

THURSTON S SMITH:

A little bit about about... Immediately following the live event, you will find the online quiz link on the same part of the website you used to access this event. If this is your first time attending NAADAC session. Make sure to save the instructional guide attached to the chat box during the session which is also saved on a dedicated web page.

Make sure, to send in any questions you have in the Q&A box. You can also vote on any questions that you would like to have answered as well.

This session, a little housekeeping items. This session is sponsored by UDO mental health and school consultants LLC. We want to thank for the sponsorship. Before we start the panel discussion, we want to open today's discussion by hearing the personal stories from Bayete A. Sadiq, he is a native Washington citizen who grew up in the DC metropolitan area. He had models for -- multiple encounters with... Of a 30 year sentence. While incarcerated he began to embrace the mindset that his life had purpose and began his transformation while he was detained.

He turned his life to a life of service as a community activist. Of the returning citizens those coming in through reentry, to gain employment, advocates for mental health services, volunteered for farming for hunger and currently the vice president of Incarcerated Lives Matter. Please welcome Bayete A. Sadiq.

BAYETE A SADIQ:

I want to thank you for such a sincere introduction. I want to begin by thanking NAADAC for this opportunity to speak. Also I want to personally thank (Name) -- thank (Name) who played a vital part for this opportunity.

My name is Bayete A. Sadiq... It was also large -- played a large part in me being released. To make sure they had ellipses but moving on, I am #Never Going Back. Does the organization that started, began as a battle cry. For those who were overcome those challenges, the adversities, but for them, not only were they able to overcome them, they are worse able to find... Often times a person may ask what right do I have, to speak on. Rise from the ashes and vowed never to return.

As Thurston said in the introduction. I spent that time for a murder I didn't commit. I opened my eyes to the justice system to how things are. I will speak to my attorney about these and I am telling him the details. Right now we are not discussing is as guilty, it's whether you should be punished. Because your crime as far as the charges documents, is his murder but at a different time in a different town in a different colour, it would've been self defence.

My attorney was Jewish, and I state that because this disparity, this things become blatant, it becomes present everywhere that he brought to my attention. This is what's going on now. And often times, it isn't about the weight of your crime, it's always the thing surrounding the crime, who is he, who was heard. Because he said himself, if he killed some white kid, to be honest with you black on black

crime, it often get swept under the rug.

And that point in time, it opened my eyes to the way things was because too often, it is seen as a complaint or things don't exist but they do. I began to see things different. Ellipses are able to afford lawyers, who cannot and are foes to go to public defenders. I also know that since they brought these plea deals, there's 95% conviction rate because those guys who can't afford private attorneys, I love the public defenders under the words always encouraging us to go and take that deal. Whether you're innocent or not.

It's the circumstances, it shows that I'm from this age and this neighbourhood and so I must be guilty. That's a term that's often used in prison, the first thing they say is I'm not going to play with their people. The harsh reality for many of us is that the odds are stacked against us so with that mentality and me realizing that, it gave birth to #Never Going Back.

It began a thing for self empowerment, despite us go with what's going on, there's many people out here, this group NAADAC, concerned with what is happening with us. You have the change in narrative and see each other in different ways. Some of it is not cool, we look at each other...

I was on the phone recently, and I introduce myself I'm a convicted murderer, and he said stop introducing yourself like that, you're not a convicted murderer. He committed a crime for that crime you served time for, but that doesn't divine you.

We carry the weight around and in doing so, and makes us continual victims. Instead of going back, to end this victim mentality. We know the six are set up against us but it's on us to no longer be tricked and also make it for those who follow us, would not follow those same schemes. That's very important, people understand that it takes so much, it was a term that was used for (indiscernible). I was released, I did know how to work the phone. I wasn't familiar, or remote control to get on the flex, these people are returned back to society with nothing but a \$50 check and whatever clothes we left the streets ended we are expected to to pull yourself of by the bootstraps.

That's why community engagement is so important. Conversations like this are so important. Because the thing is, people don't understand... To be part of the solution is to be part of the problem, we are the ones left outside these rooms. To have us with the ones left outside as these decisions are being made. That's why it's so important for us to hold onto these personal relationships for those who are highly educated to may not have seen a date inside the cell but who is able to relate through empathy and understanding. That it could have been me, it could've been my son or my brother. And that in itself will empower them and be part of the struggle. At the end of the day, things will get worse unless a spotlight is more to this problem.

