

SJC COMMUNICATIONS WEBINAR: SEPTEMBER 2019

COMMUNICATING ABOUT REDUCING RACIAL & ETHNIC DISPARITIES

Pillars of the initiative


**Jail
population
reduction**

**Reducing
racial &
ethnic
disparities**



Community engagement

Data collection

Resources

**SAFETY+JUSTICE
CHALLENGE**
Supported by the John D. and Catherine T.
MacArthur Foundation

SJC**EXCHANGE**

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Racial & Ethnic Disparities


A foundational step in doing effective work to promote racial and ethnic equity is to develop a correct analysis of the root causes and interlocking societal failures which work together to produce the persistent inequities we see both within and outside of the justice apparatus. Stakeholders must develop a shared understanding of racism and the factors that continue to produce inequitable outcomes. They also must adopt shared language and goals for change.


To assist Safety and Justice Challenge sites in establishing this shared knowledge base, we have compiled a multi-media bibliography. Everyone has different styles of learning, so our curated page includes articles, research papers, blogs, books, podcasts, and videos.


We hope these resources help to promote insight into the contemporary context and challenges of working for equity. This includes connecting the dots between history, current policies and practices, and present day racial and ethnic disparities. We encourage you to use these resources to stimulate critical and analytical thinking to push beyond your comfort zones and foster a shared understanding of the problems and potential solutions. It is in this critical context that all of the tools and resources provided through the SJC network must be utilized.

**Tools**

**Structural
Racism**

**History**

**Stakeholder
Resources**

**Implicit
Bias**

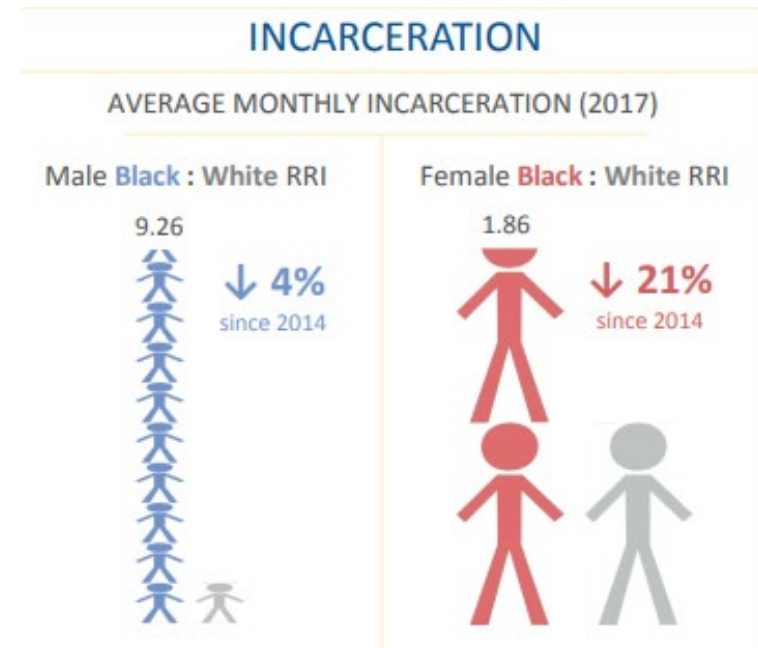
What we'll cover today

- Examples from fellow Challenge Sites
 - Charleston County
 - Pennington County
- Best Practices for Communications (M+R)

CHARLESTON COUNTY

We have a problem

- Black men booked into jail more than 4x as often as white men
- Black women booked 2x as often as white women
- Black individuals incarcerated 7x as often as white individuals



Approach to communications

- **Transparency** about progress & goals
 - Main tactic: Published data-guided reports and strategic dissemination strategies
- **Open dialogue** with community, partners & media
 - Main tactic: Community coalition, large and small community events, roundtables; capitalize on opportunities as they arise
- **Clear, deliberate (& consistent) messaging** across all communications acknowledged complexity of reducing disparities
- **Engaging authentic storytellers** with lived experience in local justice system reform (in planning -> implementation -> communications)

Recent Win: Summer Event Series included an event on race

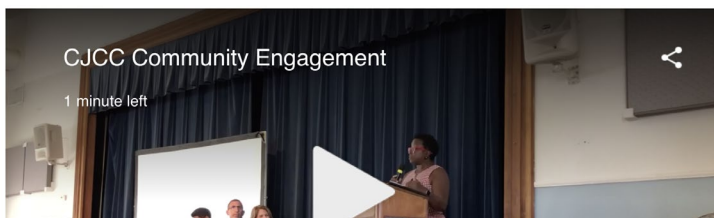
- **Goal of the event:** Meaningfully engage the community in an open dialogue about addressing disparities.
 - Connections to daily life, past progress/challenges, next steps
- **Before:** worked with community members and leadership to identify right speakers and format, reach people where they're at so they turn out, and develop the content
- **During :** community member led, roundtable groups & limited talking "at" people
- **After:** positive survey results, positive press coverage, collected feedback and reported back to the community





CHARLESTON COUNTY NEWS

Community members have open conversation about racial equity in Charleston County



The Post and Courier

He sold crack at 11 and was stabbed in prison. Now he works to help the SC justice system.



