Industries continues to provide job training in areas of industry that are demonstrated to fields of demand in the community.</p> <p>Additionally, Correctional Industries has been hosting job fairs inside correctional facilities so that releasing individuals have the opportunity to interview for employment positions prior to release.</p> <p>The Reentry Division has release navigators in select geographic regions that conduct outreach campaigns with employers. Through these connections and relationship building opportunities, employers learn more about the vocational training that's been provided to releasing individuals and makes the individuals more attractive for hiring.</p>
Legal	<p>Planned for the 2018 legislative session, the Department will be proposing clearer sentencing instructions for post-release supervision.</p> <p>The internal grievance structure for incarcerated men and women continues to be simplified and made clearer so that individuals can work at the lowest levels of structure to remedy issues and inquiries.</p>
DOC Role	<p>Through the strategic realignment of reentry, Correctional Industries and programmatic areas, the Department is working toward simplification of coordination and provision of necessary programs and assistance to those who are releasing or have been released.</p> <p>Additionally, enhanced risk assessment and case management tools, as supported by the Advance Corrections project, will provide enhanced support and more detailed information to case managers about their specific supervised individuals.</p>
Reentry	<p>Between increased and streamlined Department of Corrections focus on reentry, and Governor Inslee's Reentry Council, led by the Department of Commerce, collaboration and emphasis is being placed on safely reintegrating individuals into their home communities and providing the basic levels of service, including transportation, housing, job training, medical treatment and others.</p>