ACHIEVING RACIAL EQUITY & IMPROVING CULTURE IN JAILS USING A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

FINAL REPORT

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SAFETY+JUSTICE CHALLENGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jails hold more individuals than any other correctional facility, with over 10 million people admitted annually (Zeng & Minton, 2021). The management of jails at the local government level is characterized by inconsistent leadership and offering few services or transitional programming (Copp & Bales, 2018; Henrichson et al., 2015). The misuse of local jails is often noted because they have become mental health facilities, warehouse unconvicted pretrial populations, often for minor offenses, spread diseases such as COVID-19, and other related health concerns of overcrowding (Nowotny et al., 2020). Jails play a central role in the criminal legal system, and yet they are understudied and overused.

There is evidence of substantial racial disparities and other inequities in jail incarceration. Black people are disproportionately held in jail and, in 2019, had incarceration rates over three times that of white persons (Zeng & Minton, 2021). People of color are also less likely to be given non-monetary bail options and are substantially less likely to be able to post financial bond, further contributing to disproportionate minority confinement (Wooldredge, 2012).

Jails are also racialized institutions. Many jails have racialized subcultures, where residents of non-white racial backgrounds face increased segregation, tensions, or violence; limited employment opportunities; and social stigma (Walker, 2022; Pettit & Gutierrez, 2018). Racial disparities in incarceration exacerbate vulnerability to violence, sexual abuse, solitary confinement, and inadequate healthcare (Western et al., 2021; Wildeman & Wang, 2017). Carceral environments such as jail often manifest racial divisions, with staff frequently exhibiting racial antagonisms, either individually or collectively.

Racism can also manifest within the dynamics of a jail setting, with documented instances of racial bias and discrimination within correctional facilities including, the rate at which Black individuals are admitted to jails and the corresponding length stay. Racial disparities among the staff also result from disparate hiring practices, barriers to promotions, and negative workplace interactions (Wooldredge, 2020). Discrimination among fellow staff can lead to a hostile work environment, exacerbating tensions and negatively impacting job satisfaction and morale, and a humane jail environment. But studies of jail officers' experiences of racism are still limited.

Understanding and addressing these systemic issues are crucial for fostering a more equitable and just correctional system. New approaches are needed to transform the culture that contributes to racial bias in correctional settings. Yet, despite decades of studies documenting racial disparities as drivers of incarceration, few models have been implemented effectively to reduce inequities and disparities in the system.

This report presents an approach to addressing racial equity within jail settings. Our innovative method integrates participatory methods and evidence-driven quality improvement processes to develop and refine recommendations of racial equity interventions in complex jail systems. Participatory methods engage diverse stakeholders to assess historical and contemporary drivers of racism and develop cohesive organizational goals to promote racial equity. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) quality improvement process highlights the use of empirical information, allowing participants to address their perspectives and reconcile them with empirical data, resulting in the identification of new approaches that promote equity.

The premise of our work is that achieving racial equity in jails can profoundly impact the conditions of confinement for residents and working conditions for staff. For residents, outcomes include ensuring appropriate support, instilling a sense of fair treatment, improving the handling

of individuals with health issues, and reducing the punitive nature of the jail climate. For staff, racially equitable policies and practices provide a better work environment, enhance well-being, aid recruitment and retention, support career advancements, and promote healthy exchanges with residents, as project outcomes.

In 2022, our collaborative initiative undertook a project to address racism and racial inequities within one County Jail.

KEY THEMES THAT EMERGED IN THE RESEARCH

- Resident workgroups described a lack of beneficial programs within the jail. Incarcerated women denoted that the programming was gendered, and that they did not have equal opportunity to participate in programming, like the education and training programs, that had been recently launched for men.

- Healthcare, particularly mental health services, was a key stressor for all. Many residents indicated that their medical emergencies were not taken seriously or responded to in a timely manner. Female residents felt that the detox process was not well supported. Staff felt that they would like more mental health counseling made available, as well as more of an emphasis placed on improving the wellbeing of staff and incarcerated individuals, as a result of expressed powerlessness within their position as a staff member and status as an incarcerated resident.

- Inequities are also intersectional. For example, women felt that their hygiene needs were not addressed. Women lacked access to soap, menstrual supplies, and undergarments. Black women reported not having access to hair products that met their needs. Individuals who did not speak English as their primary language or had other physical or mental disabilities were perceived as not having their needs met or considered.

- Staff and incarcerated persons identified that they felt a pervasive sense of unfairness within the organization, and people in minoritized groups felt that there was little accountability for staff's racist behavior or misconduct of any kind.

- Staff and incarcerated persons – the majority of whom are Black – felt that racism is implicitly endorsed and perpetuated. Conversely, some white staff and residents downplayed or overlooked the existence of racism, and attributed any hardships experienced in the jail environment to factors other than race.

- Staff-specific areas of concern included disparities in promotions and leadership opportunities. Black staff felt that they were often overlooked for promotions. Staff felt that there was a lack of transparency in the process, which led to perceptions of favoritism, particularly among the predominately white male leaders.

- Through workgroups and surveys involving staff and residents, we identified and prioritized 30 intervention recommendations across three categories: Health and wellbeing, staff and resident interactions, and training and programs. These interventions, guided by an antiracism framework, aim to address power imbalances, disparities in perceptions of racism, and intersectional issues.

- Overall, it is essential to balance power distribution in racial equity work, particularly in the context of jails where conditions of confinement are intertwined with power dynamics. Participants recognized that jails are environments characterized by powerlessness, emphasizing the importance of addressing power imbalances as part of efforts to achieve racial equity.

- Increasing transparency and accountability emerged as a central theme for staff and residents. They felt there was a need to develop or appoint a neutral, external group to review the jail operations and manage staff complaints and internal affairs investigations. Residents also felt that developing an app that tracked the grievance process would be helpful.

- Staff requested a clear career pipeline from the jails' frontline to leadership to allow for job expectations to be

more transparent. They requested that all employees receive the support, training, and professional development opportunities needed to be promoted to higher jobs.

- Both staff and residents requested substantial reforms to their respective healthcare needs. Residents suggested implementing a protocol to respond to sick calls and medical emergencies. Residents also requested healthier food and access to more recreation time. Staff felt that there was a stigma against requesting assistance, particularly mental health care, and suggested more confidential programming and supports.

Moving forward, ongoing implementation, evaluation, and refinement of interventions remain crucial to validate this process and the issues that were exposed. Staff and residents raised concerns about the full adoption and sustainability of the effort and interventions. The issues raised require care and attention by jail leadership that are often not fully available to those who manage a chaotic environment. There is a need for continued support in the implementation of the recommendations from the PDSA process. This underscores the broader implications for the sustainability of this transformative work and its potential for lasting systemic change.

INTRODUCTION

Racial disparities within the criminal legal system are stark and pervasive. Recent data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics reveals significant contrast in the racial composition of individuals incarcerated in local jails across the United States. White individuals make up 49% of the national jail population, Black individuals represent 35%, and Hispanic individuals 14%. In contrast, the general population is 75.5% white, 13.6% Black, and 19.1% Hispanic or Latino individuals (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022), illustrating the overrepresentation of minorities in jail populations.

These disparities underscore the profound impact of race on individuals' likelihood of encountering law enforcement contact and their subsequent experiences within the legal system. Jails play a pivotal role in the criminal legal system, and detain individuals at various stages of legal proceedings, from pretrial detention to post-sentencing incarceration. With over 10 million individuals entering jails annually, they are the most frequently utilized correctional entities, shaping the lives of those confined, their families and support systems, and surrounding communities. The effects of racial bias extend beyond those incarcerated, affecting staff working within correctional facilities. The challenging working conditions faced by correctional staff, including stress, burnout, reduced staffing levels, and exposure to violence, further exacerbate the need for transformative change within jail settings (Lambert et al., 2008). Addressing racist policies and practices in jails and other correctional facilities is crucial for promoting a healthier work environment, retaining talented staff, and fostering positive interactions with incarcerated individuals.

Efforts to improve the culture within jails, particularly concerning racial equity, are paramount. Collaborations across jails, community organizations, and research organizations/universities offer promising avenues for developing innovative approaches to address these issues. This project was implemented in one county jail, and engaged a team of researchers, jail staff and jail residents, and a community-based partner who worked together to define recommendations for promoting racial equity and improving jail conditions and culture. This report outlines a data-driven organizational change process aimed at understanding and addressing racial disparities within jail settings, paving the way for cultural transformation and equitable practices.

By identifying problematic policies, procedures, and practices for reform, this approach aims to promote racial equity and create healthier, more supportive environments

for residents and staff. Through a structured intervention development process, our goal was to produce replicable approaches that can drive tangible and lasting change in promoting racial equity within the criminal legal system and contribute to broader efforts to reduce incarceration rates and reshape carceral environments, while simultaneously enhancing the safety and well-being for both incarcerated individuals and correctional staff through these efforts.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY APPROACH

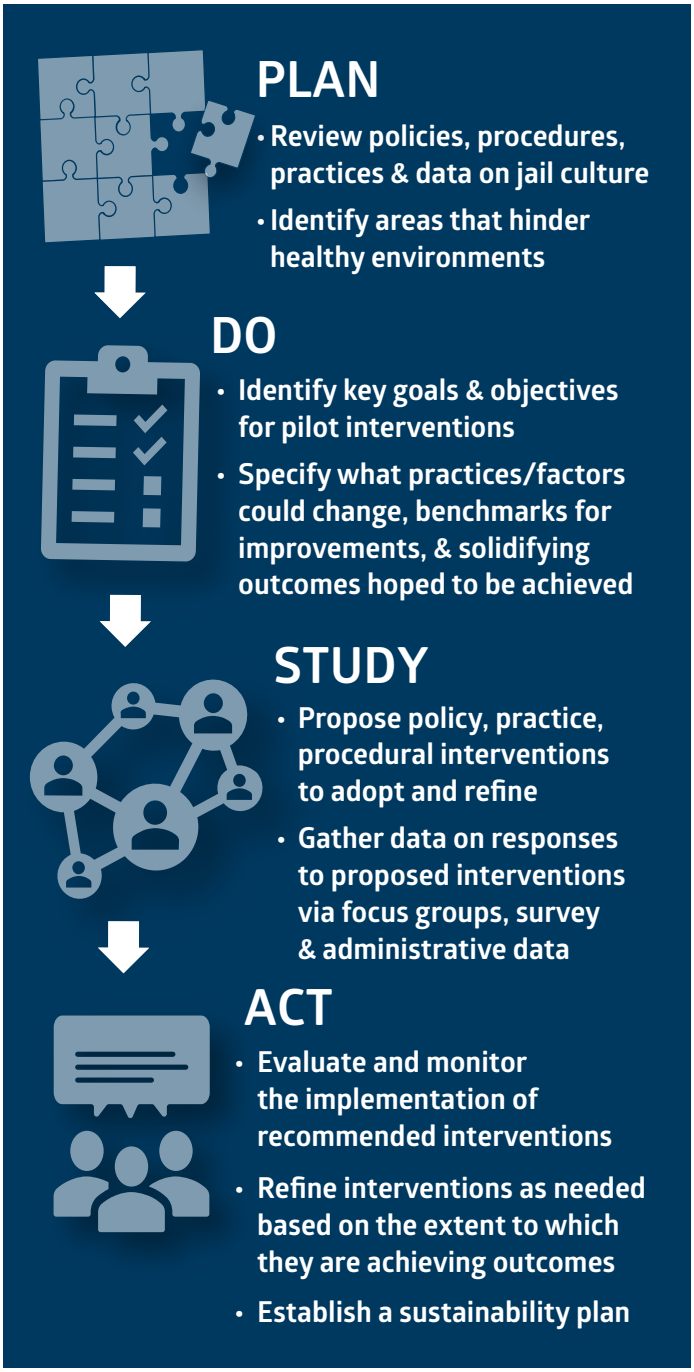
This Equity and Jail Culture project aimed to develop a replicable model for promoting racial equity within criminal legal settings, starting with a jail setting. Our approach involved implementing community-based participatory research combined with a data-driven organizational change process called Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) to effectively understand and address racial inequity in jails.

