FOSTERING HOPE AMONG FORMERLY INCARCERATED BLACK MEN

BY

RICHMOND E. HAYES

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2024

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Helen A. Neville, Chair
Professor Liliane C. Windsor
Assistant Professor Jarrett T. Lewis
Research Scholar James W. Kilgore

ABSTRACT

The benefits of fostering hope are widely known. Informally in our hearts and formally in research, there is support for higher levels of hope and many positive psychological outcomes. Still, empirical research has lacked breadth and magnitude as it relates to exploring the personal lived experiences of Black folks, including formerly incarcerated Black men and their sense of collective hope. With this dissertation, I sought to address a gap in the literature. I specifically examined the hope-fostering strategies of 12 formerly incarcerated Black men in their returns to the community after release from prison and jail. I identified seven main themes from individual one-on-one interviews, using standard thematic analysis steps. Three main themes were comparable to elements identified in Mosley and colleagues' (2019) psychological framework of radical hope: *Creating Meaning and Purpose*, *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past*, and *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality*. The consistency of the present study's findings with Mosley and colleagues (2019) and Herth (1990) suggest that there are fundamental hope-fostering strategies, and the differences indicate that there is the potential for hope-fostering strategies specific to formerly incarcerated Black men (*Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook*, *Engaging Healing/ Growth Strategies*, *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network*, and *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action*). Implications for research, practice, and community interventions with formerly incarcerated Black men are discussed.

Keywords: hope, radical hope, hope-fostering strategies, Black men, reentry

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my advisor and chair of my committee, Dr. Helen A. Neville, for her time, knowledge sharing, and commitment to my personal growth. I am also grateful for my doctoral committee—Drs. Liliane C. Windsor, Jarrett T. Lewis, and James W. Kilgore—who provided useful feedback and guidance at critical points in my individual journey and in the development of this original work. Furthermore, this research was made possible with the generous support that I received from the American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program grant, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

I am thankful for the lecturers, professors, and clinical supervisors who went above and beyond throughout my pursuit of higher education with special thanks to my longtime advisor, Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad. Their contributions were evident in the countless cycles of planning, designing, implementing, testing, as well as in the evaluation and review of this comprehensive piece of writing. I would also like to thank the office support staff from the university who kept this project on track and the study participants from my community whose stories continue to impact and inspire me.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to recognize my family. They have served as constant reminders of whose I am and where I come from. Their accountability has helped me to remember the responsibility that I have to His people and the necessity of continuing to press towards the mark.

I dedicate this dissertation to all the praying mothers and grandmothers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Majoring in psychology at Howard University solidified my interest in and equipped me with the ability to critically analyze and challenge current systems–including the carceral state. Having two Black parents who made me aware of issues concerning social justice and racial justice at an early age, the HBCU atmosphere swiftly fortified my racial consciousness and made me more sensitive to the needs of my people. I shifted from simple inquiries into slavery and Jim Crow, to immersing myself in scholarship that supplies solution models to the social justice issues of today, most specifically, mass incarceration.

The course that had the greatest impact on me is the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (Inside-Out). For the first time ever in the nation's capital, Inside-Out brought together students from Howard University and students who are incarcerated in the DC jail to learn about and discuss topics such as the causes of crime, victims, and the rationale for the criminal legal system–from inside the District of Columbia Department of Corrections. The program involved deep and transforming dialogue, underscored by respect and inclusivity. During the semester-long course behind the walls, I extensively engaged in introspection and, in doing so, reconsidered what I had come to know about crime and justice. On top of serving as my engine for social change, I was able to integrate my theoretical knowledge with my personal experiences through readings and dialogue, in addition to discussing issues of social concern and interacting with those directly affected.

I went on to earn my Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology at The George Washington University. The program allowed me to combine my passion for psychology with my interest in the criminal legal system, and I learned to examine mental health utilizing a legal lens. My

classwork focused heavily on psychopathology as it relates to interpreting behavior, and my externship training involved direct contact with individuals at all levels of the legal system. Building upon this highly specialized degree, the research training that I have received at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has taught me how to interpret empirical studies, so that my research can truly inform my practice. What is more, I have learned how to provide counseling, assessment, and intervention using multiple perspectives: psychological, cultural, and legal. The perspectives discovered in both of my graduate programs have been vital, as I have been required to leverage them daily in my clinical practice.

Understanding the value of being in community with other professionals focused on racial and ethnic minority behavioral health issues, I searched for other training opportunities in the community and at the University of Illinois. I became involved with a community-based reentry program that provides support, guidance, and hope to formerly incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. Their advocacy and outreach initiatives include the operation of a drop-in center. I supported the team as they administered to the needs of the community through peer mentoring, assistance with employment searches, job readiness training, family reunification, and service referrals. Volunteering at the re-entry program was an invaluable experience. It allowed me the opportunity to gain a better sense of what serving individuals reentering the community from jail and prison looks like in real life and will undoubtedly continue to motivate my practice and research.

Harm, Healing, and Hope

Black Americans have demonstrated hope, despite experiencing oppression for centuries. As evidenced by Black Americans expressing a desire for change and possessing the fortitude to create that change for themselves and their communities, the whole world can discern that Black

Americans have a hope or a "positive expectation that goes beyond visible facts" (Buckley & Herth, 2004, p. 33). According to decades of research by medical and psychological scholars, higher levels of hope have valuable benefits (Marques & Gallagher, 2017; Snyder, 2002; Yarcheski & Mahon, 2016). For example, results from Alarcon and colleagues' (2013) meta-analysis indicated that a moderate association exists between increased hope and greater levels of happiness and lower levels of depression and stress among adults. Extending these findings, among a community sample of adults, Gallagher and colleagues (2021) established a link between higher hope and lower anxiety and COVID-19 related stress. Besides these discoveries, from adolescence to late adulthood, the benefits of hope also appear to be stable across various stages of life (Marques & Gallagher, 2017). Additionally, Chang and colleagues (2019) observed that—above and beyond racial discrimination and social support—hope was a significant contributor in the prediction of psychological adjustment in African American adults. Overall, whether it is psychological well-being (Ang, 2022; Magaletta & Oliver, 1999), physical well-being (Long et al., 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2017) or educational well-being (Feldman, 2015; Rand, 2020), the evidence is clear and convincing in its presentation of the association between higher hope and well-being across the lifespan and across racial and ethnic groups.

In addition to health fields, hope has also been examined in the context of the criminal legal system in areas such as recidivism (i.e., formerly incarcerated individuals returning to jail/prison or being rearrested after their release) (Woldgabreal & Ward, 2014; 2016). Surprisingly, there is a dearth of research on hope in the literature documenting reentry or the process of individuals returning to the community from jail or prison. In the country with the highest rates of incarceration in the world—the United States of America—there is very little research on hope in general and those most impacted by incarceration. In addition to defining

hope from individual and collective perspectives and briefly reviewing a study that attempted to fill a gap in the literature, in this chapter, I describe hope-fostering strategies, outline methods of enhancing hope, offer a rationale for why we should promote hope, and discuss the aims of the present study.

What is Hope?

Colloquially, hope is described as something that everyone should have and hold on to. Likewise, if one has lost hope, then there is widespread support for seeking after hope until it is found again. Dating back to the 1950's, hope research in psychology emerged as part of the positive psychology wave. This reflected a call by psychologists to move away from focusing on deficit frameworks toward strengths-based models that centered human strengths and virtues. The concept of hope rode this wave of positive psychology and gained traction within the mental health field due to its association with adult growth and thriving. Although the hope literature has grown over the decades, there is still a lack of consensus on the definition of hope. There are at least 26 theories and 50 definitions of hope (Benzein & Saveman 1998; Lopez et al., 2003). Charles Snyder's hope theory and positive psychology model of hope has attracted the most research attention. According to Snyder (1995; 2002), hope is a goal-oriented, cognitive process involving agency (i.e., an individual's motivation to reach their goal) and pathways (i.e., an individual's ability to think of several courses of action to arrive at their goal). The resulting combination of these two components is hope or, more explicitly, the belief in one's ability to identify paths leading to desired objectives and ability to inspire oneself to follow those paths through positive thinking (Snyder, 2002). Despite being the most popular in the psychological literature, Snyder's hope theory is far from the only interpretation.

Another way to think about hope is from the viewpoint of the collective. Whereas Snyder's (1995; 2002) definition of hope focuses on the internal mechanisms within the individual, Mosley and colleagues' (2019) framework of radical hope describes a person with radical hope as someone who is operating in the present in a way that acknowledges the oppression experienced by Communities of Color. Using historical knowledge to design their future toward hope, the person with radical hope also has faith that their circumstances are changeable and a belief in their capacity to transform their situation at the individual and collective levels. Radical hope aspires to address the limited cultural considerations within traditional psychological theories and definitions of hope, like Snyder's hope theory. There is emerging research providing initial qualitative support for aspects of the model (French et al., 2023; Hayes, 2022).

In an earlier study, I investigated whether Mosley and colleagues' (2019) conceptualization of hope oriented toward the collective was relevant in the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated Black men (Hayes, 2022). My findings suggested that participants' conceptualizations of hope aligned with Snyder's (1995; 2002) traditional psychological perspective of hope (e.g., Goals, Self-Determination Processes, and Pathways) and with Mosley and colleague's (2019) psychological framework of radical hope (e.g., A Better Collective Future, Faith, and Meaning & Purpose). In addition, given the conceptualizations of Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community, I found new pathways to hope (e.g., Awakening/Epiphany/Encounter, Community/Social Support, Personal Growth, and HEAL-th). Limitations were listed and consisted of recommendations to use an interdisciplinary approach in future investigations to center formerly incarcerated Black men and the concept of hope, as well as to continue researching hope's role in the process of reentry.

What are hope-fostering strategies?

Given that hope is an agent of change which can fluctuate in intensity across time, efforts have been made to understand how individuals develop hope as well as how to enhance hope. For instance, Herth (1990) identified seven hope-fostering categories based on responses from interviews with people who were terminally-ill. These strategies were seen as "sources that functioned to instill, support or restore hope by facilitating the hoping process in some way" (Herth, 1990, p. 1253). The hope-fostering categories included: (1) the existence of uplifting and compassionate connections that were significant sources of interpersonal/social support; (2) the deliberate use of verbal and non-verbal humor and view of laughter as an inner resource; (3) the possession of willpower, in addition to characteristics including tenacity, bravery, and levelheadedness; (4) the establishment of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-based) goals and willingness to reevaluate goals, as necessary; (5) the presence of and engagement in spiritual beliefs and practices, such as prayer, meditation, reading spiritual books, and listening to spiritual music; (6) the recollection of positive moments from times past and/or remembering one's childhood and adolescence; and (7) the acceptance of, respect for, and celebration of one's full self by others.

Over the last several decades, there have been other studies exploring hope in the context of serious illness. Salamanca-Balen et al. (2021), for example, conducted a meta-analysis of hope-fostering interventions. They found that across 35 studies and almost 3,300 palliative care patients, enhancing hope was associated with an increased sense of meaning and decreased symptoms of depression. These findings provide a rationale for future explorations focused on identifying hope-fostering strategies. In addition to the research on hope-fostering strategies in the context of serious illness, originating from the nursing and medical professions, there is also

a significant literature base that considers hope in the therapeutic context and from a psychological framework. Weis and Speridakos (2011), for instance, conducted a meta-analysis of hope enhancement strategies in clinical and community settings. Among 27 studies on individual and group psychotherapy sessions, strategies for promoting hope aligned with the categories discovered by Herth (1990). Researchers have used these findings to help identify formal strategies for fostering hope, and they have offered countless considerations for therapists who seek to implement the strategies with their clients (e.g., Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015).

Magyar-Moe and Lopez (2015) proposed hope-fostering interventions for therapy groups and manualized single-session interventions targeting agency and pathways. In addition to the authors incorporating informal strategies for clients that would enable them to eventually enhance their own hope, they allude to some of the strategies being amenable to use by nonprofessionals who can help the individual in the generation of hopeful thoughts. Examples included collaborating with supportive friends and family to develop new pathways and checking in with others concerning one's progress in pursuit of goals. The endorsement of these examples and others is significant because it not only supports autonomy in individuals being able to foster hope within themselves, but it also confirms that others—without therapeutic training in hope enhancing practice—can aid in the development of hope in another individual.

Magyar-Moe and Lopez (2015) also provided several cultural considerations that therapists should be sensitive to when implementing hope strategies in the therapeutic context. Opening with an acknowledgement of the unique barriers to hope experienced by people from diverse groups, the authors continue in support of the supposition that some oppressed racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. have exhibited hope levels that are equal to or higher than those of white Americans (Chang & Banks, 2007; Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015). Even so, in giving

specific recommendations by racial/ethnic group, they suggested that hope for Black Americans could be optimized by "interventions that aim to reduce negative problem orientation and aim to increase positive problem orientation" (Magyar-Moe & Lopez, 2015, p. 498). Although promising, the practical utility of the proposed strategies warrants further investigation due to the relatively unknown nature of hope and specific cultural recommendations.

Despite experiencing higher levels of stress and being more likely to face adversity, Black Americans are less likely to present with depressive symptoms and more likely to maintain a positive attitude than white Americans (Assari & Lankarani, 2016). Nevertheless, in contrast to the recommendation that specific interventions be developed for Black Americans to increase hope levels, authors of other studies have suggested that psychotherapy should have less of an emphasis on hope when working with Black Americans (Assari & Lankarani, 2016). Owing to these disparate implications concerning how to accentuate hope, not only should hope be studied in diverse contexts, but its meaning and salience should be explored in the lived experiences of Black Americans to clarify its role in clinical practice.

Rationale and Purpose

Across a range of contexts there is growing empirical evidence to support the proposal that higher levels of hope are associated with positive life outcomes (Bahr et al., 2010; Guse & Hudson, 2014; LeBel, 2019; Marques & Gallagher, 2017). However, there is limited research concentrated on the experiences of Black men, who are the individuals most impacted by incarceration, and their experiences returning to the community from jail and prison. While Snyder's (1995; 2002) conceptualization of hope is historically the most cited in the social science literature, his positive psychology model of hope focuses on the needs of the individual. Communities of Color, by contrast, are traditionally oriented toward the collective well-being as

well. While Mosley and colleagues (2019) have responded with a proposed psychological framework of radical hope, additional empirical support for its practical use is needed.

In this dissertation, I extend my earlier research on hope among formerly incarcerated Black men by exploring how formerly incarcerated Black men foster hope during reentry. My previous research findings provided starting points for an exploration of how formerly incarcerated Black men might foster hope (Hayes, 2022). Specifically, when asked what gives them hope, I found that Faith and Community/Social Support were pathways to hope for formerly incarcerated Black men. In this dissertation, I aspired to connect the beliefs/thoughts (i.e., conceptualizations of hope) expressed in my earlier research to the behaviors (i.e., hope-fostering actions) of formerly incarcerated Black men. In order to achieve this goal, I needed to gain insight into the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated Black men and allow them to provide detailed descriptions of their actions towards hope.

The purpose of this study was to understand the hope-fostering strategies of Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community. I was especially interested in what hope enhancing strategies formerly incarcerated Black men utilize and whether they align with traditional, individual psychological perspectives of hope and/or with the collective psychological framework of radical hope. With the final objective being to use the findings to inform hope-fostering interventions and using Herth's (1990) study exploring how to foster hope in terminally-ill people as a template and my earlier research as a springboard, I aimed to answer the research question: How do Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community foster hope?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1969, Edwin "Eddie" Ellis—a 28-year-old Black man—was convicted of murdering a person that he "had no motive to kill" and "never" laid eyes on in his entire life (Gray, 2013, p. 12). Maintaining his innocence before, during, and after his 25 yearlong incarceration, Eddie's arrest, charge, and conviction for murder was linked to his involvement in the Black Panther Party. Eddie was targeted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counterintelligence Program or COINTELPRO because of his role as the director of community relations for the New York branch of the Black Panthers. The COINTELPRO—which began "in 1956 to disrupt the activities of the Communist Party of the United States"—broadened its scope in the 1960's to include other domestic groups "such as The Black Panther Party" (United States Department of Justice, 2011). Following the 1963 March on Washington, COINTELPRO intensified its investigations, and "authorized FBI agents to employ intrusive, if illegal, investigative techniques: wiretaps, bugs, break-ins, and mail opening" (Theoharis, 2016, p. 523). Although COINTELPRO was later criticized by Congress and citizens for this and other reasons, by 1971 when the FBI states that it ended all program operations, Eddie Ellis was demanding basic human rights such as proper health care and edible food while he was incarcerated in the Attica Correctional Facility (Gray, 2013; United States Department of Justice, 2011).

If practiced, hope has a number of benefits, including acting as a protective factor against psychological distress (Griggs, 2017; Huen et al., 2015). Yet, research exploring hope-fostering actions among formerly incarcerated individuals is sparse. So, to fill in this gap in the literature, I was interested in understanding how Black men who have experienced incarceration foster hope upon their return to the community. First, to establish the basis for this study, I utilize the lived

experience of Eddie Ellis to introduce and provide brief summaries of incarceration and the reentry experiences for Black men in the United States. I chose Eddie's story, specifically, due to the preeminence of his approach to reentry and reentry programs which take "race, class, gender, [and] regional culture into account" (Gray, 2013, p. 11). Next, using a critical lens, I present the two most prevalent approaches to reentry. Then, I define hope and proffer a psychological model of hope which is collective oriented. Finally, I review the research literature concerning hope among formerly incarcerated individuals.

Incarceration

From 1969 to 1994, Eddie Ellis was incarcerated in several of New York state's most intense and extreme prison environments. Each institution had its struggles, including the 1971 Attica uprising, during which Eddie and others endured inhumane living conditions and abuse from the correctional officers who often addressed them as nigger or spic (Gray, 2013). Incidents such as these provided evidence for advocates like Alexander (2010) to make claims emphasizing the parallels between the racial caste system known as Jim Crow and the current carceral system where "'Felony' is the new N-word" (p. 205). Indeed, much of the language that Eddie used to describe his prison experience—using words like isolated and restricted—is shared and common among formerly incarcerated individuals (Gray, 2013). In support of this description, Ligthart and colleagues (2019) charge incarceration with being a deliberately impoverished environment, citing numerous studies inclusive of one which found that "brain functions connected with self-regulation decline after 3 months of imprisonment" (p. 287). This steep decline is much more drastic than anybody, even Eddie, could have fathomed. Drawing from his experience, his conjecture was that three or five years of incarceration is sufficient to leave an individual with the imprints of prison socialization and institutionalization (Gray, 2013).

