

# Reducing Recidivism, Drug Involvement and Sexual Risk Behavior at Re-Entry: The *REAL MEN* Project



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# ***REAL MEN: A Short-Term Intervention for Adolescent Males Leaving Rikers Island***

- **Returning**
- **Educated**
- **African-American**
- **Latino and Low-Income**
- **Men to**
- **Enriched**
- **Neighborhoods**



# What I'll Be Discussing Today

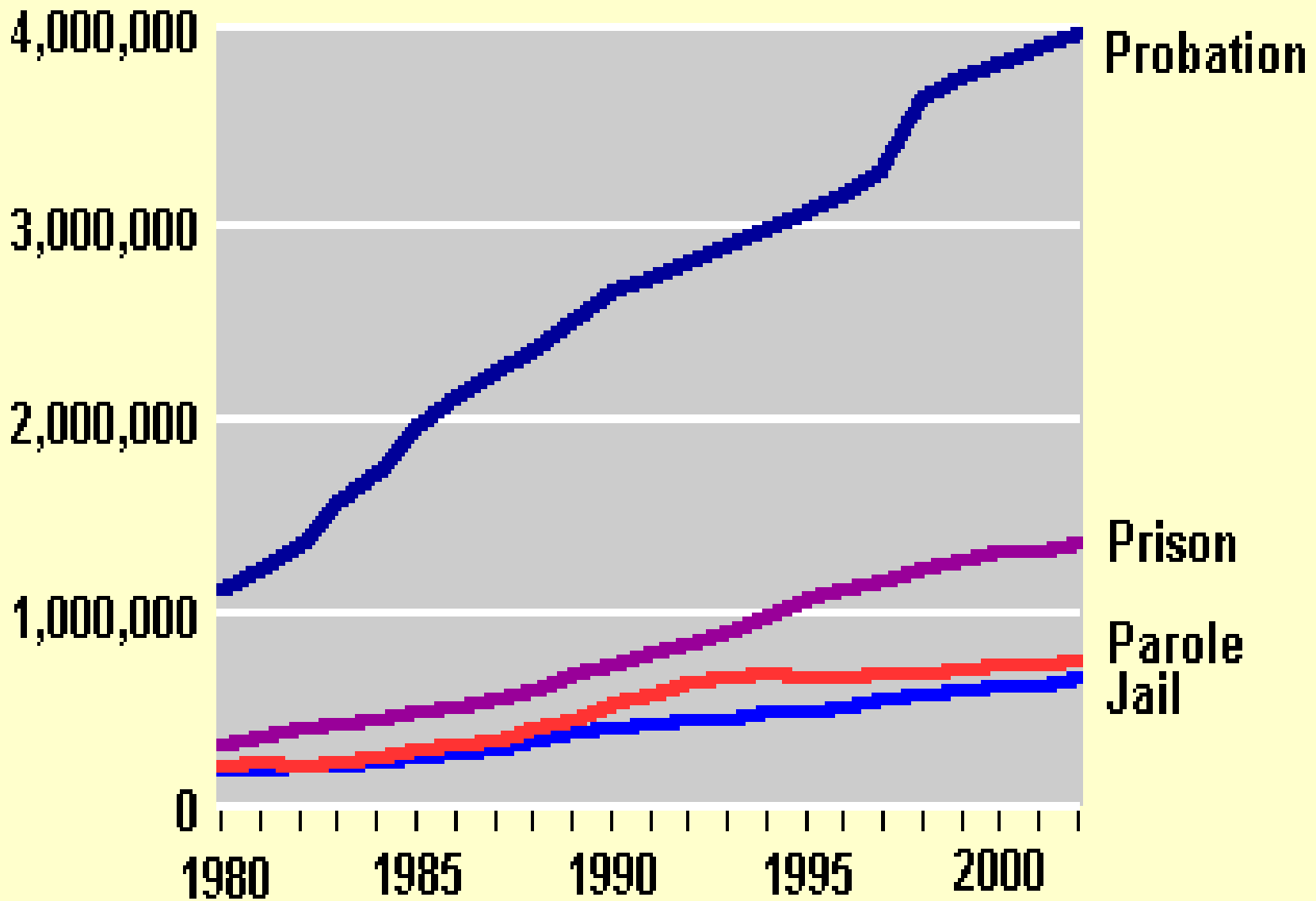
- An overview of jails & health
- Intersections of race, gender and class and the development of the ***REAL MEN*** intervention
- Preliminary Findings
- Some directions for future research