Montaine Lawton shows the scars from being stabbed while at Lieber Correctional Institution. Lawton now works to rehabilitate inmates and help reincorporate them into society. Andrew Whitaker/Staff

BUY NOW

What worked well

Build a community led coalition, grow relationships with a wide range of people, groups and organizations

- **Tips:** Genuinely support and partner with others working in this space
- **Outcome:** Several critical champions and messengers to speak in the community and media

Transparency about disparities in community engagement & with the media.

- **Tips:** Own and understand the challenges, consistent narrative, grow awareness and **stay** engaged through multiple platforms
- **Outcome:** Helps foster trust & support for local justice system reform, increases reach
 - 4,000+ impressions last month
 - 0 to 745 newsletter subscribers (2 years)

Outcomes



- Community representatives and those who have been touched by the CJCC continue direct conversations with others locally, creating a domino effect of support
- Growing efforts to enhance the community's ability to tackle the tough issues
- Positive press continues to generate increased support for local justice system reform

Looking ahead

- Incorporating feedback from recent community events into future events & communication strategies
- Concurrent roundtable dialogues across the county, and a brief community-wide survey
- Community action forum to identify community priorities -> 2020 Strategic Plan



PENNINGTON COUNTY

We have a problem

- Native Americans overrepresented in the jail, at approximately 52 percent – yet make up 10 percent of the county population
 - Addressing racial & ethnic disparities is a priority strategy
- Many generations of distrust; success in reducing the jail population depends on rebuilding that trust

Approach to communications

- **“Inside-out” approach:** started with a grassroots campaign to build relationships before focusing on communications
- **Forthright with the public** about the issue of disparities in the local justice system
- **Cultivating public messengers** who have influence and/or could help the County withstand criticism

What has worked well

Starting with a grassroots effort first (and early on!)

- Outcome:
Helped build trust at all levels of the tribe, resulting in champions for local justice reform

Developing tailored messages

- Outcome:
helped with connecting to/ resonating with different tribes

Being transparent with the press & public

- Outcome:
generated positive media, highlighting people in tribal communities benefiting from local reforms

Reevaluating The "Destabilizing" Nature Of County Jails

By CHRIS LAUGHERY & LORI WALSH • MAY 15, 2018

PROGRAM
In The Moment

In The Moment ... May 15, 2018 Show 337 Hour 2

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Carolyn Olson & Erik BringsWhite

CREDIT CHYNNA LOCKETT

How do we keep our jails from filling with people who might better be served elsewhere?

The Safety and Justice Challenge, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, seeks to reduce the overuse of jails or, put another way, the over-incarceration of Americans.

Rapid City Journal

Panel seeks to build bridges with tribal communities

Christopher Vondracek Journal staff Jul 10, 2018

Pennington County reaching out to reservations to resolve outstanding warrants



By Stewart Huntington | Posted: Tue 6:23 PM, Apr 10, 2018 | Updated: Tue 6:33 PM, Apr 10, 2018



PINE RIDGE, S.D. (KOTA TV) Many of the results of Pennington County's ambitious goal to reduce its jail population by 20 percent won't be felt for years. But one initiative that's part of the overall plan is bearing fruit today on area reservations.

It's the Warrant Resolution outreach effort by the Pennington county State's Attorney's office in Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River and Rosebud territory and it's being run with funding from a MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Grant.

Deputy States Attorney Carolyn Olson drives to the reservations and meets with people to work through their issues. Many people just can't make it from the reservation to a court date.

People like Rachel Bissonette who got into a fender bender in Rapid City last year. With no proof of insurance she got a ticket. When she failed to appear in court over the issue, a warrant was issued for her arrest.



Erik Bringswhite

Challenges

- Despite success of grassroots efforts and communications, slow progress in reducing disparities in the system
- It takes time: it's a marathon, not a sprint (*but* being forthright about the issue has helped build and keep community support along the way)

Outcomes

- Media interest generated as a result of the good work being done in community, leading to increased support of reforms
- Forging and deepening relationships has resulted in growing number of advocates and champions
 - Oglala Sioux Tribe spoke on behalf of the County to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (historic!)

