

Alternatives to Incarceration Working
Group Meeting Notes
9/20/19
11:00 pm – 4:00 pm

California Endowment

Welcome and Introductions

Rigo opened the meeting and moved directly into recommendations to save time.

Recommendation 8- It was suggested to add “prevention and care” to recommendation 8 related to an integrated systems of “prevention and care”. They recommended to change it to “Medi-Cal, MHSA and/or other eligible funding streams”. Rigo tested for consensus. The recommendation was accepted. They tested for consensus on the alternative motion and it was not blocked and therefore passed. The voting members corresponding letters were recorded. The motion was passed.

Recommendation 12- It was withdrawn because the person who brought it up removed it.

Recommendation 29-The voting members voted on it. The vote was to keep it. Dr. Barbara Ferrer wanted to add “increase the number of crisis beds and “establish, expand and enhance and coordinate the database and tools available” to track real time bed availability for all justice and health system partners.”

There is a very expensive system set up and they need to coordinate it better. We need to figure out all the beds get into inventory without a second database. It is something people must able to use. It was recommended to say, “establish, expand and enhance and coordinate the database and tools available”. It was suggested to build on what is already there. We shouldn’t throw out the tools we already have. The biggest issue is with people with SUD. There should be an ability to find a bed regardless of the need.

We also need to include dual disorders. The members of the public were given an opportunity to comment.

Comment: Add an actual way to develop and take action on the coordinating piece.

Comment: Merge the data

Comment: Also add “integrate” instead of “coordinate”.

Eunisses Hernandez blocked the original motion. Nobody wanted to block the next version. The voting members gave their letters. The motion was passed.

Recommendation 9

Should say “optimize the use and process for conservatorships and resources accordingly”.

Voting member question- For additional context there is an audit at the State level around 5150 conservatorship. We want an alternate. We do not want to incentivize more conservatorship with out

having a strong process in place. “Optimize the process for mental health conservatorship and resource it accordingly”.

The voting members It was suggested to try “optimize the process for mental health conservatorship and greatly expand the resources for the conservatee and conservator”. We have to make clear it’s about hiring more people to perform these functions (resources, money, staff, capacity, skills). Alternatives to conservatorship before we try it.

Question- what is the process for families? Answer: let’s add a comma and then “inclusive of family engagement” (Dr. Robert Ross). The goal is not to increase the number of conservatorships but to make things smarter, more sound, better. It needs to also include youths. The decision-making about when conservatorship is appropriate and optimize means. Recommended to “say optimize the appropriate use” to help us protect against misuse (to incorporate the concerns of the group). The resource part of it involves everything we want to involve and is preferred by Patricia.

Peter withdrew the letter C option for rewording the motion. We had to vote between the original wording and suggestion B. The original was blocked by Commander Tarwater. The alternative motion was then voted upon.” optimize the appropriate use and process for mental health conservatorship and resource it accordingly”. Nobody blocked B and it passed. The members gave their respective letters.

Recommendation 52- We should include “Increase the appropriate utilization of and improve the process for conservatorship and appropriate assisted outpatient treatment” (appropriate qualifies the entire statement).

Comment: There needs to be more of a way of communicating with the professionals.

Julia blocked option A and nobody blocked option B and therefore it passed and the voting letters were recorded.

Recommendation 33- The language in it is counter to the goal of this ATI group. The recommendation is to add “reallocating existing law enforcement resources to substantially increase collaboration of law enforcement. The issue is the funding going to law enforcement instead into community resources. We need to clarify what “increasing” means. There are 4 voting members wanted to reword the motion. It shouldn’t sound like a way to gain new law enforcement funding by reprioritizes it. “Right-sized” as a word was suggested.

Comment: The role of the Sheriff’s Department is to “incarcerate people” except initially, that is more the role of the courts. They run the jails and the courts are who keep people where they are at in jail.

Comment: Where are the resources coming from? It’s an implementation issue. The word “resources, funding or dollars” is being read wrong. It should say “appropriately scale”. The motion is not explicit in stating but people in the room believe it’s implied.

Comment: This needs to be open to more discussion.

Motion wording recommendation: “Following the lead of the civilian oversight commission, increase the number of collaborative law enforcement and behavioral health response teams in the County, while reallocating existing law enforcement resources.”

Dr. Ross commented that the language presumes a budgetary winner and a budgetary loser. This needs to end up more in an implementation conversation. Recommends tabling it. We should not make that presumption.

