

The transition from prison to mental health facilities for people with an intellectual disability in Queensland

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Research Questions – Impact of Imprisonment for People with I.D.

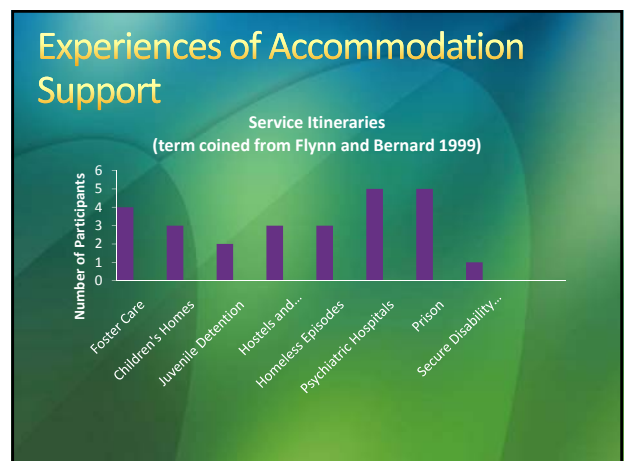
- 1 How do people labelled as having an intellectual disability interpret their needs and experiences in prison and their subsequent re-entry into the community?
- 2 What strategies and resources do they use to resolve the many challenges of prison life and community re-entry?
- 3 What are some of the methodological considerations in life story research with ex-prisoners with intellectual disability?

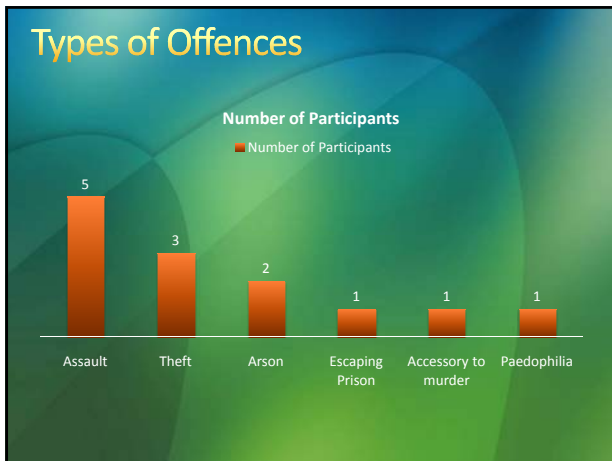


Some Methodological Considerations

- Participants identified through services
- No IQ tests
- Life story method using person's perspective only
- Communication challenges
- Length of time since transfer to mental health facility varied

courtesy of www.tembrando.com





Prison Factors Contributing to Mental Illness

Failure to understand rules	Strip-searching	Involuntary association
Physical, sexual and emotional abuse	Prolonged solitary confinement	Disrupted family relationships
Limited rehabilitation	Discontinued service support	Access to illegal drugs

Ways in which people were unsafe...

Five silhouettes of individuals are shown, each with a name tag below it: Damon (red), Michael (yellow), Kylie (orange), Wayne (purple), and Leanne (blue).

Preparation for Transfers

- One day to three months before person transferred to hospital for assessment
- Next of kin notified of change in status to classified patient
- Security concerns around prison van prevents timely information being revealed

“He’s living in a f**ing cupboard!”

- Prison mental health worker

“Yeah but he doesn’t know he is in a cupboard”

- Response from “high up” in QMH


Informing Family

Damon

The staff and the doctor asked me you got a phone number to get in contact some people? And I said “No”. I didn’t have my wallet and phone number - it was all at home.

Disorienting

I didn't know - I thought it was still the old part of the hospital... And I I ... got lost and that. And that's when I ... I took off. And then the staff went and got me and brought me back.



Kylie

Life in Mental Health System

<h3>Life in Prison</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff knowledge and resources on offender management Finite term of confinement Needs not identified or unable to be met No involvement from Disability Services Queensland 	<h3>Life in Mental Health System</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff knowledge and resources on patients with mental illness Indefinite periods of confinement depending on person's mental state and subject to review Possibility of diagnostic overshadowing Little involvement from Disability Services Queensland
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Participants Compare Mental Health to Prison Services

- Two participants preferred secure mental health – more autonomy and access to belongings
- Two participants preferred prison – finite term, access to medication and activities, more people contact
- One participant undecided



Outcomes for participants...



Damon

Michael

Kylie

Wayne

Leanne

What can be learned from these stories?

- Prevalence of ex-prisoners with intellectual disability in mental health system
- Relationship between mental health and life before and during prison
- Need for more appropriate responses with linked systems:
 - Coordination between systems
 - Communication needs
 - Orientation to change
 - Incorporating perspectives of people with i.d.