

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/the-north-star-state-finds-value-in-family-ties-for-incarcerated-people>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Just in time for the holidaystraditionally a season for connecting with familyMinnesotas[Department of Corrections](#)(DOC) published a[research report](#)that supports what many people know intuitively: contact with supportive people can help reduce the chances that someone who has been involved in the justice system will wind up in prison again.

Veras[Family Justice Program](#)conducts research about the impact of incarceration on family relationships in adult prisons and jails, juvenile long- and short-term placement facilities, and community-based organizations working with families affected by the justice systems. No matter the location, our research consistently finds that family matters.

Connection to family membersbroadly defined to include supportive people such as an Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor, a close friend, or a religious leaderserves as a motivation for many people to stay sober or to meet their parole and probation mandates. These positive bonds provide a reason to stay home and in the community and break the cycle of justice involvement.

Justice systems like Minnesotas that recognize the importance of leveraging family as a motivator are seeing great results. [In a recent publication](#)on the integration of the[Relational Inquiry Tool](#)(RIT)designed to facilitate conversations between corrections staff and incarcerated people about family supporta top administrator at a county jail in[Wisconsin](#)found that the RIT reduced stress levels for his staff and resulted in better behavior among people incarcerated in the jail.

Minnesotas research on recidivism strengthens the growing body of research on social support for peoples successful transition from incarceration to community. Heres hoping that 2012 brings more strong research about the role families can play and justice systems that respond accordingly.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

Vera Institute of Justice. All rights reserved.