The following research questions guided the project:

- How, when, and where do racially biased policies, practices, and procedures influence jail culture?
- What policy and practice strategies may be adopted by the jail to promote racial equity?
- How feasible and acceptable are the proposed recommendations/interventions (designed to promote racial equity) from the perspectives of jail staff and residents?
- How are policy, procedure, and practice strategies that promote racial equity implemented and sustained?

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Below is a brief overview of the methods we used throughout the PDSA cycle. A more detailed review of this process can be accessed in the Methods Brief and the step-by-step Implementation Guide developed for this project. This project was structured around four primary research questions guiding the implementation of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) process. This process involved stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and various levels within the jail, including program staff, security and corrections personnel, administrators, and



residents. Workgroup discussions and survey-based strategies were used to capture diverse perspectives. The adaptable nature of PDSA enabled adjustments to the research process based on participant feedback and jail-specific needs. While formal administrative records served as valuable data sources, participants' lived experiences were integrated and considered primary data points. Through guided discussions and data analysis, consensus was reached among Change Team workgroups regarding interventions to address racial equity and jail culture issues.

The workgroups and teams that implemented the PDSA process in the County jail site included a Facilitator Team, Change Teams (one Change Team for staff and one Change Team for residents), and a Jail Leadership Team. It should be noted that "workgroups" and "Change Teams" may be used interchangeably throughout this report, as workgroups may sometimes refer to the workgroup sessions themselves and sometimes to the Change Teams themselves. The Facilitator Team, Change Teams, and Jail Leadership Team played pivotal roles in the PDSA process. The Change Team, in particular, was central to defining issues, analyzing data, developing recommended interventions and prioritizing the implementation of solutions. The Facilitator Team, consisting of project leads and external facilitators, ensured effective coordination and documentation. Engaging staff and residents in these discussions required skilled facilitation to maintain confidentiality and navigate sensitive topics.

All workgroups were facilitated by the same individual, a Black woman with deep ties to the local community and extensive expertise in leading discussions on sensitive topics. Her pivotal role in cultivating a safe environment enabled participants to engage honestly and authentically. The remaining Facilitator Team members include two Black women and five White women, all with academic and practical experience in addressing racial equity issues within correctional systems. Throughout the project, the Jail Leadership Team served a critical role in facilitating trust and psychological safety for both the staff and resident Change Teams. The importance and value of the need for action, along with the potential consequences for non-action, hung at the forefront of this process.

THE PLAN PHASE

During the Plan Phase, which occurred during the first 3-4 workgroups, the Change Team workgroups collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to identify issues that affect racial equity and culture of the jail. Change Team participants were immersed in a content-rich and somewhat didactic process as they became familiar with the project's objectives and methodologies. This phase involved a series of activities aimed at establishing a common understanding and vocabulary surrounding racial equity and related concepts, such as racial disparities, bias, and racism, as well as key aspects of jail culture and conditions of confinement. Additionally, participants were introduced to the research framework, including the utilization of data and the PDSA process. A crucial aspect of this phase was the review of existing data obtained from records within the jail system. This process includes clarifying the causes of equity issues with available data.

THE DO PHASE

During the Do Phase, the Change Team workgroups developed recommendations for interventions (i.e. changes to policies, practices, and procedures) to address change related to equity issues. During this phase, the Change Teams identified which practices, policies, and procedures they wanted to prioritize to generate recommendations for intervention. They established how to gauge benchmarks for success, sparking discussions about the desired outcomes they hoped to achieve. With this process, specific criteria were considered, and questions raised within each workgroup to not only more narrowly determine the most appropriate issues or problems to

focus on, but also to specify these problem areas with intentionality by using a racial equity lens.

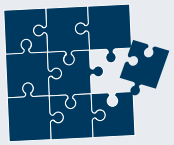
THE STUDY PHASE

During the Study Phase, a broader group of stakeholders outside of the workgroup participants were asked to react to the feasibility and acceptability of interventions, through surveys and focus groups, that were proposed to address equity issues. The Change Teams and the Facilitator Team focused on narrowing down recommended interventions for implementation through feedback from surveys, focus groups and an intervention ranking process that occurred with each Change Team and focus group.

In the focus groups, recommended interventions were sorted by focus area using guided questions. Residents were asked to rank each recommended intervention by:

- Responding to the question: How much do you think residents would benefit from each of the recommended interventions:
  a. I don't think residents would benefit from this.
  b. I am not sure if residents would benefit from this.
  c. The residents would really benefit from this.
- Ranking the top five interventions from any given category that they believed were the most important.
- Providing recommendations that have not been identified or other issues to consider.

Based on this feedback, the recommended interventions were then revised, refined, and prioritized as needed. Each workgroup received the list of recommendations and was tasked with evaluating them based on their potential for high impact. The recommendations were placed into categories: high effort (Major Projects), high impact with low effort (Quick Wins), low effort with low impact (Fill-in Jobs), and high effort with low impact (Thankless Tasks).



1. During the **PLAN** phase, the following workgroup activities occurred:

a. Established uniform definitions of racial equity, racial disparities,jail culture, racism, racial bias, and conditions of confinement.

b. Engaged in an introduction to research, the use of data, and the PDSA process.

c. Reviewed data gathered from existing records (e.g., housing/programming/work assignments; distribution of infractions; security and staffing resources; court dates/warrants/transfers; staffing issues) and compared that data with lived experiences of staff and residents in the workgroups. This was an iterative process of reviewing data with the workgroups, getting questions/ contradictory experiences from workgroup participants, seeking more data from the jail or prior research conducted with the jail, and reviewing the data with the workgroups again.

d. Conducted ethnographic documentation of meeting data and memo reflections of the experiences within the groups.

e. Monitored confidentiality and potential for real or perceived retaliation as a result of participating in the workgroups.

2. During the **DO** phase, the following activities occurred:

a. Over a course of 11 workgroup sessions with staff and 11 workgroup sessions with residents, workgroup participants proposed 74 intervention recommendations to policies, practices, and procedures. The intervention recommendations were aimed at improving culture of the jail, conditions of confinement, gender equity, and racial equity.

3. During the **STUDY** phase, the following activities occurred:

a. Assessed the acceptability, feasibility, and likelihood of adoption of the 74 policy, practice, and procedural interventions using surveys and focus groups with 68 staff and 40 residents who were not previously participants of the workgroup sessions.

b. Identified additional intervention recommendations through survey and focus groups of staff and residents who were not participants of the workgroups.

c. Hosted racial caucuses with race-specific groups to examine the prioritized intervention recommendations for their impact on race. Gleaned additional recommendations from these caucuses.

d. Workgroups narrowed the intervention specification and recommendations to approximately 30 recommendations sorted by effort and impact on racial and gender equity, jail culture, and conditions of confinement.

4. During the **ACT** phase, the following activities occurred:

a. Presented recommendations to existing and incoming administration and devised a plan for implementation of priority interventions.

b. Workgroups established evaluation metrics and preliminary evaluation plan of the implemented interventions.

Workgroups were reminded to consider the possibility that the jail administration might not have the capacity or ability to implement all recommendations. They were asked to strive for a balance between Major Projects and Quick Wins. This process identified approximately 30 recommendations for policy, practice, and procedural interventions, sorted by effort and impact on racial and gender equity, jail culture, and conditions of confinement.

THE ACT PHASE

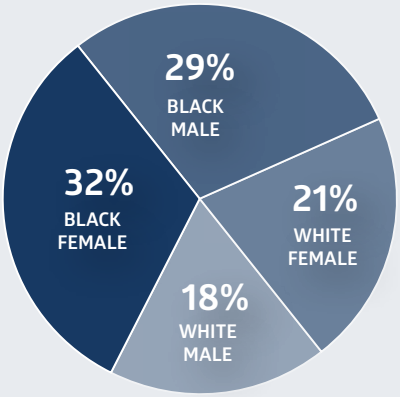
During the final Act Phase, the final interventions (i.e., policy, practice, procedural changes) are to be implemented and evaluated for impact on equity and culture improvement outcomes. At the beginning of this phase, the 30 prioritized recommendations from the Change Team workgroups and recommendations were presented to the Jail Leadership Team. The Change Teams were charged with beginning to establish evaluation metrics to ensure recommendations are implemented and evaluated to assess if they achieved their intended outcomes or required further revisions to the original recommendations proposed prior to adoption. The Act stage will be a continual and ongoing process because not all interventions can be adopted simultaneously, and this project was not long enough to fully implement the Act Phase.

DATA COLLECTION

Participants were selected through a multi-step process, starting with nominations by jail administrators and holding orientation workshops with “ambassadors”- which we coined to describe jail leaders who serve to champion the project’s goals. Prospective participants were briefed on the project’s objectives, and the importance of emotional and occupational safety. Selection criteria included tenure at the jail and conversational proficiency in English. Recruitment efforts further targeted diversity of thought among staff and residents who would participate in workgroups, surveys, or focus groups.

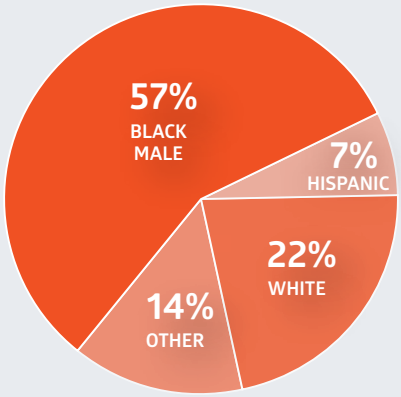
Over 18 months, 11 workgroup meetings were held for each staff Change Team and resident Change Team, with

FIGURE 1



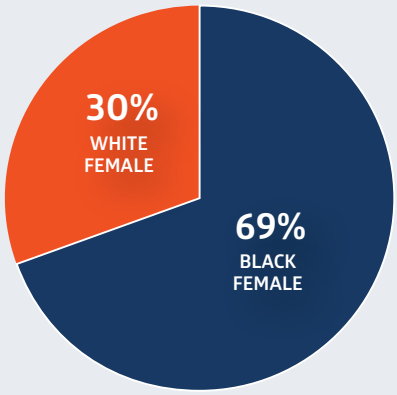
Staff Group Composition (n=30)

FIGURE 2



Male Resident Group Composition (n=28)

FIGURE 3



Female Resident Workgroup (n=13)

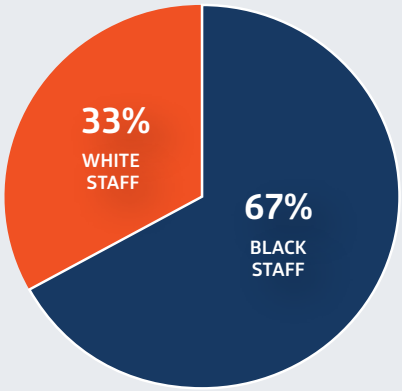
separate sessions for male and female residents. A total of 30 staff and 28 residents participated in the workgroups.

