

The background of the entire slide is a soft-focus photograph of several hands of different skin tones reaching towards the center, each holding a piece of a wooden puzzle. The puzzle pieces are arranged in a circular pattern, and the lighting is bright and warm, creating a sense of unity and collaboration.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Building Community from Prison to Reentry



**Firm Foundations
Ministries**

MATT THOMAS



FIRM FOUNDATIONS MINISTRIES EQUIPS MEN AND WOMEN TO MOVE FROM IMPRISONED TO EMPOWERED

Our vision is to invigorate communities by freeing people affected by incarceration or addiction





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Firm Foundations Ministries

- Started in 2013
- Transitional Housing
- Wichita, Kansas City, Topeka
- CTV Freedom Initiative Church Planting
- Leadership Development





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We have had so many ups and downs!





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Have you ever found yourself saying,

“We don’t have enough (time, resources people, money, favor) to do this?”

Or, “Why are the folks we love and do our best to support still falling through the cracks?”





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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Have you ever found yourself saying,

“We don’t have enough (time, resources people, money, favor) to do this?”

Or, “Why are the folks we love and do our best to support still falling through the cracks?”

YOU AREN'T ALONE!



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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

The needs of the justice-involved community are great. There are lots of service and resources and funds needed to meet them.

It feels overwhelming.



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The needs of the justice-involved community are great. There are lots of service and resources and funds needed to meet them.

It feels overwhelming.

So, what's the answer?



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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Strong partnerships are often what's missing in effective prison and reentry programs.

Today we're going to talk about how collaboration between organizations, correctional staff, and communities creates lasting support from incarceration to reintegration.

We're also going to walk out with some tangible ways to assess where we are in community and partnership building.

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Often we respond to the needs of our people by isolating and trying to build more resources and relationships within our own ministry.

We feel pressure to come up with all the solutions and build brand new things.

We build a micro community.



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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Often we respond to the needs of our people by isolating and trying to build more resources and relationships within our own ministry.

We feel pressure to come up with all the solutions and build brand new things.

We build a micro community.

We end up with a siloed and small community and burn ourselves out.



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Expanding our ministry might mean
**creating new partnerships instead of
new programs.**





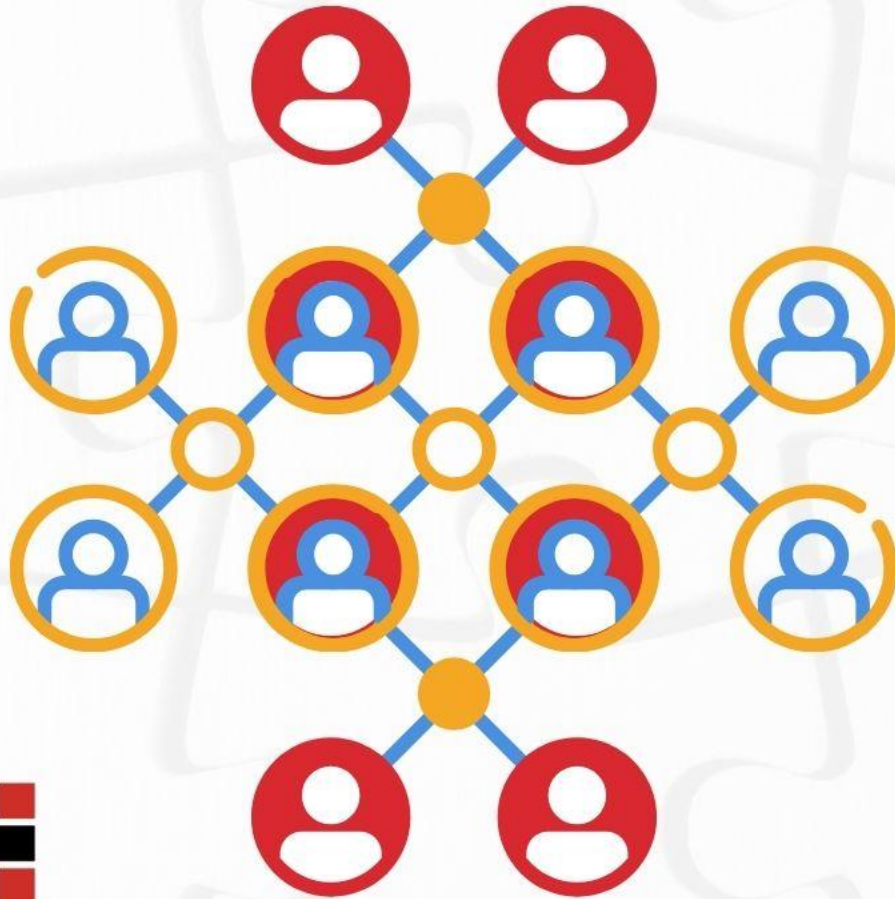
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What is true partnership?