However, with only about 63 percent of individuals in state prisons and 58 percent of individuals in federal prisons receiving mental health treatment during their incarceration, the evidence indicates that the impact of incarceration may be considerably larger (Maruschak et al., 2021). Whereas the United States Constitution legally binds prisons to provide healthcare, activities such as working out, eating healthy, and relieving stress are all privileges and not rights for incarcerated individuals (Wallace & Wang, 2020). Consequently, incarceration has mainly been characterized by a deprivation of freedom that leads to poor physical and mental health, in lieu of rehabilitation that restores individuals.

Unfortunately, after being incarcerated for 25 years, Eddie returned to his community around the time President Bill Clinton and then-Senator Joe Biden adopted a law-and-order strategy of politics and praised the tough-on-crime movement. Broadly, this movement significantly increased the probability that an individual who commits a crime will be incarcerated as well as the length of their prison stay when they are sentenced. (Mitchell, 2018). One of the most notable policies to emerge from the tough-on-crime movement is the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, also known as the 1994 Crime Bill. The enactment of this law, specifically, led to "a smorgasbord of tough-on-crime measures and provided billions of federal dollars to states in an effort to crack down on violent crime" (Mitchell, 2018, p. 353). These funds were not only earmarked for the addition of police officers and prosecutors, but also for the construction and operation of new prisons. Consequently, the enactment of this policy into law—along with others like it—has resulted in the United States spending billions of dollars on the criminal legal system. The United States, in 2017, spent $305 billion on police protections, corrections, and judicial and legal functions (Buehler, 2021). Furthermore, because of the law-and-order strategy and the tough-on-crime movement, the

United States now has the highest incarceration rate in the world. As of 2019, across the United States and its territories, almost 2.1 million individuals were confined in prisons and local jails (Minton et al., 2021). In the words of Eddie, “In every black community in America it’s almost impossible not to know someone who’s been in prison: a father, a boyfriend, a nephew, an uncle, a niece, a cousin, a friend’s kid — somebody” (Gray, 2013, p. 9).

Since 1973, when the era of mass incarceration began in the United States, many lives have been impacted by mass incarceration in the name of dispensing “justice” (Cahalan & Parsons, 1986). Though the United States’ prison population reached its peak in 2009, the facts and figures continue to show that the criminal legal system is destroying Black lives most notably (Carson, 2018). The harsh reality that so many Black Americans are and have been imprisoned in the United States is evident in the lived experiences of Black folks like Eddie as well as in reports published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) of the U.S. Department of Justice. According to the BJS, in 2020, over one third of the individuals in jail and almost one third of those serving a prison sentence in the United States were Black (Carson, 2021; Minton & Zeng, 2021). These statistics stand in stark contrast to data demonstrating that Black Americans only constitute 13.6 percent of the United States population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Consequently, scholars have studied these racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system and found that the imprisonment rate for Black Americans is five times that of white Americans. What is more, in 13 states including Illinois, at least half of those sentenced to prison population are Black Americans (Carson, 2021; Nellis, 2021). Along with Black people being disproportionately represented in the criminal legal system in general, of the Black people who are incarcerated, 96% are Black men (Carson, 2021). In fact, across all racial, ethnic, and gender groups, Black men have the highest incarceration rate.

Another clear indicator of structural racism in the United States—spurred by the tough-on-crime movement—is found in a report published in 2017 by the United States Sentencing Commission (USSC). The USSC's report uncovers evidence that, on average, Black men received sentences 19.1 percent longer than similarly situated white men (United States Sentencing Commission, 2021). This finding gives credence to the suppositions that there is bias in the criminal legal system today and that there are vestiges of overt racism still present. This is more than a number; this statistic bares out in people's lives. For someone like Eddie Ellis who spent 25 years behind bars that equates to almost five years of his life that he could have reclaimed. Eddie could have used this time to repair his marriage that ended in his wife divorcing him while he was incarcerated or to prevent his son, who ended up in prison, from following in his footsteps (Gray, 2013). On the surface, each of these can be seen as one-off examples of how incarceration negatively affected one Black man's relationship quality with his wife or how having an incarcerated father constituted a traumatic experience for one Black son. However, at its core, Eddie's lived experience speaks to the widespread impact that incarceration has on Black men, families, and communities.

Reentry

More than 95% of individuals who are currently incarcerated will return to the community (Hughes & Wilson, 2003; James, 2014). From state and federal correctional authorities, upwards of 10,000 individuals are returning to the community every week and 549,600 individuals in total were released throughout 2020 (Carson, 2021). Needs for these individuals in their process of reentry include employment, housing, and social support (Russ et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2020). Likewise, since individuals who are incarcerated have higher rates of illness, sickness, and disease, treating physical health concerns by gaining access to

medical care is also a high priority to the individuals reentering (Upadhyayula et al., 2017). In addition, due to the percentage of incarcerated individuals in state and federal prisons not receiving mental health treatment surpassing 50 percent, there is a significant number of individuals who need psychological services upon their return (Maruschak et al., 2021). Taking all the stressors that formerly incarcerated individuals face as they exit jail and prison together, their experience can be described as challenging at best. It should be no wonder why so many formerly incarcerated individuals recidivate.

Researchers have placed a heavy emphasis on predicting and documenting individual outcomes of people who have been released from prison, with an emphasis on recidivism. In 2005, the USSC initiated an eight-year study of more the 25,000 individuals who were released from federal prison. They found that 49.3 percent of individuals released from federal prisons were rearrested and 24.6 percent were reincarcerated over the eight-year period following their release (Hunt & Dumville, 2016). In a similar study, the BJS examined almost 68,000 individuals released from state prisons across 30 states. Results indicated that 83 percent of these individuals released from the state prisons were rearrested within nine years and 44.9 percent were reincarcerated within five years following their release (Alper et al., 2018; Durose et al., 2014). As a part of these efforts, researchers have examined the contributing factors to high recidivism rates, and they uncovered racial and socioeconomic disparities. For example, of all the individuals released from state prisons in the BJS study, 40.1 percent were Black. Beyond that, 86.9 percent of these Black individuals were rearrested within 9 years and 46 percent were rearrested in their first year after release. Representing a larger percentage of individuals that recidivated, a simple review of the literature reveals that barriers to successful reentry have historically been compounded by—and observed in—the criminal legal system's being

"specifically punitive against poor uneducated minorities" (Esparza Flores, 2018, p. 67). Still, while the predominant critique of recidivism is the dichotomous, black and white way that it is measured (i.e., rearrested/reincarcerated or not), the recidivism statistics simply highlight the prevalence of racial-ethnic disparities (i.e., color).

What we are witnessing now is an accumulation of pervasive and punitive practices concerning the criminal legal system that was years in the making, complete with a world-leading incarceration rate and structurally violent reentry environment. Since the early 1970's, the solution to the problem of crime in the United States has been to focus on increasing punishment, to the neglect of expanding alternatives to prosecution; just add more police, more prosecutors, and more prisons. When and if an individual makes it through these oppositions in the legal system, their punishment is extended into the community in the form of community supervision. Practices of community supervision, such as electronic monitoring and other forms of e-carceration, have contributed to the creation of a criminal legal system where individuals are surveilled and monitored rather than supported (Kilgore, 2019). Instead of counseling, individuals are questioned about their compliance, and instead of drug treatment, individuals are given a drug test.

Harding and colleagues (2022) argue that the "current system is historically and internationally extreme and excessively punitive" (p. 13). The criminal legal system has shifted from a social stance emphasizing rehabilitation and reintegration to a law enforcement approach which monitors compliance and re-incarcerates individuals for violating the conditions of their release. For example, close to one third of individuals admitted to state and federal prisons in 2020 were returning from community supervision (i.e., parole and probation) because of violations of conditions of their release or for new crimes. This discovery of a concerning

number of prison admissions being due to conditional supervision violations, among other evidence, points to the criminal legal system's failing of the people; incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated people, as well as the people at large, especially Black people.

When he was released from prison in 1994, Eddie Ellis was "an exception"; he had "family support and a job, two necessities for successful transition back into the community" (Gray, 2013, p. 8). By contrast and according to most formerly incarcerated individuals, life post-incarceration is littered with barriers to a successful return (Russ et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2020). Aside from immediate needs such as transportation, food, and clothing, formerly incarcerated individuals quickly need housing. Yet, due to them having been hidden from the world behind jail or prison walls, social and familial ties that might have aided them prior to incarceration are frequently severed and need to be regenerated. In the meantime, however, individuals may cycle through multiple temporary housing arrangements like homeless shelters—with between 4.7 and 11.4 percent of individuals exiting prison experiencing homelessness within the two years following their release (Remster, 2021). Unfortunately, the need for housing is deeper than just individuals needing a place to lay their head. Housing is frequently a prerequisite to becoming gainfully employed and/or procuring the means to consult a physician (Remster, 2021).

While it is true that Eddie had it better than most, he did experience side effects of incarceration. Not only did he have to relearn how to travel by subway, but he also had to relearn that there was no correctional officer watching to make sure he returned his silverware "because a utensil could be used as a weapon" (Gray, 2013, p. 8). Notwithstanding, one of the most difficult adjustments for Eddie in his transition was understanding his emotions. Considering he could not afford to express his feelings during incarceration, Eddie "developed a demeanor that

was distant and cold, which is “the opposite of what you need when you come into this society” (Gray, 2013, p. 8).

By virtue of the vast amount of people who enter correctional facilities with unmet psychological needs, at present, jails and prisons are at the forefront of the United States’ mental health crisis (Morris et al., 2022). Roughly 30 percent of incarcerated Black men report that they have been told by a mental health professional that they have a mental disorder, and in the course of their incarceration, over 12 percent of Black men report experiencing serious psychological distress (Maruschak et al., 2021). During their return to the community, formerly incarcerated Black men’s identities can combine, and they can experience double or even triple the stigma (i.e., being formerly incarcerated, being a Black man, and experiencing mental health issues). The combination of these factors is likely to make community reentry a complicated and challenging endeavor with numerous obstacles (Veeh et al., 2018). For instance, Black men already experience discrimination in employment. Yet, when they have a history of incarceration, potential employers have a lawful reason to discriminate against and not hire them, effectively excluding them from the labor market.

The compound effect of disadvantages such as this, while reentering, can exacerbate the psychological distress that Black men might have experienced during their incarceration. Assari and colleagues (2018) found that everyday discrimination, which is correlated with institutional and interpersonal forms of racial discrimination, fully mediated the effects of incarceration history on Black men’s symptoms of depression and psychological distress. Practically, this suggests that (perceived) discrimination in employment, housing, and civic engagement is linked to negative mental health outcomes (i.e., increased depressive symptoms and psychological distress) among formerly incarcerated Black men. Considering these empirical findings, it is safe

to conclude that a significant proportion of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated Black men experience feelings such as nervousness, worthlessness, restlessness, depression, fatigue, and hopelessness.

Although formerly incarcerated Black men report experiencing these emotions to a significant extent, they also report concealing and/or downplaying them (Addison et al., 2022). Similar to Eddie's experience, successful reentry for formerly incarcerated Black men likely requires them to reconcile the adaptive coping strategies of jail/prison and those necessary in the community. Consequently, it is important to investigate the coping mechanisms that these men use so that we can understand how they foster positive thoughts and feelings (e.g., hope) during and after experiencing feelings associated with poor mental health (i.e., hopelessness). Both claiming to help individuals returning from incarceration with these challenges, next, I present the two prevailing approaches to reentry.

Approaches to Reentry

The Deficit-based Approach

The traditional, deficit-based approach to reentry focuses on risks and needs of individuals, viewing them as being deficient in the knowledge and skills necessary to face and deal with difficulties (Hunter et al., 2016). The most influential and leading deficit-based model is the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, which outlines three core principles in the rehabilitation of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Risk is a core principle of the RNR model. It maintains that "criminal behavior can be predicted" and that the intensity of services should correspond to individuals' level of perceived risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2017, p. 156). In addition, the "Need" core principle separates the needs of an individual into criminogenic and noncriminogenic categories. According to the model, criminogenic needs

represent “dynamic risk factors” that are associated with recidivism (e.g., substance abuse, family/marital, and school/work needs), while noncriminogenic needs are weakly correlated with recidivism (e.g., self-esteem, feelings of personal distress, and physical health). Lastly, the core principle of Responsivity consists of two aspects, General Responsivity and Specific Responsivity, and both describe how necessary it is to provide treatment that matches the individual’s strengths in learning. Inclusive of these three core principles, the latest full version of the RNR model similarly tackles key clinical issues such as the breadth of treatment, assessment of strengths, structure of the assessment, and use of clinical judgement. To predict an individual’s risk of recidivating, all these principles and clinical issues are purportedly assessed.

However, while the authors were nudged to add considerations such as strengths to their original model to make it a much more complete conceptualization, even the current version of the RNR model stops short of an enthusiastic recommendation of strengths without reservations (Wormith & Truswell, 2022). Although Bonta and Andrews (2017) concede that strengths can affect the accuracy of predictions concerning recidivism, practically, they state that strengths have not been proven to enhance the accuracy of predictions when considerations of strengths and risk are combined. In the reentry context—courts, review/parole boards, and practitioners within the criminal legal system employ risk assessments to identify the individuals who are likely to commit a new offense upon release. As a result of psychological researchers’ findings that mechanical-prediction techniques are superior to clinical predictions, the use of actuarial risk assessment tools in mental health and criminal justice settings seems to be growing (Singh et al., 2011). Yet, there is not an integrated, evidence-based model of strengths within the larger assessment framework, because there is not a universally accepted definition of strengths (Wormith & Truswell, 2022).

Moreover, whereas risk assessments utilizing the RNR framework can increase an individual's access to resources by determining their level of perceived risk, their predictive validity with Black individuals is questionable, and their focus on risk has contributed to a risk-/deficit-based approach to reentry (Bhui, 1999). The traditional deficit-based approach to risk assessments does not provide a complete picture of Black individuals returning from jail and prison. Adding to the problem, one study's search for empirical evidence to support the use of strengths in RNR-based instruments found that Black individuals who were formerly incarcerated and/or on probation had a significantly fewer number of strengths than other ethnicities in similar situations (Wormith & Truswell, 2022). This means that whether we are complementing or clarifying the picture, it is worthwhile to investigate the strengths available to and used by formerly incarcerated Black men.

The Strengths-based Approach

Another approach to reentry is a progressive strengths-based approach. The strengths-based approach to reentry emphasizes the identification and utilization of strengths to promote positive change (Hunter et al., 2016). Notably, the field of psychology began to pull away from pathology, when Abraham Maslow first used the term positive psychology in 1954 (Snyder et al., 2021). Maslow highlighted how psychology "has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illness, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height" (Maslow, 1954, p. 354). In 1999, after encountering much of what Maslow had challenged more than 40 years prior, Martin Seligman reintroduced the psychological community to the concept of positive psychology. His goal was to fuel scientific inquiry into psychological interventions which focused on thriving at the individual, family, and community levels (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Also reminiscent of

Maslow before him, Seligman expressed a desire for psychology to return to questions concerning strengths, which had been disregarded in favor of focusing on deficits. There were active researchers in the space following Maslow's initial argument, and along with those who took on Seligman's charge, the positive branch of psychology has grown exponentially. In fact, in the footprints of positive psychology, various disciplines have thrived from the incorporation of strengths into treatment plans and case management techniques, including education, social work, and criminology.

The strengths-based approach to reentry operates from the tenets of "humanity, compassion, and respect" rather than the principles of risk, need, and responsivity and views social and economic injustices as causes of crime as well as solutions to crime (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 12). Analogously, Unnever and colleagues (2019) argue that the study of crime and criminal behavior (i.e., criminology) does not fully acknowledge the everyday experiences of Black people in its dominant theories of crime. In addition to communicating their dismay with the overall whiteness of criminological theories, they find fault in the lack of full integration of race-specific reasons why a minority of Black people engage in behavior that society deems as problematic. Beginning with the United States' history of racial stratification and the premise that systemic racism increases the number of crimes committed by Black people, the authors insist on the development of a Black Criminology (Unnever et al., 2019).

First recognizing how scholars have exercised their power in the past and ignored and marginalized systemic racism, Black Criminology presumes that Blacks and whites would commit crime at the same rate, if the history of systemic racism and its consequences were never a part of the Black experience (Unnever et al., 2019). Including systemic racism into analyses of external factors that can lead formerly incarcerated Black individuals to recidivate is a positive

step for the field of criminology. However, conversations concerning these external factors and their origins can quickly turn from a venture to increase critical consciousness to an enterprise pathologizing Black people. Especially with the prevalence and use of risk assessments based on models that regard strengths as nonessential, it is not enough just to be aware of the social issues that the Black community faces. Professionals must reframe their thinking to focus on how strengths such as race and cultural values may serve as a resource to promote the reduction of recidivism and effective rehabilitation (Smith & Campbell, 2018). An example of this new construction can be found in the hope literature—which is supported by the traditional, individual definition of hope—as well as a proposed psychological model of hope—which is collective oriented.

Hope

There are a number of competing models of hope in psychology and the related literatures. Snyder's conceptualization of hope is perhaps the most widely cited framework. Snyder (1995) defined hope as the sum of agency thoughts and pathways thoughts. He believed that humans are goal-oriented beings, and as such he believed that the cognitive process that is hope starts with a well-defined goal (Gallagher & Lopez, 2018). Along with the goal, an individual must have the motivation or cognitive willpower to achieve their goal (i.e., agency) as well as multiple realistic routes or ways to their goal including contingency routes (i.e., pathways). The resulting combination of these two components is hope or the belief in one's ability to identify paths leading to desired objectives and ability to inspire oneself to follow those paths through positive thinking (Snyder, 2002). Further, the more personal the goal is to the individual or the more central it is to their character, then the "more intense and powerful agency and pathways thoughts" they will have (Gallagher & Lopez, 2018, p. xvii). Over the years,

Snyder's hope theory has dominated the hope literature in psychology. Nevertheless, there have been healthy criticisms of his theory of hope that have led others to define hope differently in order to encapsulate qualities of hope that Snyder may have overlooked.

Kaye Herth's (1992) model, from the field of nursing, is another traditional perspective of hope. Herth conceptualizes hope in the context of coping during illness and considers hope to be a resource with several dimensions which can influence an individual's wellness for the better. Comparable with Snyder's agency and pathways components, the first and second factors in Herth's model stand in marked contrast to the third factor, which helps to distinguish Snyder's model from Herth's model. Herth hypothesizes that the third factor, defined by meaningful relationships with others, expands the historically narrow conceptualization of hope and measures an affiliative-contextual component of hope. This third and differentiating factor of Herth's model reflects aspects of hope, specifically social support and sense of belonging, that are not represented in Snyder's positive psychology model of hope. Despite being published around the same time as Snyder's model and being seemingly more complex, Herth's model—originating from the nursing tradition—is not as widespread as Snyder's model throughout the hope literature.