Comment: Similar to 39 and 40, it might be useful to have a separate meeting regarding it and bring back a later date.

Comment: I also look forward to the funding Ad Hoc committee meeting for further discussion on this motion.

Comment: The counties mentioned are actually looking to increase the number of beds under the guise of mental health beds, uncomfortable with moving forward on this motion and voting.

Public Comment: There are a very low number of mental health that get arrested. The number of 911 crisis has increased by 70%, the workload increased, and the amount of funding has not.

Public Comment: It seems the balance can be determined collaborative and mobile co-response teams, we need to make a clear emphasis on a collaborative and increase.

Public Comment: We need to be sure it's clear that law enforcement is not getting any more money than is needed. We want to make sure it goes to the right place. Where does it go? Not to the communities.

Public Comment: We need to analyze existing Sheriff's and police budgets, the AB109 budget, going into other things, Proposition 30 has 2.6 billion dollars and is a misappropriation of dollars. We could have done other things in the community with it to untie, house and make people healthier.

Break for Lunch

Victims, Survivors and Restorative Justice Retreat Opening

Dr. Ross made announcements. He thanked the community members and the entire work group.

The timeline for presenting to the Board in December, after communicating with Mark Ridley-Thomas and Sheila Kuehl, they agreed to push back the deadline to possibly February or March. There is agreement on 70 of the 77 recommendations. We want to make sure that when the recommendations are presented, they are as aligned as possible, so they show up in alignment with the other motions. We still should make sure they have a report by December regarding the final report.

There is a new website called: lcalternatives.org

We need to continue to apply a racial and a healing justice lens moving forward. They require us to think of public and community safety, what it means to be a victim and survivor and restoration and being accountable.

Rigo stated the purpose of the remainder of the meeting is to foster a healing justice lens to reduce harm as well as incarceration.

The three learning objectives: motivate all of us to disrupt cycles of harm and promote healing and explore ways restorative healing elements can be divided into our work.

3 Values: Equity and Racial Justice, Human First Language, Inclusion of Many Voices

There are several healers present to assist with people processing the information being shared here. Diana Zuniga introduced them all.

Panel Discussion on the topic Victims, Survivors and Restorative Justice

Moderator: Kruti Parekh

She acknowledged and mentioned cultural communities, the indigenous people of this land. She noted there is pain of separation of families, not having homes and being caged. There is a time to recognize cross-cultural differences.

She introduced her colleague to do a grounding exercise. He mentioned we cannot separate an individual from the environment. The root of much strife is childhood trauma. He sang an indigenous song in the native tongue of his people while the attendees stood in respect.

The Youth Justice Coalition were acknowledged and their impact.

She encouraged the crowd to utilize breath to regroup if feeling uneasy.

She introduced all 5 panelists. They each described their work in transformative and healing.

Fernando Rijon said he works with gang involved individuals to help transform them into peace-makers. He said the focus on trauma really gets to the heart of everything. There is the opioid crisis. How do we change the economy? The challenges at the systemic level is working with law enforcement

Rima Chaudry mentioned they work with systems partners and CBO's to provide training and technical assistance for a restorative justice program with youth arrested for serious crimes and the person they harmed in a faith-based dialogue. They come up with a consensus-based plan for the young person to make it right. It builds trust and accountability. Helps them be part of the decision-making. It is an intervention point that helps them minimize further contact. The DA closes the case with no charges afterwards and it's done. They work with organizations deeply rooted in the community where there are many youths that qualify, often times communities of color. There is data analysis and research to identify geographic areas and types of crimes mostly arrested for to go where there is most need. There are programs nationwide.

Jose Egurbide mentioned that trauma is personal. There has been a deep dive in restorative justice and the tribal values of never throwing anyone away and integrating everyone in the "tribe". It's important that we move to the "we", it cannot be solved in silos. We need to redefine what community means and focus on self-management, self-care and restoration.

Tinisch Hollins spent 15 years working to serve people in crisis in her community. She personally experienced trauma and identifies as a survivor. That changed everything in the context of her work. They create space for people to humanize their experiences and allows them to take agency and ownership of their journey. Shifting the narrative allows us to center on what is most important in the healing work and helps us to define it. There are survivors coming together all over the State. We are creating a new platform to expand the identity of who crime victims are. There is recognition of all of the traumas experienced, including those recognized as offenders.

Question- What does accountability mean to you?