2 million people are incarcerated in America, and that's vastly growing. Despite my mistakes, it will not define me, and to join hands with my brothers and sisters and to join the front lines. There's plenty of work to be done and I want to close out with a description. That's for anyone over there, the religion but this description, it says rise up, the matters in your hand. He will support you so they came from (indiscernible).

At the end of the day we will be able to change things, from us and for us. Thank you.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so very much. Sharing with us. For the grace of God, go out. It's hard to come up with the words when someone shares something so powerful important. We are privileged to have you with us. And I think your remarks establish a great foundation to our opening conversation that we are about to have. So thank you so much again.

Now onto our panelists. I'm externally pleased that we have an outstanding ... Criminal justice specialist and I'm so proud to have the opportunity.

I want to begin with Prechelle Shannon, she is a licensed professional counsellor, addiction counsellor and certified clinical trauma professional. Rachelle has over 18 years of work. She is also the CEO and cofounder of 4TRUTH. With specialization and person (indiscernible). Gender and cultural specificity, diversity, equity and inclusion. And organizational leadership.

Pardon, organizational leadership transformation. Adventure communities of colour... And equitable representation. Please join me in welcoming Prechelle Shannon.

Next we have Rommel Johnson. He is a licensed professional counsellor in the state of Michigan, and Texas. And as a board certified gender counselling in addition counsellor. He has over 14 years of clinical mental health and addictions counselling experience. His research interests include exploring brain your plasticity and addiction and recovery and understanding issues of race, social justice, disability, addiction and mental health within Afro-Caribbean and Afro Latinx Americans. Please welcome Rommel Johnson to the panel.

Our next panelist is Ms. Lisa Connors. She is a licensed clinical professional counselor, National certified Counselor, and Master addiction counselor. Her greatest passion is working with individuals affected with HIV-AIDS, substance use disorders, mental health disorders, violence, abuse, trauma, grief, loss and racial and social injustices.

Lisa's clinical work includes serving clients who have co-occurring disorders as well. She is a founding member and Pres. elect of NAADAC... Addiction professionals. Please welcome Lisa to the panel.

Our next panelist is Ms. Monica Rich-McLaurin. She is a clinician with over 25 years of experience. She is the CEO and founder of Paramount consulting group, PLLC, which provides accreditation services... Children and youth services, and opioid treatment programs. She is also the CEO of resolution counseling and therapy services, PLLC, which provides direct clinical services to adults. She is an administrator and program surveyor for (unknown term) international and accrediting body for the majority of behavioral health, medical rehabilitation and opioid treatment organizations around the world.

Monica is the chairwoman of the national Association of social workers, and ESW. She is active with

NAADAC on critical issues of the black community. She is the chair of the ethics committee for the Michigan Association of alcohol and drug abuse counselors, and a board member of the NAADAC Michigan affiliate. Please welcome Monica to the panel.

Last, but certainly not least is Dr. Karla Sapp. She is a fierce social justice legislative and public policy advocate who has been practicing for 13+ years. She specializes in general mental health and addictions counseling amongst the adult and criminal offender populations. Dr. Sapp is currently a member of the licensed professional counselors Association of Georgia. She is a member of the Florida counseling Association, and she serves as the public awareness and legislative policy committee chair.

Dr. Sapp has experienced working in a variety of settings, including inpatient acute hospitalization, outpatient and correctional settings will please welcome Dr. Karla Sapp to the panel.

So, since we have questions that are going to be submitted through the chat, I will pull these up, but what I would like to due now is give each member of the panel an opportunity to open with a few remarks and share some highlights about their experiences as it relates to criminal justice reform.

We can begin with Prechelle.

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

Hi Thurston and thank you everyone for joining. We are so happy to be here. Listening to Bayete is part of that reason. Knowing that there are magnificent people who are incarcerated, and a lot of it has to due with what ZIP Code they are from, the color of your skin, everything that he described is exactly the reality is that often times we as practitioners on the other side realize that these are magnificent people with purpose. Because, and if not for the fact that they were young, black and poor, that purpose would be realized. That purpose or individual would be nurtured.