Radical hope is a psychological framework that challenges Snyder's traditional and Western psychological conceptualizations of hope which has a circumscribed interest in cultural considerations. Centering Communities of Color, the proposed framework employs the operationalizations of Snyder and others to redefine hope from a collective rather than an individual perspective. Given this, radical hope is defined as "the collective capacity contained within Communities of Color to heal and transform oppressive forces into a better future despite the overwhelming odds" (Mosley et al., 2019, p. 3). Radical hope has two key components:

collective memory and faith and agency. Collective memory is a record of all the teachings and lessons learned by Communities of Color in the past which can produce pathways for People of Color in the present. Faith or sociopolitical faith is identified by the confidence that the believer, despite oppression, has in the possibility of collective liberation. Mosley and colleagues (2019) also proposed that the two key components of radical hope have four orientations (collective, individual, past, and future) that produce pathways that promote radical hope. Pursuant to the authors' conceptualization of radical hope, a Person of Color with radical hope shows appreciation in the present for the efforts of Communities of Color in the past. Likewise, the person believes in their power as an individual to create change at the collective level as well as in their experience-driven expertise that aids them in dreaming up future pathways for themselves and their communities toward a radical hope.

Hope and Formerly Incarcerated People

There is an emergence of research which provides evidence of the positive influence of hope among formerly incarcerated people and supports a relationship between higher levels of hope and reductions in recidivism (Bahr et al., 2010; Guse & Hudson, 2014; LeBel, 2019). The foray into this line of research began with preliminary investigations similar to that of LeBel and colleagues (2008), which sought to understand whether desistance from crime (i.e., the cessation of engagement in criminal offenses) following incarceration starts with internal or external alterations. The authors interviewed 130 men who were approaching release from prisons throughout the United Kingdom and then reinterviewed them in the community 10 years after their release. The findings included the anticipated discovery that participants encountered several social concerns, such as issues regarding substance use, housing, employment, and reconnecting with family members, which are common to individuals reentering. Moreover, the

authors analysis culminated in their conclusion that hope, a subjective variable, may be an essential factor for individuals to turn over a new leaf following their incarceration. Not only that but when one of the men perceived themselves as being devoted to their family, hope shaped his experience of those social issues, framing them as challenges instead of problems. Overall, those participants who possessed adequate motivation and a relatively sufficient self-concept—termed hope—were more equipped to survive and thrive in the midst of the storm that is reentry. Still, although the proportion of participants in the study that identified as Black or of Afro-Caribbean descent was almost twice the proportion of individuals in the British prison system, the United States criminal legal system is one of a kind. Accordingly, in addition to exploring hope among formerly incarcerated Black/African American men, this dissertation considered positive outcomes beyond rearrest and reimprisonment in the context of the United States.

On a smaller and more hope-focused scale, Vignansky and colleagues (2018) examined hope and meaning among a group of 10 formerly incarcerated men in Israel. The authors conducted phenomenological interviews with the men and participated minimally when asking them to share their life story. The results from the comparison of the participants' stories to each other, as well as the extant literature and the research questions, can be divided amongst three main themes: (1) former opinions about themselves and the world; (2) introductions to prison life and periods of adjustment; and (3) current opinions about themselves and the world. Essentially, before entering prison, participants described their lives as meaningless, lacking direction, and heedless. However, during their entry into prison, participants found meaning and purpose in their suffering and found hope through a positive future orientation and the development of goals. The underlying shift within this study was the result of participants beginning to see themselves as agents of change in their own life story. Upon their release from prison,

participants made the choice to hope for a better life, and this shift led to a change in worldview that translated to personal, family, and career goals. What is more, even though none of the participants in the study had been reincarcerated at the time of their report, the authors cast doubt on whether this pattern would remain as more time passed. Due to most of the participants having reentered within the year prior to the interview, the results of Vignansky and colleagues' (2018) study were somewhat limited. Given this limitation, my dissertation included participants with varied periods of time since their release from jail/prison, so that a more complete understanding could be reached.

From the standpoint of incarcerated women, the study conducted by Stearns and colleagues (2018) is distinct in its exploration of the disposition of hope. To explore how incarcerated women manufactured meanings of hope as well as how they obtained hope, the researchers conducted focus group sessions at a local jail. As opposed to Snyder's cognition-based conceptualization, participants' conceptualizations of hope were emotion-based, with quite a few of them defining hope in a religious context. Post-release goals—which the women were determined to achieve—included reconnecting with their children, continuing to live a sober life, finding employment, pursuing education, and giving back to the community. Constructing broad pathways to their goals, the women also identified self-control, a regular schedule, a support system, and reputable friends and associates as ways to accomplish their post-release goals. Although future hope intervention strategies will be well informed by them, the findings of this study are also limited. As a result of most of the participants being white American women who had not yet been released, this study is leaving out the demographic group most impacted by incarceration, in addition to taking place inside a jail. This dissertation addresses these topics in a

reentry context, to contribute to the scant coverage of hope and formerly incarcerated people in the research literature.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Design and Methodology Statement

The present study is a phenomenological qualitative study. Braun and Clarke (2022) define phenomenology as "a research and theoretical tradition centered on the study of first-person lived experience" (p. 301). It involves conducting in-depth interviews to understand the unique characteristics in individual experiences, and from rich descriptions of their experiences, in narrative form, researchers create themes that contribute to the overall knowledge of the phenomenon. As such, I aspired to generate knowledge and truth originating from the first-person point of view of formerly incarcerated Black men concerning the phenomenon of fostering hope in the context of reentry. For participants, this process involved them navigating the challenges of returning to the community from jail/prison as Black men. For me, it involved investigating what life is like for the participants in their own words. I implemented this phenomenological analytic approach throughout this study by immersing myself in the literatures (i.e., hope and reentry), diversifying my sources in data collection, and staying close to the data with detailed depictions of the hope-fostering strategies (Levitt et al., 2017). By using this methodology, I gained insight into the physical, mental, and spiritual health statuses of these formerly incarcerated Black men, given that they encounter impediments to successful reentry on a daily basis (Langdridge, 2017). With this approach I humanized a population that often is dehumanized in society, including in the mainstream media, by giving their experiences a voice, placing their experiences in context, accentuating the process of meaning-making, and taking a holistic approach.

I collected data using the semi-structured interview method. The "structured" component of the interviews involved asking each participant the same questions, with relevant probes, which ensured an ease in the analysis. The "semi" descriptor entailed asking open-ended questions, which allowed for richer data to be collected. Compared to other data collection tools such as surveys, the main benefit of interviews is the personal touch that comes as a result of being able to ask probing questions (Jain, 2021). In this study, the use of interviews made communication detailed and better. Notably, the phenomenological methodology considers participants' subjective and personal experiences as valid, while also regarding them as meaningful and worthy of investigation. Additionally, I believe that offering in-person interviews as well as Zoom interviews helped "to generate the trust" and gain referrals, as the research site is a hub of activity in the community (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018).

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (see Table 1). Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used for research interested in "exploring, interpreting and reporting relevant patterns of meaning across a dataset" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 220). There is not a single approach to thematic analysis. It is a larger methodological family of qualitative social research methods and reflexive thematic analysis is just one methodological process, one way to code, and one way of understanding codes and creating themes (Fugard & Potts, 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis is a build your own methodology. In reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher makes their own decisions about the design elements that they wish to engage in, and as a result, there are varied approaches to the method. Therefore, I made my orientation to the data clearer by choosing a guiding theoretical framework, complete with ontological and epistemological assumptions. My orientation to this data, which I actively chose to form, included a constructivist paradigm, an abductive, big Q approach, as well as my decision to use

"both semantic and latent, and inductive and deductive elements" (Braun et al., 2016, p.193-194). I approached the data with the belief that there are many versions of reality, which is socially constructed, and with a particular interest in the participant's lived experiences; both of which are characteristic of the constructivist paradigm (Stahl et al., 2012).

I also applied an abductive analytical approach through a "dialectic of cultivated theoretical sensitivity and methodological heuristics" whose goal was to create "novel theoretical insights" (Timmerman & Tavory, 2012, p. 180). This meant that I systematically coded the data and created themes based on my own observations and interpretations. The abductive analytical approach informed my work by establishing the data as a touchpoint, to which I maintained contact with throughout entirety of the study. The abductive analytical approach recognizes the iterative process of research, characterizes the process of incorporating new insights into initial thoughts, and also allows for the inclusion of previous theories and frameworks to identify any new surprising insights. Given that there are gaps in the literature concerning the key concepts of the present study, a deep probe was imperative to understanding the layered and complicated phenomenon under review.

I use the term big Q when describing my orientation to the data, in order to denote that I used tools designed for qualitative use within a qualitative paradigm, as opposed to utilizing qualitative data but holding quantitative values and using quantitative techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This resulted in my research question, though specific, requiring engagement with the larger theoretical and conceptual literatures to answer its significant and challenging inquiry. It also demanded that my analysis transcend basic understandings, in addition to deciphering the meanings of and estimating the significance of the data. The critical thinking, which this

orientation involves, facilitated my development of new perspectives concerning the extant literature.

Lastly, I included semantic, latent, inductive, and deductive elements, as I felt necessary. I coded and reported on implicit and explicit meanings, in addition to developing themes using both top-down and bottom-up approaches. In essence, my orientation to the data allowed me to: (1) concentrate on the participant's truth and not an objective truth; (2) engage with the data in a way that generated unique and unprecedented findings, which will help to fill in the gaps in the hope and reentry literatures; (3) analyze the data without the limits that the quantitative paradigm can place on the research/researcher; and (4) consider hope-fostering strategies from prior research, existing definitions of hope (e.g., radical hope), and remain open to letting the data tell me how it wanted to be analyzed.

For these reasons, reflexive thematic analysis was a good fit for my study. It is not only a sensible analytic approach that served my purpose, but it also told a convincing story—which is one of the goals of this method. Comprised of all the patterns, meanings, and experiences of the data set, the analysis story in reflexive thematic analysis provided the solid base for my rationale. At the same time, the method does make room for discrepancy and divergence and contradictory data. All this contributed to an even better overall story.

Table 1

Phases of my thematic analysis

Phase	Brief Description	Reflexivity
Getting familiar with the data	I familiarized myself with the data, getting to know each participant.	I maintained code notes containing glimpses into my frame of mind as I read the data.
Generating initial codes	I read and re-read the data, noting down my initial ideas.	I open coded the data and added theoretical notes to the coding memo.

Table 1 – continued

Searching for themes	I identified important aspects of the data.	I generated additional codes for emerging themes/notes.
Reviewing themes	I developed prospective themes, considering their individual and collective meanings.	I collaborated with others to reinforce my comprehension of the data.
Defining and naming themes	I immersed myself in the data—interrogating my own thought processes and interpreting what I was reading.	I made notes in my coding memos every time that I revised, refined, or completely discarded a theme.
Producing the report	I wrote this report with the goal of creating an analytic story that shows how themes are evident throughout the data.	I selected emblematic data extracts and configured themes in a way that addresses the research questions.

Participants

A total of 12 formerly incarcerated Black men were selected for this study (see Table 2). Each participant needed to have been incarcerated for a total of at least 1 month. However, the ranges of their total length of incarceration and number of times incarcerated varied. Each participant had been incarcerated a total of 1-50 times (M = 6.5) and for between 5 months to 30 years (M ~ 149.8 months ~ 12.5 years). Additionally, all or nearly all identified similarly in terms of racial and/or ethnic identity (i.e., Black/African American), gender identity (i.e., cisgender male), and sexual orientation (i.e., straight or heterosexual); only one participant described their racial/ethnic identity as anything other than Black/African American (i.e., Black/African American and white/Caucasian). Ten out of the 12 participants were residents of Illinois (central and northeastern), and the remaining two participants were residents of Texas (north and south central). Likewise, although participants were all at least 18 years old, their ages ranged across the lifespan from 27-72 years old (M = 46.92). Moreover, one third of participants' highest level of education was a high school diploma/GED, and two completed "some college."

One participant earned an associate degree, two others completed a 4-year degree/bachelor's, and one quarter of participants received a master's degree/MBA.

A little less than half (42%) of participants reported considering themselves "Very Religious," with another two quarters indicating they consider themselves as either "Somewhat Religious" (25%) or "Not Religious" (25%), and the remainder endorsing "Slightly Religious" (8%). Remarkably, two-thirds (67%) of participants considered themselves to be "Very Spiritual," while the rest of participants either considered themselves "Somewhat Spiritual" (25%) or "Not Spiritual" (8%). Interestingly, when asked what religion(s) or spiritual tradition(s) they belonged to or identified themselves as most close to, eight participants (67%) indicated Christianity, two participants (17%) responded that they had no religious or spiritual affiliation, and one participant endorsed Islam (8%), Judaism (8%), Other ("Kemetic;" 8%)—respectively. Furthermore, 10 out of the 12 participants (87%) were currently employed. Over half of the participants (58%) were single and a quarter of participants (25%) were married, with the residual (17%) being in a long-term relationship in which they were not cohabitating. And over half of the participants were fathers (58%) with 1-10 children (M = 2.3).

Table 2

Demographic information for participants

Participant	Age	Employed	Children	Relationship Status	Religious	Spiritual
Chris	51	Yes	No	Single	Somewhat	Very
Anthony	43	No	No	Long-term relationship	Very	Very
Fat	72	Yes	No	Married	Very	Somewhat
James	47	Yes	Yes	Married	Somewhat	Somewhat
Main	55	No	Yes	Single	Somewhat	Somewhat

Table 2 – continued

Hatman	55	Yes	Yes	Single	Slightly	Very
Tim	50	Yes	Yes	Long-term relationship	Very	Very
Unk	48	Yes	Yes	Married	Not	Very
A.J.	27	Yes	Yes	Single	Very	Very
Jerry	53	Yes	Yes	Single	Not	Very
Coltrane	28	Yes	No	Single	Very	Very
Reggie	34	Yes	No	Single	Not	Not

Procedure and Data Sources

Recruitment

Prior to recruitment, I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Although some participants originated from my own personal network, participants were mainly recruited from a non-profit organization in a large metropolitan city in Illinois. This organization provides reentry services for formerly incarcerated individuals such as peer mentoring and service referrals, among other services. Snowball sampling was utilized, as some of the members of the non-profit organization acted as participants and then as recruiters—identifying new participants (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). Interested participants contacted the research team and a link to a consent form as well as a brief demographic questionnaire were sent; an online consent was also used (See APPENDIX: A).

Demographics Survey

The demographic questionnaire consisted of 22 questions eliciting personal information (See APPENDIX: B). Ideally, all questionnaires would have been completed digitally via

Qualtrics. However, over half (58%) of the time, an in-person or Zoom interview was scheduled first—with the individual being provided the online consent and completing the demographic questionnaire with the research team's assistance immediately preceding the interview. The questionnaire asked participants to provide information on their age, racial-ethnic identification, sexual orientation, gender identification, city and state of current as well as longest residence, highest level of education, incarceration history (e.g., total number and length of incarceration), employment status, relationship status, and parental status. It is important to note that while data with respect to the participants' sexual orientation, city and state of current residence, highest level of education, relationship status, and parental status were also collected, the results varied. There was no requirement for this study concerning any of these demographic variables. Eligibility for this study was only contingent on age, racial-ethnic identification, gender identification, and incarceration history. Related to employment, participants' annual incomes were not requested.

Interviews

After the online consent to participate in the study was obtained and the demographic questionnaire completed, a research team member scheduled a time to conduct the interview (via Zoom or in-person). At the beginning of the interview, information on the consent form was reiterated. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' confidentiality, and I asked that participants not request to be referred to by their nicknames. Furthermore, regardless of whether the interview was conducted in-person or via Zoom, they were audiotaped. The data were collected in one, 90-minute, semi-structured interview with each participant, which was conducted in-person or via Zoom—depending on the participant's location, access to the internet, and technological skill level.

The interview protocol focused specifically on the ways in which participants have fostered hope upon their return to the community from jail or prison and if and/or how radical hope has played a role in their reentry experiences (See APPENDIX: C). Most questions were open-ended, to encourage participants to recount their experiences in narrative form, and the ordering and sequencing of the questions largely stayed the same throughout all interviews. However, as the research went on, new probing questions were added, and existing probing questions were altered for clarity. There were five open-ended questions—and one close-ended question—with probes. At the end, the interviewer completed a check-out, where the key points of the interview were summarized. The order of the themes of hope and radical hope were as follows: First, the participant was invited to tell the interviewer a little bit about themselves. Then, the interviewer asked participants to describe their last reentry experience. Following these questions, the interviewer inquired if the participant could share a story about how they fostered hope during their reentry process. Subsequently, the participant was asked if the idea of radical or collective hope connected with their reentry experience as well as if they could share a story about how they fostered radical hope during their reentry process. Finally, the interviewer questioned if the participant had ever experienced a time that made it difficult to maintain hope in their reentry journey.

After each interview, participants received a $20 gift card. For the in-person interviews, participants were physically given their choice of a gift card to Walmart, Target, or Amazon.com, but for Zoom participants, a gift card to Amazon.com was electronically sent to them via email. In addition, participants were given (in-person) or sent (Zoom) a resource list (See APPENDIX: D). Participants were also able to download the resource list before their submission of the demographic questionnaire.

Transcription and Translation of Data

I first removed identifying information from the audiotaped individual interviews to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. Then, the transcription of all interviews was done with the help of an undergraduate research assistant and using a transcription service. I reviewed the transcriptions as they were completed and made changes as necessary.

Researcher's Positionality

I am a follower of Yahuah (the God of the Bible) and a Black/African-American man. These identities principally influence my ontological and epistemological assumptions, aside from this study, and are what initially drew me to people who are or have been involved in the criminal legal system. In the Bible, the scriptures constantly remind us not to forget about those who are incarcerated or those who are oppressed. Further, the Bible encourages us to visit those in prison and to treat the suffering of another follower as if we ourselves were being oppressed.

On top of these appeals to be of service to those in physical and mental chains, I also have a "lived familiarity" with the topic of my research (Griffith, 1998, p. 362). Culturally, being a Black man in the United States can be characterized by many words, but one that comes to mind is "pressure"; pressure to attain an education, to move up the income ladder and to earn more, as well as pressure to get and to keep a job (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Reeves et al., 2022). All the while, we are fighting premature death and incarceration (Williams et al., 2020). Personally, my desire to engage in research that humanizes Black men and their reentry experiences was promoted by my close relationships to my maternal grandfather who worked inside a correctional facility as a vocational teacher and my brother who is a formerly incarcerated Black man.