Additionally, four Racial Caucus sessions were conducted, allowing participants to further evaluate recommended actions through a racial equity lens in single race groups. The racial caucus sessions provided a platform for individuals to express perspectives and experiences they may have been hesitant to share in mixed-race settings, fostering more authentic dialogue and highlighting the unique challenges faced by racial groups within the jail environment. Participants were instructed to examine potential disparities related to the recommendations and consider possible inequities that might emerge when recommendations are put into practice. To ensure equitable application, participants were asked to consider specific questions:

- Who do you think this recommendation will benefit? And how?
- Who, if anyone, will it harm or disadvantage? And how?
- Are there any patterns of racial bias that we need to consider or be mindful of?
- What could we do differently when implementing this recommendation to decrease or eliminate any negative impacts or racial bias?

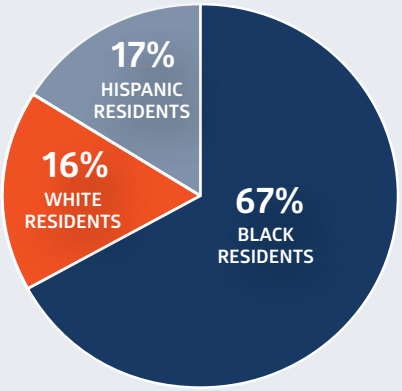
Figures 4 and 5 below specify the composition of the staff and resident racial caucus groups.

FIGURE 4



Staff Racial Caucus

FIGURE 5



Resident Racial Caucus

DATA ANALYSIS

To understand and document resident and staff perceptions and experiences with jail culture and equity, we collected data on all of the workgroups. These data were collected using ethnographic field note methods[1] with a focus on the study of groups of people in their social setting. Two researchers recorded ethnographic field notes of all workgroups and focus groups throughout the data collection process. Fieldnotes describe experiences, observations, behaviors, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, or other aspects of the observable human experience.

Researchers were tasked with denoting the following: the number of participants, the perceived race and gender of participants, the date and start and end time of each workgroup, and the type of workgroup (e.g., staff, male residents, female residents). Qualitative researchers provided detailed (de-identified) notes of each workgroup experience, contextual observations, and group dynamics. To bolster privacy and confidentiality, the researchers were seated in the back of the room to minimize interruptions from correctional staff that may try to enter the room while workgroups are in session and not disrupt the dialogue between the facilitator and participants.

After each workgroup, research team members met to corroborate notes, debrief any challenges or concerns, and provide suggestions for subsequent meetings. Additional details regarding the methods used can be found in the methods brief and implementation guide. The remainder of this report will focus on the findings and lessons learned from our work with the County Jail site.

[i] All transcriptions and reflective notes were replaced with the name of the respective workgroup and date. These files were uploaded and securely stored on password-protected secure servers with access granted only to authorized study personnel.

FINDINGS

The PDSA methodology is an iterative process, and as a result, findings are built upon each other and evolve throughout the project. We report the findings in the order described below, though this order does not necessarily reflect the sequence in which project activities occurred.

First, we summarize the Change Team members' reflections on their experiences of racism and racial inequities in the jail. We also discuss intersecting inequities around gender, ethnicity, and abilities. Second, we report the recommendations that the Racial Caucus groups developed. Third, we summarize the 74 recommendations that surfaced from the Change Teams over the life of the project. Fourth, we report on the results of the surveys collected from staff and residents who were not members of the Change Teams and how they ranked the recommended interventions. Finally, we present the prioritized results (30 recommendations, 10 for health, well-being, and safety, respectively) by the Change Teams. After the Findings are presented, we discuss some key highlights of the decision-making process the Change Teams used and the guidance that was provided to jail leadership regarding the implementation and sustainability of the recommended interventions. We conclude with a synthesis for each research question.

1. SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AND RACIAL AND INTERSECTING INEQUITIES

The process of developing 74 proposed recommendations also fostered meaningful conversations within each workgroup regarding participants' personal experiences and diverse perspectives on the realities of living and working in a jail environment. These critical insights provide an opportunity for learning to effectively shape interventions in a meaningful way.

Perceptions of Racism and Equity

Throughout the institution, participants felt that racism is implicitly endorsed and perpetuated, creating an environment that feels untenable for people of color, as expressed by both staff and residents. People of color experience the effect of racism on a more heightened level compared to their white counterparts, and on the other hand, it is ingrained in their daily life and existence to such an extent that it is not always top of mind and is experienced as "this is the way it is." Furthermore, other forms of discrimination, such as those related to physical health and ability, economic means, and language of origin were also reported. Below we share how these perceptions and inequities are experienced by both residents and staff.

RESIDENTS

Many residents described that they felt racism was simply glossed over, whether it was something they experienced directly or indirectly. One Black male resident noted how he feels racism can be unrecognizable because it is more covert than it has been in the past, stating,

"I heard someone say racism was way back then. This is important because, yeah, it was way back then, but there is still institutional racism… so we don't even recognize what it is."

Conversely, some white residents may downplay or overlook the existence of racism, attributing any hardships experienced in the jail environment to factors other than race. The perspective expressed by one white female resident might be an example of this dismissal of racism as she states,

"I think people use racism to make themselves feel better. I have never been given anything different because I am white."

Residents were not only concerned about how racism itself manifests within the jail, but also how other intersecting inequities are experienced.

Equity Issues and Resident Experiences

Participants highlighted challenges related to access to programs, job opportunities, and college education. These discussions shed light on the importance of addressing gender-specific equity issues and enhancing support systems. One Black female resident noted her concerns regarding the lack of products available to properly care for different types of hair, stating that,

"They got all the products for white women, but they don't have any hair products for black women's hair."

Further concerns around the items available in the commissary were discussed, stating that,

"On the commissary sheet, all it is, really is all males' items," and that well, there's some things that you would be able to purchase, but there are some things – some hygiene items are really health items. Commissary is generally those things that's considered like a luxury or something different. Hygiene items should not be considered a luxury. Should not be something considered that you have to purchase it in order to do it because it's a health item…it's for your wellbeing."

Women also had few work positions, which were limited primarily to laundry work. There was gender bias inherent in the job opportunities provided to women residents, and the tasks available are stereotypical, gendered domestic tasks. By offering such limited options, the jail inadvertently perpetuates and reinforces societal inequities that confine women to certain types of work based on traditional gender roles. This narrow scope of job opportunities fails to recognize the diverse skills and capabilities of women residents, further entrenching gender bias within the institutional framework.

Participants also felt that there was a lack of support for residents with disabilities. Female residents mentioned one experience where they witnessed of a fellow resident who is deaf, sharing that,

"We had a deaf person in here and she was treated so bad... so bad... they were yelling at her... and then they took her glasses."

"She straight said to a deaf girl if you can't hear then don't come up here asking questions."

One female resident, as a person who uses a walker, provided an example of her experience of being in jail as someone with a disability. She states that,

"Let me give you an example... I have a walker... I can only go so far... you never know when I lose my balance... now when I first got here... the way they brought me in... I didn't have none of my stuff... they had to give me a wheelchair... When I got here after intake... you have a white shirt screaming at me... when I went to court, I needed a chair... when I got back and came out of my chair... my walker was outside my cell. I made it... but is that equity."

Another prominent concern for residents involved how residents with different ethnicities experienced inequities. The conversation revolved around challenges with language barriers, including how these barriers can impact various procedures and processes within the jail. One female resident indicated that,

"We have a woman in the pod that is Hispanic, and no one in our pod speaks Spanish... she needs something to translate... like on the tablet...we need bilingual officers..."

One Hispanic male resident described his experience, stating that,

"That would need to be put through in Spanish and get more things in Spanish in that tablet when it comes to writing us a grievance form. Everything should be in that tablet. I don't know why they haven't done it. It's going to take time, but they should have in that tablet a grievance form so that they can send it to the right people. Honestly, even a sick call should be done on that tablet."

These language barriers around grievances that residents submit to jail personnel limit the opportunity for residents who speak little to no English as they are unable to understand the process and need to rely heavily on fellow residents to help them translate documents. Furthermore, suppose residents cannot document and submit a grievance simply because they may not be able to adequately understand the document or the process due to the language barrier. In that case, staff are not held accountable. This issue extends to resident handbooks of policies and practices every resident receives when they enter the jail. If they do not understand the language in the handbook, this could result in conduct violations because the residents are not informed of the rules in their specific language but will ultimately be held accountable to these rules.

Additionally, residents emphasized the importance of staff accountability in preventing drug-related incidents, taking seriously the need for medical services, or are experiencing a medical emergency. One white female resident noted that,

"We had somebody in our pod detoxing...The inmate had been telling them all-day, she's not okay, they need to come check on her. She went in and checked on the lady and her heartbeat pulse was still low. She was in there having a seizure when the nurse went to check on her and they had to rush her down to the infirmary."

In another scenario, one Black male resident spoke about the unfortunate loss of his friend. He shared that

"I had a friend that was in the same position …the job he got, and early that day he kept complaining about headaches and he wasn't feeling well and they still had him come to work. Three hours later, he was dead. They got him on camera, pushing the carts in and all of that. Three hours later, he went to the cell. He said he wanted to lay down and said he had to go back to work at seven. He went to lay down from six to seven and he didn't come back up. He was dead. The whole time, he had a brain tumor. He kept complaining about his head hurting that whole week."

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Black staff often encounter racial obstacles as part of their daily experiences, whereas white staff may not recognize them due to their privilege. This raises the question of whether racism is perceived as beyond the realm of influence compared to other day-to-day routine factors, given its deep-seated presence in the everyday experiences of Black staff. Black staff perceive racially influenced behavior in various aspects of their daily work experience within the jail. One notable observation is that staff feel safer during intake procedures compared to working on the floor. There may be differential treatment or safety concerns based on race within different areas of the jail.

