



UNSHACKLED POTENTIAL:

The Impact of Relationship Education
on Incarcerated Populations



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by

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Dedication

To Sharon Jacques-Rabb, Ph.D., founder and director of Center for the Empowerment of Families, for her commitment over many years to bringing Relationship Education to adults and youth in correctional institutions. Not only was she an advocate for those who are society's forgotten and ignored, but a trail-blazer who taught them relationship skills to give them hope and a better future.

1948-2014

Authors



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President, Healthy Relationships California

Patty Howell is a prominent leader in Relationship and Marriage Education who has been with HRC since the organization's founding in 2005. With graduate degrees from Boston University and Washington University in St. Louis, she has taught Relationship and Marriage Education programs for more than 30 years in 14 countries. She is the co-author with Ralph Jones of the World Class family of RME curricula, and the author of many other professional publications. She is a 2010 recipient of the Smart Marriages Impact Award for her "Healthy Marriages" booklet series.



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Dr. Larsen-Rife has worked for HRC since 2010, collecting and analyzing program data that have been published in many articles and reports, including *Impact Report: Research on the Impact of Relationship and Marriage Education Programs in California*. She received her doctorate in Human Development from the University of California, Davis. She is Chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Dixie State University, Utah.



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Dr. Early has worked at HRC since 2010 analyzing the impact of Relationship and Marriage Education programs, with her findings being published in a series of research briefs as well as the 2013 *Impact Report*. Dr. Early has also co-authored a chapter on statistically modeling data from special populations in *The Oxford Handbook of Quantitative Methods*, and has been published in several peer-reviewed journals. She received her master's degree in Child Development and doctorate in Human Development from the University of California, Davis. Dr. Early also holds a position as statistician at the University of California, San Francisco.



Dyann Collins

Director of Special Projects, Healthy Relationships California

Dyann Collins has spent her career in the non-profit sector, advocating for healthy relationships, access to education, the arts, and freedom of information. She has worked in the fields of communications, marketing, and development, and calls upon this experience to oversee a variety of tasks in her role as HRC's Director of Special Projects, a position she has held since 2012. She is a co-author of HRC's 2013 publication, *Impact Report: Research on the Impact of Relationship and Marriage Education Programs in California*.



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Communications and Research Specialist, Healthy Relationships California

Shelece McAllister is the lead author of three published articles, a co-author of *Impact Report: Research on the Impact of Relationship and Marriage Education Programs in California*, and has presented her research at state and national conferences. She joined HRC in 2012, after earning a master's degree in Marriage, Family, and Human Development from Brigham Young University. She is a member of the National Council on Family Relations, through which she has achieved provisional certification as a Family Life Educator.

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MY NAME IS CARLOS
AGE 50, FATHER OF 4 2 BOYS, 2 GIRLS,
GRANDFATHER OF
GRANDDAUGHTER
I'VE BEEN GOING
1985. SO I
CHILDREN WITH
LOTS OF PRISON
I'VE BEEN
GETTING MY



THIS CLASS HAS TAUGHT ME HOW TO
TALK, UNDERSTAND, AND LOVE MY
CHILDREN. TO LISTEN TO
GOING TO USE



I'M
GRANDKIDS
MY
3
YOU FOR
CLASS I
OTHERS,
ATION

11/19/13 THANK U, CARLOS

Letter from the President

We didn't see this coming! We've taught Relationship Education (RE) programs to tens of thousands of people, and have conducted over the past eight years the field's largest ongoing RE outcome study. Plus, we've received numerous testimonials, including poignant ones from inmates. Yet, it wasn't until late 2012, when one of our staff members taught a class at a nearby jail and reported with unusual enthusiasm how moving it was for him to teach relationship skills to this population, that we took a closer look. A count revealed that we'd reached several thousand incarcerated participants in the previous year and a half, so we decided it was important to collect hard data as well as testimonials to understand more clearly the impact of RE programs for those in correctional institutions and others who have recently been released.

Eighteen months later comes this report, and its information is stunning. From these data we now see an important new role for Relationship Education programs in transforming the lives of those who are incarcerated, of those who work with incarcerated individuals, and of those whom, upon release, former inmates will rejoin at home.

It opens up a picture of an important new role for Relationship Education programs: equipping incarcerated individuals with research-based communication and conflict-resolution skills that can help them relate more successfully to others in their lives, with those at home and those at the correctional institution, and to resolve the various problems that occur in their relationships in ways they have never before been equipped to do.

Relationship Education programs change lives, and incarcerated participants react with tremendous gratitude when they realize that, for the first time, they possess skills that can help them change the quality of their relationships and the course of their lives.

This is gratifying for those working with inmates, and it is thrilling for us to glimpse a different future for our society, which has for so long struggled with exorbitant costs of incarceration and recidivism and the complex challenges of rehabilitation.

The data in this report have fueled our desire to reach even greater numbers of incarcerated and reentry individuals and their families with Relationship Education programs. I think we're on the verge of something very important, both for these populations and for society. Read these people's stories and look at the data in this report and see if you think so, too!



Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C.
President, Healthy Relationships California



Foreword

*Paul E. (Lish) Harris, Ph.D.
Program Head for Criminal Justice Programs,
Assistant Professor of Criminology
Dixie State University*

***“HRC has done
something arduous
to do in the drab
environment of
corrections; they
have created an
approach that merges
theoretical and
empirical support with
the belief, held by
all those involved,
that this thing
actually works!”***

As anyone who has spent time around the correctional system can tell you, rehabilitation has not always been a popular concept. This is not due to a lack of effort or will on behalf of correctional institutions or the people working therein, but because of a dearth of proven, successful rehabilitative programs. At one point in time, this paucity of programmatic potential led to a response of, “Nothing works!” In spite of general rehabilitative defeat, Healthy Relationships California (HRC) has developed a promising approach through Relationship Education (RE) programs that emphasizes reconciliation and growth in an integral facet of social life: the family. The results of the following study are a welcome presage in the wave of failed attempts at successfully reintegrating offenders back into society.

In novel fashion, HRC founds their RE programs on sturdy theoretical ground, as myriad criminological theories emphasize the importance of prosocial and familial relationships. These theories imply the strength of familial relationships can influence future criminal behavior. One theory, for example, posits

that the strength of the attachment one has to their family or loved ones is directly linked to their likelihood of participation in deviance. Another indicates intact, communicative family units are more able to rear responsible, thus law-abiding, children, suggesting that RE programs have the potential to impact crime generationally. Ultimately, one thing is clear: HRC's focus on repairing important social relationships is theoretically supported.

In addition to theoretical support, the underlying notions of the RE programs are bolstered by general empirical results. The consensus of past research reveals the family-crime relationship to be significant regardless of gender, racial/ethnic background, or socio-economic standing. Moreover, it is one of the most replicated findings in all of criminological literature. All of this intimates that a program focused on repairing weakened familial relationships is valuable. The RE programs, however, not only provide participants with a forum to mend ties to loved ones, but teach techniques attendants can use to continually strengthen their social bonds as they navigate the perilous waters of reentry.

This report conveys preliminary support for the burgeoning success of RE programs. The data and anecdotes found below provide evidence that strengthening weakened relationships makes a difference to these individuals and to the lives of those whom they love. It seems the participants of these classes genuinely believe they are beneficent, which is profoundly important. In my years of researching the corrections system, I am constantly impressed by the jaded attitudes and opinions both prisoners and practitioners have towards available rehabilitative resources. HRC has done something that is arduous to do in the drab environment of corrections; they have created an approach that merges theoretical and empirical support with the belief, held by all those involved, that this thing actually works! With hope and optimism, I look forward to the continued and future successes of HRC's RE programs in jails, prisons, and institutions.



Introduction

“From our experience teaching RE to incarcerated persons, and as the data in this report show, we find Relationship Education to be an important area of focus for prevention and intervention to reduce criminal activity.”

America is justifiably alarmed about the number of people currently held in our prisons, a number that far outpaces the rest of the world. In 2012, there were 2,228,400 adults incarcerated in prisons and jails in the United States, and an additional 4,781,300 living under community supervision (i.e., on probation or parole), equating to 2.9% of the adult population (Glaze & Herberman, 2013). The cost of this incarceration is staggering, added to which are significant challenges in equipping those currently incarcerated with skills for successful reentry into society.

One successful approach to lowering rates of recidivism, research suggests, is institutional programming—such as anger management classes, vocational training (Zheng, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006), educational opportunities, trauma support, substance abuse treatment, and parenting programs (for review, see Craig, Dixon, & Gannon, 2013; Gendreau & Andrews, 1990; McGuire, 1995; Marquis, Bourgon, Armstrong, & Pfaff, 1996).

We believe that Relationship Education (RE) should be an integral part of this programming. RE curricula teach research-based communication and conflict-resolution skills that have been shown in hundreds of research studies to promote healthy relationships (Healthy Relationships California, 2009). From our experience teaching RE to incarcerated persons, and as the data in this report show, we find Relationship Education to be an important area of focus for prevention and intervention to reduce criminal activity.

Relationship Education equips participants with skills for interacting successfully with other human beings, including skills for solving problems and resolving conflicts that address deficiencies linked with greater risk of involvement in criminal activity (Andrews, 1995, 2001). Furthermore, as we see from this report, participants in RE classes reveal an increased ability to regulate their behavior, an outcome that aligns with a leading sociological theory of criminality suggesting that people commit crime because they lack self-control (Gottfredson & Hirshi, 1990). Since self-control is developed through interactions with others (Fox & Calkins, 2003), equipping incarcerated persons with skills to interact successfully with others is an outcome highly to be desired. As Leeann, a Relationship Education instructor and former inmate, succinctly puts it: “So many of us who have been in prison ended up there because we didn’t have communication skills.” (For more of Leeann’s story, see the Special Report on p. 42.)

While Healthy Relationships California (HRC) has accumulated large amounts of data—both quantitative and qualitative—on the impact of Relationship Education on non-institutional participants, we are excited now to have data showing outcomes achieved in correctional institutions. These outcomes align strongly with the five-year, cross-site, cross-program outcomes we published in 2013 (see HRC’s *Impact Report*, www.RelationshipsCA.org) from the largest outcome evaluation ever conducted in the field of Relationship Education.