Explicitly, locating myself about positionality and considering my personal life-history, it is apparent that I have vested interest in and some a priori knowledge of both the topic of and the participants in this investigation (Holmes, 2020). However, I am also a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology, and as such, my previous experiences of creating a qualitative study and of using reflexive thematic analysis influenced the research process, by guiding my decision to undertake the same research design and data analysis method for this study. Furthermore, although this study's focus is on life outside of the prison walls, my doctoral candidacy has extended my "lived familiarity" beyond this, as I am currently a Psychology Predoctoral Intern for the Federal Bureau of Prisons at a Federal Correctional Complex (Griffith, 1998, p. 362). While I have pursued my current line of research long before I was selected for this position, my experiences on internship have influenced my analysis and interpretation of the data. First, I recognize that mental health services in correctional institutions impact an individual's reentry experiences and that I am biased in my belief that, broadly and theoretically, correctional psychological services are constructive. Second, I acknowledge that my subjective lived experience thus far has supplied me with new and unique perspectives on a host of topics related to mental health, crime, and justice as well as prison culture and the overall functioning of the criminal legal system. Lastly, I accept the fact that most people will never understand the experience of being a Black man providing psychological services in a United States prison, firsthand, which has changed me in deep and profound ways.

In addition, I acknowledge that some of my other views and personal positions might have impacted how the data were analyzed and interpreted as well as its results and findings; specifically, my biblical views of hope and of hope practices. Given the countless examples of the oppressed Israelites of the Bible choosing to hope for redemption, I believe that biblical hope

can be defined as a decision to wait for Yahuah—regardless of your circumstances—with tense expectation and anticipation. Today, following the death of Yahusha Ha'Mashiach (Jesus Christ), I believe that the door to a living hope is now open and that being reborn into a new creation is necessary before you can possess or practice it. Still, once this requirement is fulfilled, I believe that hope can be practiced in several ways, including reading the Bible as well as praying to, worshipping, and praising Yahuah. While I certainly did not expect to find participants who do not follow Yahuah to list any of these as ways that they were able to foster hope in their reentry journey, I did anticipate participants describing their practice of affirmations and gratitude, in addition to noting the encouragement they received from others and possibly their experiences in nature.

Even after completing a project exploring conceptualizations of hope among formerly incarcerated Black men, I questioned what role hope has in the reentry process (Hayes, 2022). Giving additional consideration to how formerly incarcerated Black men might foster hope in reentry, I decided to investigate what these practices might be and what they might look like. Subsequently, due to my years of volunteer work and position with them as a Community Collaborator, I identified the non-profit organization—located in a large metropolitan city in Illinois—as my main research site. Through my advocacy work as well as my involvement in their social justice initiatives in the community, I have established a personal connection with them and because of this relationship, the non-profit organization granted me entry to their site for the purposes of this research.

Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis does outline six phases of analysis: "dataset familiarisation", "data coding", "initial theme generation", "theme development and review", "theme refining,

defining and naming", and "writing up" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 6). However, in reflexive thematic analysis these phases are not treated as rules but instead are seen as indications of possible future actions or directions. In addition, to properly embrace reflexive thematic analysis, it was essential for me to embrace reflexivity. My coding process consisted of reflexive accounts of my methodology and my "immersion in the data, reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, [and] returning" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 5). To facilitate the expansion of the methodological discussion of my analytic process, I gave active accounts of my decision-making and interpretive process, as I engaged with the six phases. Engaging in reflexive thematic analysis is an intense process that requires "time and space" to develop "rich, complex, non-obvious themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 5). Yet, again, the approach that I outlined to reflexive thematic analysis is only one way of engaging with the data. Although I laid out a plan to enact and this method made sense to me in the proposal stage of my dissertation, reflexive thematic analysis is considerably flexible, and I was open to the possibility of future changes to the data analytic plan. Thus, at any point in the phases of the analytic process, I was able to make necessary changes and "not inherently undermine" my analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 10).

Before I arrived at a particular conceptualization of themes, though, there were several activities that needed to engage. Themes are "patterns of shared meaning, cohering around a central concept" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 4). In other words, themes identify important aspects of the data—making use of codes which draw on observations. Themes tell a story about the observations, using an idea or concept. These themes or stories go deep into the data and would never have been expected ahead of the investigation. Since themes can be located anywhere on the semantic-latent spectrum, getting to them was a gradual and continuous process; but the data tells an analytic story (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Through an analytic story, I show how themes are

evident throughout the data, and by my reflexive accounts of the analytic process, the reader is able to follow the development of the analytic story. Additionally, in my story, I include documentation of collected data that is not related to the research questions—whether it was stimulating and fascinating to me or made me look at my data in a different way. The flexibility and changeability of the analytic process in reflexive thematic analysis applies here too because there was the potential for increased understanding which may have shifted my original research questions and/or for new growth that might have developed into an additional research question.

Trustworthiness and Methodological Integrity

The qualitative paradigm views researcher subjectivity as an advantage when the data are engaged in a reflexive fashion, while the quantitative paradigm presents it as a threat to the analysis' validity (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The values of reflexive thematic analysis do not align with the positivist, postpositivist, or quantitative paradigms. In fact, the first of ten assumptions of reflective thematic analysis states that "the potential to control such bias, make little sense within reflexive TA [thematic analysis]" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 8). To embrace reflexive thematic analysis, it was imperative that I value subjectivity, embrace reflexivity in the research process, and avoid (post)positivist concepts like data saturation. For instance, coding was done in collaboration with others (i.e., my undergraduate research assistant and my graduate advisor). But, in reflexive thematic analysis, the purpose is not to come to an agreement, to establish credibility, or to check the accuracy of the codes; it is "to enhance understanding, interpretation and reflexivity" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 9). My aim was not to get my codes correct or right. The aim of my process was to invite my collaborators to act as sounding boards, to develop my thinking, and to address any assumptions that may have limited my engagement with or my ability to make sense of the data. Although I did not verify or check my codes with others, I will

elicit feedback from the non-profit organization and/or participants more broadly, which will constitute a section with "member reflections" when I adapt my dissertation into a journal article (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). This will give non-profit organization and/or participants space to have dialogue and give feedback about the study and have their voice represented and integrated in the study.

The type of reflexive thematic analysis that I implemented worked best for this study because it is situated to the purpose of my research and my current research questions. To answer the study's current research questions, I drew out "relevant patterns of meaning across a dataset" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 220). Having established my needs, I worked out what kind of orientation best met those needs. The orientation outlined demonstrates design coherence or "methodological integrity," in that all the choices that I actively made—including the underlying theoretical framework—fit together with the research questions and the purpose (Levitt et al., 2017, p. 9).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

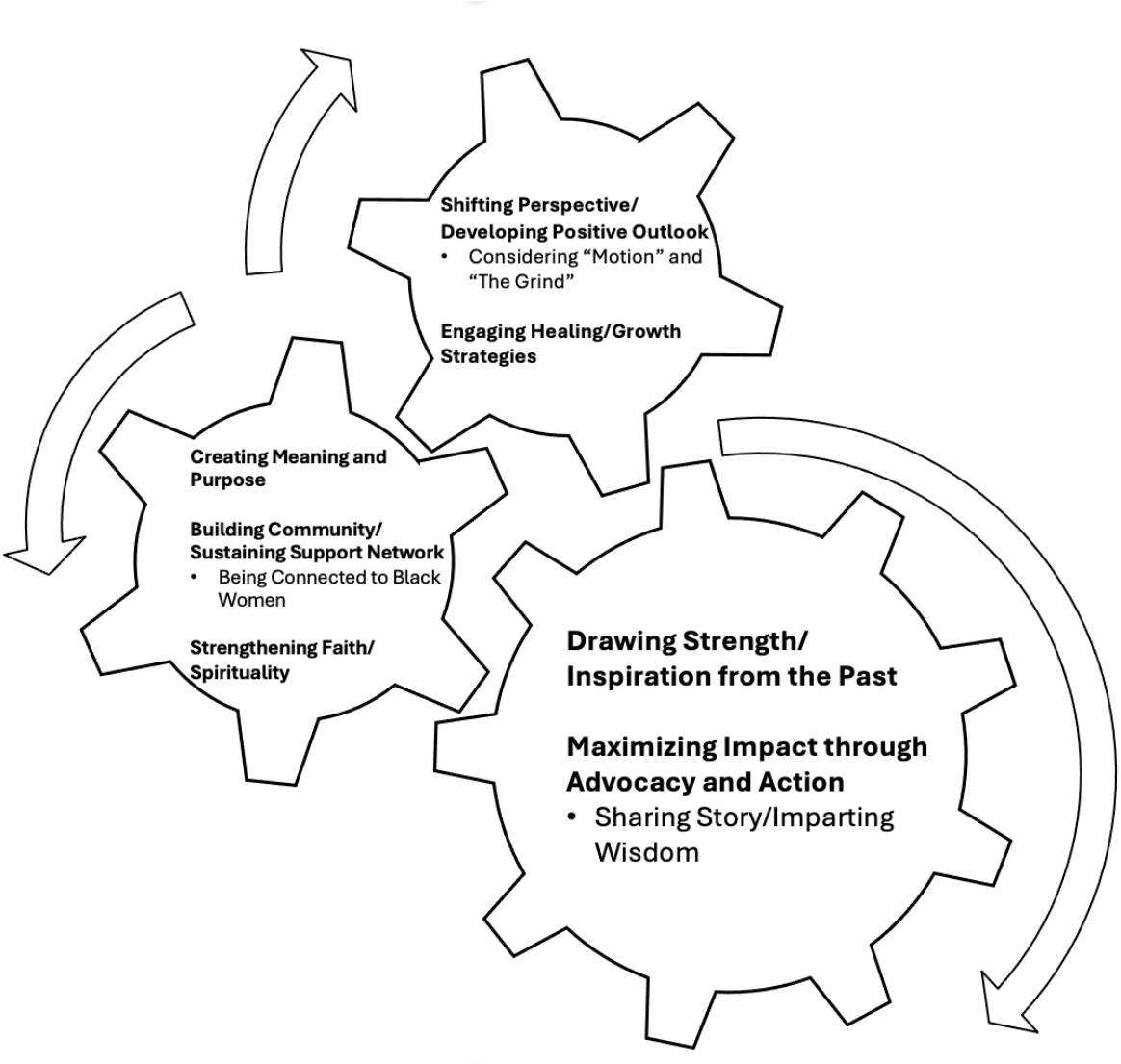
I created seven main themes using standard thematic analysis steps (see Figure 1). The seven main themes are hope-fostering strategies of Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community: *Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook*, *Engaging Healing/ Growth Strategies*, *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network*, *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality*, *Creating Meaning and Purpose*, *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past*, *and Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action*. These main themes are congruent to Braun and Clarke's (2022) conceptualization of a theme as a "core focus or idea (the central organizing concept)" (p.35). Figure 1 attempts to visually capture the complexity of participants engagement in hope-fostering strategies and highlights how the main themes are interconnected. In the data, participants hope-fostering strategies built upon each other, such that one hope-fostering strategy stimulated movement or use of another. I intentionally selected the gears design because I believe that the hope-fostering strategies were interdependent like a system of gears, turning towards a common outcome (i.e., hope). Furthermore, fostering hope is a complex concept, and I believed the relationship between the strategies warranted visual representation that communicated their collaborative workflow.

I was also interested in whether the hope enhancing strategies that formerly incarcerated Black men utilize align with traditional, individual psychological perspectives of hope and/or with the collective psychological framework of radical hope. However, I did not find a clear distinction between these types of hope. Instead, the men referred to both personal and collective hope in the same examples. These approaches to hope were often interwoven into a coherent narrative. Accordingly, I decided that the utilization of overarching themes (e.g., traditional,

individual, or personal hope and collective or radical hope) was not useful for telling the participants' stories. While the main themes and sub-themes that I identified consisted of hope-fostering strategies that somewhat aligned with broader concepts (i.e., hope and/or radical hope), I was determined to stay close to participants' voices because they are what informed my analysis.

Figure 1

Hope-Fostering Strategies: Themes and Subthemes



Confirming my assertion, Fat affirmed the statement that "You can't really help nobody if you can't help yourself. You gotta get yourself straight," and Chris concluded that "we are only a part of the whole, but if the part don't play its part, we can't make the whole." These participants and others consistently conveyed an idea also acknowledged by Mosley and colleagues' (2019) that—historically—the psychological construct of hope has been one that develops at the individual level yet demonstrates "an awareness and concern for the collective" (p.8). Connected to this idea, Jerry concurred:

> And it's interesting because when I came home, I never lost hope. And I had hope, but I had hope to the extent that I was taking care of self-first. And once I got myself healthy and whole, that's when I said, okay, somebody else could use this. And I think that is the definition of radical hope within a community, because it's going to take a community to change these systems and these structures, it's just not up to me.

Similarly, other participants also relayed concerns for their own personal well-being and wholeness, either for the sake of others or with the purpose of helping others. Therefore, although the addition of overarching themes might have added some interpretive complexity, the additional structuring would not have been properly anchored to the discussions across participants. Instead, I made the decision to prioritize analytic depth and how I could tell the best story about the data, which—in this study—is comprised of the finding that the main themes and sub-themes were interrelated. I view the (sub)themes as hope-fostering strategies that moved with and transferred power between each other to the point that stratifying them based on personal versus collective would have been difficult and made little analytic sense. Below, I describe the themes that I created and the notable similarities between Mosley and colleagues' (2019) framework.

Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook (Theme 1)

The *Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook* main theme involves participants realizing the power of how they perceived their situation in determining their reactions. All participants mentioned how they had to learn or re-learn to be intentional with respect to allowing themselves to think about their situations and themselves differently and/or more positively. For instance, Coltrane asserted:

> Perspective is key, man. So just having that perspective, that fostered hope in and of itself…And a lot of times we look at the destination or the reward, but the journey itself is the reward. So just accounting for every step along the way is how you continue to build hope.

Participants believed that the ways they viewed their incarceration and reentry experiences dictated which methods they used to cope. Here, Coltrane's metaphorical illustration is evidence of two things. One, it is evidence of the application of coping skills such as embracing your unique journey and exploring your behaviors and reviewing them frequently, and two, it is evidence of a change in mindset that acquiesces to the idea that there is inherent value in the process towards the larger goal of successfully reentering the community from jail/prison. Still, this change was and is a choice. Participants chose gratitude over callousness and contentment over dissatisfaction, and in Coltrane's case, chose to see the journey as the reward.

Given that incarceration is a traumatic event, which Chris and A.J. described as hitting "rock bottom," it changed how participants thought about themselves, others, and the world. Consequently, this main theme involved participants shedding—or "decluttering" as Unk called it—the weight of incarceration (e.g., gang affiliation, prison culture/mentality,

institutionalization/identity as an "inmate") by developing more positive outlooks through shifting their perspectives. Moreover, it documented participants making conscious decisions not to go back to drugs, alcohol, and/or their old lives as a result of these modifications. For example, Tim detailed:

> there's a lot of people doing positive stuff. But they're over there...I have to go over there. But I might be a lame, a weak, a fake, but I got to go over there. So, if I go over there and get myself together, I can come back over here and pull some of them over there.

Tim was not only able to locate external resources that were necessary in order to help him to continue in his reentry experience, but he expounded upon the necessity of him connecting to those resources. Also significant, Tim drew upon internal resources (i.e., his ability to shift his perspective) to see past the perceptions of others in the present and look to the future possibilities. Participants engaging in this strategy routinely remarked about a process where they began to realize the positive personal characteristics that they possessed (e.g., perseverance, resilience) and how this realization motivated them to change how they thought in a positive way. By engaging in self-reflection, applying the knowledge gained in the healing process, and conserving this positive outlook, they were able to fulfill the promises that they made to themselves and others during incarceration as well as their personal goals and ambitions. Fundamentally, participants trusted that shifting their perspective and having a positive outlook would foster hope. According to Hatman, "you going to have to change your mind, man. It all start with your mind. It all started with your perception. Your perception is your reality…You could do that. You won the game."

I also created a sub-theme. Some participants fostered hope by *Considering "Motion" and "The Grind."* More concretely, this sub-theme highlights participants who contemplated the

ideas that “successful” reentry may involve non-linear growth and may require them to make intentional efforts beyond what individuals who have not been incarcerated might have to do. Both of these strategies demanded that the individual shift their perspective and develop a positive outlook. Reggie recounted:

> I mean, fostering hope, it is a up and down battle. I gain and lose hope all the time just based off of, I mean, you'll get encouraged. You'll make some moves. See, in this day and age, the word is called motion. You start getting some motion in life, and then, when it's time to make that major step, you are hit with some information or somebody's turning you down. So, I feel like hope in my situation is a wave.

Reggie described the progression and regression rigmarole and two steps forward and one step back advancement that was common amongst participants. In their processes of reentry, participants, like Reggie, frequently increased in hope generally or in one area and then decreased in hope overall or in other isolated areas. The non-linear growth pattern that Reggie outlined, he compared to a wave and labels “motion”. “Motion” is a term used in Black popular culture to illustrate gaining traction speedily in an aspect of life. Howbeit, Reggie—a formerly incarcerated Black man—explains how him having “motion” or momentum toward fostering hope as well as reintegration into his community is routinely interrupted by the barriers to successful reentry. In spite of this, the subtheme emphasizes “motion” in reentry, because shifting perspectives and developing. a positive outlook necessitated that they first accept that a sense of hope during reentry may fluctuate like a wave, inclusive of “motion.”

As a result of “motion” in reentry, participants conveyed an apprehensiveness when things were going well that is akin to waiting for the other shoe to drop. This anticipation put them in a constant state where they felt that they were always being challenged. They often felt

they could prevent these challenges and/or overcome them through demonstrations of their abilities. For instance, Chris contended:

> If I don't do certain things, it's going to prove certain stereotypes. So, I got to do certain things to dismantle that…Doing positive. Basically, working hard. I call it the grind; going above and beyond what other people won't do.

A sentiment shared alongside all other participants, Chris articulated the actions that all participants took as they reentered the community from jail/prison. Compelled into combating negative stereotypes and also disassembling them, he defined "the grind" that formerly incarcerated individuals incorporate into their daily lives in order to potentially reap the rewards of hope. "The grind" is predominately understood as doing hard work, and Chris took this interpretation a step further by adding the description of "going above and beyond what other people won't do". However, the purpose of underscoring "the grind" is not to suggest that this needs to be the modus operandi for formerly incarcerated Black men, but to call attention to it as a strategy that participants considered which prompted them to think about their situations and themselves differently.