Moreover, Black staff mentioned the existence of a "Black phone and white phone" for staff members. This distinction implies a segregation of landlines for staff use, highlighting a socially sanctioned culture of racism within the jail environment. Such segregation may extend beyond communication methods and could potentially manifest in other aspects of staff interactions and dynamics within the facility. One Black male supervisory staff shared that, "One staff member went to the January 6 protest at US Capitol; came back and publicized it. Also told an Asian staff member that it is his fault there is Covid here." We observed staff members discuss an instance where a Black female officer in a security position was assaulted while on duty and expressed how a white officer who stated she "brought it on herself" was subsequently promoted as a leader in the jail. These comments highlight the implicit and pervasive acceptance of racism as experienced by staff.

Racial Dynamics and Leadership

The recognition of implicit acceptance of racism within the organization is notable, with the reported instances of racially insensitive comments and the promotion of individuals associated with such remarks. Although there was optimism regarding potential change with a new leadership team in place, staff voiced doubts concerning the deeply ingrained nature of the culture and the difficulties in addressing racial dynamics.

As another layer to the implicit experiences of racism, there is a necessity of balancing power distribution in racial equity work, particularly in the context of jails where conditions of confinement are intertwined with power dynamics. Participants recognized that jails are environments characterized by powerlessness, emphasizing the importance of addressing power imbalances to achieve racial equity.

This sense of powerlessness is recounted by one Black female staff member commenting,

"We have done this before [staff focus groups], and nothing has come about…they led us to believe we have the power to change things…it was a complete waste of our time."

Another staff member discussed how leadership has to be invested and has to care about what is happening for change to occur, stating that,

"We are on a ship that is sinking and is on fire. I do not believe this is going to get better as you have leaders that do not give a damn. If we had the bodies this would work. Leadership does not care."

Discussion on Experiences of Racial Disparities & Trust

Because the idea of change felt so distant for many participants, trust emerged as a crucial element throughout the discussions, particularly regarding the trust of facilitators and the need to foster trust within the Change Team group themselves. Participants emphasized the importance of building layers of trust within the groups, acknowledging the potential for more distrust among group members compared to outsiders. The challenge here is effectively assessing distrust among group members.

The development of recommendations prompted extensive conversations within each workgroup, offering valuable insights into the realities of living and working in a jail environment. Participants discussed perceptions of racism and racial inequity, with residents expressing concerns about racism being overlooked and limited job opportunities for women residents perpetuating gender bias. Staff, particularly Black staff, recounted experiencing racial obstacles in their daily work lives, including differential treatment based on race and the existence of a segregated communication system. Concerns were also raised about racially insensitive comments made by white staff and the promotion of individuals associated with such remarks. Participants emphasized the need to address power imbalances and foster trust within the group to tackle racial disparities and drive meaningful change effectively.

2. RACIAL CAUCUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Holding racial caucus sessions offered opportunities to discuss issues like disparity, bias, racism, sexism, and culture in a demanding 24/7 work environment that can be emotionally intense and draining. As dynamics within the Change Teams fluctuated, so did the level of comfort in openly expressing experiences. This comfort level varied depending on the day or if a particularly charged conversation occurred during a workgroup. To address this, we organized racial caucuses where participants were grouped based on how they identified by their race or ethnicity (e.g., white, Black, Latinx) and were facilitated by someone of the same race/ethnicity. These caucuses provided a space for Change Team members to share their experiences in a way where they may have felt like the others in the room were most likely to understand their racial/ethnic experience as it relates to the intervention topics, potentially offering new insights that may not have been shared in previous workgroup discussions. Through these caucuses, we gathered additional recommendations for consideration.

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Racialized Double Standards in Policy & Procedure Enforcement, Especially Regarding Discipline

Participants felt the current internal affairs process was corrupt and unfair. The racial caucus members felt it was important to staff the internal affairs department with employees from outside of the jail because they would not reflect the entrenched policies, enforcement practices, and discipline practices of the past. The Caucus members felt the jail needed people with law enforcement knowledge and experience to staff this important position but felt an independent body would be more impartial. Caucus members advocated that when racial incidents occur, they should be investigated and addressed directly by an impartial outside group.

Two Black male correctional officers noted the importance of impartial review as they felt that in the current system there was no accountability for unfair or racist behaviors,

"I also heard the white officer pepper-sprayed a resident who was handcuffed and was not disciplined

or fired, he also referred to residents as monkeys and monsters."

"We had an individual that's in charge right now, was changing an officer's time, he taking stuff out of the files, he was basically stealing time for this woman, but, yet, he still kept his position and his title because he was white."

Lack of Fairness & Access in Salary, Pay & Incentives

Caucus members indicated that Black staff and other people of color had less access to promotions and other work incentives compared to their white counterparts. The members said the jail should promote more Black officers in the K-9 Unit, training department, and other staff positions with opportunities to gain exposure, valuable job skills, and supplemental income (with financial and non-financial incentives). The members felt the jail should develop a clear career pipeline from frontline staff to leadership positions so that more Black employees know the expectations, receive the support, get the training and development, and have access to the opportunities and mentorship that they need to grow in and beyond their roles at the jail.

Black male supervisory staff expressed their concerns around promotion and staffing assignments, stating that,

"Now, if you really want to talk about disparity, the majority of the Caucasians and supervisors have no inmate contact."

"The value, the ethnic value is different, or the racial value, ethnic value, however you want to put it, they value us differently, even though we may be more educated and more experienced, we're always offered less. Even if we're given a position where we're not provided with the additional perks that one of them may get out of it. Special shifts, or the additional incentive pay. We can be doing the same job and not receive the additional incentive pay. It's just bias, period."

Racial Bias in Promotions

Caucus members indicated they had witnessed racial bias in promotions. Members said that to promote fairness, more value should be placed on seniority and frontline experience in decision-making on promotions. The members indicated that Black staff tend to work for the jail for more extended periods before promotion and in positions that put them in closer proximity to residents. Members said seniority should be a leading consideration for salary, incentives, and promotions, instead of other factors like education level. A Black male supervisor indicated that,

"Majority of White supervisors have no inmate contact. They are behind the lines rather than on the frontlines and they get promoted. Blacks don't complain because they are trying to protect their pensions and are afraid of extreme retaliation."

The members recommended that the jail hire someone in the administration whose sole focus is ensuring that the jail advances diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This person would be a champion for DEI and greater fairness at the jail. They would work to improve the jail's culture, operations, policies, procedures, and practices.

3. POLICY, PROCEDURAL, AND PRACTICE INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sections delve into various aspects of equity and culture within the jail environment. We present the intervention recommendations around themes of disparities in hiring and promotions, limitations of staff training, staff mental health supports, access to mental and physical health supports for residents, and the

treatment and perceptions of residents by jail officers. These discussions shed light on critical issues such as unequal treatment based on race, inadequate training resources necessary to address situations specific to the jail setting, gaps in mental health support for both staff and residents, and biases in the perception and treatment of residents by jail staff. Through these insights, areas for improvement are identified to promote a culture of fairness, respect, and accountability within the jail setting.

The totality of the proposed policy, practice, and procedural intervention recommendations were grouped into three areas of focus for staff and three areas of focus for residents.

- **Staff Focus Areas**
  - Focus Area #1: Hiring
  - Focus Area #2: Training
  - Focus Area #3: Staffing Supports

- **Resident Focus Areas**
  - Focus Area #1: Health and Wellbeing
  - Focus Area #2: Access to Programs
  - Focus Area #3: Staff and Resident Interactions

Below, we list the final reduced set of recommendations, discuss each of the focus areas, and describe insights about the importance of each focus area as shared by staff and resident Change Team members. All recommended policy, practice, and procedural interventions are listed in the Appendix.

Change Team participants were tasked with reviewing the comprehensive list of intervention recommendations and ranking their top five recommendations while incorporating the feedback from surveys and focus groups (this process is described further in section 4). The survey data collected from both residents and staff played an important role in shaping the final project recommendations, providing valuable insights into the feasibility, acceptability, and receptivity of the proposed interventions. For female residents, a focus group format allowed for in-depth discussions, where participants raised concerns such as the need for specialized women's health services and improved access to communication technology. Similarly, male residents participated in focus groups, expressing various concerns ranging from mental health support to cultural dorm representatives. The feedback highlighted the importance of nutritious meals, health and fitness resources, and programming needs as top priorities for all residents. On the other hand, staff surveys revealed significant concerns related to pay, hiring recommendations, and the need for training in interpersonal communication. Staff emphasized the importance of consistency in policies and practices, and adequate support for mental health issues, particularly following critical incident. These insights provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by staff members and informed recommendations aimed at improving work conditions, communication, and mental health support.

Overall, the survey data served as further validation of the recommendations proposed by the workgroups, offering additional perspectives and identifying key areas of concern. By incorporating feedback from a broader community of staff and residents, the final recommendations were tailored to address the most pressing concerns to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability within the jail environment.

Subsequently, each staff and resident Change Team proceeded to further refine their focus by selecting approximately 10 recommendations from the three areas. Throughout this process, the Change Teams carefully considered the potential impact of each recommended intervention on the overarching goals of achieving racial equity and fostering cultural change within the jail. What resulted from this process was the refined set of recommendations outlined below for both the

Staff Change Team and Resident Change Teams. The recommendations listed below are verbatim from the notetaking during the Change Team workgroups.

RESIDENT CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Health & Wellbeing

- Review and modify the policies regarding what items are allowed and not allowed for sale in the commissary. Ask residents for their opinions on what should be available for purchase.
- Develop a check-out/check-in process for women's products that they cannot keep in the pod (e.g., toenail clippers). The women acknowledge the limitations of being able to keep certain items within the rooms/pods due to security issues.
- Increase access to hygiene items such as feminine products, deodorant, shaving products, and bras. This would include increasing the amount and the items available.
- Increase facility cleanliness. This can be done by allowing women in the pod to help with cleaning duties.
- Create a detox policy that provides support from jail staff instead of relying so heavily on peers. Sometimes, women are put in the infirmary, but this isn't always common practice.
- Increase services for mental health needs that address women's unique struggles – for example, sexual abuse, shame, and childcare concerns. Develop a process like an ombudsperson that would help with life issues.
- Review the possibility of securing an app for the tablet that allows for translation services and communication for the hearing impaired.
- Provide healthy meals and accommodate dietary needs (example: diabetes and food allergies).
- Allow access to exercise every day, as was policy before COVID-19.
- Ensure access to more health and fitness equipment.
- When correctional officers see someone who needs medical help, they should ask: "Are you self-declaring a medical emergency?" and if the answer is yes, the resident should get immediate medical attention.
- Conduct more frequent physical health checks.
- Provide adequate services for mental health needs.
- Improve the transparency and ease of the medication dispensary experience.

Access to Programs

- Improve the orientation process by having it in person. This way, residents will know the rules better when they first come to the facility.
- Reinstate the in-person orientation program.
- Consider allowing a resident to participate in the orientation program, which will allow clarification of the rules and regulations from a resident's perspective.
- Allow residents to set up peer-led programs around their interests, skills, and talents. Examples of topics: self-awareness, orientation to jail operations, publishing/ writing and teaching how to pray.
- Increase fairness regarding how programs are communicated and who is allowed to sign up. Broaden access to work opportunities for all charge types.
- All residents be made aware of open programs and opportunities for enrollment and be allowed to sign up indicating their interest.
- To ensure greater fairness, have a lottery system for every floor/unit so that all residents have the opportunity to participate in programs.