Maybe we need to reframe our thoughts about partnership.

Instead of being transactional where “I need this + you provide this = partnership,” healthy partnership is building an interconnected web of like-minded people...a Kingdom community!



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The people we serve are in great need of resources and services, but without a healthy community in which to receive and live out those services, we often don't see the lasting fruit of change.



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If real, life-changing partnerships flow out of community. What kind of community are we trying to build/join?



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HOSPITALITY IS NOT TO CHANGE PEOPLE, BUT TO OFFER
THEM SPACE WHERE CHANGE CAN TAKE PLACE.

-HENRI NOUWEN



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Building Community from Prison to Reentry



What if we could be part of and build a community of hospitality with the necessary pieces in place to provide a welcoming, healing, and empowering space for the justice-involved?



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Building Community from Prison to Reentry



Community of Restorative Hospitality

- Humble Interdependence
- No Gatekeeping
- Hospitality
- Accessibility
- Faithfulness over Talent





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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Humble Interdependance

A community of restorative hospitality recognizes that transformation requires collaboration and that no single organization or leader can do the work alone.

- **Leadership acknowledges the need for community**
- **Organization actively collaborates with other ministries and service providers**
- **Decision-makers welcome input from participants and partners**
- **Leaders are willing to learn from people with lived experience**
- **The organization prioritizes collaboration over organizational control.**





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No Gate Keeping

A community of restorative hospitality removes unnecessary barriers and works to ensure access to opportunity and belonging.

- **Clear pathways exist for participation in programs**
- **Leadership opportunities are open to justice-involved individuals**
- **Resources and opportunities are shared across organizations**
- **The organization avoids unnecessary bureaucracy or exclusion**
- **Participants are empowered to grow into leadership roles**





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Hospitality

A community of restorative hospitality intentionally welcomes people with dignity, especially those who have experienced rejection.

- **New participants feel welcomed and valued**
- **The organization creates safe relational environments**
- **Volunteers and staff practice relational care**
- **Churches or partners intentionally welcome justice-involved individuals**
- **Community gathers encourage belonging and relationships**





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Accessibility

A community of restorative hospitality removes barriers that prevent participation and growth.

- **Programs are accessible to justice-involved individuals**
- **Transportation barriers are considered**
- **Meetings and programs are scheduled with participants' needs in mind**
- **Cost barriers are removed or lessened**
- **Physical spaces are accessible and welcoming**





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Faithfulness Over Talent

A community of restorative hospitality prioritizes character, commitment, and transformation over credentials or personality.

- **Leadership values faithfulness and growth over talent or personality**
- **Volunteers and leaders are chosen for character and commitment**
- **People with lived experience are trusted with responsibility**
- **The organization practices patience with growth and development**
- **Mistakes are treated as opportunities for learning and restoration**



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Which of these are you strong in?

Which of these does your organization struggle with?



Community of Restorative Hospitality Assessment Matrix



Community of Restorative Hospitality Assessment Matrix

This matrix helps organizations assess whether they are cultivating a community culture that supports restoration, collaboration, and belonging, particularly for justice-involved individuals. (However, "justice-involved" could be replaced with any disenfranchised population you are working to make a welcoming space for.)

A truly collaborative community has many characteristics, but in this form these 5 characteristics were chosen for assessment: Humble Interdependence (Humblety), No Gatekeeping, Hospitality, Accessibility, Faithfulness over Talent. Use these as a lens to evaluate your community and then create an action plan to grow where most needed.

Building collaborative communities requires our immediate community (church or nonprofit) to demonstrate these things. Then we can identify other healthy organizations and we can be part of building healthy larger communities.

Key Community Members to Assess

Key In-House leadership & Personnel	Key Partner Organizations	Key Community of Service/Inclusion

Score	0	1	2	3	4
Meaning	Not present	Rarely practiced	Occasionally practiced	Consistently practiced	Fully embedded in culture and leadership

1. Humble Interdependence

A restorative community recognizes that transformation requires collaboration and that no single organization or leader can do the work alone.