Recognizing privacy issues and facility rules at correctional institutions, HRC’s Directors of Research designed a study specific to these limitations, which allowed us to collect basic quantitative and qualitative data from incarcerated participants on a voluntary basis. The data analyzed in this report came from hundreds of men and women in California’s jails, prisons, and federal holding facilities between 2012 and 2014.

Their responses highlight the varied ways RE leads to positive change in the lives of those who have been involved in the criminal justice system. Participants report outcomes across three important dimensions:

- **Improving quality of relationships**
Improvement is seen with their romantic partners, children, and other family members, as well as being able to get along better with others in the correctional institution.
- **Avoiding criminality by developing communication and conflict-resolution skills**
Components of this include developing greater impulse control, anger management, and empathy for others.
- **Increasing capacity to find and retain future employment**
Components of this include greater confidence in being able to communicate effectively during job interviews and in work situations with supervisors and coworkers.

To date, Healthy Relationships California has served over 12,000 participants with RE classes in 29 federal, state, county, and youth facilities in California, including:

Federal Facilities: Federal Correctional Complex, Adelanto; Federal Correctional Institution, San Pedro

State Prisons: Avenal State Prison; California Institution for Men, Chino; California Rehabilitation Center, Norco; California State Prison, Corcoran; California State Prison, Solano; Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla; Folsom State Prison; Mule Creek State Prison; Valley State Prison, Chowchilla

County Jails: East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego; Glenn E. Dyer Detention Facility, Oakland; Rountree Men’s Facility, Watsonville; San Diego County Work Furlough Facility; San Joaquin County Honor Farm; Santa Cruz Main Jail; Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County; South Bay Detention Facility, Chula Vista; Twin Towers Correctional Facility, Los Angeles; West County Detention Facility, Richmond

Youth Facilities*: California Youth Authority, Stockton; Camp Clinton B. Afflerbaugh, La Verne; Central Juvenile Hall (Eastlake), Los Angeles; Juvenile Court and Community Schools, San Diego; Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, Downey; N.A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility, Stockton; O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility, Stockton; Sylmar Juvenile Hall

This report presents the results of a study of 425 adults who participated in Relationship Education classes while incarcerated (see the Project Overview section on p. 36 for details on the study design). Additionally, HRC has served the reentry population through classes at rehabilitation centers, half-way houses, and homeless shelters (see the Special Report on p. 42). HRC is delighted with the results of this study, as well as the poignant testimonials from many incarcerated and reentry participants in our classes. These data—both quantitative and qualitative—address the value of Relationship Education programming for correctional institutions. They reveal the potential of RE programs for helping those currently incarcerated become unshackled from habits that have damaged their lives and limited their potential. And they reveal as well the potential of RE for unshackling America from some of the burdens of crime and imprisonment.

* Youth data from these facilities are not included in this report.

you help me by staying out of trouble
and helping me with job training and
you taught me how to Apology &
forgiveness. J-T Oakland.

First and Format my Sorbetly make
this program alot clearer for me to understand
the importance of being parents to our children.

My Children our Audite and I was
never there for them in their early years.

I was Always in and out of Prison, and
Regrett not being there for them. I never took
the steps to be the Father they need, and that's
something i will have to live with.

This program as thought me that it's never
to late to be a parent, and giving them
the tools they will need to be a productive
person in Main-stream Society. Its never to
late, young or old, to teach our children, and
i believe one day i will have some sort of
Closeness in Both of our Live. This Class as
given me some hope to still reach out and
touch their Live. I thank you for giving
me that Knowledge.

Jessie
Los Angeles Ca.
11/26/13

Rec

I

You

I want you to know I did get something out
out this class. I feel like this class helps
me express myself easier to my peers. Cause
I'm a quiet person. It also helped me
focus more on the other person and his/her
feelings and take it in consideration. I also
have patience now in listening to the other
person and their problems. I know that
they just want someone to express themself
too. I thank you for your time.

Rebecca

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opened my eyes to

feel I can

my girlfriend

help me with
of trouble I've

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Shawn V.

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Executive Summary

“Importantly, the qualitative results provide additional information that illuminates the key benefits of RE that are the most meaningful for participants with regard to their relationships, avoiding criminality, and employment.”

Unshackled Potential: The Impact of Relationship Education on Incarcerated Populations represents an integration of quantitative and qualitative data (i.e., a mixed-method study) collected from inmates in correctional institutions who volunteered to complete a brief outcome evaluation survey after participating in Relationship Education (RE) classes taught through Healthy Relationships California (HRC). The evaluation was conducted to understand the potential benefits of RE for incarcerated individuals, especially concerning their family relationships, recidivism, and employment. The RE courses were taught to men and women in six correctional facilities in California from November 2012 through May 2014. Due to the timeframe of this study, the data draw upon information gathered at only a fraction of the correctional institutions in which HRC has taught RE classes.

Results from the mixed-method study provide evidence for the benefits of RE in promoting successful relationships during incarceration and after, reducing criminality and recidivism, promoting successful employment, and promoting the personal growth of the participants.

The findings presented in this report highlight the skills and abilities the participants gained from participating in a relatively brief RE course for the expected outcomes of relationship skills, avoiding criminality, and likelihood of successful employment. Results from all categories of participants and across all ethnicities, including Hispanics and African Americans, were uniformly positive, with similar benefits for both men and women.

Overall, the quantitative results reveal:

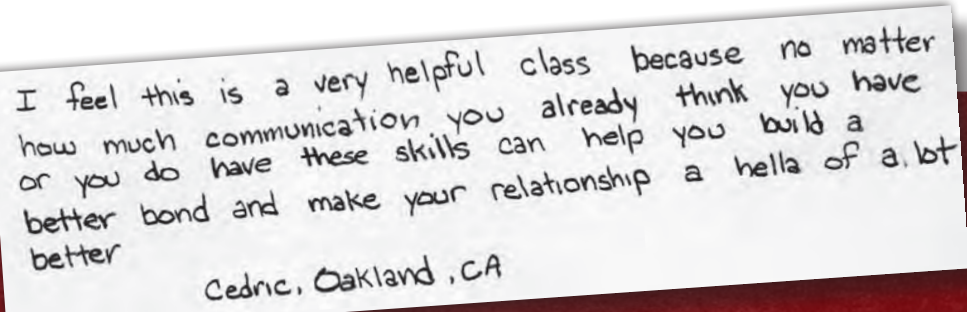
- **84%** reported that RE will help “*Very much*” or “*A lot*” with **their relationships**
- **65%** reported that RE will help “*Very much*” or “*A lot*” with **avoiding criminality**
- **65%** reported that RE will help “*Very much*” or “*A lot*” with **successful employment**

Importantly, the qualitative results provide additional information that illuminates the key benefits of RE that are the most meaningful for participants with regard to their relationships, avoiding criminality, and employment.

These qualitative results showed positive personal development across three dimensions:

- **Better impulse control and anger management**
Including an increased ability to stop and think before making decisions
- **Increased empathy for others**
Including the ability to understand and take into consideration another person’s thoughts and feelings
- **Overall character development**
Including personal growth in ways that participants believe will improve their lives

The testimonies and other qualitative data shared in this report are recorded exactly as written by the participants themselves. While the writing skills of many are limited, their enthusiasm for what Relationship Education is doing for their lives is not.



I feel this is a very helpful class because no matter how much communication you already think you have or you do have these skills can help you build a better bond and make your relationship a hell of a lot better

Cedric, Oakland, CA

Section A: Research Data

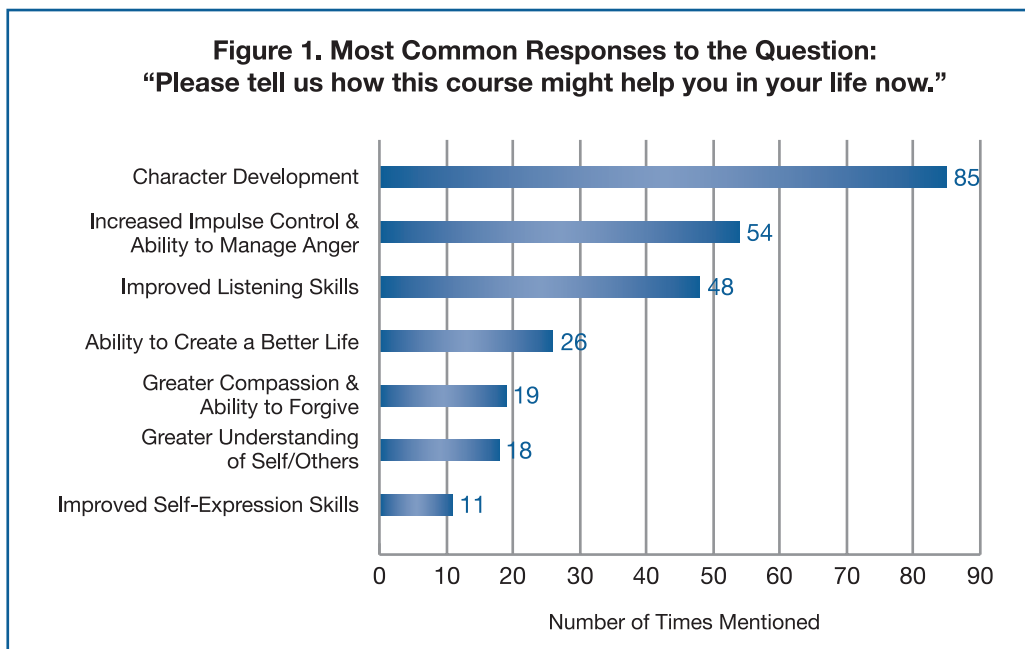
Results from this investigation provide evidence that Relationship Education (RE) impacts inmates in a variety of positive ways, which they believe equips them to improve their family relationships, avoid criminality, and succeed in the workplace, both now and in the future.

1. How Relationship Education Impacts Incarcerated Individuals

Qualitative Results

In assessing the immediate impact of RE, 234 inmates responded to the question, “Please tell us how this course might help you in your life now.”

From their narrative responses, a broad array of themes emerged, including many that overlap with each other. Key themes include: developing a greater understanding of others; being better able to regulate their emotions; and learning a variety of skills that will enable them to be more effective in their communications with family members and others. Figure 1 shows inmate responses arrayed in thematic clusters:



Here, in their own words, are inmates' descriptions of the immediate impact RE has had on their lives:*

Character Development (n = 85)

// Participants believe the skills they learned in RE class will help them understand themselves and will promote their growth as human beings. Many noted that they have deeply held resentment and trust issues, and they see the RE skills as having potential to help them heal.