Engaging Healing/ Growth Strategies (Theme 2)

The *Engaging Healing/ Growth Strategies* main theme captures participants utilization of simple yet reliable approaches that are effective in stimulating development in areas in need of restoration or improvement. These were practical yet impactful ways that participants fostered hope and consisted of: creating a schedule/routine; practicing discipline; journaling; moving to a new environment; exercising/participating in martial arts; and volunteering. Additionally, other participants such as Main indicated, "I tried to resort to the things that got me through prison being locked up, especially when the pandemic hit…Going back to my coping—reading, music,

my sports." Further, when asked if there are any people or situations that make him feel greater hope, A.J. answered, "Oh, it's just my children…my daughter, she could be asleep, I would just watch her some nights and just be like, 'I got you.' This is bigger than me." This main theme was comprised of many of these seemingly mundane tasks that, in context, were powerful in aiding participants in fostering hope. The reoccurring phenomenon of A.J. watching his children, specifically his daughter, eat, sleep, and grow, in conjunction with Main's "coping" clearly influenced them in an impactful manner.

What is more, one of the more notable strategies for engaging healing and growth was education. Participants committed themselves to formal schooling in different forms, from enrolling in business management and effective communication classes to learning or getting certified in a trade. Among many others, Hatman explained:

> But once you get a felony, it's hard to get a job. I'm locked out of 75% of the jobs, then I go get shot on top of that. So now that 25% become 3%. So now I'm locked out of all that. So, I had to take myself to the highest level. I was forced to go back to school, reeducate myself, work on getting the degrees.

In the present disclosure, Hatman revealed how he struggled to gain employment subsequent to him being convicted of a felony. To complicate matters, he was injured in a shooting that left him disabled and requires him to use a wheelchair. Hatman reported how he was "locked out" of a vast majority of jobs and education was what he was "forced" to engage with. Purportedly, his lack of choices contributed to a desire to use education and continue to pursue it to "the highest level." Hatman reoriented his mind and prepared himself to carve his own path via education. Education empowered Hatman and others to create knowledge and learn hard skills which fostered hope, by being a pathway to new opportunities.

Germane to the field of counseling psychology, psychotherapy was also a method that participants applied to rehabilitate and foster hope during the reentry process. Besides seeing psychotherapy as helpful for themselves, they were advocates of its practice in the community too. Unk discussed:

> So, when I come home and people I'm talking, they looking at me like, man, but I'm like, look man, I done been to mental therapy since I've been home a couple few times. And I'm like, man, I suggest it, bro. So, I try to make it exciting, right?

Unashamedly, Unk professed to some of his fellow community members made up of men—other Black men in particular—that participating in treatment had been beneficial for him after his return from prison. On top of that, he showed continuing support and approval of others attending to their mental health needs utilizing this strategy as well. Unk centered the benefits of psychotherapy—using himself as a living testimony. He introduced a hope-fostering strategy that, while others might have heard about it, might not have seriously considered until he recommended it.

Creating Meaning and Purpose (Theme 3)

The main theme of *Creating Meaning and Purpose* alludes to participants drawing upon their inner resources, in addition to significant findings from their incarceration and reentry experiences, and strengthening their resolve to be the change they wish to see in the world. Simply put, forming meaning in their suffering and using it to establish their purpose, participants fostered hope. Participants found meaning in their incarceration and/or challenges upon reentry through listening for the needs of others around them. Repeatedly expressing and acting upon their revelations by paying it forward or giving back to the community more generally, they took on the mission of helping others. As an illustration, Anthony indicated:

> And that's what I've learned since I've been out that my whole mission is to help. And right now, I'm in the process now of trying to find avenues to talk to the youth, because I don't want them to experience what I experienced.

Anthony's "mission" of helping others was one shared by all participants. For example, Fat professed, "As long as I wake up, I'ma be steady trying to hit my goals…one of my passions is to help people, regardless of how I help them. I'm helping somebody every day." Some participants were already aware of their life's purpose of being of service to others prior to incarceration. However, all participants—comparable to Anthony—made meaning of their past incarceration and present reentry experiences and produced objectives for social change.

Creating Meaning and Purpose involved activities that participants would like to see continued in their communities, and also involved the possibility that the participant could be an example for others. Anthony's desire for "the youth" to learn from wisdom and not from experience led him to search for routes in order to reach them. A.J. extended this idea of being an example to others, sharing:

> So that right there, just did it for me, to actually show my family, just to be that one for change, for them to see, to be the example, that I'm not just an example for my family, my children, I'm an example for everyone, everyone I come across, even our people.

A.J. is hopeful about being an example for his family and children. Simultaneously, he was able to foster hope by enabling the meaning that he has created—pursuant to his incarceration—to serve a purpose through being an inspiration on the collective level.

Worthy of note, in the discussion of individual versus collective strategies that participants in this study implemented, is that A.J. creating meaning and purpose began to develop on the individual level first. Yet, what was also conveyed in his own words, was his

concern for the collective (i.e., “everyone” but “even our people”). Depicted through the responses of other participants as well, James delineated:

> I was able to make it through that and take everything that they could do to me. I took that, taking everything they can do to me out here, and I'm still here. I'm still fighting. And so, I definitely draw strength and hope from the people I care about, but also, there is a little bit of that it's internally generated from the knowledge that you were able to endure.

Illustrated here is a clear example of James specifying the origins of the strength and hope that he has fostered as a result of his incarceration and reentry experiences. Part of the meaning that he has created from these experiences includes the understanding that he is able to withstand oppressive forces and overwhelming odds, and this was an awareness that all participants exemplified. They all gave credence to their incarceration and reentry experiences for showing them how internally strong they are and how they could utilize hope as a means to prevail. Additionally, in spite of oppression and unfavorable surrounding conditions, James is still “fighting.” While not explicitly stated in this illustrative quote, the fight that James and others were battling was not only with justice, for themselves, but also for the collective.

Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network (Theme 4)

The *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network* main theme represents strategy by which participants acquired meaningful shared relationships with other people (e.g., family, friends, children, significant others, strangers)—before, during, and after incarceration—who affirmed their worth, contributed to their wellbeing and future, and became a part of the network they are building to meet the collective need. All participants identified the presence of

individuals in their lives who taught them to hope or helped them to maintain hope by supporting their growth, health, and safety. For example, Reggie explained:

> Community is probably the most essential piece to maintaining hope, especially in my situation. I learned very early that staying isolated and being to yourself does nothing to help your situation. And I'm a firm believer as far as in my faith that The Most High works through everybody to cultivate His purpose.

Participants leveraged their community as a method towards sustaining hope. Supported by a shift in perspective to a place of acknowledgment that isolation is unhelpful and that connection to a spiritual source (i.e., "The Most High") was worthwhile, Reggie viewed being in community with others as paramount in the reentry process. Due to the benefits of a support network, Reggie was able to foster hope.

Similarly, Jerry reported that, "Now I feel hope from surrounding myself with the right people and through the encouraging words or moments where you have to bond to get through some things. It does build that hope." Other participants had parallel experiences to Jerry where they encompassed themselves about with "the right people" who encouraged them with words and who they developed a bond by working toward a collective hope. Participants such as James shared:

> And so the only difference now is coming out of prison, there was my family, there's my friends, everything like that, but doing this work, the people I care about have expanded. So, the scope of people I care about has expanded to include not just the people I know, but the people that I'm actually in community with, and so, I draw all my hope from that.

After incarceration, James expressed how he experienced an increase in the size of his network as he continued to take actions towards social justice, in addition to how that community

became something even greater from which he could derive hope. Throughout the interviews, participants finding peace within their community was a common theme. Other participants described how their community pushed them further into community as well. Due to individuals acting altruistically or the participant having a positive experience with an individual, their faith in humanity would be renewed and that individual would then become a part of the participant's community—if they had not been already.

To illuminate this point, when Anthony was seeking general assistance after reentry, he recounted how he "explained to them what the situation is, everything. And she like, 'We going to sit here until we get everything on this paper that you need to get your general assistance. We going to sit here and get it.'" This interaction fostered a sense of hope, because it provided an experience in the community that stimulated positive momentum or "motion." Moreover, a meaningful relationship was developed, and this stranger could be considered as a part of Anthony's support network. Likewise, there was this reoccurring feeling of hopefulness when someone outside of their community, literally and figuratively, advocated for them. As an example, Unk outlined how he shared his vision of opening a barber college in the community with his white pastor:

> He said, "this is not a loan. This is for you. Get your vision going." These white folks. And I just opened up about my gift and what I wanted to do—my mission—and they backed that. So that right there was, that gave me so much hope right there.

Unk had a vision on how to meet a collective need that involved him being in community with people who he could express himself to, and through his vision of helping others, he himself was helped. The *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network* main theme was fundamental for all participants cultivation of hope. Family, friends, children, and significant others

established the foundation for the meaningful relationships for participants as they returned from incarceration. While those relationships were being sustained, more relationships were being built with other people doing the work toward the collective hope, so the community and their network continued to flourish.

This theme also produced a sub-theme. The sub-theme *Being Connected to Black Women* refers to the remarkable relationships that participants had with Black women, who played a crucial role in the nourishing Black men and the Black family. This facet is related to the *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network* hope-fostering strategy and is particularly important to the concept of fostering hope, specifically for formerly incarcerated Black men. Chris proclaimed:

> My mom, her hope and our prayers actually helped get me through. She's not here anymore, but that helped get me through. I got a sister. Her hope prayer still actually get me through. Her love and support actually still gets me through. So, understanding that that's what makes me want to be better for Black women, women in general.

As stated, when discussing the main theme of *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network*, participants' families were one of the basic building blocks upon which participants commenced construction on when they returned from jail/prison. Chris identified his mother and his sister—both Black women—as key figures that keep him afloat. Further, he signified that his mother's hope allows him to prevail and that these two Black women in his life had supplied him and seeded a desire to improve himself for the entirety of Black women. Tim also communicated an affinity for Black women, given that, "a lot of them forgave me. They loved me. They nourished me through my recovery…I had my uncles and stuff, but it was mostly women that

nourished me." Similar to Tim, other participants distinguished between the help and hope that they received from Black women and the hope they received from other people.

Independent of the role that they played in each of the participants lives, Black women had a special influence on the lives of participants. As a case in point, considering the impact of Black women on his reentry experience Hatman disclosed, "I had a good lady at the time. I really treated her bad. She helped me out. If it wasn't for her, I think I probably would've did a suicide move." In his assertive statement, Hatman emphasized the importance of Black women to Black men, formerly incarcerated Black men, and to him especially. As a result of her displaying faithfulness in her commitment to him in the midst of admittedly "bad" treatment, this Black woman saved this formerly incarcerated Black man's life by virtue of helping him to foster hope.

Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality (Theme 5)

The *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* main theme makes reference to participants reinforcing their connection to a religious or spiritual source through practices that further support the "belief that positive change for the collective is possible" as well as for the individual (Mosley et al., 2019, p. 5). Throughout the interviews, participants endorsed the belief that fortifying their relationship with their religious or spiritual source was a pathway to producing greater hope. In fact, most participants verbalized an understanding of hope that was intricately intertwined with their faith. For instance, Jerry pronounced:

> I think hope parallels with your faith. I think they run hand in hand because if you have faith, if you're a spiritual person or religious person, you have faith in whatever that religion is, it breeds hope because you're not really looking at what's actually going on around…You're always looking at encouraging yourself saying, "Okay. This too shall pass."

Participants sharing the same beliefs about faith and hope as Jerry, viewed *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* as analogous to hope, and therefore, a manner in which to receive and promote hope. Jerry suggested that having these spiritual or religious beliefs would increase an individual's hope. On the grounds of having a strong faith or spiritual alliance, participants were able to face the challenges of life with a more positive outlook.

Through practices including expressions of faith, participants fostered hope. As an example, Main confirmed, "the preacher at my girl's church, he's pretty positive about the Black community. He speaks highly of what we can be and what he'd like to see. So, I can derive a little hope out of the message that he kind of presents." Gathering with other believers via attending church services, was a practice that other participants engaged in and one that Main discovered he could use to enhance his hope in so doing. This strategy led to participants finding a place of worship and connecting with a spiritual or religious leader that often spoke life into their situation and demonstrated belief in them as an individual. At the same time, Main's comment on how the preacher's message—specifically his favorable view of the Black community's collective future—was a resource that he drew upon to further his hope.

Also, given the philosophy that preparation for reentry should begin on the first day of an individual's incarceration, hope-fostering strategies utilized while participants were still incarcerated became important to consider. Coltrane narrated:

> I remember very early on, my mom and I were doing Bible studies over the phone…She was just giving me scripture, and I would just recite it back to her and praying over the phone. And whenever she wrote me letters, putting the scriptures in my letter just to keep me encouraged, keep the hope going, keep the faith going, knowing that God is going to continue to get me through.

In this depiction, Coltrane reinforced his connection to a religious or spiritual source (i.e., God) with the help of his mother—a Black woman. As a result, he was able to persevere and maintain a positive view of his situation, even though he was still incarcerated. In reentry, the *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* main theme appears similarly; participants reading religious/spiritual texts in spiritual communion.

Some participants adopted related practices of faith/spirituality such as meditation and praise/expression of gratitude. By way of illustration, Hatman noted, "I got meditation I do now, it's called cosmic meditation…So I learned little tricks like that. Let the energy off, just let it off. Don't hold that in." A more practical spiritual exercise, Hatman indicated that he was able to use this technique to reduce stress. Through tapping into the energy of the universe, he reported that his self-awareness was heightened and that this introspection, in turn, helped him to advance his hope.

Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past (Theme 6)

The main theme of *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past* refers to participants' orienting themselves to the past in order to identify experiences from previous actions, social actions, and generations. All participants believed that by remembering the past, they could gain encouragement from its practice that could help to inform their future. This strategy is consistent with the Understanding history of oppression and resistance and the Embracing ancestral pride pathways from Mosley and colleagues' (2019) psychological framework of radical hope.

Understanding history of oppression and resistance is related to looking back and reviewing the organized actions taken by People of Color in opposition to oppression, to gain knowledge about and wisdom concerning their experience. Embracing ancestral pride alludes to having and expressing reverence for previous generations' achievements and setbacks—both

individual and collective. *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past* main theme is the central organizing concept, and although this main theme could have been separated by the pathways to radical hope in these findings, I decided to combine them. With the understanding that both of these pathways to radical hope are understood as being oriented toward the individual and collective past, respectively, the radical hope framework acknowledges this point of connection, and this main theme is that junction.

When prompted to consider how identifying as a Black man has played a role in how he fostered hope during his reentry process, A.J. said this about drawing strength and inspiration from the past:

> Our ancestors, Martin Luther King, Malcolm, X, they died, they actually was willing to give up their lives, which ended up happening. But a lot of people don't know what happened to Malcolm really. But Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for instance, all the things that he done for us to get where we are now…It does a lot because I feel like I'm supposed to be one of the next ones to contribute to that.

The process of A.J. understanding the history of oppression and resistance led him to research history for himself. He acknowledged that these individuals from the past have helped to shape his present, and he took their willingness to resist to heart, because he believes that he is now the one who is charged with transforming the conditions of, overcoming adversity with, and providing hope to the Black community.

Akin to A.J.'s representation, Unk also appealed to the past for strategies to facilitate hope and concluded that, "learning about our superheroes, man, that was the main thing because that's what unlocks the chains, the slavery mentality." In this excerpt, Unk stipulated that in order to resist and liberate Black people from the residual impact of slavery, they need to educate

themselves on the "superheroes" of the Black community. Along with a few of the other participants, both these men suggested that the knowledge of Black history has social implications for Black people, specifically, implications for social action. Yet, there is much history to draw from and many lessons to be learned for the sake of fostering hope.

The strength that James amasses from being Black strengthens his ability to hope. He maintained:

> the things that we as people have endured, no one should have to. They should never have to have that strength, but the fact remains that the result is that strength is what it is. So, the ability to endure, to withstand is there, even when there needs to be space to not be strong, and I think that's a much harder fight for us, frankly.

Reexamining the history of the Black community, James first underscored that fact that Black people have endured tremendous number of traumatic events, which has shown how strong the Black community is. What is more, he emphasized that no human should ever have to possess the strength that Black people have demonstrated in the face of various oppressive forces and overwhelming odds. However, James implied that part of the wisdom gained from these historical events is that although Black people have survived systemic oppression in the past, the future should include a fight for spaces for Black people to heal from the traumas that they have experienced. To be present and feel safe—physically and psychologically—would require a change in the conditions and environment of Black people. This environment, for whatever amount of time it can be held, would be in resistance to oppression and could provide Black people hope.

Other participants, such as Coltrane, embraced and took great pride in their ancestry. He shared that "hope is not even just Black culture. In general, man, hope is almost inbred in us. We

are people of just survival, of resilience. It's in our DNA." This idea that hope was innate in Black people was expressed by many participants. Coltrane confidently welcomed this idea and delighted in it as an example of why Black men hope differently. Following a similar line of questioning, Reggie was asked how being a Black man influenced how he fostered hope during his reentry experience. He responded:

> Just seeing what came with slavery, the methodology on how they came up with different types of cuisines, with the foods that they were given, which were scraps, but made it into delicacies, bro, who else is doing that?…So how being Black and being in my situation, how I had to foster hope, I just had to be creative and actually be cognizant of my surroundings, of what I have, what I can deal with, and how I can make something shake.

Reggie identified with the creativity of Black people and admired the ingenuity shown by his ancestors who were enslaved. In addition, he translated that pride that he felt into a strategy for fostering hope as a Black man in his return to the community from jail. Reggie stressed the importance of being creative including identifying the resources he could use to his advantage. Drawing on the inspiration from the past, he planned for his preferred future. The contributions of his ancestors, in terms of putting their creativity on display, encouraged Reggie to foster a sense of hope within himself. Other participants confirmed that *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past*—in particular embracing ancestral pride—produced hope by way of motivating them to act.

Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action (Theme 7)

The *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action* main theme involved participants standing up/transforming conditions for themselves and others being impacted by systemic oppression through active resistance to oppressive forces. Whereas the resistance depicted in the

Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past main theme emphasizes looking to the collective's history for inspiration towards taking action, the *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action* main theme emphasizes building upon participants' personal histories—especially incarceration—as sources of motivation towards engaging in social action. Ranging from Anthony's desired goal, "to be able to fight the system that's in place now" to Main stating, "what I really wanted to be is a youth counselor. Cause I experienced a lot," all of the participants were enthusiastic about advocacy and taking action.

For instance, when asked to share a story about how he fostered hope during his reentry, James communicated how he was already amplifying his voice in the community and specified:

> So being able to engage in a local, community-based reentry program as a peer mentor, or to engage with kids who've been through the system three or four times, and to talk with them and to listen to them. Not to offer solutions, but to just offer to listen and to just be there. And it's that for me. What gave me the most hope was feeling like I could do something to make a difference, to make change.

