

The Family Healing Project

The Family Healing Project uses restorative practices to offer supportive spaces for individuals and families, after incarceration. Evidence shows that strong social support is positively correlated with stable housing and that stable housing greatly reduces the risk of re-arrest amongst formerly incarcerated people. Yet support for people coming home is often narrowly focused on material needs, while heads of households, primarily women of color, shoulder the emotional, psychological and spiritual challenges for all.

Supporting Individuals and Their Loved Ones

Using a restorative justice framework and circle practice, The Family Healing Project provides an opportunity for participants to vocalize the impact of incarceration, tend to the relationships that have been affected, and collectively decide how to move forward after release. People returning home to New York City from State or Federal prison and their loved ones are invited to receive sustained emotional and logistical support in this voluntary process. In a restorative justice process, participants can work on issues that arise before and during the transition home from prison, including: addressing the logistical questions of the transition and cohabitation; identifying and repairing past harms; deepening relationships between estranged relatives; and reaching consensus on important decisions. Any formerly incarcerated person who has been separated from their family for at least five years or their loved ones are eligible to participate. Participants may elect to participate in a year-long engagement with their loved ones to tackle the complexities of coming home. Alternately, households wherein a formerly incarcerated person is living can elect to use our restorative justice process to resolve conflicts when they arise.

Healing in Community

Outside of our restorative justice process for participants' families, we hold peer support groups for the formerly incarcerated, as well as for spouses, siblings, children and supporters of the person returning home. Inviting similarly situated individuals to share their stories, challenges and resilience together creates opportunities for collective healing and empowerment.

Community Member Training

The Family Healing Project trains cohorts of people who have lived through the reentry process in restorative justice. These volunteers can lend their experience and knowledge to current program participants. This is part of a growing effort to increase capacity amongst New Yorkers to lead community-based healing and accountability processes. Community members receive stipends for their participation in this healing work.

For More Information

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