- *"The difference that this program made in my life is that it kinda made me feel like a better, grown happy person because it made me think about life problems and how we should approach them."* —**Gabriel, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"By taking this course, I realized a lot about myself, my behavior, Where, When and how I've been violent to myself or significant other."* —**Rafael, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I see now the benefits of setting my own feelings aside and seeing things from another's perspective. It helps me to take and accept responsibility for my actions and my role in a situation."* —**Jordan, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I wish I had went to this class a long time ago to avoid all the drama and trouble in my life."* —**Juan, South Bay Detention Facility, Chula Vista**
- *"Learning new tools to put in my tool box and to use them instead of using or drinking when life decides to show up."* —**Miguel, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I will be able to talk and listen more, keep myself from hurting myself with mistakes. I can take my time and accept the things I cannot change and it will help to let go of the things that hurt."* —**Keon, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

* Participants' testimonies are written in their own words, with no changes or corrections to spelling, grammar, or punctuation. All participants have given permission to HRC to use their testimonies, and all names have been changed to protect the privacy of the authors. Any similarity to a person's actual name is a coincidence.

Increased Impulse Control and Ability to Manage Anger (n = 54)

// Participants described learning to be thoughtful in their communications, and being able to moderate their anger by reframing their responses to situations. Many feel the class will help them make correct choices in the future.

- *“Avoid fights by using I feel and other I statements. Using the XYZ method for solving problems. I’ll be able to really hear and understand what people are saying.”* —**Tenesha, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“I will forgive me and be proud of me—do what’s right even tho it will take a while. Be patient will last.”* —**Traci, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“It will help me with my forgiveness and anger because I have a lot of anger in me. It’s ‘eating me alive’ and I will change.”* —**Jarred, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland**
- *“So I can be able to stop and think about certain decision before I make them. Basically to make the right choice instead of making the wrong choice.”* —**Gabriel, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Improved Listening Skills (n = 48)

// Participants revealed improved ability to listen and increased understanding of the importance of listening to others.

- *“I probably will be a better listener and be more considerate while trying to active listen.”* —**Anthony, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“This class will now help me repair my damaged marriage by teaching me the importance of listening entirely and to not just cutting someone off and dismissing them.”* —**Cody, West County Detention Facility, Richmond**
- *“I also have patience now in listening to the other person and their problems.”* —**Lucas, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Ability to Create a Better Life (n = 26)

// Participants see that the skills learned in RE will help them to make or have a better life in the future.

- *"This program has made a big difference in my life. It showed me that by taking charge of our thinking we can control our lives....I understand how that we have choices to rewrite our lives, all we have to do is listen and show understanding."*
—**Derek, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I see very good future of my life from everything I learn from this class, this class teaching me how to recover everything from the past to made my life better."*
—**Tyrone, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"The ability to listen, forgive, and ask forgiveness has humbled me. It has enabled me open up my mind to new ways of improving my life. I know as long as I continue to practice in every situation, my life's situation will continue to improve."*
—**Salvador, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland**

Greater Compassion and Ability to Forgive (n = 19)

// Participants reported learning to have more respect for their fellow human beings. They see themselves as more patient and compassionate, and better able to forgive when something goes wrong.

- *"It gave me a peace of mind eased my pain a lil and showed me how to forgive the people who has hurt me and taught me to apologize better to those who I hurt."* —**Tariq, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"...felt it offered advice helpful to my current relationship especially the apology and forgiveness section b/c it relates to what I'm going through right now as far as being able to forgive my girl for her actions in situations we've been going through."* —**Morrice, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I'll always be considerate and solution oriented and seeking the compassion equal to that which I give."* —**Damarco, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**
- *"These skills will help me be more aware of how my actions have affected the people I love and allow me the opportunity to apologize for my behavior, thereby improve my relationships with my love ones."* —**Marlene, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Greater Understanding of Self and Others (n = 18)

// Participants reported that the skills they learned in RE will increase their social awareness by helping them better understand themselves and others.

- *"Personally I believe this would help me in my life in many ways knowing my own way of being. I would be more open minded and understanding."*
—Max, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"I will study what I've learned because it will make me a better understanding person."* —Pepper, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland
- *"By understanding any situation how can I do better, do better talk, analyze better."* —Carlos, West County Detention Facility, Richmond

Improved Self-Expression Skills (n = 11)

// Participants developed skills in sharing their feelings in a healthy way, both when wanting to share something personal as well as when needing to confront someone about a problem.

- *"I believe the things I learned in here will improve any relationships I have, I have learned to be more of a power listener and practice xyz exercise to communicate better to avoid blame and express my feelings without making the other person feel attacked."* —Tomas, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego
- *"I feel like this class helped me express myself easier to my peers cause Im a quiet person."*
—Lucas, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"This program really helped me in dealing with responsibility, having healthy relationships, dealing with feelings and sharing feelings."*
—Diego, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County



2. How Relationship Education Impacts Incarcerated Individuals' Relationships

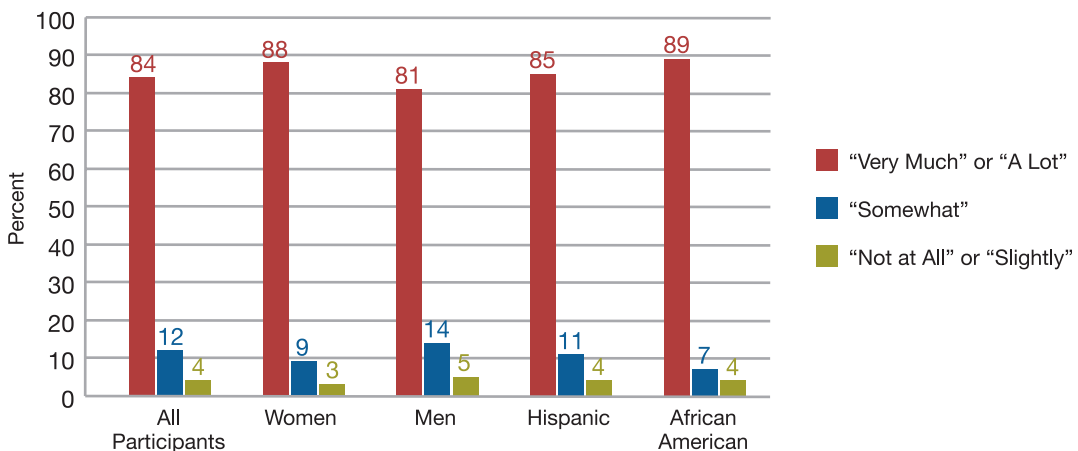
Participants directly related the RE skills they learned to their relationships with their family members, including spouses, romantic partners, children, and others. Additionally, as with the previous question, some participants identified the value of Relationship Education skills for helping them relate more successfully to others in the correctional institution.

Quantitative Results

An overwhelming majority of inmates taking Relationship Education programs reported that they believe RE will help with their relationships (see Figure 2):

- 84% of all participants (n = 279) said that it would help *“Very much”* or *“A lot.”*
- 88% of women (n = 78) said that it would help *“Very much”* or *“A lot.”*
- 81% of men (n = 198) said that it would help *“Very much”* or *“A lot.”*
- 85% of Hispanic participants (n = 100) said that it would help *“Very much”* or *“A lot.”*
- 89% of African American participants (n = 89) said that it would help *“Very much”* or *“A lot.”*

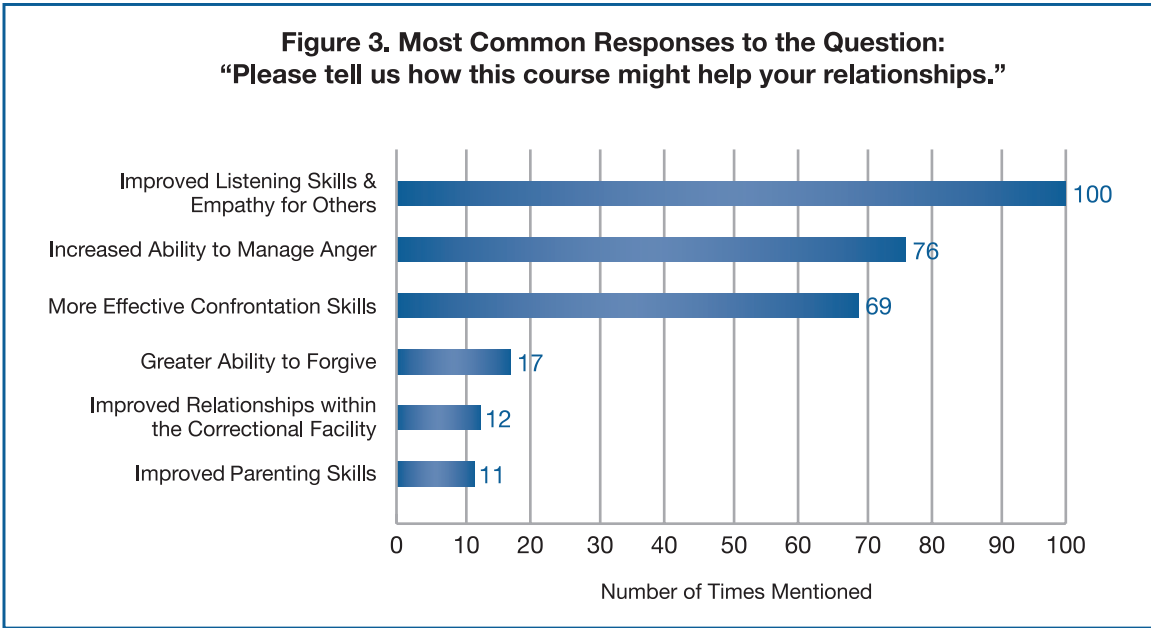
Figure 2. Percent of Participants Who Believe Relationship Education Will Help with Their Relationships



Qualitative Results

In assessing the impact of RE on their relationships, 260 inmates responded to the question, “Please tell us how the skills you learned in this class will help you to improve your relationships with others,” or “Please tell us how this course might improve your relationships.”