Indicator	Score	Evidence	Opportunities for Growth
Leadership acknowledges the need for community partners			
Organization actively collaborates with other ministries and service providers			
Decision-makers welcome input from participants and partners			
Leaders are willing to learn from people with lived experience			
The organization prioritizes collaboration over organizational control			

Key Questions

1. Do we treat partners as equals or as resources?
2. Are returning citizens seen as contributors or just recipients?

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Justice-Involved Community Partnership

As we build healthy community both inside our organization and out, we then can turn to whether we have all the right pieces in place to provide a successful space for justice-involved individuals to succeed



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Justice-Involved Community Partnerships

- Institutional Partnerships (DOC)
- In-Prison Programming & Community
- Core Reentry Resources
- Faith Community Integration & Belonging
- Health, Recovery, & Wellbeing





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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Institutional Partnerships (DOC)

Strong institutional partnerships allow organizations to begin transformation before release, which research shows greatly improves reentry success.

- **Wardens/Facility Leadership**
- **Prison Chaplains**
- **Reentry Coordinators**
- **Parole Officers/Community Supervision**





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In-Prison Community & Programming

Preparing individuals before release dramatically increases success after release.

- Inmate-Led Faith Community
- Mentoring & Relational Support
- Discipleship/Leadership Development
- Life Skills & Higher Education
- Reentry Planning





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Faith Community Integration & Belonging

Faith communities often provide long-term belonging, which research shows is essential for desistance from crime.

- **Welcoming & Empowering Churches**
- **Discipleship/Spiritual Growth**
- **Peer Support & Prosocial Community**
- **Mentoring (post release)**
- **Volunteer & Relational Networks**





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Building Community from Prison to Reentry

Core Reentry Support Partners

These partners address structural barriers that frequently cause reentry failure.

- **Housing Providers (short and longterm)**
- **Transportation Services**
- **Employment Opportunities & Job Pathways, incl. Education**
- **Legal/ID/Documentation Assistance**





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Health, Recovery, & Wellbeing

Many justice-involved individuals face trauma, addiction, and untreated health issues, making partnerships in this area critical.

- **Substance Use Recovery Programs**
- **Trauma Counseling**
- **Mental Health Services**
- **Physical Health Care**
- **Spiritual Care Support**



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Which of these categories/subcategories do you fall under?

Which of these do you have in your network and which are missing?



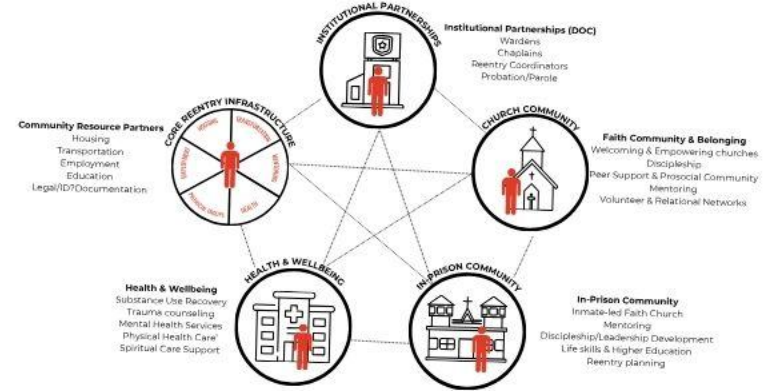
Justice-Involved Community Partnership Assment Matrix



Justice-Involved Community Partnership Map Assessment Matrix



Below is a practical assessment matrix prison/jail/reentry organization can use to evaluate how well its community ecosystem supports justice-involved individuals and where new partnerships are needed. The tool is designed for strategic planning, coalition building, and identifying gaps in a justice-involved-friendly community network.



Score	0	1	2	3
Meaning	No relationship or support exists	Informal/occasional Connection	Active partnership with some coordination	Strong strategic partnership with clear collaboration

1. Institutional Partnerships (DOC)

Strong institutional partnerships allow organizations to begin transformation before release, which research shows greatly improves reentry success.