They would have been seen as valued. Someone would have invested in that individual or in that neighborhood. Being on this side, and working with incarcerated citizens and seeing myself reflected in my sons, fathers, reflected in the people that are incarcerated, it compelled me a long time ago, even before I could have even imagined being at this stage at my career. Being a position like this, I knew that there was something that had to be done.

So, that is my, "Why." I continue to advocate for reform. I continue to advocate for people who are harmed by these systems that are designed to continue to perpetuate this type of damage. We have to use our platforms, use our experience and our education and our knowledge to influence change. That is why I am here for the we have 390 people. Let this be an inspiration for you to also look towards being a change agent. Thank you.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you Prechelle. Let's pass the baton to Dr. Rommel Johnson.

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

You mentioned something that relates to my, "Why." This quote I wrote on that crime does not define you. I have worked a lot with young people, predominantly African-American young men. Coming to understand this thing of criminalizing someone, having something to find themselves in such, became very apparent to me when I started practicing counseling.

Working with these young people, there was this identity that they accepted, and I realized that as a provider, being poorly educated, I fell right into place treating them with that identity. When I started to learn about them and how they are people and how the system -- what the system does to them, this persona that is created that we really need to look at that we need to separate, As someone in the chat said. Not letting the events create an identity for them.

How did we get to the place of you due the crime you due the time, to now that perpetually defines you as a criminal. There is criminology and people go to school and study this. There is disbelief of the inherited trait that you have of being a criminal, you know? That is very problematic, and we see how in the criminal justice system, our black and brown bodies are shuffled through because of this false narrative of this inherited belief that you are rotten to the core. And so, we are going to dole out punishment. We don't look at treatment, but we are going to dole out punishment because you are inherently rotten to the core. So that is my, "Why." Was go and I'm glad that we can advocate for those things.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you for those remarks Dr. Johnson. Thank you for those poignant remarks. Let's pass the baton to Lisa Connors.

LISA CONNORS:

Thank you everyone. I am so thankful to be here. I just want to say as we were getting on and talking together, thank you Prechelle, thank you Dr. Rommel, thank you Bayete. One of the things that you said resonates with me.

My why is a personal story. I grew up in a household of trauma and my dad use heroin for all of my life. I didn't know anything else but that. That is my, "Why. Also I recognize when my daddy went to jail, he went to prison, you know, there was no reform, not only for him, there was no reform for my family.

And so, everybody was focusing on let's get together into what we need to. There was a breakdown in my family but we got lost, we were invisible. So we have to recognize that when the person goes to prison, they go to jail, they are leaving people behind full stop we got left behind. This is my, "Why." I stand on my why and the fact that, "Hey, just because my dad did what he did... It doesn't define who I am."

We talk about adverse childhood experiences. I am just being truthful today for people say, "Well, you grew up in a household with trauma." People to find you by what you score. I tell people today, that is not who I am. I said to the panel before we go on, by the grace of God, there go I. Because of God, because of the people who love me and wrap their arms around me, I am here today to tell the story.

So that is my why. it doesn't matter how you grow up, and what you did. You have to understand that you are greater than that.

There was no treatment for my dad. There was nothing for him. (Indiscernible) does not equate recovery. And so, my data came in, out, back and forth. But we lost something. And there was a major disruption in our family. And so, today I can stand true, I can be honest and people say, "She's telling her story." I don't have nothing to hide. One of the things I have come to recognize that. When you reveal, you heal.

I am not going to allow my father... To keep me in bondage was that is my, "Why." When you ask me, that is my why. And I stand on my why.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Alrighty then! Thank you Lisa. Now, let's pass the baton to others.

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

... The aftermath are those individuals who are left behind after that person enters into treatment or get incarcerated. Who cleans up the aftermath? That is something that has always been lacking in our community for nobody looks at the aftermath, or the children or trauma they have suffered by witnessing their parent or loved one, you know, continuously engage in drug use.

Part of my why is many years ago, probably about 20 years ago, I began to notice the disproportionate rate that people of color, particularly men of African-American descent were being incarcerated compared to caucasian counterparts. And the things that they were incarcerated for. I also started to look at as well the charges that they were being convicted of.