Interestingly, many identified the benefits of specific communication skills. This encouraging result is indicative of their having developed both knowledge about specific communication skills and understanding of the value of communication skills as key for being able to create and sustain healthy and successful relationships. The relationship-impact themes mentioned with greatest frequency are the following (see Figure 3):



Improved Listening Skills and Empathy for Others (n = 100)

// Participants cited the importance of being able to pay attention while someone else is talking. They also reported an increased ability to understand others’ feelings.

- “I’ve learned that listening is very important when dealing with my wife. I’ve learned that I can’t always solve everything that’s wrong. Sometimes just listening is helping enough.” —Damon, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County

- *"It will make me think about others feelings more before I react."*
—Duane, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"I have deaf parents...I was never a good listener. After this class my skill I have learned it took this class to make me feel someone can hear me and I can hear them."* —Paige, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"I have learned how to listen w/empathy and how to put myself in other people's shoes."* —Ladawn, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County

Increased Ability to Manage Anger (n = 76)

// Participants identified how Relationship Education skills will help them control feelings of anger and handle emotions more effectively.

- *"It helped me to learn to actively listen to my partner. Also to get my point across without having to use aggress or violence."* —Amy, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"I am able to be a more attentive listener and aware of the fact that its not what you say most of the time its how you say it. I can better express myself without getting angry and frustrated by using 3 simple steps 'XYZ.'"* —Wakeisha, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"Because these skills bring awareness to how important relationships and not hurting those that I love is and that I am responsible for what I say and how I treat others."* —Ian, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"...learned the ability to think rational about situation rather that immediately blame the other person."* —Benjamin, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *"It will help me break down each part and anilize to better deal with situations."*
—Antwoine, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County

More Effective Confrontation Skills (n = 69)

// Participants reported an increased ability to confront others successfully, without resorting to aggression.

- *"Well it will be more helpful for me in prison. To be able to be assertive without appearing aggressive."* — **Tenesha, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I've also learned a few things essential to being able to express myself more clearly. The more you understand the better you expression."* — **Chris, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"Expressing yourself to others not in a demanding way."* — **Marlene, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"Helpt me understand a diffrent perspective other than mine when in a argumat."* — **Leonard, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**

Greater Ability to Forgive (n = 17)

// Participants emphasized learning how to forgive themselves as well as others.

- *"I have learned a lot because I have improve on talking more with other's and forgiving myself and other's as well."* — **Kareen, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"...I learned how to forgive someone truly and also I learned how to give out a sincere apoligy."* — **Lashone, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"helps me learn to see sincere apologies instead of just a way to move on. helps me to forgive."* — **Bret, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**

Improved Relationships within the Correctional Facility (n = 12)

// Participants see value in the new skills they learned for their relationships within the correctional institutions.

- *"In a place such as this, it's very important to be able to communicate. Sometimes life and death."* — **Joseph, West County Detention Facility, Richmond**

- *“Currenting locked up in jail I’m surrounded by many hardened criminals, these skills will allow me to express myself in a non-hostile way to calm a situation.”*
—**T-Rex, West County Detention Facility, Richmond**
- *“When the cop says lockdown for count, I might [actually] listen and not get put on lockdown.”* —**Sam, West County Detention Facility, Richmond**

Improved Parenting Skills (n = 11)

// Participants applied the communication and interaction skills they learned to their relationships with their children.

- *“I think I will take good care of my family know in a goods way because I need to be like that because I don’t want my kids to end up like me when they grow up soon.”* —**Jomo, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**
- *“I now want to have a family relationship after taking this class.”*
—**Lorenzo, South Bay Detention Facility, Chula Vista**
- *“It will help me by focusing on what my kids are trying to tell me and not assuming what I think they are saying. To be more patacent when they make mastacks foregive them and apologies for what I didn’t do and said that might have been offence.”* —**Logan, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“Its given me alot of different looks and insights on how to be a better father, friend, to my children and especially to or for my children.”* —**Thomas, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“I think by just listening to my children without me interrupting and just listen will improve my relationship with my children.”* —**Ruth, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *“I’m starting to be a better person to my family.”* —**Marcel, South Bay Detention Facility, Chula Vista**
- *“Excellent source of tools and ideas for communicating. I can’t wait to apply this knowledge to my current and future relationships.”* —**Finlay, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**

3. How Relationship Education Impacts Incarcerated Individuals' Futures

Importantly, participants see their new communication and interpersonal skills as being valuable both for avoiding criminality and for being able to get and keep a job once they are released from the correctional institution.

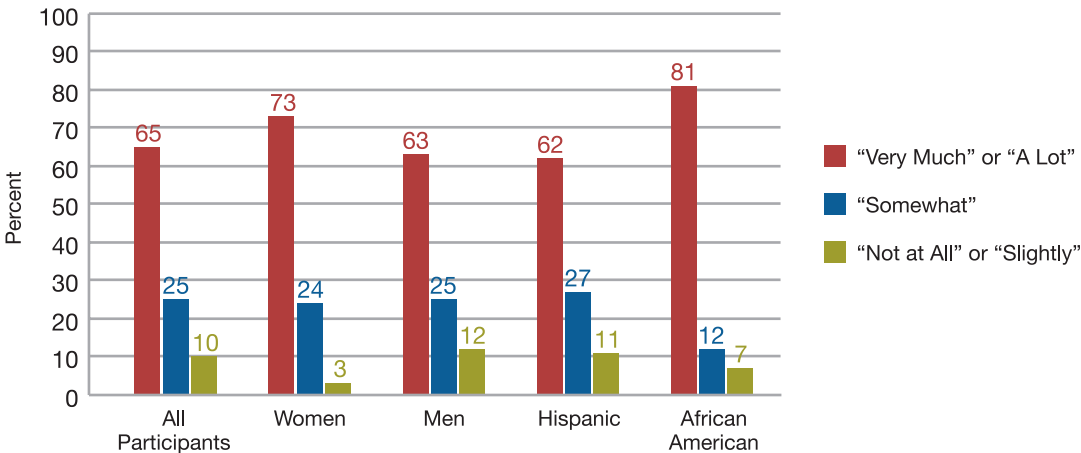
a. Helping Them Avoid Criminality

Quantitative Results

Most participants reported that they believe RE will help them avoid criminality and recidivism after they are released (see Figure 4):

- 65% of all participants (n = 276) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 73% of women (n = 78) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 63% of men (n = 195) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 62% of Hispanic participants (n = 98) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 81% of African American participants (n = 88) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”

Figure 4. Percent of Participants Who Believe Relationship Education Will Help Them Avoid Criminality

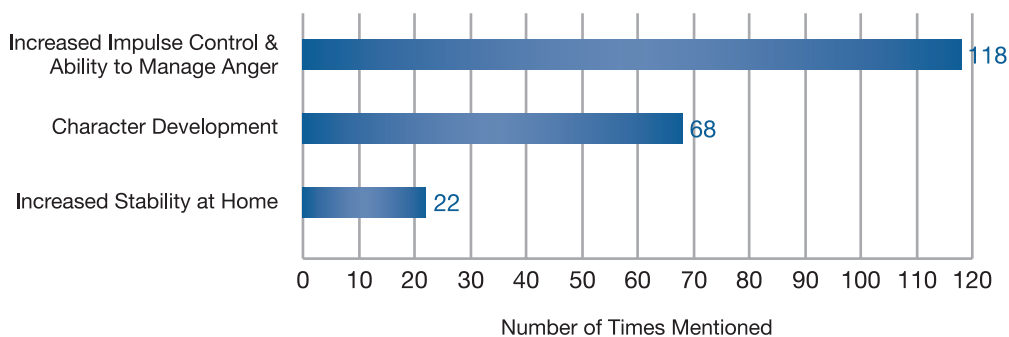


Qualitative Results

In addressing recidivism, 227 inmates responded to the question, “Please tell us how this course might help you stay out of trouble once you are released,” or “Please tell us how the skills you learned in this class will help you to avoid returning to past criminal behavior.”

Participants offered examples of developing conscientiousness, the ability to regulate their emotions, and increased empathy for others. These results link RE with increased self-control through the development of interpersonal competence, leading to increased impulse control and ability to regulate anger, character development, and increased stability at home (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Most Common Responses to the Question:
“Please tell us how this course might help you stay out of trouble once you are released.”**



Increased Impulse Control and Ability to Manage Anger (n = 118)

// Participants identified aspects of conscientiousness that emerged from taking RE, including being able to think before speaking or doing, and being able to control their emotions and avoid situations that lead to trouble.

- *“Take time to practice having a way out without having to feel like I have to pressure myself or others with threatening words while wasn’t the intentions in the first place to begin with.”* —Adam, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *“Time will tell...I will hopefully think twice at what I am doing.”*
—Kenneth, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County

- *"It taught me to be less angry, which will not cause me to drink."*
—**Aharon, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"It will help me a lot communications & listening will help cut out the Domestic Violence in our home."* —**Emerson, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Character Development (n = 68)

// Participants reported believing they will be a better person as a result of RE, which will prevent future arrests.

- *"I will try to be a better person and have respect for others when I am out."*
—**Kevin, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"Learning to deal with pressures of life show me that there are another way to get by without criminal behavior."* —**Marcus, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"I won't be as closed minded and instead of being short tempered I will have a better attitude and just listen."* —**Brittany, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Increased Stability at Home (n = 22)

// Many participants have new hope that the skills learned in RE will bring them closer to their loved ones.