Staff and Resident Interactions

- Have staff participate in training in the following areas: Mental health/trauma trainings, code of conduct training, emotional intelligence, de-escalation/ how to use words to de-escalate.

- Develop a private and secure grievance submission process. This would include a process that would enforce consequences for staff not following DJS policy on managing grievances. It could be as simple as downloading the apps.
- Hold staff accountable to the jail code of conduct.
- Do not allow staff with a history of documented bad behavior (misconduct) to train other staff.
- Make a special app for resident tablets to report problems and submit grievances electronically. This app would automatically be installed on resident tablets. Grievances would go directly to appropriate administrators who are not working on the floor.
- Peer-based grievances review (also called a resident council): Assemble a group of residents from the different floors to form a committee that reviews filed grievances and helps staff determine resolutions.
- Establish a hearing committee to investigate grievances and write-ups.
- Establish a resident advisor for each pod.

CONTEXT OF RESIDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Access to Mental and Physical Health Supports**

Wellness emerged as a prominent theme. Participants identified a need for more exercise equipment, like a calisthenic bar and exercise, with the goal of facilitating better physical health and wellness activities. There was a concern about the nutrition provided, and residents desired healthier meals. Participants highlighted the need for improved access to medications for residents' physical health management and continuity of care for chronic conditions. A Hispanic male resident describes his healthcare needs and the lack of healthy food, citing that,

"I'm a diabetic, I need better meals."

"We eat cake three times a day, I don't think we need to be eating cake three times a day."

A Black female resident describes the need for more counselors, expressing,

"Availability of mental health counselors. When you are here you are missing your kids and your family... it gets hard... availability to talk to someone would be wonderful."

A few Black male residents commented in depth about the need for better physical and mental health care supports, stating that,

"Let me tell you something you don't know... somebody died last week... this was before breakfast... he told one of the Co's he couldn't breathe. After the breakfast trays were passed out.... He died... they didn't take him seriously."

"They don't take it serious until you are unresponsive."

"Since I have been here... I have put in a mental health card every week.... It's been 2 months. I have Bipolar and I can't get my medication. I have been diagnosed by multiple doctors and I still can't get my medication."

"I had a swollen prostate, and I couldn't urinate... I complained to multiple nurses... I developed 3 liters of urine over multiple weeks... the nurses thought I had gas... I ended up getting a hernia because of it... I was literally on the floor every night... I would go to the nurse, and they wouldn't show up... one of the nurses didn't even want to touch me... I help kept calling the nurses telling them there was blood going through the bag... it took over 3 hours for them to come... they finally came to change out my catheter... I went like that for 2 weeks... they wouldn't take me seriously... I could have died... for two weeks I was on the floor because I was in so much pain."

Recommendations include the implementation of more frequent physical health screenings and moving beyond annual check-ups to promptly address emerging health needs. Residents recognized a need to initiate mental health screenings and provide training for staff to identify and support residents with mental health concerns. And, the residents asked that mental health treatment be provided with compassion and support, rather than punishment, to encourage residents to seek help without fear of reprisal. Implementing procedures for residents to access mental health consultations through sick call forms can streamline the process and encourage proactive care-seeking behaviors. These recommendations aim to improve the overall healthcare environment within the facility, fostering a culture of holistic well-being and support for all residents.

Lack of Resident Programs and Inequities in Access to Programs

Resident workgroups described a lack of beneficial programs within the jail, from reentry-related programs and peer supports to programs that help residents improve in areas such as financial literacy. Furthermore, staff and residents expressed concerns with the differential access to programming that is available. For example, there is a residential substance abuse treatment program in the jail. Generally, participants feel strongly that the availability of programming is impacted by race and gender, with a Black female counseling staff reporting,

> *"There is a racial bias in the fact that African Americans are just not offered it [drug program in the jail]. We are so quick to send them to prison instead of treatment. There are some people who have never been offered the* program*... it's a lack of access... it comes from the courts... the attorney's own biases.... That we are going to give this other person a chance. I have worked with some African Americans that end up having to advocate for themselves and ask their attorney to be in [the drug program]."*

Some Black male residents noted concerns regarding the lack of available programming opportunities, saying things like,

> *"We don't have any beneficial programs unless the court orders it... peer groups would help because no one knows what we are going through except us."*

> *"They have programs, but they are only programs offered to certain individuals."*

Language Barriers and Misrepresentation of Race/Ethnicity

Workgroup discussion points centered on the treatment of Hispanic residents within the jail facility. Concerns were raised regarding the lack of consideration for Hispanic and/or Spanish-speaking residents, leading to perceptions of unfair treatment and inadequate access to services.

One Hispanic male resident shared his concerns, stating,

> *"Grievances, with that, I see a lot of...they don't speak English. The COs are like, "He speaks English... I'm like, "How do you know?" You're going to sit there tell me if he's telling me he only speak a little English, and you're telling me he does."*

Residents reported that staff members were observed to hold presumptions about racial identity and ethnicity, which may influence their interactions with residents. Additionally, there were specific challenges highlighted, such as language barriers, with limited staff members being fluent in Spanish, leaving some residents with limited access to information and support. For instance, essential documents like the inmate handbook are not available in Spanish, creating further obstacles for residents who may struggle to understand rules and regulations while incarcerated.

One Hispanic male shared his own experience of his ethnicity being misrepresented, stating that,

"It's like the cards we get [admissions cards]. On the cards we get it says we are white. I'm not white, I'm Hispanic.. .so, you added me to the wrong race."

Residents viewed these cultural and linguistic diversity issues within the jail environment as barriers to ensuring equitable treatment and access to services for all residents.

Treatment and Perceptions of Residents by Jail Officers
One issue raised was the tendency for residents to be automatically viewed as "guilty" by jail staff even before their trial or legal proceedings. One Black male resident expressed his view of this perception:

"We are viewed as guilty when we walk through the door... when you are already treated as an animal, but then they act surprised when they act that way... in other words when someone walks through that door, you should be treated with respect."

"Once you put this uniform on you are guilty in their eyes"

Residents explained that this preconceived perception undermines the principle of presumed innocence and has a negative impact on the climate and culture of the institution. The lack of privacy surrounding residents' charges, with these details being visible to all staff members, was also a concern. Moreover, instances of disrespect and dehumanization toward residents by staff members were reported, highlighting the need for improved professionalism and empathy within the facility.

Another significant finding was the absence of a clear disciplinary process, such as a formal hearing board, to investigate violations. This lack of structure can lead to inconsistencies in addressing misconduct and may undermine accountability and fairness within the facility.

Black male residents explained why the recommendations they prioritized regarding infractions were so important, saying,

"I think they still need to establish a hearing committee. The only way you are going to get out of a write up is if they say you punched someone in the face, and they look at the camera and see you didn't do it. Here you get punished before it is investigated. Sometimes you have been in the hole 3 days before they look at your write up. There could be resident council. They need a process so that they investigate a problem before you are punished."

"They try to deter you. They try to break you down mentally and spiritually.... They got staff spitting on us, disrespecting us... eventually we just say we are guilty to get out."

These recommendations underscore the necessity of fostering a culture of compassion, equity, and accountability to uphold the well-being and rights of all residents within the facility. Next, we present the themes and focus areas identified by staff.

STAFF CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Hiring

- Raise the age for new hires back to 21.
- Allow existing staff members with similar positions to be on the hiring team for the same position or positions they have held in the past because they understand what is required to complete the job successfully.
- Hiring/promotions policies should be consistently enforced. Standards should not be modified to accommodate preferred candidates.

- Hire more Black people in leadership positions, the training department, and other areas where there are opportunities to gain exposure and visibility, as well as supplemental income.

Training

- Provide more extensive de-escalation training.
- Conduct field training and training in the pods prior to classroom training to allow for a better understanding of the position prior to completing the staff training.
- Once a trainee's floor assignment is known, the classroom trainer should meet with the FTIs on that floor to provide background information on the trainees' strengths, weaknesses, and classroom performance.
- Develop a train-the-trainer program that enhances trainer skill development.
- Change the training platform from online to conducting trainings in person.
- Lengthen the on-the-job training and establish shared standards and training protocols that are adopted equally on each floor—currently, operations and procedures differ on each floor.
- Identify subject matter experts both in-house and locally to provide training and augment incentives for subject matter expert/senior staff's involvement in training.
- Develop shared standards and training protocols.

Staffing Supports

- Increase salary and incentives to existing staff.
- Reinstate the pay increase to leadership and case managers that was enacted during COVID-19.
- Do a study of shifts to determine which options would best staff the jail and ensure stability (e.g., 4 days of 10-hour shifts, 12 hours shifts).
- Be consistent with scheduling rules and allow more work-life balance.

CONTEXT OF STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Fairness and Accessibility in Hiring and Promotions**

Participants candidly discussed various barriers and facilitators to achieving racial equity, shedding light on key issues within the organization. One Black staff member describes one white staff as being promoted even when engaging in serious conduct violations,

> *"Accountability has to be done. We can tell you more stories where people of Caucasian, who has been known to have been in trouble, from dating employees to you name it. From dating to assault, to pulling weapons, and not only did they didn't receive any time, they've gotten promotions and still getting promoted."*

While another Black staff member reacts to how they feel Black staff are undervalued, reporting,

> *"White staff and Black staff are not valued for their expertise equally. Even though Black staff may have more education and experience, they are valued less. Also, they are offered less perks. EX: incentive pay, take home vehicle, special shifts. Blacks do not get perks at all often."*

One prominent concern voiced by staff was the perceived lack of respect for the chain of command, leading to confusion and inefficiencies in operations. Transparency surrounding the hiring and promotion process was also highlighted, with staff expressing frustration over unclear procedures and policies, particularly regarding the hiring of supervisory staff and staff with little to no direct interaction with jail residents. One staff person raised concern about training officers whom he felt did not have the requisite experience working with incarcerated people to be training others.

> *"Most of them [training officers] down there that don't even have that five or six years and they don't have*

no floor experience. Most of them came in straight through the pod, ended up getting out of the pod, going to another department, without excelling in that nor that. Now they're training these people, and they have no knowledge of the floor, but, yet, you're training our new people, and when they get to the floor, they're so confused because they only know about what they were taught."

Furthermore, concerns were raised about the professionalism and experience of new hires, suggesting potential gaps in recruitment and onboarding processes. A Black male custody supervisory staff voiced that,

"We have bodies, they're just not qualified. They're not. Most of the people shouldn't have been hired. I've got one guy who can't even read."

While a Hispanic male resident describes his thoughts on the hiring of younger staff and its impact on interactions with residents:

"A lot of these youngsters, they're coming in, especially the females, they'll come in and start yelling, 'Oh, you need to do this.' You think these guys are going to respect you by yelling at us? Look how old you are and look how old they are. There was one time in here, a female CO got beat up, hurt. She got beat up because she disrespected one of the guys. I don't know what happened, I wasn't in the pod. A lot of the times these females are talking crazy to these guys. These guys, what if these guy—He got sentenced to life. He has nothing to lose. He's going to beat up the CO. He's going to beat up this female. It's already happened twice. They need to hire somebody older, and that's more calm, they would treat these guys like human beings. They need to be treated like human beings."