Many participants were the same as James—already fighting the system—while others were still in the formulation stages of their advocacy work. James indicated that one of his actions that supported an increase in hope was him helping other formerly incarcerated people in an organized reentry program. He delineated another action as him committing to listening to and being a resource for youth involved in "the system." These are both personal examples of how James fostered hope in his reentry process, but they are not exclusive to him. This means that, given the same perspective towards helping the community, other formerly incarcerated Black men could benefit from these avenues as well.

Other participants identified additional pathways towards hope, namely, engaging in local/state/national politics, being a part of changes to the criminal legal system, and starting their own programs in the community. In another case, Fat reflected:

> When I wrote a piece a few years ago and I was saying that the problems that was going on now, I mean this was three or four years ago, we went through in the sixties…And I was telling them how to fix it was to get the youths.

Fat and other participants revealed their movements in the fight for social justice. Fat's accomplishment of being published in the local newspaper is not to be overshadowed by his ability to also utilize his wisdom from his personal past of activism in the sixties to offer solutions for long-standing issues in the community today. This kind of application of knowledge typifies the responses of participants in this study. Whether it was being there as a male figure for those without a father or fighting the oppressive forces that led them and others to incarceration, these formerly incarcerated Black men ensured that they would have maximum impact by engaging in advocacy and action.

Also, from this theme, a sub-theme was established. *Sharing Story/ Imparting Wisdom* is a sub-theme of *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action*, because it spotlights a strategy that was endorsed by all but one participant. *Sharing Story/ Imparting Wisdom* connotes participants realizing the power in their story, believing that it's their obligation to share experience with others, and using their situation to open doors for themselves and others. In short, one of the methods that participants used to foster hope was through sharing their story and imparting wisdom. As proof, when asked if there are people or situations in the community that help him to feel greater hope, Coltrane answered:

> I'll say yes, having a couple close friends that have been able to, I guess, help me draw plans for the future, or just allow me to put my thoughts into words and give me ideas on how to document the experience or how to move forward with the experience, and realizing that my experience is a story to tell in and of itself as a source of hope.

Regardless of the venue, participants strategized how they could tell their story, including considerations of the person's level of understanding and need to gain trust, so that people were willing to listen.

In order for them to convey the story in a way that would connect with listeners, they first had to comprehend the strength of their story for themselves. Coltrane conceded that he was not initially aware that his experience was something worthy of being shared. Notwithstanding, his community (e.g., his close friends) contributed in part to his realization that his story needed to be told. Now, as he mentioned, Coltrane is envisioning possibilities for his future and hopeful that the wisdom he has gained will be useful to someone else—in the right form.

Much like Coltrane, Reggie also detailed having to realize capacity contained within his story. To illustrate, Reggie chronicled:

> And so, once I learned over a period of time that I do have a form of influence and that people's lives are being changed and they're actually expressing that to me, that gave me hope that even though it may be difficult getting actual income…My value came from life change from other people.

Participants changed lives by practically showing others future possibilities beyond their current circumstances. Reggie designated value to the lives that were being changed by the power of his articulated experience and counted them as good as "actual income." When participants—as a whole—came into the awareness and knowledge of the influence that comes

along with *Sharing Story/ Imparting Wisdom*, they diligently sought pathways to talk to any individuals willing to hear about their story. Commonly participants communicated with individuals, such as the youth in their communities, with the objective of preventing them from having similar negative experiences.

Jerry, who founded a reentry program, used his story to open doors for himself and others. To provide further explanation, Jerry outlined:

> And so that's what the whole reentry program is. Let's get some folks that have these lived experiences, that have a story to tell, that wants to amplify their voice, but at the same time, they want to educate and inform others and get in the community, verbally.

In this passage, Jerry succinctly described his plan as he established his reentry program, particularly how he intended to bring together people with the common goal of utilizing their individual stories to meet the collective need. Not only did participants in this study foster hope by sharing their stories with others, but they promoted their own hope as they assisted others through imparting wisdom. Likewise, the achievements of others encouraged continued social action at the collective level and facilitated pathways to hope at the individual level.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this study, I aimed to outline hope-fostering strategies to be used toward the creation of hope-fostering interventions for formerly incarcerated Black men. I specifically explored how Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community foster hope. I extended my earlier research on formerly incarcerated Black men's conceptualization of hope (Hayes, 2022), by explicitly examining strategies that foster personal and collective hope. In so doing, I challenged, confirmed, and extended concepts in the extant literature with my findings. First, my findings challenge the divide between personal and collective hope as they appear in individuals' personal or lived experiences. Second, participants confirmed and challenged the applicability of some of the elements of the framework of radical hope to their reentry processes. Finally, my findings confirm and extend the conclusions of prior investigations by specifying strategies that formerly incarcerated Black men can use to foster hope.

Personal and Collective hope

First, findings challenged the dichotomous manner in which the concept of hope in psychology has been presumed to partition nicely between traditional, individual and radical, collective perspectives. This study brings to the fore the reality that lived experiences do not distinguish nor support a natural segmentation of personal hope and collective hope. For example, the *Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook* main theme, on its face, could be seen as an individual level endeavor. It could potentially involve various processes that begin with the individual, including developing self-awareness, engaging in cognitive restructuring or positive self-talk, or challenging negative cognitions while also practicing gratitude and self-compassion. However, examples from the men's narratives highlight how utilizing this strategy

to foster hope for themselves was not independent from an orientation towards the collective. Tim, for instance, described the negative feedback that he anticipated receiving from some of his peers as a result of his affiliation with people positively engaging in the community upon his return. *Considering "Motion" and "The Grind,"* he displayed his positive character traits and awareness of the collective as he realized the personal motivations that he had (i.e., being able to help others) and decided to take a chance. Notwithstanding the change occurring internally at the individual level, Tim implemented a life-changing shift in his perspective, after considering his personal future as well as the future of the collective.

Although the extant reentry literature is silent on employing shifts in perspective and developing a positive outlook as hope-fostering strategies, clinical psychology does provide some evidence of its benefits. Specifically, Pimentel and Oliveira (2024) conducted an investigation into the associations of impairment of personality functioning and positive outlook for the future with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Complex-Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Operationalizing positive outlook for the future using optimism and hope scales, they surveyed 304 adults and found a moderate negative correlation between a positive outlook for the future and Complex-Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. This finding strengthens the argument that hope, generally, and a positive outlook, in particular, could help Black men who have endured the long-lasting traumatic event that is incarceration as they are released from prison and jail. A goal of Pimentel and Oliveira's (2024) study was to support the development of interventions. Makaremnia and colleagues' (2021) research findings also have relevance here. They conducted a randomized clinical trial to evaluate what effects, if any, a positive thinking training program would have on hope and sleep quality of patients with a recessive genetic disorder. The results of their investigation included the finding that the training program improved hope and sleep

quality—which speaks to the positive impact of positive thinking and its effectiveness in interventions. Still, both studies above involved investigations centering personal perspectives of hope.

Tim's narrative illustrates the complicated nature of hope in the present study. Tim cultivated a growth mindset which helped him to foster hope at the personal level (Yeager & Dweck, 2020). This involved him modifying his beliefs to reflect a confidence in his capacity to change for the better with time. Practically, Tim's positive thinking was a display of his agency, or "the will" in Snyder's (1995; 2002) conceptualization of hope that was also found by Vignansky and colleagues (2018). However, part of his reasoning for developing this way of thinking was his concern for the collective. Tim believed that if he could improve, develop, and grow, then he could come back to help others. Even though the strategies which they were applying at the individual level included individual benefits, among the significant findings of the current study was that all participants shared a concern for the collective wellness.

By contrast, there were also strategies that were oriented to the collective, which helped the participants to foster hope on the individual level as well. I created the *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action* main theme to capture participants fighting the system (i.e., acting to change oppressive forces) through advocacy and social action. These actions were oriented to the collective and included actively participating in the political system on various levels, advocating for changes to the legal system, and formerly incarcerated people helping other formerly incarcerated people, formally and informally.

In addition to this main theme and the *Sharing Story/ Imparting Wisdom* sub-theme, Reggie's recollection of one of his experiences in reentry illustrates a collective-oriented strategy fostering hope at the individual level. During his interview, Reggie relayed that he had been

sharing his story to individuals, more specifically the youth, since he had returned to the community. Due to him receiving a significant amount of extremely positive feedback over an extended interval, Reggie expressed that not only did their valuation give him hope, but it gave him hope in the midst of the continued oppression and setbacks that he experienced in his reentry process. Reggie's collective-oriented actions of telling his story to the youth—in order to potentially inspire them—also resulted in he himself fostering hope at the individual level.

This idea of formerly incarcerated individuals engaging in advocacy and activism to aid the collective is not new to the reentry or reintegration literature. It has been the subject of investigation in the study of sociology and criminology as well as under the auspices of strengths-based reentry and restorative justice in reentry. Smith (2021), for example, conducted in-depth interviews with formerly incarcerated advocates and activists and identified three core themes. The first theme described participants' tendency to focus their helping efforts on other formerly incarcerated individuals or justice-involved youth. The second theme highlighted how participants built communities and helped to sustain support networks based on the type of work that they were engaging and how the communities and networks impacted participants' reintegration process. The third theme recognized participants' work directly related to prison reform. Together, these three core themes acknowledge advocacy as an individual and collective strategy in strengths-based reentry, which was a theme in the present study too.

However, a key difference was that Smith's (2021) investigation was guided by a major restorative reentry theory that presumes that formerly incarcerated individuals use advocacy as a coping mechanism toward the larger goals of redemption and de-stigmatization. Explicitly, the participants in the current study disapproved this supposition. Reggie and other participants implemented storytelling, advice-giving, and narrative practices more aligned with Smith and

Kinzel's (2021) expanded conceptualization of carceral citizenship—a conceptualization that directly names the alternate reality that incarceration places individuals into as well as the opportunities for reform of the system. From this perspective, participants in the current study performing social action and resisting by means of storytelling and the impartation of wisdom are viewed as them engaging in genuine generativity and providing support for the high value that their expert knowledge should command.

Radical Hope

I describe three main themes in the present study that were comparable to elements identified in Mosley and colleagues' (2019) psychological framework of radical hope. In particular, the main themes of *Creating Meaning and Purpose* along with *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past* were parallel to some of the pathways to radical hope (i.e., Creating meaning and purpose, Understanding history of oppression and resistance, Embracing ancestral pride). Meanwhile, the *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* main theme confirmed and challenged the radical hope framework's Faith and agency component.

The psychological framework of radical hope outlined pathways which individuals could employ to experience radical, collective hope (Mosley et al., 2019). Two of these pathways were Understanding history of oppression and resistance and Embracing ancestral pride. Both pathways were oriented to the past, however, each is simultaneously oriented to either the personal (i.e., ancestral pride) or to the collective (i.e., history of oppression and resistance). In the present study, participants confirmed the pertinence of these pathways to fostering hope in the process of reentry. Although these two pathways were captured in interviews with participants, they were combined into one main theme (i.e., *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past*) due to their connection through their orientations to the past.

In their narratives, participants described meaning and purpose as a pathway to collective hope in much the same way as Mosley et al. (2019) did in the radical hope framework. As a strategy toward fostering hope, the *Creating Meaning and Purpose* theme consisted of participants meaning-making after experiencing incarceration and being challenged by reentry at the same time. Similar to the radical hope framework's description, the outcomes of this process incited participants of the present study to action; actions which were characterized by their fight for justice and liberation. Participants drew on their inner resources and made it their mission to help others around them, which they believed was their duty to the collective.

Even though Mosely and colleagues (2019) noted that the source of an individual's sense of obligation to the collective can be spiritually and morally rooted, the psychology of radical hope framework focuses more on the sociopolitical nature of faith. Sociopolitical faith differentiates itself from religious or spiritual references to faith in its awareness of injustice coupled with a belief in the collective's abilities to overcome oppression. Comparable to the empirical research on the psychology of radical hope, I interpreted faith in the men's narratives as both spiritual/religious and sociopolitical (French et al., 2023).

All participants expressed a spiritual or religious belief that contributed to their understanding of racism and their confidence in the individual and collective capacity to thrive in spite of difficulties. Faith's ability to modify an individuals' actions influenced the formation of Faith and agency component in the psychological framework of radical hope as well as the *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* theme in the present study. For participants, their religious or spiritual beliefs fostered hope within themselves at the individual level. These beliefs contributed to their sociopolitical faith, which facilitated collective social action.

Hope and spirituality have been explored in the extant literature. For example, Tao and colleagues (2022) investigated social support and spiritual coping as mediators between hope and depression in individuals with advanced cancer. Their results consisted of the findings that hope, social support, and spiritual coping predict depression. They posited spirituality and/or religiosity, specifically, "provide patients with a guidance system or a broad framework to guide their cognition and behavior" (Tao et al., 2022, p. 7). This discourse echoes the expressions of participants in the present study. Although all the themes and sub-themes were interrelated, I theorize that spirituality and religiosity, in particular, cut across each of the themes. Participants' spirituality and religiosity influenced their understanding of history, their racial pride, and the communities they engaged in collective action with, as well as their outlook of life, their meaning-making process, and sense of purpose. Considering the potential for negative mental health outcomes among formerly incarcerated Black men, the findings of the present study provide evidence in promotion of spiritual coping and spiritual development (i.e., *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality*), towards the long-term goal of fostering hope in reentry.

Hope-fostering Strategies

My findings confirm and extend the conclusions of prior investigations of hope-fostering strategies. In conceptualizing the present study, I referenced Herth's (1990) study exploring how to foster hope in terminally-ill people as a starting point towards identifying hope-strategies, which she defined as "sources that functioned to instill, support or restore hope by facilitating the hoping process in some way" (Herth, 1990, p. 1253). Utilizing this definition to explore how Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community foster hope, I identified some main themes that aligned with the key categories of hope-fostering strategies outlined by

Herth (1990). The participants' narratives, however, extend Herth's and others by describing the specific strategies to the reentry experiences of formerly incarcerated Black men.

More concretely, the *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network* main theme is in line with the Interpersonal/connectedness category and the *Strengthening Faith/ Spirituality* main theme is consistent with the Spiritual base category of Herth's (1990) key categories of hope-fostering strategies. On the other hand, the remaining main themes relate to and extend the key categories determined by Herth (1990) so that they are applicable to formerly incarcerated Black men. For instance, the *Shifting Perspective/ Developing Positive Outlook* main theme could be seen as an explicit Personal attribute, which Herth (1990) described as, "those attributes within the self that enabled uplifting feelings and thoughts to be found despite the circumstances" (p. 1255). Congruently, the *Engaging Healing/Growth Strategies*, *Creating Meaning and Purpose*, and *Maximizing Impact through Advocacy and Action* main themes can be taken for fully developed Attainable Aims. Additionally, Uplifting memories for formerly incarcerated Black men, specifically, might involve *Drawing Strength/ Inspiration from the Past*.

Making these connections does at least two things in terms of identifying the strengths of the present study: (1) it highlights this study's offering of concrete strategies to foster hope among formerly incarcerated Black men in contrast to Herth's (1990) categories, and (2) it emphasizes my orientation to the data (i.e., incorporating inductive and deductive elements) thereby demonstrating design coherence or methodological integrity. Although the goal of this research was not to map themes in association with the key categories by Herth (1990) or Mosley and colleagues' (2019), their theories and findings did provide a basis for inquiry. The consistency of the findings across the investigations point to fundamental hope-fostering

strategies, and the differences denote the potential for hope-fostering strategies specific to formerly incarcerated Black men.

Among these potentially foundational findings was the evidence consistently demonstrating the importance of *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network*. Social support (e.g., family support) is well-documented in the reentry literature, especially as it relates to formerly incarcerated Black men and those who are also fathers (Thomas et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2019). Whether it be food and clothing, a job lead, or emotional support, having a strong support network is an invaluable resource in reentry for Black men. What is less often discussed in these conversations, however, are the people that make up these immediate and close interpersonal relationships. The participants in the present study were clear that it was Black women, in particular, who helped them to foster hope when they returned from jail and prison. Correspondingly, the *Being Connected to Black Women* sub-theme within the *Building Community/ Sustaining Support Network* main theme was created to represent the support for and acknowledgment of the necessary skills and position that Black women have and hold, which can and have promoted the fostering of hope in formerly incarcerated Black men.

Thomas-Davis and colleagues (2024) explored the experiences of Black women who many times take on the burden when Black men are incarcerated, including parenting, as they also experience the vicarious trauma of incarceration. Their qualitative interviews revealed the true impact that incarceration has on Black families and by extension Black communities. Upon reentry though, the stories of these extremely complex relationships are frequently left untold. Indeed, the relationship between Black women and formerly incarcerated Black men may contribute to a feeling of uneasiness given the nature and functioning of the relationship. At the same, it is a real-life portrayal. This study extends the reentry literature by identifying the hope-

fostering strategies of Black men, in addition to recognizing the Black women that nurture their hope.

Limitations

The findings must be examined against the backdrop of a few limitations. One limitation is that data collection for this study took place over approximately one year's time and the interviews were dispersed unevenly. As a result, there were months in between some interviews. Given the semi-structured nature of the interview, there is the possibility that the open-ended and probing questions varied across interviews and made some interviews more detailed than others. Nonetheless, reflexive thematic analysis is flexible, and at the outset, I noted that future changes were possible. Besides this, to engage in reflexive thematic analysis is to embrace subjectivity. Since I am not searching for an objective truth, then what becomes more important is the ways in which I engaged with the data and documented it. Therefore, I can both acknowledge my process of data collection and not weaken my findings.

Additionally, one of the objectives of this study was to examine whether the participants hope-fostering strategies aligned with individual or collective hope. Consequently, a limitation of this study could be that questions in the interview protocol introduced and asked questions about the concept or radical hope, while also providing examples of it to the participants—specifically of the possible ways to foster radical hope. Furnishing these examples may have potentially given a bank from which participants could draw from in answering questions about the concept of radical or collective hope. Yet, without supplying participants with examples, there would have been a risk that participants may have denied the applicability of radical hope to their lived experiences though they did engage in hope-fostering strategies in alignment with it. In this case,

the benefits and the risks were considered, and I decided that the risk of a false negative was far too great.