- *"Maybe being able to communicate more effectively with my family will enable me to nurture a harmonious home environment, so I can stay at home & not run the streets."* —**Grace, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"Skills in the class will keep me away from criminal activity by helping me step back and evaluate actions before acting upon them. Criminal activity is a normal thing in my life so doing this will not only keep me out of jail but bring me closer to love ones."* —**Kyle, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

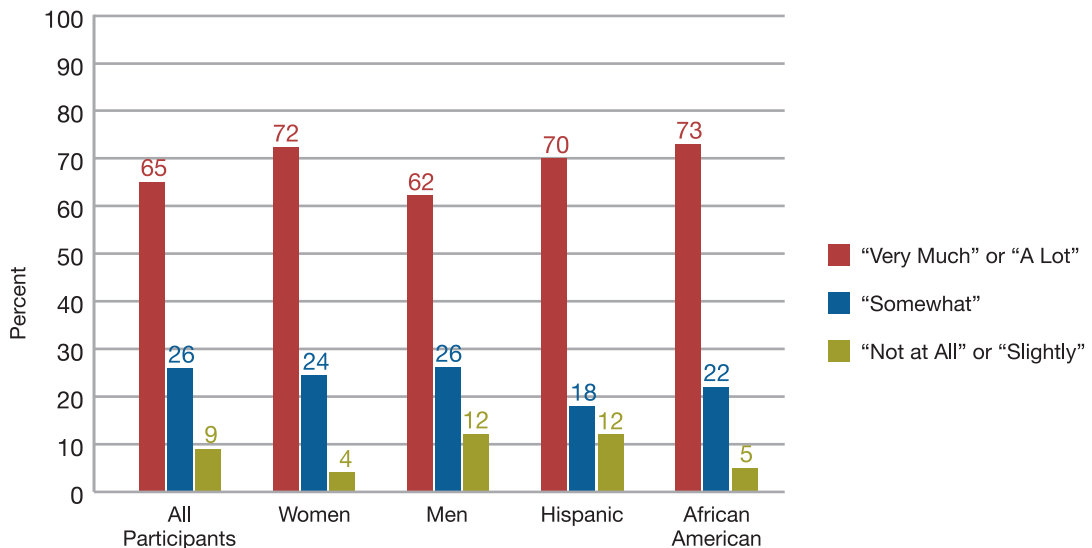
b. Helping Them Improve Their Employment Options

Quantitative Results

Most participants reported that what they learned in Relationship Education will be beneficial for their being able to obtain and retain employment after they are released (see Figure 6):

- 65% of all participants (n =276) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 74% of women (n = 78) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 61% of men (n = 195) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 70% of Hispanic participants (n =98) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”
- 73% of African American participants (n = 88) said that it would help “*Very much*” or “*A lot.*”

Figure 6. Percent of Participants Who Believe Relationship Education Will Help Them Get and Keep a Job

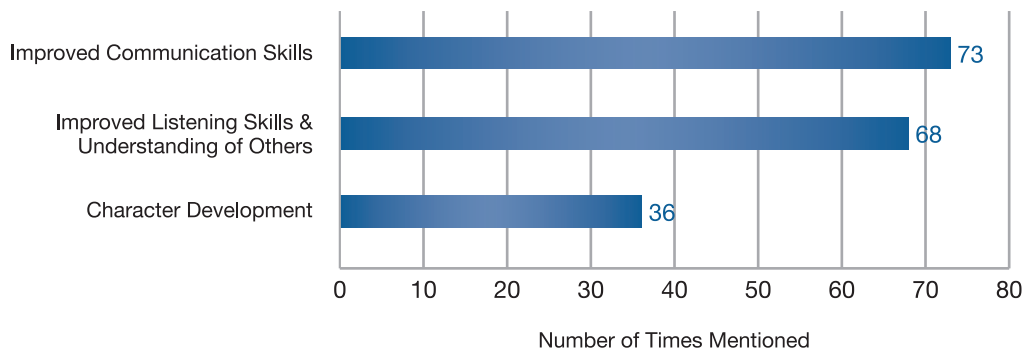


Qualitative Results

In assessing employment factors, 236 inmates responded to the question, “Please tell us how this course might help you get and keep a job once you are released.”

Participants' responses identified several components of communication skills, as well as character development, as being essential factors in their future job acquisition and retention (see Figure 7). They reported RE skills would enable them to convey their thoughts effectively in work situations, both in communicating more effectively during a job interview and in communicating with their supervisors, coworkers, and customers on the job.

**Figure 7. Most Common Responses to the Question:
“Please tell us how this course might help you get and keep a job once you are released.”**



Improved Communication Skills (n = 73)

// Participants provided different examples of how their overall communication might improve.

- *“As a manager, verbal and written communications, are very critical. Previously, I could effectively communicate via the written word but sometimes fell short with verbal. Having completed the program, I believe my communications with employees and peers will improve.”* —Melissa, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *“Allows me to get my view or point across in a professional manner.”* —Mike, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- *“This class teaches people how to get along and recognize how to talk, listen, and be courteous to others.”* —Jerimiah, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland

Improved Listening Skills and Understanding of Others (n = 68)

// Participants identified the ability to listen to their employer, coworkers, or customers as important for working successfully on the job.

- *"It will help me listen more and understand how to communicate with a employer who will interview me and not flash when I get upset and also will help me think a lot more on how to pay closer attention to things I need to do to perform a better job."* —**Simon, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland**
- *"By understanding aspects of other's lives and be able to be considerate and understanding of various backgrounds."* —**Daniel, East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego**
- *"It will help me to understand what a petential employer is seeking and be able to provide more acurately specific skills."* —**Jordan, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**
- *"The skills I've learned will help me listen to my customer's needs in more detail, so I may provide the best service/product to them."* —**Armand, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

Character Development (n = 36)

// Participants believe skills learned in RE will help them become better people, which they feel will make them better employees.

- *"Well through a better level of comunication and respect I am by far a better employee and more likely to interview better."* —**Jake, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland**
- *"I want to leave my past behind. To improve myself I can not keep hindering myself with criminal activity. If I remain a criminal I will stay with criminals and I want more out of life."* —**Tahani, San Diego County Work Furlough Facility**
- *"By me being better and understanding I can get along with others better. If I treat others with respect, and be honest Ill hopefully will get the same."* —**Traci, Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County**

4. Research Conclusions

The results of this investigation show Relationship Education to be efficacious for inmates in correctional institutions and well-received by them.

Our survey data show positive outcomes across three areas:

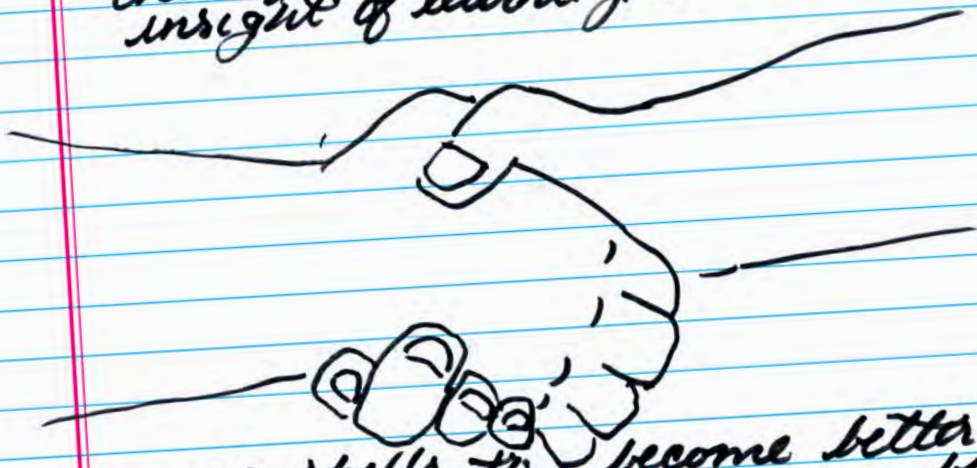
1. Participants in Relationship Education classes report increases in communication skills associated with the ability to form and sustain healthy and stable relationships, including the ability to listen with empathy, confront non-blamefully, and solve problems cooperatively;
2. Participants in Relationship Education classes report increased capacity for anger management and impulse control, as well as other indicators around growth as a human being;
3. Participants in Relationship Education classes report increased work efficacy, specifically, increased confidence in being able to communicate effectively in job interviews and with employers and coworkers on the job.

These three variables, individually and collectively, are associated with positive outcomes during incarceration and with increasing family support both during incarceration and upon release, and they work to create a protective effect against recidivism.

Given that most human beings are typically resistant to changing life-long habits; that the Relationship Education programs in this study were brief interventions (up to 12 hours)—generally shorter than non-institutional RE classes; and that outcomes from this study correspond to those found with participants from non-institutional classes (Howell, Krafsky, McAllister, & Collins, 2013), the results of this investigation are most encouraging about the impact of Relationship Education in correctional institutions.

The cost-effectiveness of evidence-based institutional programming within the criminal justice system, including Relationship Education, adds even greater encouragement. One analysis by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, which reviewed evaluations of over 500 programs serving incarcerated youth to determine return on investment (ROI) rates, found the ROI for various program types ranged from 4:1 to as high as 37:1 (Seigle, Walsh, & Weber, 2014). It is reasonable to expect that the ROI of Relationship Education programs for incarcerated adults is also likely to be outstanding.

Thank you for
the knowledge and wisdom
that you gave us.... with this
insight of learning we'll improve



our skills to become better
fathers, husbands and a better
men in society. Thank you.

Section B:

Research Design & Details

1. Overview of This Research Project

The present study is an evaluation of the efficacy of Relationship Education (RE) courses for individuals in correctional institutions. The primary research questions are whether participation in such RE courses serves to improve incarcerated individuals' communication and problem-solving skills and whether they think these skills may benefit them in being able to improve their relationships—both at home and at the facility—and, upon release, be able to avoid recidivism and obtain and sustain gainful employment.

Three RE curricula were included in this study: *Pick-A-Partner*, *Ready for Love*, and *World Class Communication*. Each course lasted between 6 and 12 hours, and was presented over several days or weeks. Some modification of the curricula was necessary in order to adjust to each institution's regulations and class schedule.

Data reported in this study were collected from 425 adults in California correctional institutions, with 279 inmates providing quantitative data and 411 providing narrative (qualitative) data. As not all participants responded to every survey question, we indicate separately the number of participants reporting on each question.

a. Demographics

Gender

Approximately 60% of participants reported their gender as male ($n = 254$) and 28% reported their gender as female ($n = 121$). The remaining 12% ($n = 50$) did not report their gender.

Age

Participants who reported their age ($n = 278$) ranged from 18 to 65 years old, with an average age of 34. Over 75% of participants were under 41 years old ($n = 219$). There was no statistically significant difference in males' and females' ages.

Ethnicity and Race

Participants were asked to identify their ethnicity and race. Of those who responded to ethnicity ($n = 278$), over one-third self-identified as Hispanic ($n = 105$); of those who responded to race ($n = 180$),

one-half self-identified as Black or African American ($n = 89$) and about one-third self-identified as White ($n = 65$). A total of 16% of participants self-identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native ($n = 14$), Asian or Asian American ($n = 3$), or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ($n = 9$).