F. R: People need time out when committing murders. At the community level we build a system for housing and other resources. How communities and people have been criminalized. If there is no investment or buy in in a program, it will not work. People must be invested, and community has to be accountable. There has to be accountability for coordination of efforts, at an individual level to each other and at a community level to build cohesion, and at systemic level holding them accountable to addressing the issues that they helped create. There are different values, we do not want to work in a transactional way but a transformational way.

R.C.: If our system worked, we would be the safest in the world. The current way is not working and people are not exposed to other options. There needs to be a cultural and paradigm shift about what people envision for people to see there is another way for them to be seen and heard and be well. People have the assumption public safety is just policing. It's nurturing families and having resilient communities. There is healing to be found for both the person who has experienced the harm and the person who did it. "You are more than the worst thing that's ever happened to you and the worst thing that you have ever done".

J.E: People who experience trauma or are isolated or are in survival mode. There are a lot of participants that are low risk, yet high needs. There must be a conversation that addresses those needs. The people putting the processes together need to be responsible. We need to assist them to increase resiliency. We focus on emotions and the accompanying thoughts with providing practical tools for them when there is not help nearby (when it's night and no program is around).

T.H.: It is difficult to talk about accountability for folks who have never experienced justice. We need to think of shared safety which is the foundation for all the work we are doing. There should be equity in keeping all communities safe. How can we project something that is new? How do we create spaces for people to own their own experiences and to help them heal? We need to bring a collective healing process. This current system is not working.

Q: How does restorative justice make our communities safer?

F.R.: Communities are just networks of families and they can adjust and restore themselves in different ways. As we close community to prison pipelines we need to create space for people to thrive. We also have to take into account how the system looks at human beings. Those who do not "count" or "produce for society" are put into cages. Let's make them visible. We have to prove to people we deserve our dignity, sometimes have to fight and struggle. If we can start to see ourselves differently, maybe we can change the world.

R.C: We live in such an individualistic society which reinforces the view that the Individual is separate from society and in fact we are interconnected. My neighbor's wellness impacts me. I believe in an intersectional approach, not looking at harm in isolation. If you look at an under resourced school and put money into it becomes a failed effort. Youth only spend a portion of time in school. We have to look at the whole ecosystem and what the root causes are.

J.E.: It comes back to the needs for the criminal-justice involved, the victim, the community. We should learn each other's. It is more than recidivism rates and the outcome. It is the process because that's what leads to transformation.

T.H: In Montgomery, Alabama at a museum you get a history of slavery and information. I do not have the time and interest in helping people see my humanity, it's mirroring another person's humanity. It's about intentionally creating spaces for people to have access to spaces for healing. Goal is every community to have a trauma resource center for everyone with easy access. We need to take down the culture shift about who is worthy of healing and make it accessible for everyone.

Comment: Be in community and find your appropriate partner, so you are not doing this work alone.

Where can people go for help:

The Youth Justice Coalition/Chuco's

RJDToolkit.org

Panelist Jose Egurbide's email: Joseegurbide@lacity.org

Timedone.org (for those who are system impacted)

Q: When people say we just want people who committed a crime incarcerated, what is your response?

J.E: We need a balance to meet the needs the needs of the community and the victim (if they want to participate). Community members can comment on the harm to the community.

Public Comment: BWW to create workshops across SPAs in LA and was able to address mental health trauma as it relates to black women and found there are a plethora of black women healers here in LA that teach Ti Chi and Yoga. I put together a resource guide.

1:55 pm 5-minute break

Listening Session Participation and Healing Dialogue (60 minutes)

Directive from Javier: People who have endured pain only in nightmares that then have gone out and injured others who then go through a process of self-reflection. We approach it with reverence and understanding that there is healing and transformation. He works in his organization with people who have loved ones serving life in prison and people who have had a loved one murdered. People in small circles share their stories with compassion and understanding. In the gathering's labels are dropped. The moms connect with wanting to heal. The purpose in having this is so that we as a group can focus on the same goal at a deeper level. For many people to reach a depth of healing it is recognizing our common humanity and wanting to heal on both sides.

The participants in the circle were introduced to the room.

The room listened to Noelle, Guadalupe, Joshua, and Christian from HDA speak.

Small Group Discussions (50 minutes)

Small group discussion didn't occur, instead the floor was opened up to the room to ask questions and to talk about what they heard/were feeling. A healer stood up and grounded everyone. Discussion continued until the end of the session.