Looking ahead

- Continuing the “inside-out” approach: progress in the Pine Ridge communities being replicated in Cheyenne and Rosebud Sioux communities

A tip to leave you with:

“ Find a community ally. There are people who have overcome these challenges in the past who want to help others facing similar challenges now. Engaging someone with lived experience can help you build trust with others. These champions are your best messengers for communications and ultimately, growing support for local reforms. ”

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATIONS

M+R

Setting yourself up for success

- **Be prepared:** don't wait for a crisis to happen to get a plan in place
- **Be transparent:** recognize when/where there's work to be done
- **Be authentic:** engage voices with lived experiences as credible messengers to create trust & build support for reform

Proactive communications is critical

- **Shapes the media narrative** around the need to reduce disparities and successes/challenges around reducing disparities
- **Generates buy-in** from stakeholders & the public on related strategies
- **Gets ahead of naysayers**

Internal communications

Get (& keep) buy-in among internal stakeholders

- **Reminder:** Anyone new to the work? (E.g., a new judge) be sure to onboard them & address questions/concerns early on

Tailor & provide spokespeople with core messaging

- **Tip:** Walk through messaging together & have spokespeople practice (practicing in groups helps people learn from each other, too)
- **Resources:** SJC Messaging Architecture, M+R, Justice System Partners & fellow sites!

Be transparent about what still needs to happen

- **Tip:** Talk about progress & wins to date, what's still needed, & how the group is tackling or will keep tackling disparities

External communications

Cultivate key messengers & outside “validators” early on

- **Tip:** Engage partners who can provide outside credibility (e.g., faith leaders) + those w/ lived experiences
- **Resources:** “Community advisory groups” & local meetings/events (for messengers already contributing to & bought into the work) + nat'l allies (e.g., NCVC, JLUSA)

Tailor messages to different audiences & communications platforms

- **Tip:** Be clear about why this work should matter to them/their community.
- **Tip:** Package information according to the platform (i.e., rely heavily on visuals for TV & social media)

Weave in data & research

- **Tip:** Illustrate the problem & progress to date with data.
- **Tip:** Highlight trends (both positive & negative).
- **Resources:** Tap expertise of nat'l data partners like ISLG & PJI

External communications

Educating & influencing the “influencers”	Controlling the narrative	Showcasing wins & new initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Editorial Board Outreach▪ Reporter briefings & roundtables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Op-Eds▪ Letters-to-the-Editor▪ Social Media	<p>All of these (👉) +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Press events▪ Broadcast TV & Radio

Note: for all of these, use the opportunity to show the depth & diversity of those involved in reform

The Oregonian

Addressing disparities in jail system: Letter to the editor

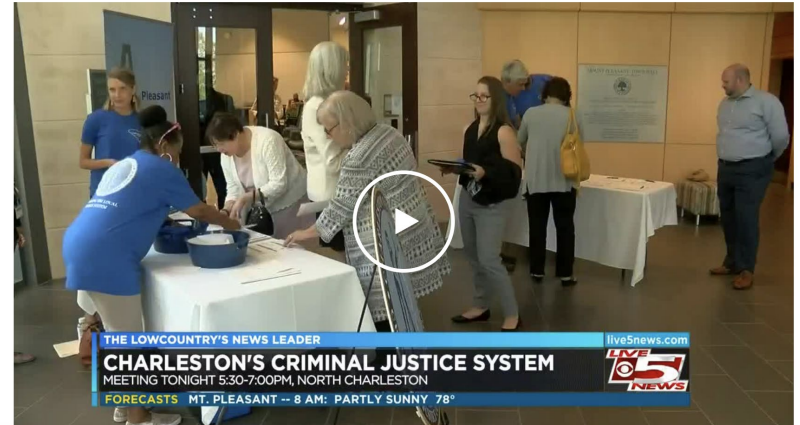
Updated Dec 12, 2018; Posted Oct 10, 2017



The author writes that "Women facing minor charges who, due to mental health concerns, have been deemed

NEWS

Law enforcement officials to discuss racial equality in Charleston's criminal justice system



INLANDER

Spokane jail inmate population analysis finds racial disparities, high number of bookings for misdemeanors and nonviolent offenses

We're here to help.

- Strategic communications counsel
- Hands-on communications support, as needed (materials development, media outreach, etc.)
- Crisis communications planning & support
 - Resource: crisis communications planning webinar & template

Get in touch!

Via email: TeamSJC@mrss.com

In-person: Network Meeting in Houston

Q&A

THANK YOU!