Education

Nearly 50% ($n = 195$) of participants reported either graduating from high school or passing the GED. Twenty percent ($n = 83$) reported they did not complete high school, while over one-third ($n = 147$) did not report their education level. More than one-third of participants reported receiving some education beyond high school ($n = 150$).

Relationship Status

Of participants who reported their relationship status ($n = 160$), 39% were single ($n = 62$), 33% were in a committed relationship ($n = 53$), 19% were married ($n = 31$), and 9% were divorced ($n = 14$). No participants identified as widowed.

b. Methodology

Measures and Survey Instruments

Study surveys included demographic information along with quantitative and qualitative questions. Participants responded to quantitative and qualitative questions on attitudes about the efficacy of RE for relationships, avoiding reoffending, and employment. One additional qualitative question asked participants how RE could help them in their life while still incarcerated. The questions are identified in each results section of the report.

Enrollment and Participation

From November 2012 to May 2014, men and women in California's correctional institutions who attended RE courses offered through Healthy Relationships California (HRC) and our local partnering organizations were invited to participate in a brief program evaluation. All 425 inmates who participated in this study voluntarily provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

Participating correctional institutions included:

- East Mesa Reentry Facility, San Diego
- Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland
- San Diego County Work Furlough Facility
- Santa Rita Jail, Alameda County
- South Bay Detention Facility, Chula Vista
- West County Detention Facility, Richmond

Study Limitations

As inmate participation in HRC's quantitative/qualitative study was voluntary, HRC was unable to collect data on all inmates who attended RE classes during the period of this study. Additional limitations in data collection include:

- Cross-sectional survey design: Data collection occurred at one point in time and did not include a pre-test/post-test design. This was largely due to time constraints for educational programs of this sort at correctional facilities, necessitating that the instructors adhere to a strict schedule.
- Criminal behavior unknown: HRC did not ask about the criminal history or current criminal offense of the participating inmates, as instructors suggested these questions might make the inmates uncomfortable and less likely to complete the survey. Although inmate-specific information is not known, crimes committed varied from simple misdemeanors to index offenses (i.e., felonies).
- Limited practice situations: Although inmates were able to practice with their classmates some of the relationship skills they were taught in class, opportunities for practice were more limited than for a typical participant who also has opportunities to practice these skills at home with a partner, at work with colleagues, or in a job interview situation. For participants in this study, opportunities to practice the skills occurred when visited by a partner, during phone calls with family members and friends, with officers in the prison, and when allowed to interact with fellow inmates.
- Confidential responses: A number of participants provided quantitative and/or qualitative data, but requested the information not be used in reporting. Those data are similar to reported data, and many support the qualitative findings.

Despite these limitations, the results presented here are relevant and provide useful insights into the effectiveness of RE in correctional institutions.

Analyses

The analytic strategy used in this evaluation is a sequential and convergent mixed-method investigation. A mixed-method design was implemented to understand the effectiveness of RE for individuals, as well as for groups, and is a method increasingly supported by the National Institutes of Health as an important study design (Plano Clark, 2010). The first step in this mixed-method evaluation was to read and code open-ended "testimonial" letters submitted by participants. The initial coding consisted of identification of themes and concepts for further study.

The next step was to develop convergent quantitative and qualitative measures to reflect the concepts and themes that emerged from the testimonials to better understand participants' experiences.

Quantitative results range from a score of 0 to 100. There were five response options, ranging from "Not At All" to "Very Much."



I see
life is incarcerated
No parenting skills
Fairly A child B
Have the tools I need
Right thing with
Self



In this class I really believe this class will help me communicate better with parents, siblings, kids, and be more prudent with what's on your mind. This will help do good in job with co-workers. This will help have a better relationship and express myself better.

Sincerely,
Eric
San Leandro

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This course has really helped me to open up and communicate with others. I have had many problems with using communication not with just friends and family but most of all with my significant other... Now having taken this class I understand that listening is the key... Now I know not to make it all about me.. I should put myself in the other person shoe. I have developed great communication skill for improving my job interviews, relationships at home, and mainly to stay out of trouble. So thanks Berto for your help with us...

Royce



Section C: Additional Support for the Research

1. Special Report: Relationship Education with the Reentry Population and Rehabilitation Centers

In addition to those served in correctional institutions, Healthy Relationships California (HRC) has in the past five years served over 4,800 participants with Relationships Education (RE) classes in rehabilitation centers. Many of these individuals, like Leeann, whose story follows, have disclosed that they were previously incarcerated, and are among the reentry population whose successful reintegration into their communities can be supported through Relationship Education programs.

Leeann's story:

Leeann first encountered Relationship Education when she was a resident at Crossroads, a transitional-living home for women who have been released from prison. Paroled after serving 17 years of a 15-to-life sentence, Leeann was 40 years old and starting her life over.

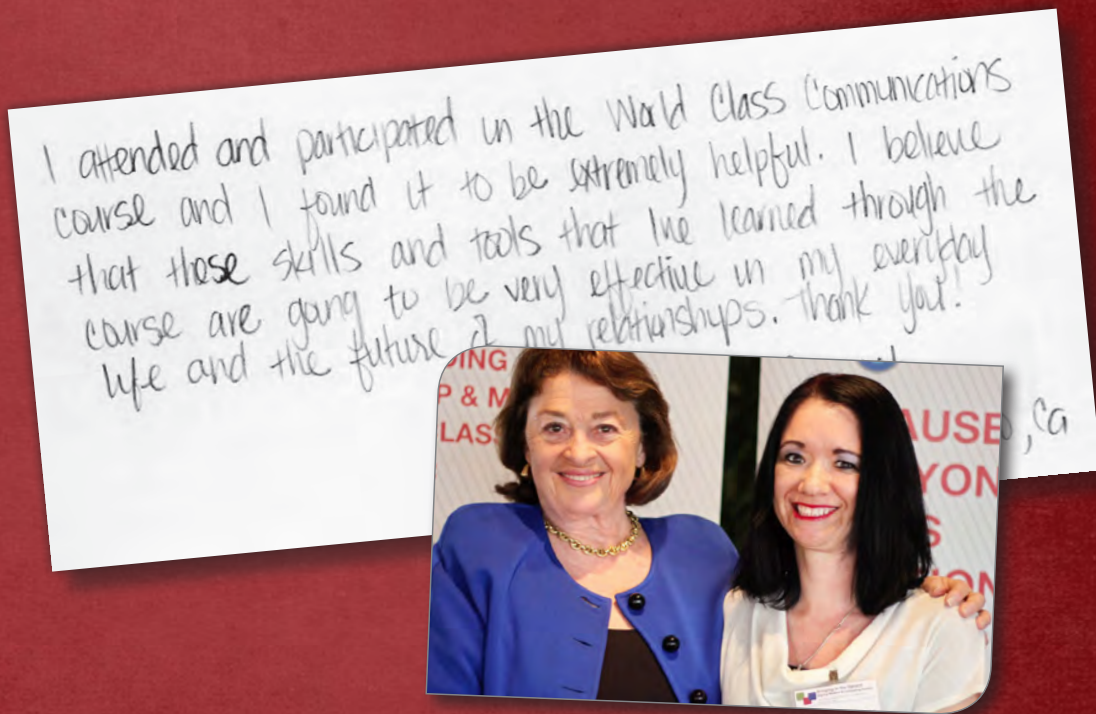
As part of Crossroads' transitional program, residents attend workshops designed to help them reenter society, and one of the first in which Leeann participated was the RE program *Ready for Love*, presented by the Clinebell Institute, the counseling and psychotherapy training center of the Claremont School of Theology, an HRC Partnering Organization in Claremont, CA.

Ready for Love helped Leeann acquire relationship skills she had never before had a chance to learn. "In my family, with my parents, there was no communication," she says. "I didn't know what a real, healthy relationship was. When I married, I ended up in an abusive situation, always living in fear." Through *Ready for Love*, "I learned to resolve conflicts without arguing, without explosiveness."

Leeann has since participated in the *World Class Relationships for Work & Home* and *Mastering the Mysteries of Love* programs, and she credits these RE courses with helping her get her life back on track. Although Leeann participated in skills-building programs in prison, the RE classes have been especially helpful. "While in prison, you do a lot of groups," explains Leeann, "but this was in a whole new light. It's real life, not in a confined situation."

For three years Leeann has held a steady job at the Clinebell Institute, first as a bookkeeper and now as the director of Clinebell's partnership with HRC in delivering RE programs to low-income and at-risk populations. She has been able to rent her own apartment, and, after learning how to drive, she bought her first car.

Leeann says that RE impacts her every day, because the skills she learned were transformative to her life. She is very grateful to have had the opportunity to learn relationship skills, adding poignantly, "Many of us who have been in prison ended up there because we didn't have communication skills."



2. Observations from the Other Side

a. An Instructor Shares His Experiences

Bento Leal, a Relationship Education instructor and the director of Healthy Relationships Bay Area in Oakland, CA, never dreamed he would find himself teaching communication and problem-solving skills to the inmates at a maximum-security prison.

For one thing, he doesn't look like someone who could engender the trust of prisoners. "I'm a middle-aged white guy in his sixties," Bento explains. "I easily could look like the kind of guy that put them behind bars. I could look like the judge; I could look like the D.A.; I could look like the main cop, you know—the heat!"

But when Bento was asked to teach an RE module as part of an anger management class being offered at the Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, he overcame his trepidation and agreed.



He quickly realized that teaching RE in a correctional facility is like teaching RE anywhere else. "I must say, it's not unlike any other class," Bento says. "It just happens to be in jail. I went in there thinking a jail class would be more complicated, more scary. It was not. Once I acclimated and they felt acclimated to me, it was like any other class, where it's person to person, and people are people, and I just realized, [RE is] a great neutralizer. These skills cut across—rich or poor, educated or not, this is a human element here."

Bento finds the RE skill of Empathic Listening is the key to establishing rapport with the inmates. "Listening is the number one skill, I find. All these guys, they've never had anybody listen to them with that level of intentionality, empathy, sincerity, not butting in, really wanting to understand, and if you're on the receiving end of that kind of empathy, you automatically tend to move toward trust."