Getting back to more of my why, I joined the critical issues in the black community committee so I could serve as an advocate for those who are in need of receiving substance abuse services was all too often in the African-American community, we are either underinsured or uninsured. With that type of insurance dilemma, it presents a whole different challenge when somebody saying, "I'm ready for substance abuse treatment.",

I am from the state of Michigan. In the state of Michigan, we have one primary facility that provides services to underinsured and uninsured individuals. When a person calls me and says, "Monica, I want to go into treatment. As go and they have Medicaid or Medicare, and Medicare as you know is the one for the aging population, I have to call this facility and say, "Hey, I have John Doe who is ready to go into treatment. A scope and they say that there is a 30 day waiting list. How does that set somebody up to be successful? If anything, you are giving them permission to go back out and use. Right?

By telling somebody that you have to wait for month to get treatment, they could go out and kill themselves in 30 days. Whereas, for those who have private, commercial insurance, you can pick up the phone and say, "Jane Doe is ready to come into substance abuse treatment. This quote we have an opening this evening at 7 PM! Unfortunately that disparity in insurance coverage, and how people are treated based on the type of insurance they have is one of my biggest passions.

I am currently in school for my doctoral degree, and this is going to be part of my research.... Number two, how did we work on closing that gap so that everyone wants to get treated gets treated. My professional clinical opinion is that when an individual says that they are ready, you struck while the iron is hot. You don't hit the pause button and say that you will be back in 30 days. You have to strike the iron when it is hot.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you so much for those dynamic remarks Monica. Next is Dr. Karla Sapp.

KARLA SAPP:

I'm sitting here thinking on how can I follow everyone. NAADAC is so be here. And be part of the black community as well. I sat here thinking, it is literally almost 14 years ago when I sat in the courtroom with two African-American males who were charged as adults. And I bagged if they could just be convicted at adult court and sent them back to... I will ensure that they will go and receive treatment at these babies, when they have a life of. And the judge looked at me and said, you know what, they didn't care what they did and so I don't care about their sentencing. It was on that day that I sent a 15-year-old to adult prison for 20 years. And I sent a 16-year-old for 30 years.

I voluntarily signed... Again I sent out voluntarily signed up because for every day, since July 30, 2011 I've walked through the prison doors working with the incarcerated population. The population not that I work with, I coordinate their entire substance abuse programming which has been an amazing honor because I get to be the voice for the voiceless. I get to tell people what exactly they're experiencing on a day-to-day basis so people understand and changes can be made and I am a part of that change.

2018 I travelled back and forth. And it amazed me how many policymakers that we elected into the Congress that had no idea exactly what happened in the federal prison and as I sat in each of their offices and explain the programming and explain why we needed to reform the justice system and so our population have a reason to make a change in their life and we are being a part of that. They became amazed.

And it was December 20 18th that (indiscernible) it was cited to legislations and justice past month I went to six of my own inmates walk out of prison several years ahead of when they're supposed to because they were able to benefit from the (indiscernible). My reason is not to just be a voice to the voiceless but as my (indiscernible) reminded me, I always tell them it's not what you say, it's how and what you do every single day that makes a difference.

And they reminded me of that yesterday as I was walking out of my unit with them, that is what I do because the work that I do give some hope and if I can give them hope their families have hope and if their families have hope every reason to go home and have a reason to stay home.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. As you can see there is at least two things happening, number one, this panel is on fire. And number two which validates the previous introduction, you can see each one of this

panelist brings a wealth of insight for this discussion. We have several questions that has been submitted to us in the chat.

Let me offer this first question for the panel. Are there any states or examples of programs that have demonstrated successful results in addressing racial disparities in criminal justice? Especially those disparities that show at the doors of addiction treatment? Can anybody speak to that?

KARLA SAPP:

I will jump in real quick and I will talk about mine from the inside prison setting. What we have in the prison setting is we have the drug abuse program and that program is the residential which is a 9 to 12 month program. An nonresidential... and what I found in working in the prison system and I've worked in two different facilities in the past 11 years. And have another couple of months to go. I'm seeing it more now that I have just about get the equal mix of ethnic and racial groups in my program right now.

And that was me walking out of the door because I had to run some numbers. What I found is that my inmates, I say inmates and I want to refer them as my participants. But when I go home at my previous facility, I transitioned four age 15 individuals, out of those individuals only 10 came back. And those 10 came back was in the (indiscernible). They made up several ethnic groups. When they came back for several reasons. I can remember one of my participants keep back because at that moment, he worked a good job, and his girlfriend passed away, left him with her daughter he had to raise. He didn't know what to do and he went back to what he had always known.