# Who is in Jail?

- U.S. jail system admits and processes more than 11 million people a year.
- About 700,000 people in jail at any given time.
- In 2003, 88.1% of US jail inmates were males and 11.9% female; 43.6% were White, 39.2% Black, 15.4% Hispanic, and 1.8% some other race/ethnicity.
- 50 of the nation's 940 jails, all in urban areas, held 31.2% of all inmates in 2003.
- Proportion of persons held in jail awaiting trial has risen considerably, from 51% in 1990 to 60% in 2004, with nearly half of that growth occurring in the last three years.

# Adult correctional populations, 1980-2002

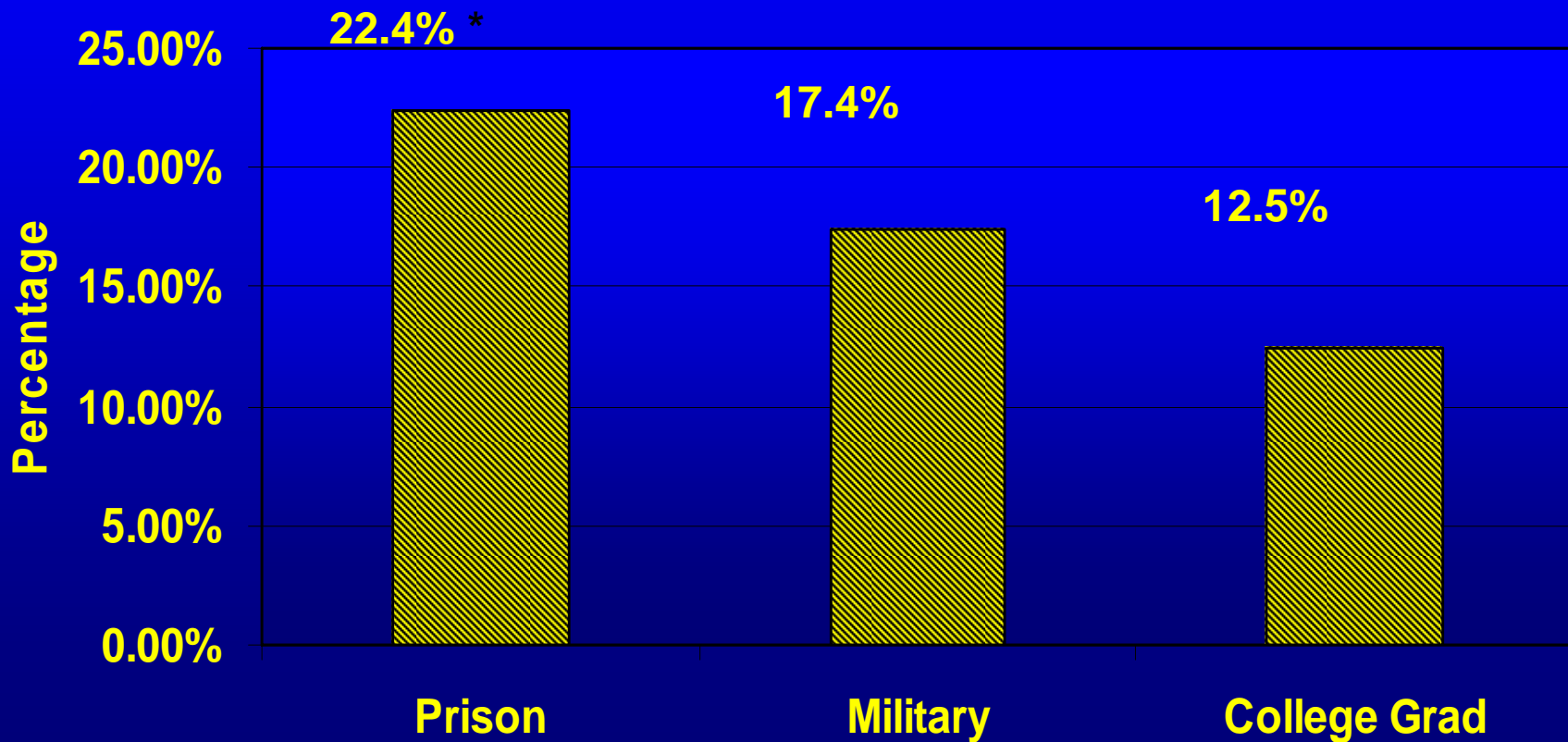




# Race, Gender and Jail

- In 2003, the risk of incarceration for Blacks was 5 times higher than for whites and for Hispanics it was almost two times the risk for whites.
- One of every eight Black males in the age group 25-29 is incarcerated on any given day.
- Although incarceration rates for women are on the rise, men (across racial/ethnic groups) remain the overwhelming majority of those in jail, especially as adolescents.

# Percent of Black Males Who Spent Time In Prison, the Military, or Completed College by 1999 among Men Born in 1965-1969



# The Health of People in US Jails

High rates of :

- Infectious diseases
- Chronic conditions
- Mental health problems
- Substance abuse
- Dental problems



## National Estimates of Selected Infectious Diseases among Inmates and Releasees, 1996-8

Condition	Est Jail Prevalence Per 100	Ratio Jail/Population Prevalence	Prison and Jail Releasees as % of total Population with condition
AIDS	5	5:1	17
HIV Infection	1.2-1.8	4-6:1	13.1-19.3
Syphilis	2.6-4.3	N/A	N/A
Hep C	17-18.6	9-10:1	28.9-32
TB disease	.17	17:1	35



# Substance Abuse and US Jails

Source: **Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002**

**7/05 NCJ 209588**

In 2002:

- 68% of jail inmates reported symptoms in the year prior to admission that met substance dependence or abuse criteria.
- 16% of convicted jail inmates said that they committed their offense to get money for drugs.
- 63% of inmates who met substance dependence or abuse criteria had participated in substance treatment or other programs.