Limitations of Staff Training

Staff training was described as one fundamental deficit in achieving a positive jail culture. Participants felt the existing staff training videos were outdated and did not effectively address real-life situations. Furthermore, the accessibility of online learning platforms raised concerns for staff about the potential for cheating and the lack of realism in addressing practical scenarios. Concerns were raised regarding the inadequacy of situation-based training for the use of force and the absence of de-escalation techniques in the training curriculum. Furthermore, staff reported insufficient crisis intervention team training and overall experience with training, including among management personnel. A white male custody supervisory staff mentioned that,

"A lot of the training is outdated… the staff that had been here 15 years had the same training."

A few Black male correctional officers described limited opportunities for training, reporting,

"Black staff are not offered opportunities to get additional training to pick up special jobs and not offered additional paid opportunities to serve."

One staff member was exacerbated and said,

"You have no practice, you have no principles, you have no SOPs [standard operating procedures], you have nothing to guide anybody in this building on how to do anything."

A prevailing lack of trust among staff, coupled with a perceived deficit of knowledge within the training department, contributed to the perceived overall ineffectiveness of staff training. Suggestions were made to involve experienced personnel in leading training sessions and implementing a "train the trainer" program

to enhance training quality. However, it was noted that many veteran officers expressed reluctance to participate in training activities. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive enhancements in staff training methodologies within the jail setting that address typical situations staff may encounter in their day-to-day operations.

Staff Mental Health Supports

There was a clear need for more mental health supports, either for staff themselves or more training provided to address the mental health needs of residents. Staff shared that mental health first aid training, once provided, was no longer available. This lack of training creates a gap in addressing critical issues that could arise within the jail around emergency procedures when responding to resident and/or staff crises. Staff felt that there was a need for training sessions aimed at educating staff on identifying and addressing mental health issues commonly observed among residents. One staff person describes some of the needs in this space,

> *"Unless we have mental health staff here on a 24-hour basis, we rely on the afternoon and midnight shift… we are dealing with people who are suicidal or are hearing voices… the only thing we can do is have them to see a nurse, but even that… they are not equipped…. It's not just a capacity issue. Most of our staff don't know how to recognize mental health issues… Some don't even know what to look for… It would be good if it was something that funding would support."*

4. SURVEY RESULTS: FEASIBILITY, ACCEPTABILITY, & RESPONSIVENESS

Feedback from the larger community of staff and residents of the jail who did not participate in the workgroups was sought to gauge their perspectives on the recommended interventions to assess feasibility, acceptability, and receptivity. This process allowed surveys and focus groups with 67 staff and 60 residents to validate the recommendations and provide additional insights on the proposed interventions and on areas not addressed by the interventions.

Female Resident Survey

The research team convened a focus group comprising six female participants who were not affiliated with the existing women's workgroup, to complete a resident survey ranking the 74 proposed recommendations. This format facilitated the provision of contextual information for each recommendation and allowed for thorough discussion with the participants. All participants in this phase of the project had previous experiences of incarceration ranging from 30 days to 2 years.

Each participant was provided with a designated section to record any additional concerns not covered in the survey. Several participants availed themselves of this opportunity, expressing grievances such as the need for specialized women's health services and improved access to communication technology, such as tablets.

Male Resident Survey

A similar focus group format was conducted for male residents, which included 44 individuals . The majority of participants had been incarcerated for durations ranging from 30 days to 6 months, though some had shorter or longer stays, spanning up to 4 years. In addition to the structured survey, participants were allowed to voice any additional concerns by filling a designated box. Many participants accepted this opportunity to express issues pertaining to mental health and well-being. Specifically, eight men raised concerns related to mental health, with multiple individuals highlighting the potential benefits of regular mental health check-ins. Similarly, eight participants mentioned issues regarding medication and medical needs, ranging from a call for increased medical proficiency to the ability to request medical attention during any medication distribution.

Furthermore, nine participants discussed smoking-related matters. Male residents expressed a desire for access to e-cigarettes or designated smoke breaks, with several advocating for the privilege to smoke based on good behavior. Three residents voiced the need for cultural dorm representatives who could serve as intermediaries between staff and residents. Additionally, four individuals advocated for the establishment of an inmate canteen fund to finance improvements such as enhanced workout equipment. Others cited additional concerns about food choices and no access to hot water.

Lastly, five residents identified programming needs in the supplementary fill-in box, which were added to or combined with the original recommendations.
One resident emphasized the necessity for more active programs, noting that some individuals thrive with a busier schedule. Program participation, aside from recreation, represents the only respite from confinement. Several participants expressed a desire for peer-led and peer support initiatives. Despite hopes for improvement, one resident remarked,

> *"How can we expect change? We are, in fact, considered animals, monsters. Although the thought of change would be fantastic, it's wishful. Very idealistic."*

Staff Survey

The staff surveys were conducted using a methodology distinct from that of the residents. Staff members were recruited via email and census sampling, with additional identification of individuals clocking in for their shifts. The research team utilized the meeting room from 11 am to midnight to ensure representation from all three shifts.
A total of 67 participants took part, with half identified as correctional officers and the remainder serving in case management or administrative roles.

Staff were shown a brief video providing context and explanation of the survey before being provided with the survey, with the research team available nearby to address any queries. Instructions regarding the recommendations were given prior to the staff completing the survey. The primary issues identified by staff related to pay for both incoming and existing personnel, alongside hiring recommendations. Additional feedback highlighted the need for training in interpersonal communication, with one case manager emphasizing the importance of respectful interaction with residents.

Participants underscored the significance of teamwork, noting its absence. Concerns were raised regarding shift allocation, short staffing, and inconsistencies in policies and practices, with one officer stating,

> *"Every floor is not ran the same which makes it confusing for new people coming in and more stressful."*

Mental health emerged as another issue among staff, particularly regarding support following assaults. Participants advocated for increased services for individuals dealing with PTSD, expressing dissatisfaction with the limitations of the existing Employee Assistance Program (EAP). One participant stated,

> *"Provide more services for those who may have or are dealing with PTSD and have to continue to work the EAP program only allows for 3 sessions of a therapist. More is needed done in this area."*

5. IMPLEMENTATION & SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The Facilitator Team was responsible for presenting the recommendations to the Jail Leadership Team and offering suggestions for selecting and implementing the recommended interventions. Throughout the PDSA process, it was acknowledged that it might take some time for the Jail Leadership Team to understand the implications of these recommendations before taking action.

However, it is critically important that implementation, evaluation, and sustainability received ample attention to prevent the extensive work done by the Change Teams from being lost in the day-to-day activities. Change Team members recognized that administrators change over time, and initiatives previously highly touted could be abandoned with new leadership. To avoid this, we provided a suggested implementation plan to the Jail Leadership Team to promote action and sustainability. The suggested steps involved in our recommended implementation plan are outlined in the next section as a method to allow for ongoing evaluation and sustainability of the selected recommendations.

Development of Evaluation & Sustainability Plans

A crucial aspect of wrapping up the PDSA process was ensuring a sustainability plan was in place to withstand the shifting nature of leadership. Example activities included establishing an ongoing implementation committee, documenting both the process and output of the Change Teams, setting quarterly and semi-annual benchmarks and reviews, and obtaining ongoing staff and resident feedback on the change process. Keeping the work of the groups at the forefront of the daily activities of the jail will help ensure that progress is maintained.

The implementation and sustainability plan focused on presenting the recommendations derived from the Change Team workgroup discussions to the Jail Administration Team. This presentation served as a crucial moment to convey the heartfelt work, experiences, and dedication of the workgroups towards fostering a more just and equitable environment within the jail. The Facilitator Team ensured that the recommendations were contextualized within the insights provided by the workgroups to facilitate understanding and discussion of the recommendations.

SUGGESTED STEPS FOR THE REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

TIPS - Guidance to the Administrative Team of Selecting Interventions to Adopt

1. Establish a decision-making subcommittee that includes racial & gender diversity for reviewing recommendations.
2. Apply a racial equity lens to help prioritize & select recommendations.
3. Identify accountable parties within the jail's leadership who would be responsible for over-seeing the implementation of the selected recommendations.
4. Develop specific steps to the implementation process which will include who is responsible for what specific actions and the anticipated due dates.
5. Develop a tiered communication process for the roll-out of the recommendations.
   - **5A.** First, communicate to workgroup participants the next steps for implementation
   - **5B.** Second, communicate to jail staff & residents who were not a part of the workgroups
   - **5C.** Third, communicate to external governing entities
6. Develop key messaging around recommendations. This messaging may include:
   - **6A.** Define why the recommendations were selected
   - **6B.** Describe the benefit of taking action on the recommendation
   - **6C.** Explain who will be responsible for the implementation of the recommendation
   - **6D.** Provide an anticipated timeline

The decision-making process of the Jail Administration Team is guided by the formation of decision-making subcommittees composed of jail administrators and direct service staff, considering diversity of gender and race/ethnicity to ensure varied perspectives. We strongly recommended these committees apply a racial equity lens to identify potential adverse impacts and patterns of racial bias and devise corrective actions to minimize such consequences. Communication with staff and residents is essential, to emphasize the agency's commitment to action and recognize the contributions of workgroup participants, and survey and focus group participants.

Furthermore, establishing an implementation team within the jail is paramount, with a clear delineation of accountable individuals and timelines for recommendation rollouts, categorized as immediate, short-term, and long-term; this will be critical for ensuring the ongoing efforts for implementing the recommendations are sustained. Communication with staff precedes any external discussions, ensuring internal stakeholders are informed of the outcomes before external dissemination, which we see as vital to maintaining trust within the jail. Overall, this implementation plan specified the importance of sustained commitment, clear communication, and proactive engagement to ensure the successful integration of recommendations into the jails practices and policies.

DISCUSSION

LESSONS LEARNED

The Importance of a Thorough, Thoughtful Planning Stage for Trust-building

During the planning stage, it became evident that the expedited planning process, within the short timeframe of the PDSA structure, posed several challenges. Time constraints were a significant factor and limited the depth of discussions and the thoroughness of planning, specifically within the early workgroup sessions. The pressure to move quickly may have led to oversight or swift decision-making, potentially compromising the comprehensiveness of interventions. It may also affect the trust built within the groups, which is needed given the sensitive topic of racial equity issues. However, an expedited process is often necessary in work of this type, given the frequent turnover among staff and residents. In addition, staffing constraints limited the time that staff and residents could be away from general custody. Additionally, balancing the need for efficiency with the importance of inclusivity and thoroughness presented a delicate challenge. This highlights the importance of finding a balance between efficiency and comprehensive planning in fast-paced projects.