But he came back and he said he needed to work on it. A big part of trying to address those racial disparities is having a staff that is culturally diverse and racially diverse so you're making sure that you are addressing those issues at hand. An understanding that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to the work that we are doing special with the criminal justice population because that's a subculture that is very diverse and has an array of issues that they're having to work through and navigate through. Part of that I feel a lot of times, you look at these, the makeup, the racial makeup of the agencies that you're working with. Monica was (unknown term) him and with her agency, you called up certain people for treatment and you can get it. That's a problem because were catering to certain populations and understanding that the diction population isn't about catering to this racial group but about the collective what is the one issue this bring them to the door and that is the diction. The substance abuse that they are going through.

... Which is what I have noticed, I've seen it with my program, having trained to see this racial makeup of clinicians working, able to address issues from a variety of different perspectives and that helps our population to be more inclusive and being more open to be doing the work that is necessary.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much, anybody else?

(Multiple speakers)

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

I think in general when we have agencies that really make an effort to make a change, I can't really speak to estate but I do know that in different areas that I've worked in, there seems to be a willingness from the people that work in the institution, the program managers, even your metalevel or local leadership to the institutions. Really try to make an effort.

But I think where we fail in this, because this is been going on for a while but we don't see the results, the results are not ones that, recidivism is not being reduced. People are still using, the same barriers out there still exists. Crime still exists, there going back to the same neighbourhoods.

The problem is the linkages from the program and institutions and into the communities, that's where we are missing it. We have to put a lot of emphasis and focus on our reentry, building those networks and it doesn't mean that you know when you leave out of jail... That doesn't do nothing for an individual who has been traumatized or who has substance abuse issues or their family and connections in the community, no longer exists. We have to vet the services that we are providing, we have to build these networks and create foundations and work on building relationships that are vetted. So when someone, when you give someone a place to go, there is a contact.

Go see this person, this is the individual that manages this, but that's where we fall short. But initially what we are doing is checking a box. What is the quality of the program? Who are the people who are providing these services? So it really matters and speaking to what Karla Sapp said. The other side is when I get to these places to the people who are providing these services, look like me. That's another issue, we cannot ignore cultural specificity and the need for people to see themselves represented.

It's a lot to it, so I can't say any state is doing better than the other but I do know that those are the problems that I consistently see with programming, all across the board.

THURSTON S SMITH:

OK.

LISA CONNORS:

I was going to add what they said. One of the things we have to understand is about changing the language. One of the things that I challenge my students when I'm teaching them, is that they say it, I'm an addict, part of this we have to speak -- the stigmatize the stigma.

This is 2022, so we have to begin to start changing the language and what you said, it's not about the state, it's about how you are showing up, how are you presenting yourself. One of the things that I do when I'm very mindful of, I started doing this work in 1989. I probably don't look like it but the thing about it is, how I'm going to show up, how am I going to be present? When it relates to declines in the patient's comments about me, have to do some self-awareness and for those of you who are in addictions, your therapists or counsellors, peer support specialists, you need to evaluate yourself. What are you seeing to your patients? What you say to your clients. I don't even like the word client and patient anymore, I like participant and partner. When I say kind and patient, I think I know everything. I am not the expert, when that client shows up, they are the expert to their life.

It is a partnership and the other thing is that we work and silos. But I grew up in the south and it took a village to raise us. We have to go back to the village mentality. It's not about your agency, your money, but how do we come together. How can we collaborate. One of the things I learned when I worked in public health, healthy communities produce healthy people. And when we have healthy communities, we have healthy people. We have to go back to working together. You have to link arms and the thing I said, we have to put some foots and that's not grammatically correct but we have to foors these legs and we have to get moving. I want to share that, that's my little input.

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

Lisa, I need to come to your church.

(Laughter)

In addition to what both of y'all shared, relationship matters. So even if there is not a program, how are you showing up to your clients? What Prechelle mentioned and what I want to touch on, was, you know, networking and getting engaged with the people in the community. They are human beings. Sometimes you will be surprised. And their families are grappling some of these things, so there might not be a program, but they're prosecuting attorney has a family that are battling and can relate. Never underestimate the power of you showing up for your time.