To keep that trust, instructors simply need to treat inmates as they would any other RE participant. "Be your natural self, be animated, be real, be authentic," Bento advises. "The guys will smell inauthenticity a mile away."

Once participants are at ease, RE quickly effects amazing changes in even the most hardened inmate on the cell block. Usually, Bento says, "You can't look too vulnerable [in jail], you'll be taken advantage of. You either [stay] quiet or you wear some kind of tough skin, but don't show weakness in jail." But participants in RE classes are moved to open up and show vulnerability.

“They start feeling empathized with, and the more they feel empathized with, the more they share their story. The other guys are looking on, and the guy who’s sharing is just getting more and more animated telling the story, and he might even wipe a tear from his eye. I’m kind of catching him at a place that he’s either covered over or hidden away, that he doesn’t reveal to anybody, anybody ever, let alone a stranger in a group. It’s just transformative!”

The RE lesson on apology and forgiveness is also powerful. “These [inmates] get stuck on their anger and resentment from having been hurt, or their guilt from hurting others, what put [them] behind bars. So having an exercise where people write out what they would say to that person if they could, write a letter saying ‘I forgive you for what you did to me,’ or, ‘I apologize for what I did to you,’ it tends to unpack some stuff.”

In addition to developing the inmates’ relationship skills, participation in RE can have a tangible effect on their incarceration. “In a couple of cases, when the judge saw [an inmate had completed an RE class], the judge took a day off their sentence,” Bento reports. “Now, to you and me, a day isn’t a lot, but if you’re behind bars, a day is a long, long time.”

Seeing these results among the inmates he is teaching has been a turning point for Bento as well. “You’ve got to be in one of these classes!” he exclaims. “It’s a very human experience.



"I think it demystifies what a 'jail person' is, because you might think it's some kind of unique, weird human being, but actually it's a person who made a wrong choice or two, maybe many. But when you hear some of these guys' stories, you think, wow. Absent dad, [addicted] mom, living on the wrong side of town, no supervision, lots of opportunities around for trouble. Who's to say if I was in that situation I wouldn't do the same thing?"

"I'll tell you, for an instructor, it changes you. It makes [you] more empathic. Because everybody's incarcerated. Everybody's in a certain level of incarceration with a self that we're not fully satisfied with. And we'd like to be better. And how do I unpack and get out of the self-imposed jails that I've got that keep me down and keep me limited, and get free to be real with people?"

For RE instructors who want to work with the incarcerated population, Bento recommends looking for the same opportunity that got him started: an invitation to be a guest instructor in an existing program. "If you can slide in as a guest instructor, you don't have to create anything from scratch."

But even if you have to start from scratch, Bento thinks it's well worth it. "The most inspiring classes I teach, I think, are in the jail, just because of all the challenges and the turmoil of these lives, and to see skills penetrate so deeply, even the most hardened fellow, it works like magic.

"I encourage anybody to have some of their class time done in jails and also substance abuse programs as well. Places where people are stuck in some kind of difficulty. You'll open up your own heart and they'll gain an awful lot."

b. Feedback from Other Instructors and Correctional Facility Staff

"I have countless stories of guards and counselors telling me that they see the improvement in these young men that do the [RE] groups. These skills not only help them on the inside of the prison, but once they come out into the community, back to their families, back to their homes, it also helps them in their relationships." —**Rev. Ben Carrillo, prison chaplain, Santa Cruz County**



"One of the big pluses of the program is how well [RE] subjects tie in with the Anger Management [class]... On behalf of my faculty, and the inmates in our classes, I would like to say how much we value this tremendous resource that [the RE Instructor] brings to our correctional program. These skills sessions have been a very nice complement to the classes we already have in place. We all sincerely hope the program may continue!" —**Fred Rutledge, Principal, Adult and Correctional Education, Tri-Valley Regional Occupational Programs, Alameda County**

"We offer Relationship Education classes in several correctional institutions on an ongoing basis because they give prisoners tools they really need to improve the manner in which they communicate with their respective families and with the community. With our support, they apply the new skills within themselves first, and then with those with whom they have relationships. This helps them break the cycle of serious emotional offenses, not to mention criminal offenses. It is so important to continue these RE classes because we know from released prisoners that they go on to share and teach these skills with others." —**Dan Moran, Director/Facilitator, REnovando Familias, Santa Cruz County**



"After teaching RE courses in correctional institutions for the past year and a half, I can truly see the value of the skills taught in such facilities. Participants for the first time have a sense of hope, encouragement, and purpose that with the skills learned in RE classes they can now deal with family, coworkers, and life's challenges in a more positive way. The participants share with other inmates about the class, so by the time we complete the course we already have a waiting list for the next class." —**Daniel Ballon, Director/Facilitator, IMPACT South Bay, San Diego County**

"Because of your classes, here are some things that the men have used with their relationships: Many of the men said that the listening skills were most helpful when they were on the phone...One of the students said that he and his wife [previously] just yelled at each other both at once when they talked. When he learned how to listen to her on the phone, he actually heard her, and she felt heard and then listened to him. The knowledge you imparted was gold to them...The men with children said that letting their children talk to them instead of them doing the talking made for closer relationships than they had before. Being interested in what their child has to say, instead of telling them what to do, has changed the dynamics from cold and impersonal to warm and loving for both the dad and child." —**Carolyn Kellams, teacher, maximum-security inmates, Glenn E. Dyer Detention Center, Oakland**

"The reason educational opportunities around relationships are so important is...[the inmates] lack basic communication skills. They lack basic skills on how to de-escalate a situation. They only have one direction to go...and that's escalate. After participating [in RE], there is an improvement in the way [the inmates] interact with each other and in the way they are interacting with their partners." —**M'Liss Kessling, Inmate Programs Coordinator, Santa Cruz County**

3. Recommendations for Expanding Relationship Education throughout the Criminal Justice System

Based on the findings of this mixed-method study, we make the following recommendations for the use of Relationship Education within the criminal justice system:

Recommendation 1: Make RE classes available to more individuals in correctional institutions. Incarcerated participants, both men and women, report significant benefits from participating in Relationship Education programs, including developing skills they believe will help in strengthening their relationships, in avoiding criminality, and in finding and retaining future employment. These are highly desirable outcomes, as research suggests improvement in these areas is associated with healthier and safer conditions within correctional institutions and strengthened family relationships, along with diminished problems upon reentry. RE can likely have positive benefits for incarcerated juveniles as well.

Recommendation 2: Include intensive skill-based communication and problem-solving modules in existing institutional programming (i.e., the “Thinking for a Change” cognitive-behavioral program, anger management classes, substance abuse treatment, etc.). Correctional institutions already offer life skills classes and vocational training; adding RE as a component of this existing programming is a cost-effective and time-saving way to deepen the level of assistance provided to inmates and correctional staff.

Recommendation 3: Make RE part of the preparation for early release. Any offender being considered for early release should be encouraged to attend an RE course to promote commitment to and capacity for making the life changes necessary to successfully reenter society and avoid future criminal activity.

Recommendation 4: Give inmates the opportunity to attend multiple RE classes. Although participants report improvement in communication and conflict-resolution skills after just one RE class, experience with non-institutional participants shows increasing skill levels with increased skill practice, a benefit that can help inmates’ daily interactions and capacity to deal with deeper issues.

Recommendation 5: Make RE classes available to the family members of those who are incarcerated. Providing RE courses to the family members of those incarcerated will serve to promote the further development and integration of the RE skills the inmates learn. Use of these skills in the home will also serve to engender more satisfying relationships, especially during the transition back into family life.

Recommendation 6: Make RE classes available in Day Reporting Centers. Making additional courses available to inmates after their release and while on probation or parole will serve to sustain their new skills and foster a sense of continuity and success.

Recommendation 7: Train criminal justice system professionals (e.g., chaplains, guards, parole officers, vocational instructors) in RE skills. Training the professionals who work with offenders will promote harmonious interactions not only between these staff members and inmates, but between staff members and their colleagues. This can provide valuable modeling of RE skills as well as trained partners with whom inmates can interact, enabling them to practice the new skills they are learning in class and gain the benefits of skill reinforcement.

Recommendation 8: Make more funds available to RE organizations serving incarcerated and reentry populations. For many organizations offering RE to the incarcerated and reentry populations, scaling such programs is hindered by general lack of funding. RE is a cost-effective strategy to achieve the goals of the criminal justice system, and directing more funds to the delivery of RE programming is likely to result in a positive return on investment with widespread impact across society.

Recommendation 9: Increase the number of RE organizations working with incarcerated and reentry populations. RE organizations may be hesitant to pursue opportunities to serve incarcerated and reentry populations, due to an apprehension that they do not possess the skills needed to work effectively with these groups. However, as illustrated by the Instructor testimonials in this report, teaching those who are or have been incarcerated differs very little from teaching RE to any other group. Agencies that fund and provide technical assistance to RE organizations should make an active effort to educate and recruit RE providers in order to increase the availability of RE for offenders.

Recommendation 10: Conduct more research on the impact of RE on the incarcerated and reentry populations. It is evident that RE helps inmates develop interpersonal skills that they believe will lessen the chances they will reoffend once released. Additional research should be conducted to determine the extent to which RE can reduce recidivism, as well as the most effective means for providing RE throughout the criminal justice system.

I AM VERY THANKFULL FOR BEING A PART OF THIS CLASS, YES I AM
HAPPY AND LEARNED ALOT THROUGHT MR BENTO AND MR.
NORCEN, I WILL APPLY THIS SKILLS TO MY EVERY DAY
OUT ON THE OUT SIDE. I WILL REMEMBER THIS CLASSES THANK
YOU VERY MUCH. WILL CONTINUE TO EVALUATE THE DANPLET
ON THE DAYLEY BASES

Love And Respect

Manuel Angilles
HAYWARD CALIF.