Furthermore, when presented the findings of this study, questions may inevitably and almost naturally arise regarding the generalizability of the findings to other or even all formerly incarcerated Black men. However, while a goal of this study was for the findings to provide practical utility and act as a practical resource guide of proposed strategies for formerly incarcerated Black men, this was a phenomenological qualitative study. Therefore, by its very nature, it intended to highlight the viewpoints of certain formerly incarcerated Black men with respect to the specific phenomenon of fostering hope in the context of reentry. Black people, in particular formerly incarcerated Black men, are not a monolith, and there were undoubtedly nuances that could have been but were not points of emphasis in this study because they were not applicable to the participants (e.g., fostering hope among formerly incarcerated Black immigrants). Still, although the findings of the present study may not be generalized to all formerly incarcerated Black men, there remains power in their abilities to inform future discourse.

Implications

Taken together with the limitations of this study, the findings from this study can inform research, practice, and community interventions with formerly incarcerated Black men through a variety of means. Future research should continue to center formerly incarcerated Black men, who have the highest incarceration rate across all racial, ethnic, and gender groups. Research should also persist and maintain a focus on hope, in order to counter the deficit-based narratives that have accumulated over the years as it relates to Black men and the criminal legal system. Additionally, the difficulty encountered in recruiting younger participants shed light on another

consideration for research going forward—the significance of time. Not only should time be considered in terms of age of incarceration and reentry as well as sentence length, but the temporal element concerning when in their reentry journey formerly incarcerated Black men engage specific strategies should be examined using a longitudinal study design. Moreover, though they were not central concepts in the narratives of participants from the present study, future research should pose more explicit questions to participants with respect to hope and radical imagination, Black masculinity, Black women, as well as the Black family.

Counseling psychology and other mental health professionals can use the findings of the present study in their work with formerly incarcerated Black men and people in their support network. Specifically, they could use these hope-fostering strategies as conversation starters or introduce them into the therapy room to explore coping strategies. Those concerned about what to do in order to help formerly incarcerated loved ones (e.g., family members, spouses, partners, etc.) might appreciate the concrete strategies outlined in this study that highlight ways they might be of assistance in the reentry process. Mental health practitioners could also benefit from viewing these hope-fostering strategies as strengths that should be emphasized and supported. Those practitioners engaged in group therapy might introduce the findings to group members in sessions designed to explore and envision the possibilities stimulated by these examples of potential pathways. Additionally, a one or two session psychoeducation class could be offered to educate people on the concept of meaning making—with guided practice examples in session.

Provided that the ultimate goal of this research was to contribute to the creation of hope-fostering interventions, the question now becomes how to translate the research findings. Turning to the broader definition of intervention, it is plausible for a community intervention to be developed for each main theme of this study. As outlined in the literature review, a positive

thinking training program related to hope could be developed, implemented, and evaluated. In addition, a resource list with all of the *Engaging Healing/ Growth Strategies* could be designed and made accessible to the community via digital or online fliers. Furthermore, the hope-fostering strategies described in the present study could be used to create prompts for a hope-based journaling intervention or hope intervention using guided imagery. Other interventions include the possibility that a community-based reentry program facilitates a networking event for formerly incarcerated Black men or employs a professional storyteller to help formerly incarcerated Black men learn to communicate their story more effectively.

Conclusion

The hope-fostering strategies furnished by the present study are not exhaustive, but they do help to fill the gap in hope and reentry literatures addressing individual and collective perspectives of hope and exploring hope-fostering actions among formerly incarcerated individuals. I encourage researchers, clinicians, and community advocates to consider my suggestions in the future, to apply them where they can in their work, and to add to the list of hope-fostering strategies for formerly incarcerated Black men. My dissertation was an effort to transition from conceptualizations of hope to more concrete hope-fostering actions, and the strategies organized in this dissertation describe what these formerly incarcerated Black men engaged with to foster hope upon their return to the community from jail and prison. Still, there is much more meaning to make and themes to create, given the complex interactions with hope and radical hope which I observed in the participants of the present study. Thus, I hope that this is just the first step in research toward this end and that the ideas presented will contribute to our collective future.

REFERENCES

Addison, H. A., Richmond, T. S., Lewis, L. M., & Jacoby, S. (2022). Mental health outcomes in formerly incarcerated Black men: A systematic mixed studies review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 78*(7), 1851-1869. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15235

Alarcon, G. M., Bowling, N. A., & Khazon, S. (2013). Great expectations: A meta-analytic examination of optimism and hope. *Personality and individual differences, 54*(7), 821-827. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2012.12.004

Alexander, M. (2010). *The new Jim Crow : mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New Press.

Alper, M., Durose, M. R., & Markman, J. (2018). *2018 update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-year follow-up period (2005-2014)*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/2018-update-prisoner-recidivism-9-year-follow-period-2005-2014

Ang, J. Y., Monte, V., & Tsai, W. (2022). First-year college students' adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic: The protective roles of hope and gratitude. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science,* https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000320

Assari, S., & Lankarani, M. M. (2016). Depressive symptoms are associated with more hopelessness among white than black older adults. *Frontiers in Public Health, 4*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2016.00082

Assari, S., Miller, R. J., Taylor, R. J., Mouzon, D., Keith, V., & Chatters, L. M. (2017). Discrimination fully mediates the effects of incarceration history on depressive symptoms

and psychological distress among African American men. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, *5*(2), 243–252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-017-0364-y

Bahr, S. J., Harris, L., Fisher, J. K., & Armstrong, A. H. (2010). Successful reentry: What differentiates successful and unsuccessful parolees? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *54*(5), 667-692. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X09342435

Benzein, E., & Saveman, B. -. (1998). One step towards the understanding of hope: A concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 35*(6), 322-329. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7489(98)00045-5

Bhui, H. S. (1999). Race, racism and risk assessment: Linking theory to practice with Black mentally disordered offenders. *Probation Journal*, *46*, 171-181. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1177/026455059904600303

Bonta, J., & Andrews, D. A. (2017). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328-352. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise* (pp. 191-205). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315762012.ch15

Buckley, & Herth, K. (2004). Fostering hope in terminally ill patients. Nursing Standard., 19(10). https://doi.org/info:doi/

Buehler, E. D. (2021). Justice expenditures and employment in the United States, 2017. *NCJ, 256093*. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/justice-expenditures-and-employment-united-states-2017

Cahalan, M. W., & Parsons, L. A. (1986). *United States Historical Corrections Statistics, 1850-1984*. Westat, Incorporated. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/united-states-historical-corrections-statistics-1850-1984

Carson, E. A. (2018). *Prisoners in 2016*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/prisoners-2016

Carson, E. A. (2021). Prisoners in 2020–Statistical tables. *NCJ, 302776*, 1-50. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/prisoners-2020-statistical-tables

Chang, E. C., & Banks, K. H. (2007). The color and texture of hope: some preliminary findings and implications for hope theory and counseling among diverse racial/ethnic groups. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *13*(2), 94. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-018-9949-y

Chang, E. C., Chang, O. D., Rollock, D., Lui, P. P., Watkins, A. F., Hirsch, J. K., & Jeglic, E. L. (2019). Hope above racial discrimination and social support in accounting for positive and negative psychological adjustment in African American adults: Is "knowing you can do it" as important as "knowing how you can"? *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 43*(2), 399-411. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-018-9949-y

Durose, M. R., Cooper, A. D., & Snyder, H. N. (2014). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 30 states in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Elisha, E., & Ronel, N. (2022). Positive psychology and positive criminology: Similarities and differences. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 08874034211065992. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1177/08874034211065992

Esparza Flores, N. (2018). Contributing factors to mass incarceration and recidivism. *Themis: Research Journal of Justice Studies and Forensic Science*, *6*(1), 4. https://doi.org/10.31979/THEMIS.2018.0604

Feldman, D. B., Davidson, O. B., & Margalit, M. (2015). Personal resources, hope, and achievement among college students: The conservation of resources perspective. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-being*, *16*(3), 543-560. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9508-5

French, B. H., Neville, H. A., Lewis, J. A., Mosley, D. V., Adames, H. Y., & Chavez-Dueñas, N. Y. (2023). "We Can Create a Better World for Ourselves": Radical Hope in Communities of Color. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *70*(4), 327-340–340. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1037/cou0000670

Fugard, A., & Potts, H. W., (2019). Thematic Analysis, In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J.W. Sakshaug, & R.A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations.* https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036858333

Gallagher, M. W., Smith, L. J., Richardson, A. L., D'Souza, J. M., & Long, L. J. (2021). Examining the longitudinal effects and potential mechanisms of hope on COVID-19 stress, anxiety, and well-being. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*, *50*(3), 234–245. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1080/16506073.2021.1877341

Gallagher, M. W., & Lopez, S. J. (Eds.). (2018). *The Oxford handbook of hope*. Oxford University Press.

Gray, K. (2013, July). The Run-On Sentence Eddie Ellis On Life After Prison. *The Sun*, (451), 4–12.

Griffith, A. I. (1998). Insider/outsider: Epistemological privilege and mothering work. *Human Studies*, *21*(4), 361–376. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1023/A:1005421211078

Guse, T., & Hudson, D. (2014). Psychological strengths and posttraumatic growth in the successful reintegration of South African ex-offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *58*(12), 1449-1465. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X13502299

Harding, D. J., Western, B., & Sandelson, J. A. (2022). From Supervision to Opportunity: Reimagining Probation and Parole. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *701*(1), 8-25. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162221115486

Hayes, R.E. (2022). *Hope among Formerly Incarcerated Black Men* [Unpublished early research project]. University of Illinois.

Herth, K. (1990). Fostering hope in terminally-ill people. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *15*(11), 1250-1259. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1990.tb01740.x

Herth, K. (1992). Abbreviated instrument to measure hope: Development and psychometric evaluation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 17*(10), 1251-1259. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1992.tb01843.x

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(4), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232

Hughes, T. A., & Wilson, D. J. (2003). *Reentry trends in the United States*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/reentry-trends-united-states

Hunt, K. S., & Dumville, R. (2016). *Recidivism among federal offenders: A comprehensive overview*. United States Sentencing Commission. https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/recidivism-among-federal-offenders-comprehensive-overview

Hunter, Lanza, A. S., Lawlor, M., Dyson, W., & Gordon, D. M. (2016). A Strengths-Based Approach to Prisoner Reentry. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology : Official Organ of the Association for Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders (APTO)., 60(11), 1298–1314. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15576501

Jain, N. (2021). Survey Versus Interviews: Comparing Data Collection Tools for Exploratory Research. *The Qualitative Report, 26*(2), 541-554. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4492

James, N. (2014). *Offender reentry: Correctional statistics, reintegration into the community, and recidivism* (Vol. 37). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

James, D. J., & Glaze, L. E. (2006). Mental health problems of prison and jail inmates. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/mental-health-problems-prison-and-jail-inmates

Kilgore, J. (2019, September 4). *Let's fight for freedom from electronic monitors and E-Carceration*. Truthout. https://truthout.org/articles/lets-fight-for-freedom-from-electronic-monitors-and-e-carceration/

Kirchherr, J., & Charles, K. (2018). Enhancing the sample diversity of snowball samples: Recommendations from a research project on anti-dam movements in Southeast Asia. *PLoS One, 13*(8) https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201710

Langdridge, D. (2017). Phenomenology. In B. Gough (Ed.), The Palgrave handbook of critical social psychology (pp. 165–183). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

LeBel, T. P. (2019). Strengths-based re-entry and resettlement. In *The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice* (pp. 583-594). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315102832-52

LeBel, T. P., Burnett, R., Maruna, S., & Bushway, S. (2008). The 'chicken and egg' of subjective and social factors in desistance from crime. *European Journal of Criminology, 5*(2), 131-159. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370807087640

LeBel, T. P., Richie, M., & Maruna, S. (2015). Helping others as a response to reconcile a criminal past: The role of the wounded healer in prisoner reentry programs. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 42*(1), 108-120. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854814550029

Levitt, H. M., Motulsky, S. L., Wertz, F. J., Morrow, S. L., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2017). Recommendations for designing and reviewing qualitative research in psychology: Promoting methodological integrity. *Qualitative Psychology, 4*(1), 2-22. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000082

Ligthart, S., van Oploo, L., Meijers, J., Meynen, G., & Kooijmans, T. (2019). Prison and the brain: Neuropsychological research in the light of the European Convention on Human Rights. *New Journal of European Criminal Law, 10*(3), 287–300. https://doi.org/10.1177/2032284419861816

Long, K. N., Kim, E. S., Chen, Y., Wilson, M. F., Worthington Jr, E. L., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2020). The role of hope in subsequent health and well-being for older adults: An outcome-wide longitudinal approach. *Global Epidemiology*, *2*, 100018. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloepi.2020.100018

Lopez, S. J., Snyder, C. R., & Pedrotti, J. T. (2003). Hope: Many definitions, many measures. *Positive Psychological Assessment: A Handbook of Models and Measures.*, 91–106. https://doi.org/10.1037/10612-006

Magaletta, P. R., & Oliver, J. M. (1999). The hope construct, will, and ways: Their relations with self-efficacy, optimism, and general well-being. *Journal of clinical psychology*, *55*(5), 539-551. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4679(199905)55:5<539::AID-JCLP2>3.0.CO;2-G

Makaremnia, S., Dehghan Manshadi, M., & Khademian, Z. (2021). Effects of a positive thinking program on hope and sleep quality in Iranian patients with thalassemia: a randomized clinical trial. *BMC Psychology*, *9*(1). https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1186/s40359-021-00547-0

Marques, S. C., & Gallagher, M. W. (2017). Age differences and short-term stability in hope: Results from a sample aged 15 to 80. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 53*, 120-126. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.10.002

Maruschak, L., Bronson, J., & Alper, M. (2021). Indicators of Mental Health Problems Reported by Prisoners: Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016 NCJ252643. *Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics*. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/indicators-mental-health-problems-reported-prisoners-survey-prison-inmates

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Row.

Magyar-Moe, J. L., & Lopez, S. J. (2015). Strategies for accentuating hope. *Positive psychology in practice: Promoting human flourishing in work, health, education, and everyday life*, 483-502. https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2018.1478438

Minton, T. D., Beatty, L. G., & Zeng, Z. (2021). Correctional populations in the United States, 2019—Statistical tables. *BJS Statistician. NCJ*, *300655*. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/correctional-populations-united-states-2019-statistical-tables

Minton, T. D., & Zeng, Z. (2021). Jail inmates in 2020—statistical tables. *NCJ*, *303308*. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/jail-inmates-2020-statistical-tables

Mitchell, O. (2018). The Paradox of a Black Incarceration Boom in an Era of Declining Black Crime: Causes and Consequences 1. In *Building a Black Criminology* (pp. 343-367). Routledge.

Morris, Smith, W. R., & Zisman-Ilani, Y. (2022). Mental Health in the Era of Mass Incarceration. Psychiatric Services : a Journal of the American Psychiatric Association., 73(1). https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.73104

Mosley, D. V., Neville, H. A., Chavez-Dueñas, N. Y., Adames, H. Y., Lewis, J. A., & French, B. H. (2019). Radical hope in revolting times: Proposing a culturally relevant psychological framework. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *14*(1). https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12512

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). Exploring the Challenges and Barriers for Black Men Along the Life Trajectory. In *An American crisis: The*

growing absence of black men in Medicine and Science: proceedings of a joint workshop (pp. 15–22). essay, The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25130.

Nellis, A. (2021). *The Color of Justice: Racial and ethnic disparity in state prisons*. The Sentencing Project.

Pimentel, F. U., & Oliveira, S. E. S. de. (2024). Personality functioning, positive outlook for the future, and simple and complex post-traumatic stress disorder. *Acta Psychologica, 244*, 104165. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104165

Rand, K. L., Shanahan, M. L., Fischer, I. C., & Fortney, S. K. (2020). Hope and optimism as predictors of academic performance and subjective well-being in college students. *Learning and Individual differences*, *81*, 101906. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2020.101906

Rasmussen, H. N., O'Byrne, K. K., Vandament, M., & Cole, B. P. (2018). Hope and physical health. In M. W. Gallagher, & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of hope; The Oxford handbook of hope* (pp. 159-168, Chapter xxiii, 373 Pages). Oxford University Press.

Reeves, R. V., Nzau, S., & Smith, E. (2022). The challenges facing Black men—And the case for action. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/11/19/the-challenges-facing-black-men-and-the-case-for-action/

Remster, B. (2021). Homelessness among formerly incarcerated men: Patterns and predictors. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *693*(1), 141–157. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716221993447

Russ, E., Puglisi, L., Eber, G. B., Morse, D. S., Taxman, F. S., Dupuis, M. F., ... & Ferguson, W. J. (2021). Prison And Jail Reentry And Health. *Health affairs/RWJF health policy brief*.

Salamanca-Balen, N., Merluzzi, T. V., & Chen, M. (2021). The effectiveness of hope-fostering interventions in palliative care: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Palliative Medicine., 35(4), 710–728. https://doi.org/10.1177/0269216321994728

Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279-298). Springer, Dordrecht.

Singh, J. P., Grann, M., & Fazel, S. (2011). A comparative study of violence risk assessment tools: A systematic review and metaregression analysis of 68 studies involving 25,980 participants. *Clinical psychology review*, *31*(3), 499-513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.11.009

Smith, J. M. (2021). The formerly incarcerated, advocacy, activism, and community reintegration. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *24*(1), 43–63. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1080/10282580.2020.1755846

Smith, J. M., & Kinzel, A. (2021). Carceral Citizenship as Strength: Formerly Incarcerated Activists, Civic Engagement and Criminal Justice Transformation. *Critical Criminology*, *29*(1), 93-110–110. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1007/s10612-020-09538-w

Smith, P., & Campbell, C. (2018). Race and rehabilitation. In *Building a Black Criminology* (pp. 369-394). Routledge.

Snyder, C. R. (1995). Conceptualizing, measuring, and nurturing hope. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73(3), 355–360. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1995.tb01764.x

Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*(4), 249-275. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1207/S15327965PLI1304_01

Snyder, C.R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology., 60(4), 570–585. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.4.570

Snyder, C.R., Hoza, B., Pelham, W. E., Rapoff, M., Ware, L., Danovsky, L., Highberger, H., & Ribinstein, K. J. (1997). The Development and Validation of the Children's Hope Scale. Journal of Pediatric Psychology., 22(3), 399–421. https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/22.3.399

Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., Edwards, L. M., & Marques, S. C. (Eds.). (2021). *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology*. Oxford university press.

Stahl, J. V., Taylor, N. E., & Hill, C. E. (2012). Philosophical and historical background of consensual qualitative research. In C. E. Hill (Ed.), *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena; Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena* (pp. 21-32, Chapter viii, 330 Pages). American Psychological Association.