I have been to courtrooms, hearings, I have been involved with prosecutors will stop I did a program back in Michigan called, "In my shoes." We got five police officers and five black men to due 10 group therapy chansons together. I was the therapist. I had a colleague, and we had a powerful discussion. All of that came about by being engaged in networking with people. When you show up like that, you make change happen. Don't underestimate the power of relationship, the power of networking.

If there is no program, you get to know the players in the community. You get to know the police officers. Asked to due presentations to them to educate them. You know, your school. Don't underestimate the power of relationships and networking full stop

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Okay. Briefly, Monica did you have anything to add?

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

I due. Just kind of piggybacking on what everybody said. Lisa, your comment about it takes a village, that cannot be a more true statement at all. When we look at people who come out Dr. sops program, how is the community ready to supersede the individual? I think that is a large part of what we are lacking right now, and where we need to begin to serve as a voice for them with our state legislators and letting them know that this is what we see as being a college. We look at people who are reoffending and being reincarnated and committing additional crimes, those are the things we need to take into consideration.

Dr. Johnson, your comment about the, "In my shoes," I remember that project will stop it was amazing, and I wish we could you more like that countrywide. I think that is something needed particularly with

black men and police officers. Because we look at police officers... Men look at police officers as the adversary, they you not look at them to be helpful. The more that we due that and prepare our community to receive these individuals as they are getting released from being incarcerated, the better prepared they are and they are more set up for success as opposed to just saying, "50 bucks, same clothes as you had on. See you later, good luck." That is not the combination for success. Thank you.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you so much. Great discussion. Let's go on to our next question from one of the participants.

Here goes., "I worked in a methadone clinic in the 1990s. And the 1994 crime bill was devastating to my clients and their families. How did we advocate to help alert our policymakers that the harm of not just that bill, but similar bills, and create change for the people we are actually trying to help?"

In Monica, I'm going to pass the baton back to you.

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

Great, thank you Thurston. So how you doing? You find out who your legislators are. You find out who your house representatives are, Congressman and Congresswoman. You make appointments with them and sit down at the table with them and educate them.

Oftentimes a lot of people that we put in these political offices, some people may be aware of challenges, some may be oblivious. We have to be bold enough to take that step and to sit down at the table with these individuals, because those are the ones who can realize the change. We are simply the voice or the vessel.

So some people say, "I'd not want to doable myself." Get some of your colleagues and professionals who think the same way you due. Make it a collective effort. Whoever gave me the big ups for being a social worker, but you know, the national Association of social workers is very collaborative and talking with state legislators and lawmakers in order to get those things on the table and get them heard. We had actually gotten the ear of a lot of people in terms of advocating for those things that we need to change.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you so much. Let me pass the baton to Prechelle on that question real quick.

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

I would have to echo what Monica has said. It is definitely reaching out to your leadership, reaching out to your Congressman. But sometimes, that's a challenging thing. Many of us would not feel comfortable with doing that. Like, whereto I start?

So again, I am one for building bridges and connecting with the people on the ground. Find out the organizations that involve the community, go to them and tell them your story. Join them, because there is so much more in the power of numbers. I am all for always connecting and looking to your right and left before you look way, way up. Use those people to help you and push the real narrative

that is out here. That we know that we live. That Lisa saw in her own home. That I saw in my relatives, you know. And friends, and families and their parents.

I would always recommend everyone, look to your community, because what you need is there.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Outstanding. If you don't mind, let me take a brief moment, since that particular question really hones right in on my area of expertise. I would like to make a remark that everyone would find valuable.

So, first of all, we all need to understand that the criminal justice system, like all governmental systems, our political systems. There are three distinguishing characteristics that make the criminal justice criminal system. The political system.

Criteria number one is... Is established, pursuant to public law, legislation and or executive order. That is number one for number two, the criminal justice system is political because the individuals that are selected to govern them are either elected or appointed through the political process. Lastly, which is thirdly, but equal to the other two, what makes the criminal justice system political system is because the public policies and protocols within those systems are influenced by political ideology, by either political party, and or by world view and the policies that have been implemented to push them forward.