# Substance Abuse and US Jails

Source: **Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002**  
7/05 NCJ 209588

	<u>Percent of jail inmates</u>		
	<u>Alcohol</u>	<u>Drugs or drugs</u>	<u>Alcohol</u>
Any dependence or abuse	47%	53%	68%
Dependence	23	36	45
Abuse only	24	18	23
No dependence or abuse	53	47	32

52% of female jail inmates were found to be dependent on alcohol or drugs, compared to 44% of male inmates.



## Health Services in US Jails, 1999

<b>Health care delivery system</b>		
Fee-for-service	1,101	39%
On-site staff	882	31
Managed care	500	18
Local government physicians	338	12
<b>Mental health services</b>		
Screening at intake	2,152	78%
Psychotropic medication	1,832	66
24-hour care	1,309	47
Routine therapy/counseling	1,283	46
Psychiatric evaluation	1,044	38



## How Do Jails Influence Community Health?

- Jails amplify health problems.
- Jails present opportunities for intervention.
- Incarceration reduces opportunities for post-release employment, education and housing.
- Jail and reentry process reduce social support.
- Incarceration increases stigma and isolation.
- Resources spent on incarceration could be used to promote health and public safety.



# Jails Amplify Health Problems

- Increases risk of contracting tuberculosis.
- Risk behavior in jails.
- Schools for criminal and antisocial behavior and attitudes.
- Increases social stress, exacerbating stress-related physical and mental health conditions.
- Release process contributes to risky drug and sexual behavior post-incarceration.



# Jails Present Opportunities for Intervention

- Jails have potential to link people to health, mental health, drug treatment, health insurance and other services and thus to improve their well-being.
- Failure to realize these potentials constitutes missed opportunities for prevention and early intervention.



# Developing a Short-Term Intervention for Adolescent Males Leaving Jail

- Developed in consultation with community members (focus groups, pilot interviews, previous experience with Health Link).
- Focus on social inequalities based on race class and masculinity that shapes the lives of young men of color in New York City as sites of both potential risk factors and resiliency.