Stearns, A. E., Yang, Y., & Boudreaux, L. (2018). Hope springs eternal: An exploration of hope at a local jail. *Women & Criminal Justice*, *28*(5), 397-417. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1080/08974454.2018.1450177

Tao, Y., Yu, H., Yan, M., Sun, L., Chen, Z., Liu, S., Wang, C., & Zhang, L. (2022). Hope and depression: the mediating role of social support and spiritual coping in advanced cancer patients. *BMC Psychiatry*, *22*(1). https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1186/s12888-022-03985-1

Theoharis, A. (2016). Expanding U.S. surveillance powers: The costs of secrecy. *Journal of Policy History*, *28*(3), 515–534. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0898030616000208

Thomas, A., Wirth, J. C., Poehlmann-Tynan, J., & Pate, D. J. (2022). "When She Says Daddy": Black Fathers' Recidivism Following Reentry from Jail. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(6). https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.3390/ijerph19063518

Thomas-Davis, S., Muhammad, B., and Smith, V. (2024). On the frontlines: Stressors of Black women caring for children of incarcerated parents. In K. Holden and C. Jones (Eds.), *Black Women and Resilience: Power, Perseverance, and Public Health*. New York: SUNY Press.

Timmermans. (2012). Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. Sociological Theory., 30(3). Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. Qualitative Inquiry, 16(10), 837–851. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1177/1077800410383121

Trainor, L. R., & Bundon, A. (2021). Developing the craft: Reflexive accounts of doing reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *13*(5), 705-726. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2020.1840423

United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2011, May 05). COINTELPRO. https://vault.fbi.gov/cointel-pro

United States Sentencing Commission. (2021, January 13). *Demographic differences in sentencing*. United States Sentencing Commission. https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/demographic-differences-sentencing

U.S. Census Bureau. (2021, July 1). *U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: United States*. United States Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045221

Unnever, J. D., Gabbidon, S. L., & Chouhy, C. (2019). *Building a black criminology: Race, theory, and crime*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Upadhyayula, S., Ramaswamy, M., Chalise, P., Daniels, J., & Freudenberg, N. (2017). The association of ethnic pride with health and social outcomes among young Black and Latino men after release from jail. *Youth & Society, 49*(8), 1057-1076. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X15576736

Veeh, C. A., Tripodi, S. J., Pettus-Davis, C., & Scheyett, A. M. (2018). The interaction of serious mental disorder and race on time to reincarceration. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, *88*(2), 125. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/ort0000183

Vignansky, E., Addad, M., & Himi, H. (2018). Despair will hold you prisoner, hope will set you free: Hope and meaning among released prisoners. *The Prison Journal, 98*(3), 334-358. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518764920

Wallace, D., & Wang, X. (2020). Does in-prison physical and mental health impact recidivism?. *SSM-population health*, *11*, 100569. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100569

Weis, R., & Speridakos, E. C. (2011). A meta-analysis of hope enhancement strategies in clinical and community settings. *Psychology of well-being: Theory, research and Practice*, *1*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1186/2211-1522-1-5

Williams, J. M., Bergeson, C., & Wilson, S. K. (2019). "It's Hard Out Here if You're a Black Felon": A Critical Examination of Black Male Reentry. *Prison Journal*, *99*(4), 437-458–458. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1177/0032885519852088

Williams, J. M., Wilson, S. K., & Bergeson, C. (2020). Health implications of incarceration and reentry on returning citizens: A qualitative examination of Black men's experiences in a Northeastern City. *American Journal of Men's Health, 14*(4), 16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988320937211

Woldgabreal, Day, A., & Ward, T. (2014). The community-based supervision of offenders from a positive psychology perspective. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 19(1), 32–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2013.12.001

Woldgabreal, Day, A., & Ward, T. (2016). Linking Positive Psychology to Offender Supervision Outcomes. Criminal Justice and Behavior., 43(6), 697–721. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854815620816

Wormith, J. S., & Truswell, K. E. (2022). Responsivity Model of Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation. *Facilitating Desistance from Aggression and Crime: Theory, Research, and Strength-Based Practices*, 136.

Yarcheski, A., & Mahon, N. E. (2016). Meta-analyses of predictors of hope in adolescents. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 38*(3), 345-368. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945914559545

Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2020). What can be learned from growth mindset controversies? *American Psychologist, 75*(9), 1269-1284–1284. https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1037/amp0000794

APPENDIX A: ONLINE CONSENT FORM

Fostering Hope among Formerly Incarcerated Black Men

You are being asked to participate in a voluntary research study. The purpose of this study is to understand how formerly incarcerated Black men foster hope during their process of reentry back into the community from jail and/or prison. Participating in this study will involve participating in one individual interview and your participation will last approximately 90 minutes. Risks related to this research include recalling distressing information by discussing ways that you foster hope personally, emotionally, spiritually and/or physically in the process of reentry.

Benefits related to this research include discussing your reentry experiences in a strengths-based fashion which will provide an opportunity to identify and reflect on personal and collective strengths that may encourage a continued effort after the interview. In addition, research shows that having someone listen to your personal narratives can elicit positive emotions.

The potential benefits to society are numerous, including increasing the body of knowledge surrounding reentry and recognizing the ways that hope has been and can be fostered. The implications of this knowledge may be crucial to understanding factors which impact the well-being of formerly incarcerated Black men. We envision this study providing support for hope interventions with formerly incarcerated Black men.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Dr. Helen A. Neville, Professor
Department and Institution: Educational Psychology and African American Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Contact Information: hneville@illinois.edu; 217-244-6291

What procedures are involved?

The study procedures include completing a brief demographic questionnaire and participating in one individual interview. During the individual interview questions will be asked about the ways you foster hope, given your history of incarceration (e.g., What does hope mean to you?, Has hope played a role in your reentry experiences?, and Can you share a story about a time in which hope was particularly helpful to you in your reentry process?). We aim to recruit approximately 15 participants.

This research will be performed face to face at First Followers Re-entry Program or online via a secure web-conference platform: Zoom©. The brief demographic questionnaire will take less than 10 minutes, and the individual interview will last approximately 90 minutes.

Interviews will be recorded for audio and coded for data analysis. Individuals will be required to consent to audio-recording in order to participate in this research study. If you do not consent to audio-recording, then you will not be able to participate in this study and any research activities which you are involved in will be discontinued immediately. For the interviews completed via

Zoom©, only the audio-recordings will be retained; the video-recordings will be deleted as soon as possible.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

We will use all reasonable efforts to keep your personal information confidential, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. But, when required by law or university policy, identifying information may be seen or copied by: a) The Institutional Review Board that approves research studies; b) The Office for Protection of Research Subjects and other university departments that oversee human subjects research; c) University and state auditors responsible for oversight of research.

Will I be reimbursed for any expenses or paid for my participation in this research?

If you consent to participate in the study and complete the questionnaire and the interview, you will receive a $20 gift card of your choice to Walmart, Target, or Amazon.com. Gift cards will be given (Walmart and Target) or sent electronically via email (Amazon.com). However, if the interview is completed via Zoom©, you will only be able to receive a $20 Amazon.com gift card which will be sent electronically via email.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate, or to withdraw after beginning participation, will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Additionally, your decision to participate in this research study will not impact your probation or parole.

The researchers also have the right to stop your participation in this study without your consent if they believe it is in your best interests, if you were to object to any future changes that may be made in the study plan, and/or if you experience intolerable distress and are a threat to yourself or others.

Will data collected from me be used for any other research?
Your de-identified information could be used for future research without additional informed consent.

Will I be re-contacted, for any reason, after my interview?
The only reason that you may be contacted, after the interview, is to receive your $20 Amazon.com gift card—which will be sent electronically via email—if you choose that option or complete your interview via Zoom.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
Contact the researchers Helen A. Neville, Ph.D. at 217-244-6291 or hneville@illinois.edu if you have any questions about this study or your part in it, or if you have concerns or complaints about the research.

What are my rights as a research subject?
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu. If you would like to complete a brief survey to provide OPRS feedback about your experiences as a research participant, please follow the link here or through a link on the OPRS website: https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/. You will have the option to provide feedback or concerns anonymously or you may provide your name and contact information for follow-up purposes.

Please download and save this consent form if you would like to retain a copy for your records.

☐ I certify that I am 18 years old or older.
☐ I consent to being recorded.
☐ I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in this study.

_____
Signature

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Fostering Hope Among Formerly Incarcerated Black Men
Demographic Questionnaire

Screener (Questions #1-9)

1. Name
2. Age
3. Are you Hispanic/Latino?
    - Yes
    - No
4. How do you identify racially and/or ethnically (e.g., Black, African American, Afro-Latino, etc.)? Please specify _____
5. Describe your racial/ethnic identity (select all that apply).

    - Black/African-American
    - African (specify)
    - Middle Eastern or North African (specify)
    - Caribbean (specify)
    - Indigenous American or Alaskan Native
    - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    - Asian (specify)
    - White/Caucasian
    - Other (specify)

6. Which of the following terms **best** describes your current gender identity?

    - Man
    - Woman
    - Nonbinary, genderfluid, or genderqueer
    - I describe my gender identity in another way: _____
    - I am not sure or questioning.
    - I prefer not to say.

7. Are you transgender?

    - Yes
    - No
    - I prefer not to say.

8. How many times in total would you estimate that you have been incarcerated? _____

9. How many years and months in total would you estimate that you have been incarcerated? _____

10. Which of these options **best** describes your sexual orientation?

    - Straight or heterosexual
    - Gay or lesbian
    - Bisexual, pansexual, or queer
    - Asexual
    - My sexual orientation is _____
    - I am not sure or questioning.
    - I prefer not to say.

11. In what city/town and state do you reside in? (for example, Champaign, Illinois) _____
12. In what city/town and state have you lived for most of your life? (for example, Champaign, Illinois) _____
13. Highest level of education

    - Some high school
    - High school diploma/GED
    - Some college
    - Associate Degree
    - 4-year degree/Bachelor's
    - Master's degree/MBA
    - Doctoral degree
    - Post-doctoral

14. To what level, do you consider yourself to be religious?

    - Not religious
    - Slightly religious
    - Somewhat religious
    - Very religious
    - Don't know

15. To what level, do you consider yourself to be spiritual?

    - Not spiritual
    - Slightly spiritual
    - Somewhat spiritual
    - Very spiritual
    - Don't know

16. What religion(s) or spiritual tradition(s) do you belong to or identify yourself most close to (select all that apply)?

    - o No religious or spiritual affiliation
    - o Catholicism
    - o Islam
    - o Judaism
    - o Hinduism
    - o Christianity
    - o Buddhism
    - o Indigenous spirituality (specify)
    - o Other (specify)

17. Are you currently employed?

    - o Yes
    - o No

18. What is your relationship status?

    - o Single (never married)
    - o Married
    - o In a domestic partnership
    - o In a long-term relationship (not cohabitating)
    - o Divorced
    - o Separated
    - o Widowed

19. How many children do you have? _____
20. How would you like your interview conducted?

    - o In-person at FirstFollowers (314 Cottage Ct, Champaign, IL 61820)
    - o Zoom

21. Please select which $20 gift card you would like to receive after your interview.
    - o Walmart
    - o Target
    - o Amazon (sent electronically)
22. Please provide an email to receive your $20 Amazon gift card. _____

We sincerely thank you and appreciate your time and willingness to participate in our study. Please download and save a copy of our mental health resource list for your information.

Thank you again for sharing your time! Please click the arrow below to record your response.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Fostering Hope Among Formerly Incarcerated Black Men
Participant Interview

This study uses qualitative inquiry to explore how Black men transitioning from incarceration back into the community foster hope.

Introductory comments, background, and purpose:

- Welcome and thank you for joining me
- Introduction of interviewer
- Reiterate key points from consent form: purpose, nature of participation (can pass if he wants), confidentiality (remind him to leave out specifics about others like names), how data will be used, payment – sent to email after the interview; audio-recording
- Ask participant to identify a fake name or pseudonym – if on Zoom, then ask him to change his name to fake name or pseudonym

Interviewer: Welcome and thank you for joining me. My name is Richmond Hayes, and I am a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of individuals transitioning from incarceration into the community. Specifically, I seek to explore how formerly incarcerated Black men foster hope. I am going to ask questions about you, hope, and the reentry process. If there are any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering, we can skip the question(s). Also, we will be referring to you only by your fake name or pseudonym throughout this interview. Please do not use your real name or anyone else's real name during this interview. Your answers will help us all to further understand hope among formerly incarcerated Black men. After our interview, I will give/send you the $20 gift card which you selected in the demographic questionnaire. Do you have any questions before we start? I will be audio-recording this interview for the purposes of transcription. Is this OK with you?

Turn on audio recording

1. What is your fake name or pseudonym. Please tell me a little bit about yourself and where you grew up?
    - If hope was a color, what color would it be and why?

2. Tell me a bit about your (last) reentry experience. I am interested in the entire experience from pre-release to day of release to your experiences in general reentering the community?

Interviewer: As you know, in this study I am exploring the concept of hope in formerly incarcerated Black men's reentry experiences.

3. Can you share a story about how you fostered hope during your reentry process?
    - Can you tell me more about your response.

- When did this occur in your journey (how many months or years after your last incarceration)? What was the context of the story? What did you do? How did this make you feel? What were the outcomes?
- In what ways, if any, is the experience of hope different for a Black man? Has identifying as a Black man played a role in how you fostered hope during your reentry process?
- Are there people or situations that helped you to feel greater hope or less hope? Have women played a role in how you fostered hope during your reentry process? Have Black women played a role in how you fostered radical hope during your reentry process?

Some people also talk about a concept of radical hope. Basically, this is a collective notion of hope that acknowledges the "capacity contained within Communities of Color to heal and transform oppressive forces into a better future despite the overwhelming odds". This focuses on helping to create a better tomorrow not only for you as an individual but for other Black men and Black communities.

4. Does the idea of radical or collective hope connect with your reentry experience(s)?
    - Can you tell me more about your response.

5. Can you share a story about how you fostered radical hope during your reentry process?

    For example, A Better Collective Future (aspirations for the collective future included radical changes related to crime and the criminal legal system, "psychological wellness, liberation, and dignity" for their community), Faith (religious and spiritual practices of faith including prayer, meditation, and gathering with other believers), and Meaning & Purpose (view their meaning and purpose as changing oppressive conditions for themselves and others by engaging with, investing in, and advocating for others that are in similar situations)

    - Can you tell me more about your response.
    - When did this occur in your journey (how many months or years after your last incarceration)? What was the context of the story? What did you do? How did this make you feel? What were the outcomes?
    - Has identifying as a Black man played a role in how you fostered radical hope during your reentry process?
    - Are there people or situations that helped you to feel greater radical hope or less radical hope? Have women played a role in how you fostered radical hope during your reentry process? Have Black women played a role in how you fostered radical hope during your reentry process?

6. Are there times in your journey that made it difficult to maintain hope?
    - Can you tell me more about your response.
    - When did this occur in your journey (how many months or years after your last incarceration)? What was the context of the story? What did you do? How did this make you feel? What were the outcomes?
    - Have parole or probation made it difficult to maintain hope?

- What was the most important way that you used to maintain hope during those times in your journey? How have you been able to heal yourself and your community?

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with me. I am taking a lot away from our conversation. [summarize key points, especially how they define and foster hope]. Did I capture this accurately?

Are there things you want to share that you did not get a chance to talk about?

What was this experience like for you?

APPENDIX D: MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE LIST

Mental Health Resource List
Fostering Hope among Formerly Incarcerated Black Men

Emergency Hotline Numbers

If experiencing a life-threatening emergency, ***always*** dial 911 and when appropriate, visit your nearest hospital emergency room

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

- Dial 988 to access suicide or crisis hotline
- 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to speak with someone if having thoughts of suicide
- Website: https://988lifeline.org/

SAMHSA's National Helpline

- 1-800-662-HELP (4357) to receive referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations
- Send your zip code via text message to 435748 (HELP4U)
- Website: https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/

Outpatient Therapy Services

TherapyforBlackMen.org
therapyforblackmen.org
(646) 780-8278
info@therapyforblackmen.org

Mental Health Resources for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
https://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/guide-to-mental-health-resources/for-bipoc-mental-health

Hyde Park Center 4 Healing
hydeparkcenter4healing.com/champaign-urbana-office
Phone: (872) 212-3424

Venus Evans Winter, PhD – Private Practice
venusevanswinters.com/services.html
4507 North Sterling Avenue
Peoria, IL 61615
(309) 362-0501

Elliot Counseling Group (Champaign, Urbana)
https://elliottcounselinggroup.com/
309 W. Clark Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 398-9066

Promise Healthcare
https://www.promisehealth.org/frances-nelson-health-center/
Rosecrance Building
801 N. Walnut
Champaign, IL 61820

Family Service of Champaign County
https://www.famservcc.org/counseling
405 S. State Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Dynesha D Grissom, PhD, John R Day & Associates, Ltd
Christian Psychological Services
christianpsychological.org/our-therapists
701 Devonshire Drive, Suite 120
Champaign, IL 61820
**offers online therapy*

Brave Beginnings Counseling, PLLC
www.bravebeginningscounseling.com/#home
505 W University Avenue Suite 214
Champaign, IL 61290
(217) 979-9249
**offers online therapy*

Keri Powell Therapy (Champaign, Mahomet)
kptherapy.com
41 E. University Ave. Suite 3D
Champaign, IL 61820
**offers online therapy*

Rosecrance
https://rosecrance.org/locations/rosecrance-moreland/
2302 Moreland Boulevard
Champaign Illinois 61822

The Pavilion Behavioral Health System
https://pavilionhospital.com/treatment-and-services/
809 W Church St,
Champaign, IL 61820

C.R Booker Meditation & Counseling
crbookermc.com
701 Devonshire C-35, Suite 123
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 552-4040
**offers online therapy*

Jessica Jackson Counseling
www.jessicajacksoncounseling.com
Bloomington, IL 61701
(309) 220-6850
**offers online therapy*

Carle Behavioral Health Services (Champaign)
carle.org/Services/child-diagnostic-clinic
1701 W. Curtis Rd.
Champaign, IL 61822
(217) 365-6200

CR Booker Mediation and counseling
701 Devonshire
C-35, Suite 123
Champaign, IL 61820
https://crbookermc.com/counseling/

Jessica Jackson Counseling
Bloomington, IL 61701
(309) 220-6850
https://www.jessicajacksoncounseling.com/

Ascend CHC
https://www.ascendchc.com/champaign-urbana
700 S. Gregory Street, Suite-A
Urbana, Illinois 61801

OSF HealthCare
https://www.osfhealthcare.org/mental-health/?_ga=2.174797920.317336207.1665784417-356338319.1665599425
520 N. Cunningham Avenue
Urbana, IL 61802

Center for Youth and family Solutions
https://www.cyfsolutions.org/services/behavioral-health-counseling/
1315A Curt Dr.
Champaign, IL