To piggyback on what Monica's response and initially was about NAADAC, NAADAC is at the forefront along with organizations such as NAS W and similar organizations that are involved in advocacy. Advocacy is absolutely critical. for those of you who are participants of the NAADAC, advocacy is included in several of those printable. Politics is not a dirty word, although there is some stuff that goes on in politics that is not always tasteful. But, getting involved at every level is so very, very important. That includes speaking with legislators, so on and so forth.

Having said that, lemme pass the baton to Dr. Rommel and then Dr. Sapp.

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

Thank you so much for sharing that information, Thurston. Really touching on the engagement in the political process, which is something that I used to be allergic, I said to politics. You just mention the nastiness. I have come to learn that if we due to advocate, we are not going to get what we need. And we need to be engaged, and the different ways to due that start from the ground level. I think somebody said earlier, "Start where you are." Start by going to your community meetings, talking to local officials.

Again, they are human beings. They might have possession, power, but they are human beings just like you and me. They can be sympathetic, they can be empathetic to stop I have experienced that. When you talk to them about what is going on, you know, you change hearts and minds by your consistent engagement.

I wanted to emphasize that it is good to protest and go out on the street, that needs to be done, but the

thing that works often the best is consistent, sustained engagement. Due not just to it one time, right? Keep doing it. Keep going at it. That is what I would add.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Thank you so much. Dr. Karla Sapp?

KARLA SAPP:

Kind of to piggyback on the consistency piece, being able to show up and show up often authentically as yourself. Not feeling like you have to, because you are talking with one particular person or group, that you have to be a certain way for just being who I am and being able to express my thoughts, my ideas, but also the lived experiences of those that I'm working with. Sharing those narratives are so important.

I found that out in the three years that I have been looking alongside with Congressman. When it comes to things in legislation for the (indiscernible) population, sharing stories, because a lot of times they don't understand what is happening.

A lot of times when they make these decisions, it is based on political ideology, worldview. They are not dealing with them on a day to day basis. When you are able to break it down for them, and for them to honestly see and relate and understand that while this is person A we have made this role for, it also impacts my family too. We have people in our families who are expensive same things that they talk about.

When we can get them to that place where it is no longer S&M but we, collectively, we can make a difference. Now we are saying if that happens to my nephew or my son, this could be it. I always tell my incarcerated population that everyone is just 1 bad day away...

With that being said, being able to bring it to your legislators in that particular manner, definitely allows them to see it from a different perspective is if you are not consistent... You can't show today and then don't show up for the next couple of... My Congressman, I tell you I have his personal cell phone number for the Texan every time I see something. Can you tell me this, etc. And he just like I have you Karla, I got you. I don't mind doing that.

I'm not sending messages because I want to sit here and navigate what you're doing, but because I am a voice for those people who due not have a voice and who you are not going to listen to full stop when I show up, I show up as Dr. Carla and every incarcerated offender that she is working for. You make a decision is sound that is in their best interest. That is so important. You have to be consistent. You have to be at these meetings. If you know that they are at a meeting, you show up. Get involved, engage with your community and be right there...

Activism and advocacy are two different things, and we have to be able to disagrees between the two was a a lot of times people will go out and protest, but what good is the protest of somebody is not sitting there advocating as well? We are not having conversations after the protest has ended? We

can't just protest and not have a conversation.

THURSTON S. SMITH:

Outstanding. Lisa, you have anything to add to this?

LISA CONNORS:

You know, I do. One of the things that I wanted to say is a vote, vote. I was one of those persons, let me just vote at the national level. I due not care what is going on in my neighborhood and community. I have learned that I have to start at the smaller place. I have to start voting for things that may be impacting my neighborhoods and my communities. So vote! That was the first thing stop

The other thing is that I believe the pen is mightier than the sword. If I see something, if you are not going to lose your job today, you might lose it tomorrow. I am going to write letters today to this person and that person. I due in the state and Maryland, things have gone on here with my children, I am writing. If you say you are for something, you better hold fast to what you say. If you're trying to get into office, you may not get there because I am going to rally around and ask other people. You really have two get out there. The pen is mightier than the sword.