# Recognizing Difficult Life Circumstances

- Poverty
- Criminal Justice
  - Huge investment of public funds
  - Punitive Rockefeller Drug Laws
  - Racially-targeted “buy and bust” operations
- Disinvestment in public education
  - Large class sizes
  - Poorly trained teachers
  - High drop out rates
  - Fewer than half those who enter NYC high school graduate



# Intersectionality: Race, Gender and Class

- Young men of color have a unique standpoint at the intersections of race, gender, and class inequalities.
- The project seeks to provide a framework young men of color can use to negotiate within the context of those inequalities and combine to create opportunities for health.



# Contextual HIV Intervention

- Many HIV interventions focus specifically on skill-building (e.g., “*how to put on a condom*” )
- ***REAL MEN*** seeks to address the context in which the risk of HIV occurs



# The Need for Gender-Specific Health Interventions

Aronson, Whitehead, Baber:

- Authors refer to males who are left with only reputational sources of masculine expression as having a “fragmented sense of the gendered self.”
- Call for “*male-based intervention programs that have goals of ‘gender’ or masculinity transformation*” that “move males away from a core of reputational attributes to respectability ones.”



# Project & Study Design

- Intake goal N=600
- Participants randomized at intake into control (J) and study (JC) groups
- “J” = services in jail-only, including two groups and discharge planning, connections to community services
- “JC” = all the above, plus additional groups for one month post-release
- Contact at 3,6,9 months, follow-up interviews at 12 months



# Curriculum Groups

The group sessions include:

- “Staying Free, Staying Healthy”
- “Being a Man in Today’s World”
- “Sex in the Risk Zone”
- “Drugs in Your Life”
- “Getting the Information You Need to Stay Free and Healthy”
- “My People, My Pride/*Mi Gente, Mi Orgullo*”



# Connecting to the Community & Additional Services

- Friends of Island Academy, our community partner, provides:
  - Educational testing, placement, classes.
  - Employment counseling and placement.
  - Counseling and mental health services.



# Incarcerated Adolescents: What the Data Tell Us

- Existing literature suggests that prior to incarceration adolescents have high rates of:
  - (1) substance use
  - (2) risky sexual behavior
  - (3) particular experiences of masculinity.



## Findings from Health Link

### Male Adolescents Incarcerated at Rikers

Drug used	Intake Last 6 mo	Follow Up Last 3 mo
Marijuana	83	55***
Cocaine	7	3***
Crack	2	< 1**
Heroin	2	1*
Methadone	1	<1
Abstained from alcohol in last month	42	68***

# Preliminary Data from REAL MEN on Drug Dependence (N=421)

In last year did :	#	%
You need to use more drugs to get same high	85	20.2
You need to use more drugs than you wanted to	40	9.5
You tried but were unable to cut down on drugs	109	25.9
Drugs play a bigger role than you wanted	90	21.4
Drugs cause less social, work or recreational time	110	26.4
You keep using drugs even though you felt bad	55	13.1



# Preliminary Data on Sexual Risk (N=421)

- 99% report ever having a vaginal sexual partner
- 17 partners on average
- 3-4 vaginal sexual partners – three months prior to arrest
- Condom use (62%)



# Preliminary Data on Masculinity (N=421)

## Traditional

- Ok to hit someone who hits first (88.1% Strongly agree, or agree)
- Harder to report hitting at school than hit back (62.7% Strongly agree or agree)
- Most men go out with women just for sex (83.2% Strongly agree or agree)
- Boys deserve to be hit by girls they date (55.4% Strongly agree or agree)