Partner	Current Score (0-3)	Current Relationship	Gap Identified	Action Steps
Wardens/Facility Leadership				
Prison Chaplains				
Reentry Coordinators				
Parole Officers/Community Supervision				

Key Questions

1. Can the organization access facilities regularly?
2. Are the staff aware of the program?
3. Are participants referred before release?
4. Is there cooperative work happening with community supervision officers and programs?

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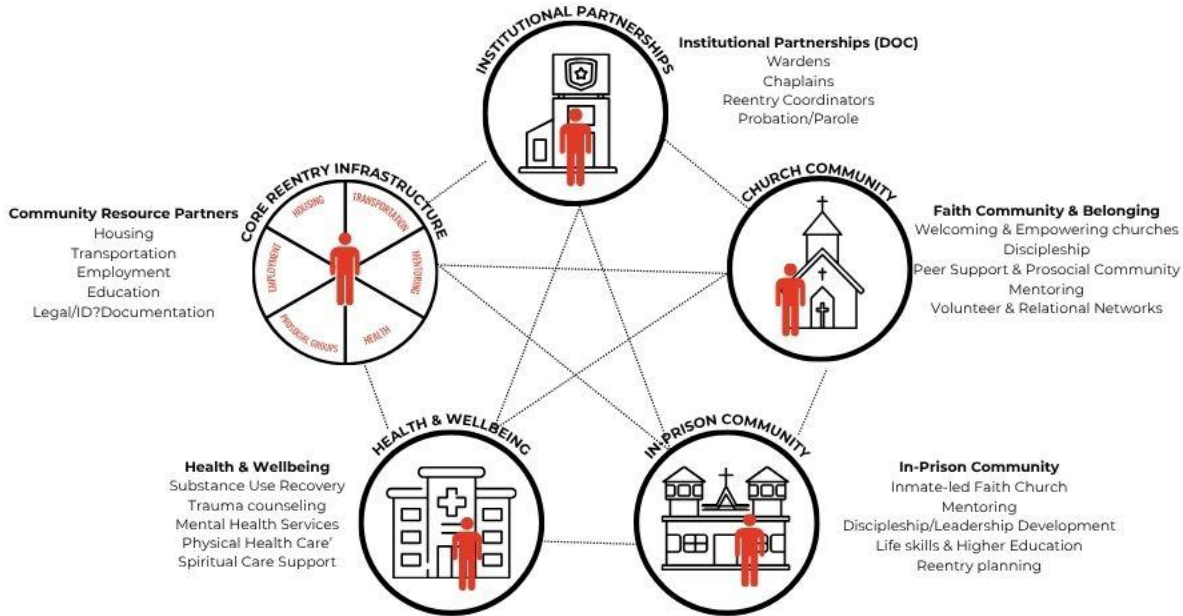
Next Steps:

1. **Establish if you are a Community of Restorative Hospitality. If there are improvements to make, start there!**
2. **Start working to flesh out the partner matrix, welcoming partners and participants into a larger community.**



Justice-Involved Community Mapping Resources

Justice-Involved Community Map



INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (DOC)

WARDENS/FACILITY LEADERSHIP

PRISON CHAPLAINS

REENTRY COORDINATORS

PAROLE/COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

IN-PRISON COMMUNITY & PROGRAMMING

INMATE-LED FAITH COMMUNITY

MENTORING/RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT

DISCIPLESHIP/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

LIFE SKILLS & HIGHER EDUCATION

REENTRY PLANNING

FAITH COMMUNITY & BELONGING

WELCOMING & EMPOWERING CHURCHES

DISCIPLESHIP/SPIRITUAL GROWTH

PEER SUPPORT & PROSOCIAL COMMUNITY

MENTORING (POST RELEASE)

VOLUNTEER & RELATIONAL NETWORKS

HEALTH & WELLBEING

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MENTORING

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE

REENTRY SUPPORT

CORE REENTRY SUPPORT PARTNERS

HOUSING PROVIDERS (SHORT & LONGTERM)

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

LEGAL/ID/DOCUMENTATION

Justice-Involved Community Partnership Map



Fill in community map with partnerships for each category to see areas of strong partnerships and areas where new partnerships need to be made.



**BUILDING HEALTHY KINGDOM COMMUNITY THROUGH
AND WITH REDEEMED, JUSTICE-INVOLVED MEN AND WOMEN.**



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Scan to download:

- This presentation
- The Community of Restorative Hospitality Assessment
- The Justice-Involved Community Partner Matrix
- The Community Web



ONE MORE THING





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