Formerly incarcerated women can succeed in transforming their lives if they are in a program that centers relationships and cultural identities and eliminates systemic barriers.

**Background**

While California’s incarcerated population has decreased over the last decade, recidivism rates remain high. 42.6% of formerly incarcerated women will be rearrested within one year of release. In Time for Change Foundation’s programs, the six-month rearrest rate has been 0% for three years. Recidivism is a lost opportunity – for incarcerated women, their children, and our entire society. Time for Change Foundation’s evidence-based program ensures women do not lose the opportunity for a better future. Built by a formerly incarcerated black woman and employing true diversity, equity, and inclusion in its organizational culture and structure, it offers a unique model that:

- Centers building relationships
- Centers Black and brown women’s cultures and voices
- Meets women’s unique needs as mothers and caregivers
- Teaches self-advocacy

**Methods**

The project employed a mixed methods quasi-experimental design. Statistical data using the GAIN and SAMHSA CSAT GPRA measures (in a six month pre/post design, N=129) were combined with qualitative data from client surveys (N=129) and focus groups (N=36).

**Results**

**Barrier #1 Lack of Supportive Relationships:** Women are more likely to return to abusive relationships. TFCF’s program builds a new community based on healthy relationships through innovative peer mentoring, group housing, and teaching advocacy.

**Barrier #2 Poverty:** 41% of formerly incarcerated women in the country are homeless. 79% of incarcerated women said their greatest area of need is employment, education, and life skills. TFCF’s program ensured 90.5% of women were housed and 51.2% of women entered employment or educational programs within six months.

**Barrier #3 Trauma:** Intergenerational trauma is a significant factor in women’s reentry. TFCF’s program resulted in a 31.7% decrease in depression, a 39.2% decrease in anxiety, and a 60% decrease in cognitive symptoms. Its innovative group family housing and parenting programs have successfully returned 317 children to their mothers from foster care.

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