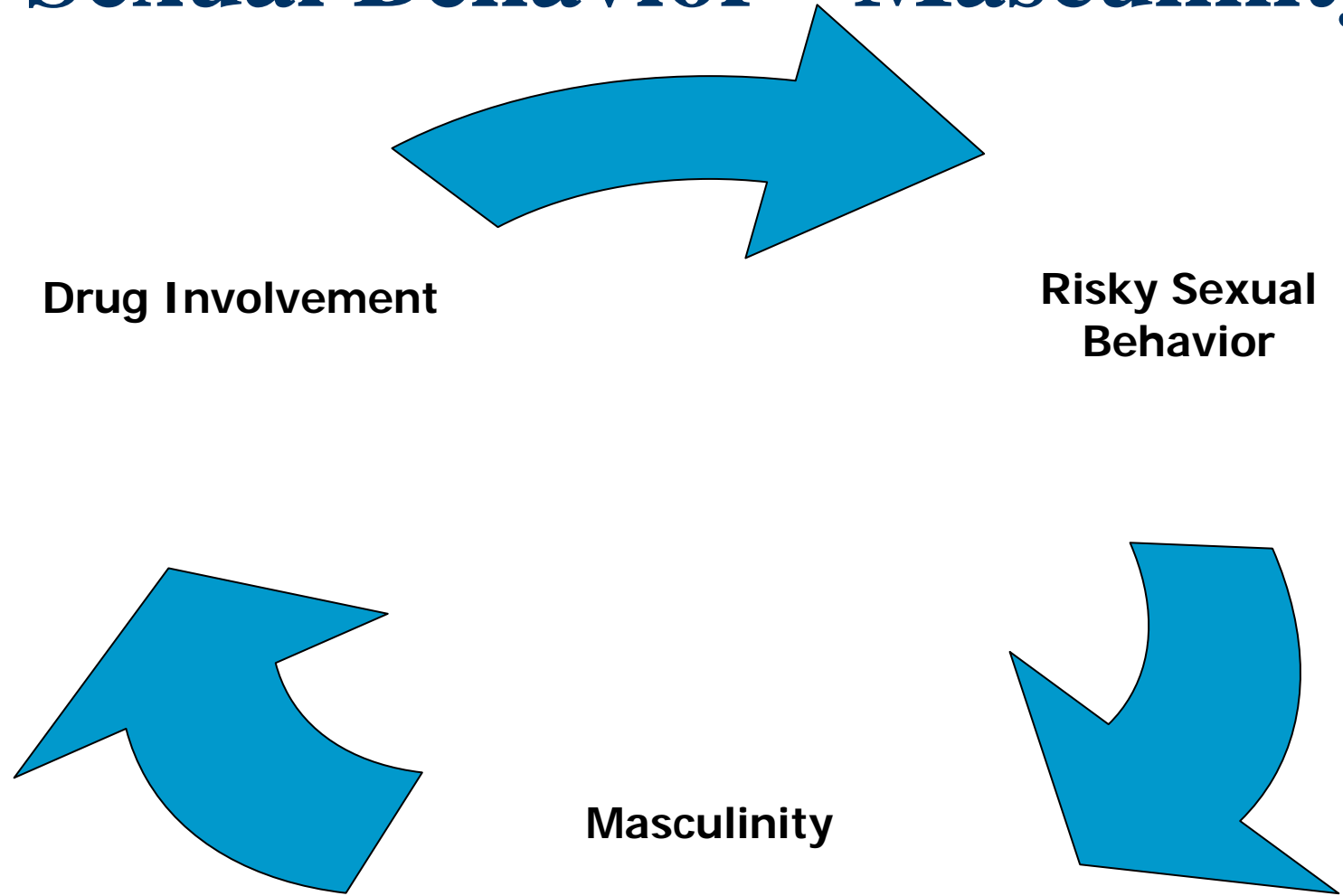


# Preliminary Data on Masculinity (N=421)

## Non-Traditional

- You don't always need to fight. There are other ways of dealing with a problem (85.2% Strongly agree or agree)
- It's OK for a man to hit his wife (90.3% Disagree or strongly disagree)
- Men and women both should take equal responsibility in raising their kids (97.6% Strongly agree or agree)