Impact of Time Constraints on Staff and Residents

The time constraints placed on staff and residents throughout the project, because of staffing limitations and the nature of the PDSA process, had notable effects on their involvement and engagement. Limited time for meetings and deliberations may have caused stress and fatigue among participants, potentially hindering their ability to contribute effectively. The expedited nature of the process may have hindered trust-building and rapport development among team members. Recognizing and addressing the impact of time constraints on participants' well-being and engagement was crucial for maintaining motivation and productivity throughout the project.

Fairness in Compensating Research Participants

In response to the challenges posed by time constraints, discussions arose regarding the possibility of providing overtime pay for staff involved in the project. Offering compensation could have potentially incentivized participation and mitigated concerns about workload and time commitment. Furthermore, this monetary gesture demonstrates the value placed on the time and effort put into this process. However, it is important to carefully consider budget constraints and equitable distribution of compensation to ensure fairness and feasibility.

The research team provided $15 gift cards to staff who participated in the work or focus groups. Residents were given snacks during workgroups and survey distribution.

Prioritizing Trust-building Activities

To accelerate trust development and the implementation of recommendations despite time constraints, suggestions were made to reorganize meeting agendas. Meetings became more focused and productive by prioritizing agenda items related to trust-building activities and action planning. This reorganization ensured that essential aspects of the project, such as building relationships and driving implementation, receive adequate attention despite limited time.

Emphasis on the Need for more Touchpoints with Leadership

Given the critical role of leadership support to drive culture change, there was an emphasis on the need for more frequent touchpoints with leadership throughout the project. Increased communication and engagement with leadership and the research team facilitated alignment of priorities, garnered buy-in for proposed interventions sooner, and secured resources necessary for implementation. Regular updates and feedback sessions with leadership ensure that the project remains aligned with organizational goals and receives the necessary support for the successful execution of recommendations.

Monitoring and Accountability in the Jail Environment

Discussions highlighted the significance of implementing an external process to better understand conditions within the jail, recognizing that internal monitoring may be compromised. Concerns were raised about the jail's ability to effectively self-monitor issues related to racism and racial equity. This reiterates the importance of independent accountability mechanisms and monitoring practices to address equity and fairness in the conditions of confinement within the jail.

Benefits of Follow-through and Sustained Commitment

A crucial consideration is the importance of strong follow-through of recommendations. Without consistent action to address issues recommended for intervention, there's a risk of perpetuating racism and racial inequities; without visible efforts to make any recommended changes, this would likely validate what staff and residents currently experience with racism and other intersecting inequities. This highlights the need for sustained commitment and effort to create lasting change.

Disconnect in Carceral Environments

Concerns about the lack of visibility and accountability in carceral environments highlighted the disconnect between administration, staff, and residents in addressing issues. This prompted a discussion on the need for process improvement. Involving jail administration in the workgroup process at an earlier stage in the PDSA cycle is ideal and important. However, challenges include maintaining confidentiality and ensuring the psychological safety of staff and resident participants.

Celebrating Small Wins

Intentionally celebrating small victories by identifying and implementing "small win" interventions early in the PDSA process would have helped participants take ownership of the process, built trust sooner, allowed reflection of the jail's commitment throughout the process, and facilitated buy-in for sustainable change. Initiating implementation teams sooner and integrating a three-month action plan earlier would have fostered greater engagement, promoted transparent discussions, and reduced barriers to establishing processes in the jail.

Accelerating the PDSA process

Considering the prolonged nature of the process in overwhelmed and understaffed environments like jails, it might be feasible to condense the PDSA process while maintaining the same level of effort required in the PDSA

process. Instead of an 18-month process, perhaps focusing on 9 to 12 months would be more efficient. This might be slightly longer work sessions and concurrent processes. Accelerating process issues is essential in high-turnover environments.

KEY TAKEAWAYS & LOOKING AHEAD

Implementing and sustaining change within the organizational framework of a jail setting is difficult. It underscores the fundamental role of trust-building and relationship cultivation in fostering effective collaboration and open dialogue among staff and residents, a process that inherently requires time and patience. Moreover, the PDSA process itself can be resilient and lead to successful results even in the face of organizational upheavals, including leadership changes, staff turnover, and operational challenges such as jail overcrowding. Despite the daily crises and distractions inherent in the jail environment, maintaining focus on addressing racial and gender disparities remains paramount. It can be accomplished by emphasizing the need for clear communication about the project's goals and processes. Given the nature of the jail environment, we explored the delicate balance between thoroughness and timeliness, which prompted a discussion on the exploration of streamlined processes to achieve project objectives efficiently. Through a comprehensive examination of these factors, the section aims to provide insights into the complexities and challenges associated with driving meaningful change. Below, we identify the key takeaways from this process:

- **Lengthy Process Requiring Trust Building**

The process involves extensive trust and relationship building, which naturally takes time. Establishing trust is crucial for effective collaboration and open dialogue among participants.

- **Resilience to Organizational Changes**

The work conducted within the project has shown resilience in the face of organizational transitions, including changes in leadership, staff turnover, and challenges such as overcrowding.

- **Impact of Daily Crises on Focus Areas**

Daily challenges and crises inherent in the jail environment can divert attention from addressing racial and gender disparities, making it essential to maintain focus on these critical issues.

- **Importance of Clear Communication**

Effective communication about the process and its goals is paramount for sustaining momentum and engagement among stakeholders throughout the project duration.

- **Benefits of External Facilitation**

Utilizing an external facilitation team that has expertise in racial inequities for the PDSA process enhances accountability, commitment, and transparency, instilling confidence in the integrity of the work.

- **Significance of Racial Caucuses**

Racial caucuses provide a crucial platform for individuals to express perspectives they may be hesitant to share in mixed-race groups, fostering a more inclusive and authentic dialogue.

- **Concerns Regarding Change Efficacy**

Despite significant investment and resources, members of the Change Team may express genuine concerns about the perceived lack of substantive change, highlighting the importance of addressing apprehensions and fostering optimism.

- **Balancing Thoroughness and Timeliness**

While collecting all recommended interventions beforehand allows for thorough review and intentional

implementation, it may result in substantial delays before tangible changes are realized, necessitating a balance between depth of work and expediency.

- **Balance of Power Distribution**

Achieving racial equity in jail settings demands a delicate balance of power distribution, acknowledging the intertwining of conditions of confinement with prevailing power dynamics, as integral to the pursuit of racial equity.

CONCLUSION

One of the common pitfalls in racial equity projects is the failure to achieve real and lasting progress on proposed changes. Implementation is where many initiatives falter, whether in jail contexts or other settings. Despite the significant energy and resources invested in studying, identifying, prioritizing, and recommending interventions, the process can potentially do more harm than good if subsequent action does not occur. Such inaction can lead to further cynicism about the environment and culture. It risks becoming a wasted effort and can undermine the vulnerability that participants have exposed themselves to.

This lack of action can send a discouraging message, particularly to members of minoritized groups, suggesting that organizations are willing to invest resources to study the problem but not to address it. This dynamic creates a feedback loop where individuals may become hesitant to participate in future processes that hold the promise of change but fail to deliver.

When the process of identifying necessary changes to achieve equity does not translate into tangible improvements in the lived experiences of people of color, systemic and structural disparities persist. The project achieved notable successes with the hope of combating such inaction, from the development of comprehensive recommendations addressing racial equity and intersectional inequities within the jail system to the intrinsic value found within the PDSA process itself, fostering open dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among workgroup participants. Additionally, the successful presentation of recommendations to jail leadership marked a pivotal milestone, indicative of the potential influence in advancing institutional change and promoting a more equitable environment within the facility.

To facilitate implementation, we recommend several actions.

- The Jail Leadership Team should establish a decision-making subcommittee that reflects racial, ethnic, and gender diversity to review and prioritize recommendations. This committee must establish clear criteria for selecting and implementing interventions to legitimize its decisions and minimize vulnerability to criticism. Applying a racial equity lens throughout this process is essential.
- The Jail Leadership Team should identify accountable parties within the jail leadership to ensure implementation, evaluation, and necessary adjustments occur. Delineated accountability will enhance the likelihood of successful implementation and evaluation.
- Effective communication of intentions and processes is crucial. The Jail Leadership Team should devise key messages about the process, its anticipated benefits, responsible parties, and decision rationales. These messages should be disseminated to workgroup participants, staff, residents, and the wider community.
- The research and facilitation team should continue to partner with the Jail Leadership Team to conduct an implementation and evaluation study. The goals of this study would be to identify effective implementation strategies and to evaluate the impact of implemented interventions on experiences and perceptions of racial and other intersecting inequities and on overall jail culture and conditions of confinement.

APPENDIX A

STAFF CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA 1: HIRING

- Increase starting pay and provide a signing bonus for new staff.
- Raise the age for new hires back to 21.
- Reinstate the pre-employment exam and require staff to pass the exam prior to being interviewed.
- Enact consistent and transparent criteria for hiring.
- Enact consistent and transparent criteria for promotions.
- Develop a post-interview feedback process for staff who apply and are denied a promotion.
- Require staff who are involved in hiring decisions to attend human resources (HR) and diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) training.
- Allow existing staff members with similar positions to be on the hiring team for the same position or positions they have held in the past because they understand what is required to successfully complete the job.

AREA 2: TRAINING & SECURITY

- Change the training platform from online to conducting trainings in person
- Provide more extensive de-escalation training.
- Provide training on understanding and responding to mental health problems seen among incarcerated individuals.
- Provide training on understanding and responding to mental health problems staff are experiencing.
- Lengthen on-the-job training.
- Identify subject matter experts both in-house and locally to provide training.

STAFF CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA 2: TRAINING & SECURITY (CONT.)

- Conduct field training and training in the pods prior to classroom training to allow for a better understanding of the position prior to completing the new staff training.
- Provide intensive, specialized training for staff to address the needs of higher risk residents.
- Require staff to go through the body scanner prior to entering the jail.
- Staff an officer at the 3rd Floor Post at all times.
- Review and assess the effectiveness of the security company that is providing supplemental support.
- Review and update the critical incident emergency plan.
- Require mandatory testing and training on the critical incident protocol.
- Establish shared standards and training protocols that are adopted equally on each floor – currently, operations and procedures differ on each floor.
- Provide field training staff (FTIs) ongoing training and booster sessions on standard protocols and supports.
- Establish periodic meetings for all field training staff (FTIs) to review and evaluate the training curriculum and processes.
- Develop a feedback process that would allow trainers to provide targeted training and professional support for employees struggling with certain skills.
- Augment incentives for subject matter expert /senior staff 's involvement in training.
- Develop a process that would allow supervisory staff to serve as trainers.
- Develop a feedback loop for trainers and supervisors to ensure new staff training is reflecting the skill-sets required by the position.

STAFF CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA 3: STAFFING SUPPORT

- Increase salary and incentives to existing staff.
- Reinstate the pay increase to leadership and case managers that was enacted during COVID 19.
- Be consistent with scheduling rules and allow more work-life balance.
- Increase mental health services for staff.
- Improve mental health supports for residents.
- Offer more informal thanks, appreciation, and praise for jobs well done and for effort above and beyond calls of duty.
- Provide incentives for high performers (e.g., gift cards, thank you cards) that communicate appreciation.
- Reinstate the previous overtime policy where overtime is automatically earned after 8 hours are worked on any day.
- Do a study of shifts to determine which options would best staff the jail and ensure stability (e.g., 4 days of 10-hour shifts, 12 hours shifts)
- Increase comp time for field training staff (FTIs) who provide shadowing and training.
- Raise the pay for field training staff.
- Institute a probation period for field training staff.
- Restrict individuals who are on probationary status from serving as field training staff or providing shadowing.