Public Comments

- Comment: I didn't fully understand how healing could happen in this space, but I could actually see it when you spoke about connecting with survivors, thank you for sharing with us.
- Comment: the ATI work really needs to pay attention to what's going on here, what I come to understand about healing is that it has to be done in a collective, and stay in a place that feels safe, especially for people who feel broken in some way.
- Javier: specifically, to ATI, let us be careful that we are not dividing people who commit harm into different categories that make it harder for us to listen to people who spoke today. We cannot limit and differentiate. We cannot continue to dehumanize further, no matter what they have done. Not only can people, even those who were convicted of heinous crimes, learn from them, but they are capable of change. I want my children to learn from them how to get back up after making mistakes. I want them to see there is an opportunity to move to a better place. I've heard them say they've taken the worst mistake of their lives and found purpose and meaning by helping others out.
- Noelle: I went back to Lancaster a few weeks ago, and they are helping keep my sister's memory alive because they know about her and talk about her because of this type of work. Previously, she had died a second death because I didn't talk about her.
- Christian: We all face disconnection from shame (if you knew all of me, you wouldn't accept me), this barrier stops us from connecting with others. I cannot receive the healing you're trying to give me
- The people reaching out also feel that way too, which shows how cyclical this is
- The only thing that heals you is to have the courage to share your story and show yourself to others. Not everyone will be accepting of it, but you will make connections with a few people, which makes it worth it.
- Javier: if you want to see the episode of Redemption Project on CNN where Christian met with his survivor, please check it out.
- Comment: one thing that has always been challenging for me is about violence (everyone fundamentally wants safety and an opportunity). It took me a long time to understand, my family was a victim of a crime when I was 5, and they got sentenced to consecutive life sentences. He eventually was released, and some were engaged in a restorative process. I learned that I want some sort of accountability. I have not forgiven him, I felt rage and selfishness since others were participating in the RJ process. Simultaneously, this person has limited access to housing and resources. I haven't forgiven him, but I don't wish state torture on him either. When we start to share, the nuance of our experience gets taken from us. It's so important to me that conversation of accountability is nurtured, without state violence.
- Javier: we see that without accountability, there is no healing.
- Comment: First off, thank you for your courage and vulnerability. I apologize for leaving, because I had to process things I didn't realize I had to process. I realized that people who have turned the worst mistake into a dedication to make amends often do not address their own traumas. The system was created to be inhumane, and people have succumbed to the inhumanity of these systems. How do we bring these perspectives to design systems to be more humane? Want to have a healing lens in implementation, bringing survivors' voices to the process.
- Javier: we need to get to a point where we talk about healing as much as voting, housing, education, i.e. as a basic need.

- Comment: thank you to everyone in this space. Two of my brothers were murdered, and redefining and telling your story is amazing. Their parents carried a lot of their trauma in her body, so thank you to the strength of mothers for stepping up. Thank you to the brothers who shared, I really appreciate that you bring that example to the community, welcome home.
- Comment: Javier mentioned seeing this as a spiritual process, and I witnessed it as how this ATI process should be. We should continue the healing and restorative justice, and it shouldn't be a spoke but rather the hub. Ultimately, it's what at least me here today, we need to continue to challenge ourselves through experiences like this.

Adjournment and Closing Statements

Dr. Ross: Thank you for invoking the Tongva people at the start of this meeting. Sometimes, I wonder if we're using this land consistently with the hopes and dreams meant for it. To Javier and our 4 colleagues who shared their stories, I've been in hundreds of meetings in this building, and this was the most powerful human moment I've ever experienced.

When our report shows up to the BOS, we need to honor this. It isn't just a box to be checked by having this conversation, this energy and conversation needs to be in mind, in your heart and in your soul when we deliver this report to the Board of Supervisors. We need to honor what we heard and experienced.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Voting Results:

Recommendation #8

- Blocked – Eunisses Hernandez
- Version B Passed:
 - A: 20
 - C: 1

Recommendation #9

- Blocked – Cheryl Newman-Tarwater
- Version B Passed
 - A: 5
 - B: 16
 - C: 1

Recommendation #29

- Blocked – Eunisses Hernandez
- Version B Passed
 - A: 19
 - B: 2
 - C: 1

Recommendation #52

- Blocked – Julia Dixon

- Version B Passed
 - A: 15
 - B: 5
 - C: 2