# Drug Involvement - Risky Sexual Behavior - Masculinity

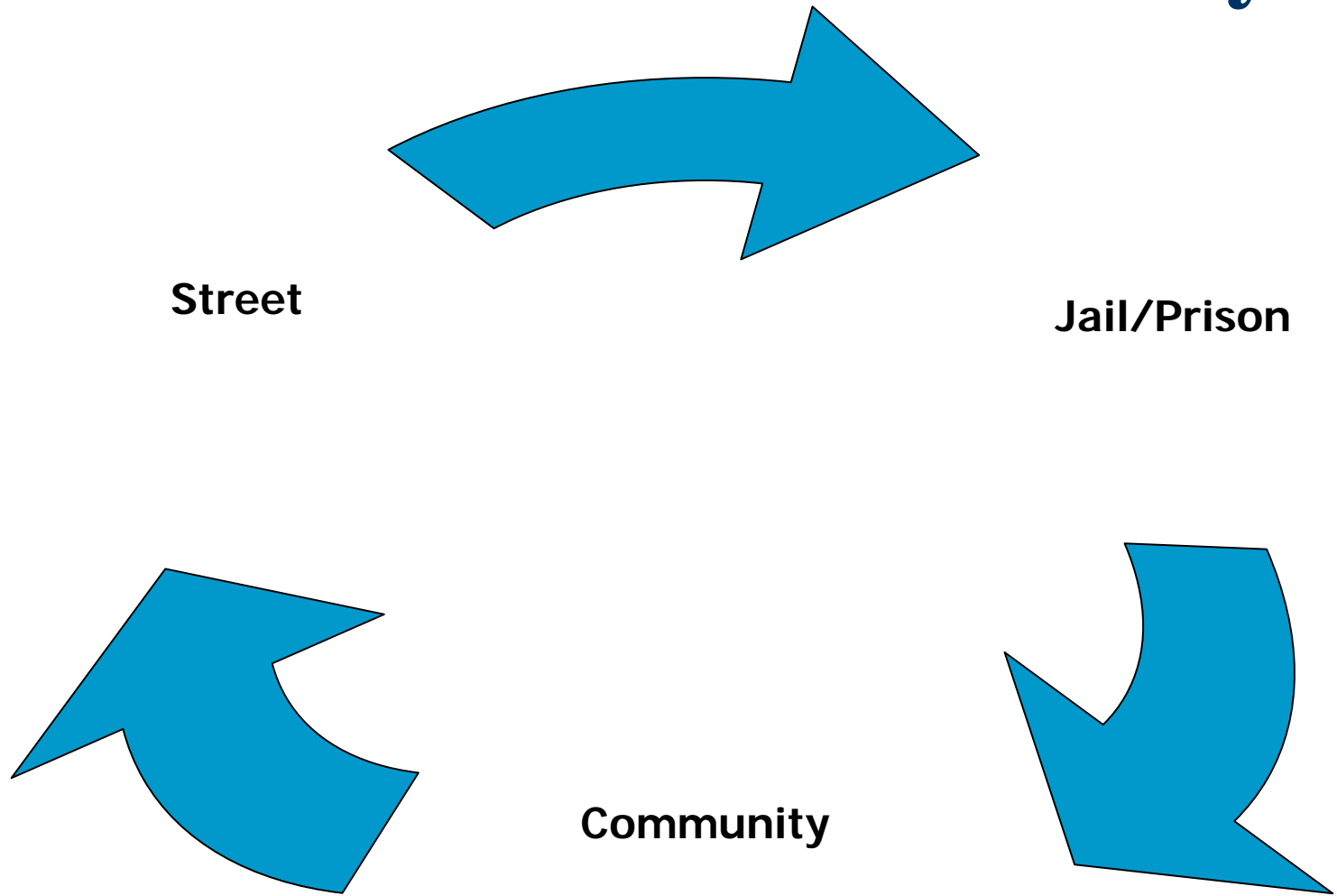




# Connecting Jail and Street Life

- *“... lock up is not a disruption in the perpetuation of the hustling culture, but a stage in which hustling behavior and skills are enhanced ‘the place where you really learn your hustling skills’. The high percentage of young Black men going through the prison system saddles black communities with male members who are further marginalized and stigmatized and unable to contribute constructively to their community. “(Whitehead, 1997:434).*

# Street - Jail - Community



Street

Jail/Prison

Community



# Further Research Planned: Focus Groups

- To what extent do race and masculinity influence the experience of drugs and sexuality for adolescent males who are involved with the criminal justice system?
- What does an “*multiproblem-focused*” intervention (Castrucci & Martin, 2002) around drugs and sexual risk behavior look like from the perspective of street life oriented young?



# Further Research: Focus Groups

- How do street life oriented young men frame notions of drug use and sales of narcotics in relation to masculinity and male sexuality?
- How would street life oriented young men frame effective health interventions in a street community and in jail?



# Effectiveness: Still Under Investigation

- While evaluation data for *REAL MEN* are not yet available, experience to date indicates that it is possible to engage young men in a critical examination of masculinity.



# Thank you for your attention!

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