4. About Relationship Education in Correctional Institutions

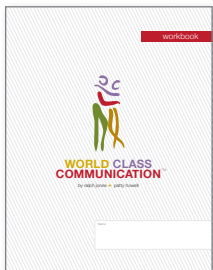
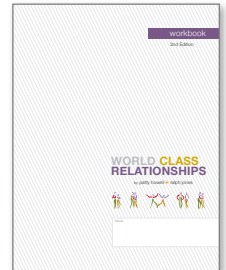
Relationship Education courses taught in correctional institutions are structured curricula taught by a trained Instructor in a classroom setting. Class sizes are typically small, usually 10-30 inmates per class. The curricula include training in such areas as empathic listening, effective confrontation, problem solving, conflict management, and apology and forgiveness skills. A typical course supported by Healthy Relationships California lasts 5-16 hours, lasting over a period of several days or weeks, and includes presentations, demonstrations, role-playing, skills practice in pairs, small-group exercises, and group discussion of course material.

a. Recommended Curricula

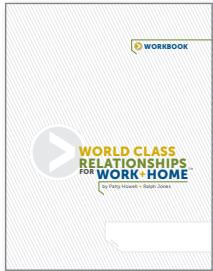
HRC-approved RE curricula for use in correctional institutions include:

Adult Curricula

- **World Class Relationships (WCR)** by Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C., and Ralph Jones
 - o 2 levels, 8 hours each
 - o Available in English or Spanish
 - o Based on research by John Gottman and Carl Rogers, this program teaches “16 Pillars” of a World Class Relationship, building upon the foundations of empathy, acceptance, and genuineness.
 - o Teaches empathic listening, non-blameful confrontation, win-win conflict resolution, skills for avoiding blame, apology and forgiveness, and how to handle hot topics such as money management. Includes role-playing, workbook exercises, and practice assignments.
 - o WCR teaches a full range of communication and conflict-resolution skills needed for all relationships.
 - o Top-tier program outcomes among 18 nationally known RE curricula studied.
- **World Class Communication (WCC)** by Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C., and Ralph Jones
 - o 6 to 8 hours
 - o Available in English or Spanish
 - o This course distills and emphasizes the Communication Skills components of WCR. It can be used as a stand-alone curriculum in institutions such as jails and recovery centers and as a follow-on skills-reinforcement curriculum for individuals who have taken WCR.

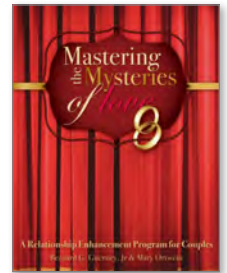


- **World Class Relationships for Work & Home (WCR-W&H)** by Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C., and Ralph Jones



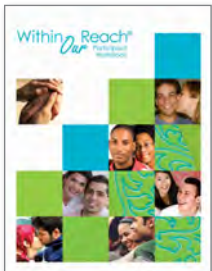
- o 2 levels, 8 hours each
- o Available in English or Spanish
- o This program is designed for work environments of all kinds, including clients of organizations serving incarcerated, recovering, or low-income individuals.
- o Teaches “16 Pillars” of a World Class Relationship, with emphasis on relationships both at work and at home.
- o WCR-W&H is a curriculum created specifically for individuals utilizing employment-support services. The program emphasizes the application of communication skills on the job; for obtaining and keeping a job; and for forming family relationships that endure during times of stress.

- **Mastering the Mysteries of Love (MML)** by Bernard Guerney, Ph.D., and Mary Ortwein, M.S.



- o 2 levels, 8 hours each
- o Available in English or Spanish
- o Based on the highly researched *Relationship Enhancement* curriculum, MML uses everyday vocabulary and step-by-step directions to teach 10 core communication skills. This foundational course gives couples experiences in deep intimacy—even in the heart of conflict—while teaching them tools to make solutions last. Couples learn how to put and keep honesty, compassion, empathy, and trust in their relationship.

- **PREP: Within Our Reach—8 hours (WOR-8)** by Howard Markman, Ph.D., and Scott Stanley, Ph.D.



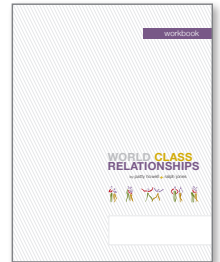
- o 8 hours
- o Based on over 20 years of research, PREP’s WOR-8 curriculum walks couples through the application of relationship skills that heighten the quality of their union, including fostering improved communication, managing expectations, and devoting themselves to a mutual commitment and support.



- **Ready for Love** by Bernard Guerney, Ph.D., and Mary Ortwein, M.S.
 - o 2 levels, 8 hours each
 - o This program combines the 10 Relationship Enhancement skills of *Mastering the Mysteries of Love* (described above) with experiential learning activities focused around qualities of good relationships, boundaries, emotional safety, and the biology of love.
 - o Although this program targets singles/solos, the curriculum also is open to married couples.

Youth Curricula

- **World Class Relationships (WCR)** by Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C., and Ralph Jones
 - o 2 levels, 8 hours each
 - o Available in English or Spanish
 - o WCR teaches the “16 Pillars” of a World Class Relationship, including the full range of communication and conflict-resolution skills needed for all relationships.



- **Love U2 Relationship Smarts Plus** by Marline Pearson
 - o 8 to 13 hours
 - o Based on a five-year Federal evaluation study at Auburn University, *Love U2* offers 13 activity-based lessons to guide teens in building healthy relationships and making wise choices. Covers topics such as maturity, values clarification and peer pressure, attractions and infatuation, and building blocks for positive relationships.

- **PICK a Partner/How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk(ette)** by Dr. John Van Epp
 - o 5 to 8 hours
 - o Based on years of clinical research as well as observations from Dr. Van Epp’s private practice, this program gives participants the tools to avoid dead-end and negative relationships. Topics covered include recognizing subtle, hidden signs of future problems, assessing your partner’s true personality, analyzing your partner’s conscience, pacing the relationship to prevent premature emotional attachments, and focusing on your emotional health so you’re not the jerk.



b. Insights about Teaching Relationship Education in Correctional Institutions

While the content and results of Relationship Education classes taught in a correctional facility are similar to RE classes taught elsewhere, some modifications are necessary when RE classes are given in correctional institutions:

1. Instructors must obtain a security clearance before being allowed to teach in any given facility, which can take up to two weeks.
2. Instructors should always arrive to class early, to give facility personnel time to clear their entrance and escort them to the classroom. Entrance may be delayed if security personnel are dealing with an issue within the facility, so ample time must be set aside for the entry process.
3. Instructors must pass through a security checkpoint to enter a facility. No items that are contraband for the inmates or could be used as a weapon, including cell phones, pencils, and pens, are allowed into a facility. It is best to leave all personal items at home or in your car, to keep the entry process speedy and problem-free.
4. The number of days a class will last, and the length of each class session, will be determined by administrators at the facility. Class length may be shorter than typical, requiring a condensed version of the curriculum.
5. Any given class session may be further shortened by a late start. From the facility's point of view, the class is not their top priority; safety and security are. If there is an incident in the facility that needs to be addressed, inmates may not be brought to the class on time.
6. Instructors need to be flexible regarding the manner in which the RE program is presented. Due to security restrictions, equipment such as laptops and PowerPoint projectors may not be allowed in the class. Instructors should be prepared to teach using only the printed Instructor Guide. Additionally, in some cases the Participant Workbooks themselves are not allowed. Check first, and be prepared to modify the workbook material as necessary.

To begin the process of teaching in a correctional institution, contact the facility and ask to speak to the Education Coordinator. Ask if there are opportunities to teach as a guest instructor in one of their existing programs.

About Healthy Relationships California

Our Mission:

Equipping everyone, in California and beyond, with the relationship skills that transform lives.

Our Vision:

A world filled with people who communicate successfully with each other; who have the skills that enable marriages to succeed, children and families to thrive, communities to be safe, and societies to achieve their full potential. This will be accomplished by increasing access to, and participation in, high-quality, skills-based Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) programs.

Improving the quality of relationships between couples, within families, among coworkers, and throughout communities is a cost-effective approach to addressing a wide range of societal concerns. Divorce, domestic violence, child maltreatment, school failure, substance abuse, crime, poverty, unemployment, low productivity, and a host of other social problems can be ameliorated by the communication and conflict-resolution skills taught in RME courses.

Healthy Relationships California (HRC) offers RME programs in social service agencies, community centers, correctional facilities, churches, and schools throughout California. Our Healthy Relationships International (HRI) division works with organizations outside California to implement all components of effective RME program delivery. HRC is thus engaged in the transformation of no less than our communities, our nation, and our world.

Our History:

Founded in 2005 as the California Healthy Marriages Coalition, Healthy Relationships California has quickly become a preeminent Relationships and Marriage Education organization, serving to date over 200,000 individuals with life-changing RME classes. Through direct service, research on program outcomes, and award-winning professional resources, HRC provides a variety of training and support services for individuals, RME colleagues, and organizations around the world that are searching for successful community-building strategies.

HRC has been the recipient of the largest Healthy Marriage and Relationships grants provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Through this support for our work in California, HRC has built a “coalition of coalitions,” an innovation that unites a wide range of community-based organizations under the HRC umbrella and enables HRC to standardize program delivery and allocate resources efficiently. HRC trains facilitators in

RME curricula, conducts large-scale public awareness campaigns, and achieves economies of scale with program materials. HRC also creates and implements Quality Assurance protocols, and utilizes Outcome Evaluation instruments to assess participant results. HRC makes these tools available to our network of community partners, who utilize these resources to offer RME programs tailored to the needs of their respective communities.

In 2012, HRC launched our HRI division at a United Nations conference in Geneva, Switzerland. Healthy Relationships International exports HRC's proven model by working with organizations and agencies outside of California and around the world to establish research-supported RME programs. HRI staff provide step-by-step consultations, systems, and supports to help other organizations institute best practices for RME implementation.

Additional Resources by HRC

Reports:

The Case for Relationship Education: Creating Social Benefit through Skills Training

Impact Report: Research on the Impact of Relationship and Marriage Education Programs in California

Lives Transformed: Real Voices on How Relationship and Marriage Education Impacts Lives

The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State

Booklets:

Healthy Marriages and Mental Health

Healthy Marriages, Healthy Children

Healthy Marriages, Healthy Lives (Matrimonios Sanos, Vidas Sanas)

Healthy Marriages, Healthy Societies

Healthy Marriages, Healthy Women & Girls

Healthy Marriages, Responsible Fatherhood

Download and order these and other resources at: www.RelationshipsCA.org/store

Find RME classes at: www.RelationshipsCA.org/classes/find-a-class

Visit HRC's Spanish-language site at: www.MejoraTusRelaciones.com



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