

Coming Home to Harlem: A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Harlem Parole Reentry Court

The Harlem Parole Reentry Court engages parolees returning to Harlem for six to nine months in supportive services, including evidence-based treatment such as cognitive behavioral therapy and judicial monitoring to promote compliance. *Coming Home to Harlem* presents the results of a randomized control trial of the reentry court. A total of 504 parolees returning to Harlem were randomly assigned to either the reentry court or regular parole between June 2010 and February 2013. The parolees were predominantly male, black, and/or Hispanic, averaged around 30 years of age, and shared similar case characteristics and criminal histories. Findings include:

Monitoring and Rewards

Supervision: Reentry court parolees report to parole officers and case managers in their community, increasing opportunities to connect with family and local social service providers. They reported to their parole officers and case managers more frequently than regular parolees.

Incentives: Ninety-six percent of reentry court parolees received an incentive in their first year, as opposed to 77 percent of those on regular parole.

Sanctions: Reentry court parolees were less likely to receive a sanction than those on regular parole (30 percent v. 63 percent.)

Procedural Justice

Perceived Fairness: Reentry court parolees reported better experiences than those on regular parole. Ninety-six percent said that they were treated with respect, compared to 40 percent of regular parolees. Only 8 percent of reentry court parolees stated that they were treated unfairly in court, as opposed to 60 percent of regular parolees.

Impact on Parolees' Lives

Employment: One year after release, 75 percent of reentry court parolees were in school or employed, compared to 45 percent in the comparison group. Reentry court participants also had higher annual incomes and jobs that provided health insurance and paid vacation or sick time.

Drug Use: At one year after release, 65 percent of reentry court parolees were not using drugs at all, as opposed to only 39 percent of those on regular parole.

Criminal Thinking: Reentry court participants were less likely to express feelings of entitlement, the need for power and control, and personal irresponsibility.

Impact on Recidivism

Revocation: The reentry court produced a 45 percent relative reduction in parole revocations when compared to the control group (12 percent v. 22 percent.)

Re-arrest: Fifty-one percent of reentry court parolees and 56 percent of control group parolees were re-arrested within 18 months of release.

Reconviction: Reentry court parolees were 22 percent less likely than regular parolees to be reconvicted within 18 months, with a 60 percent reduction in felony reconvictions.

The Harlem Parole Reentry Court serves approximately 200 parolees each year. The program is operated as a partnership involving the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, New York City Mayor's

Office of Criminal Justice, the Center for Court Innovation, and an array of local service providers. This study was underwritten by the U.S. Department of Justice (grant #2009-CZ-BX-0051 and grant #2013-CZ-BX-0033) and the J.C. Flowers Foundation.

For More Information

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