APPENDIX B

RESIDENT CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA 1: HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Provide healthy meals and accommodate dietary needs (example: diabetes and food allergies).
- Allow access to exercise every day (like they used to have before COVID-19).
- Ensure access to more health and fitness equipment including: calisthenic bar, exercise mats, scale (for weight).
- When correctional officers see someone who needs medical help, they should ask "are you self-declaring a medical emergency" (and if the answer is yes, the resident should get immediate medical attention).
- Provide a more efficient system for sick card requests.
- Review the process by which medication is provided to residents.
- Give residents their med cards to check their medications to ensure they are correct.
- Conduct more frequent physical health screenings (not just once a year).
- Provide adequate services for mental health needs.
- Review and modify the policies regarding what items are allowed and not allowed for sale in the commissary. Ask residents for their opinions on what should be available for purchase.
- Develop a check-out/check-in process for women's products that they cannot keep in the pod (e.g., toenail clippers).
- Increase access to hygiene items such as feminine products, deodorant, shaving products, and bras. This would include increasing the amount and the items available.
- Increase facility cleanliness. This can be done by allowing women in the pod to help with cleaning duties.
- Create a detox policy that provides support from jail staff instead of relying so heavily on peers. Sometimes women are put in the infirmary, but this isn't always common practice.
- Increase services for mental health needs that address women's unique struggles. For example, sexual abuse, shame, and childcare concerns. Develop a process similar to an ombudsperson that would help with life issues.

RESIDENT CHANGE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA 2: ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

- Increase fairness with regard to how programs are communicated and who is allowed to sign up.
- Allow residents to set up peer-led programs around their interests, skills, and talents. Examples of topics: self-awareness, orientation to jail operations publishing/writing, and teaching how to pray.
- Broaden access to work opportunities for all charge types.
- Increase equity in work opportunities for women to make comparable to men. This would include increasing the types of jobs available and the number of women allowed to work.
- Allow women the same access to programs as men. Currently, women do not have access to college courses. In addition, expand or create programs relating to legal support and information.
- Allow residents to set up peer-led programs around their interests, skills, and talents. Example of topics: cooking class, self-care, exercise classes, and orientation to jail operations.
- Improve the orientation process by having it in person. This way, residents will know the rules better when they first come to the facility.

AREA 3: STAFF & RESIDENT INTERACTIONS

- Do not allow staff with a history of documented bad behavior (misconduct) to train other staff.
- Have staff participate in training in the following areas: Mental health/Trauma, code of conduct, emotional intelligence, de-escalation techniques.
- Make a special app for resident tablets where they can report problems and submit grievances electronically. This app would automatically be installed on resident tablets. Grievances would go directly to appropriate administrators who are not working on the floor.
- Establish a peer-based grievance review (also called a resident council): Assemble a group of residents from different floors to form a committee that reviews filed grievances and helps staff determine resolutions.
- Establish a resident advisor for each pod: This would be a new work opportunity position that is capable of helping to resolve resident issues, advocate on behalf of residents, and could be resident selected.
- Hold staff accountable to the DJS code of conduct.
- Ensure policy is being followed in regard to searches, especially drug searches.

APPENDIX C

FEMALE RESIDENT – FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESULTS

Note: Participants were instructed to list their top 5 priorities; therefore, the total number of responses will be larger than the number of participants.

FEMALE RESIDENT SURVEY RESULT RECOMMENDATIONS (N= 6)

ISSUE	N	%
Review and modify the policies regarding what items are allowed and not allowed for sale in the commissary. Ask residents for their opinions on what should be available for purchase.	4	13.8
Develop a private and secure grievance submission process. This would include a process that would enforce consequences for staff not following DJS policy on managing grievances.	4	13.8
Increase access to hygiene items such as feminine products, deodorant, shaving products, and bras. This would include increasing the amount and the items available.	3	10.3
Allow residents to set up peer-led programs around their interests, skills, and talents. Example of topics: cooking class, self-care, exercise classes, and orientation to jail operations.	3	10.3
Have staff participate in training in the following areas: Mental health/Trauma trainings, Code of conduct training, emotional intelligence, de-escalation- how to use words to de-escalate.	2	6.9
Provide healthy meals and accommodate dietary needs (example: diabetes and food allergies).	2	6.9
Increase facility cleanliness. This can be done by allowing women in the pod to help with cleaning duties.	2	6.9
Increase equity in work opportunities for women to make comparable to men. This would include increasing the types of jobs available and the number of women allowed to work.	2	6.9
Allow women the same access to programs as men. Currently, women do not have access to college courses. In addition, expand or create programs relating to legal support & information.	2	6.9
Hold staff accountable to the jail code of conduct.	1	3.4
Develop a check-out/check-in process for women's products that they cannot keep in the pod (e.g., toenail clippers)	1	3.4
Improve the orientation process by having it in person. This way, residents will know the rules better when they first come to the facility.	1	3.4
Increase services for mental health needs that address women's unique struggles. For example, sexual abuse, shame, and childcare concerns. Develop a process similar to an ombudsperson that would help with life issues.	1	3.4
Create a detox policy that provides support from jail staff instead of relying so heavily on peers. Sometimes, women are put in the infirmary, but this isn't always common practice.	1	3.4

APPENDIX D

MALE RESIDENT – FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESULTS

Note: Participants were instructed to list their top 5 priorities; therefore, the total number of responses will be larger than the number of participants.

MALE RESIDENT SURVEY RESULT RECOMMENDATIONS (N= 44)

ISSUE	N	%
Provide healthy meals and accommodate dietary needs (example: diabetes and food allergies).	23	11.1
Ensure access to more health and fitness equipment including: calisthenic bar, exercise mats, scale (for weight).	22	10.6
Do not allow staff with a history of documented bad behavior to train other staff.	20	9.6
Establish a resident advisor for each pod: This would be a new work opportunity position that is capable of helping to resolve resident issues, advocate on behalf of residents and could be resident selected.	18	8.7
Make a special app for resident tablets where they can report problems and submit grievances directly. This app would automatically be installed on resident tablets. Grievances would go directly to appropriate administrators who are not working on the floor.	16	7.7
Allow access to exercise every day (like they used to have before COVID-19).	15	7.2
Provide a more efficient system for sick card requests.	14	6.7
Have staff participate in training in the following areas: Mental health/Trauma trainings, Code of conduct training, emotional intelligence, de-escalation- how to use words to deescalate.	14	6.7
When correctional officers see someone who needs medical help, they should ask “are you self-declaring a medical emergency” (and if the answer is yes, the resident should get immediate medical attention.	11	5.3
Conduct more frequent physical health screenings (not just once a year).	11	5.3
Increase fairness with regard to who knows about programs and who gets to sign up for them.	10	4.8
Provide adequate services for mental health needs.	8	3.8
Broaden access to work opportunities for all charge types.	6	2.9
Establish a peer-based grievance review (also called a resident council): Assemble a group of residents from the different floors to form a committee that reviews filed grievances and helps staff determine resolutions.	6	2.9
Review the process by which medication is provided to residents.	5	2.4
Give residents their med cards to check their medications to ensure they are correct.	5	2.4
Allow residents to set up peer-led programs around their interests, skills, and talents. Example of topics: self-awareness, orientation to jail operations publishing/writing, teaching how to pray.	4	1.9

APPENDIX E

STAFF – FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESULTS

Note: Participants were instructed to list their top 5 priorities; therefore, the total number (n) will exceed 67.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS (N=67)

ISSUE	N	%
Increase salary and incentives to existing staff.	38	11.6
Increase starting pay and provide a signing bonus for new staff.	26	7.9
Reinstate the pre-employment exam and require staff to pass the exam prior to being interviewed.	22	6.7
Raise the age for new hires back to 21.	16	4.9
Reinstate the previous overtime policy where overtime is automatically earned after 8 hours are worked on any day.	16	4.9
Be consistent with scheduling rules and allow more work-life balance.	16	4.9
Reinstate the pay increase to leadership and case managers that was enacted during COVID 19	15	4.6
Provide incentives for high performers (e.g., gift cards, thank you cards) that communicate appreciation.	13	4.0
Increase mental health services for staff	11	3.3
Provide training on understanding and responding to mental health problems seen among incarcerated individuals.	10	3.0
Conduct field training and training in the pods prior to classroom training to allow for a better understanding of the position prior to completing the new staff training.	10	3.0
Require staff to go through the body scanner prior to entering the jail.	10	3.0
Offer more informal thanks, appreciation, and praise for jobs well done and for effort above and beyond calls of duty.	10	3.0
Enact consistent and transparent criteria for promotions.	10	3.0
Do a study of shifts to determine which options would best staff the jail and ensure stability (e.g., 4 days of 10-hour shifts, 12 hours shifts)	9	2.7
Change the training platform from online to conducting training in person.	8	2.4
Restrict individuals who are on probationary status from serving as field training staff or providing shadowing.	7	2.1

APPENDIX E (CONT.)

STAFF – FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESULTS

Note: Participants were instructed to list their top 5 priorities; therefore, the total number (n) will exceed 67.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS (N=67)

ISSUE	N	%
Allow existing staff members with similar positions to be on the hiring team for the same position or positions they have held in the past because they understand what is required to successfully complete the job.	7	2.1
Provide more extensive de-escalation training.	7	2.1
Lengthen on-the-job training.	7	2.1
Improve mental health supports for residents.	6	1.8
Enact consistent and transparent criteria for hiring.	5	1.5
Establish shared standards and training protocols that are adopted equally on each floor – currently, operations and procedures differ on each floor.	5	1.5
Establish periodic meetings for all field training staff (FTIs) to review and evaluate the training curriculum and processes.	5	1.5
Improved mental health support is needed for staff.	5	1.5
Raise the pay for field training staff.	5	1.5
Develop a post-interview feedback process for staff who apply and are denied a promotion.	4	1.2
Provide training on understanding and responding to mental health problems staff are experiencing.	4	1.2
Develop a process that would allow supervisory staff to serve as trainers.	4	1.2
Increase comp time for field training staff (FTIs) who provide shadowing and training.	4	1.2
Provide intensive, specialized training for staff to address the needs of higher risk residents.	3	0.9
Staff an officer at the 3rd Floor Post at all times.	3	0.9
Develop a feedback process that would allow trainers to provide targeted training and professional support for employees who are struggling with certain skills.	3	0.9
Require staff who are involved in hiring decisions to attend human resources (HR) and diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) training.	2	0.6
Develop a feedback loop for trainers and supervisors to ensure new staff training is reflecting the skill sets required by the position.	2	0.6
Identify subject matter experts both in-house and locally to provide training.	1	0.3

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SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE

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