The other thing for those of you who are in this field, I think about at this level, I look at the micro level, because if you are not standing up and speaking out for your clients, don't jump to the macrolevel... You have to start speaking up and standing out and really advocating for your clients. If you know something is going on in your agencies, and people say they due not want to lose their job, at the end of the day, fire me! Go ahead and fire me! That will be a whole other issue right there.

Institutional book trail. Betraying your members, your clients, and sometimes as clinicians, we don't say anything. And we know stuff is going on. So yes, we are talking about activism and advocacy at the federal level, national level, but what about in your agency? We have to start standing up and speaking out.

If you are not invited to the table, crash the party.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Standing. Go on to our next question. Let the panel know, the audience is loving this discussion. Here is the next question. Has anyone of you witnessed two or three generations of black men, either father, son or even grandfather in the prison system simultaneously at the same time? If so, how difficult was that for you to see and work with either on a personal or professional level. And anybody can jump in on that.

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

Multiple times. Not just once but multiple times. It is painful. Because you see the historical trauma perpetuate. Because the grandfather, the uncle, the father, the son and the nephew, all of them are incarcerated.

And that is not an accident. That is the thing, that's when if a light bulb is not going off or some sort of

awareness not coming towards you, this happens with us and only us and that is by design. The one thing, we are in an area -- era of criminal justice reform. But truly the meaningful reform, it cannot happen, cannot be accomplished without the acknowledgement of these racist underpinnings.

You can't say something but not be willing to have the conversations and delve into why it is what it is. These are big conversations but these are things that can start every single thing that we are talking about here, can a start with one individual. At your level, in your agency, community, organization and so I challenge everybody here to be brave enough to have the conversation and do something about it.

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

If I can follow up, I've seen that and to add on to what you have said, the psychological impact of the criminalization. There is what the institution does, there's a systematic process and the racism in the history of incarceration, we don't have time to get into that. What is helpful, there is a book, Thomas Blackman, Douglas Blackman, sorry. Slavery by another name. That gives you so much on the continuation of slavery through the whole incarceration process.

But going back to this idea of criminalization. This what the system does to individuals, when they internalize it, is perpetuated. And so what I have seen said it's almost like this doomsday prophecy. My granddad went to jail, my dad went to jail, I'm bound to end up there. And I've worked with people who haven't had anything on the record,... The psychological destruction that this thing of criminalization because people are trained to believe that they inherently are persons of no worth, that they are criminal. For something they didn't, the minor offensives. Someone gets a speeding ticket, we don't call them a criminal.

If someone does something, you do the crime, you do the time, that should be it but the psychological trauma that is deep-rooted and passed on from generation to generation. It is a real thing and so going back, what do we do? We have to address it head on. If you're not in the field of treatment, helping them find someone who can help them with this. And recognize it as a trauma. A generational trauma. And address it head on.

In this tier that a young person, whatever you can do. Mentoring, afterschool programs, whatever he could do to let them know, you don't have to go down this path. Because your grandpa had this, this was an event, it shouldn't define him, it doesn't define your family. That's not how you were created. Everyone screws up, makes a mistake. And gets over, why can't you? And so we really have to address this pathology created by this whole institutionalized criminalization in (unknown term).

THURSTON S SMITH:

Alright, thank you so much.

LISA CONNORS:

I want to say something to what you were saying, you are right on point with that because as I work with clients, I do a lot of looking at historical trauma and intergenerational trauma. I like to go deep-sea diving. Because sometimes as clinicians, we look at the surface. But it's more to it than just the

surface. We have to go diving and ask all of those questions because a lot of this is embedded. In our brain and so is changing the mindset. Her research has said that when it comes to historical trauma, it becomes embedded in our collective memory for several generations.

Somerset in the chat box, my granddaddy dented, my father did, and what you were saying, then you will do it. It's really helping them change their mindset and I'm always saying to people, and some of you may agree or disagree but some of my clients will say, my depression or my anxiety. My substance abuse disorder, when you say my, it belongs to you. I'm not saying my because I don't own this. So it's really changing the mindset and that's really changing the things we say out of our mouths. So I agree with you and the historical trauma, this goes all the way back to slavery and it's a whole long story with this.

But we have to dig in, have people in my family and I will say this and then I will get off. Start with your own family. We want to start with our client and our partners, our participants, patients. Start with the people in your family. I got to start with my family, I got to start with home because ministry start at home and I still work and still do what I do, I show up and still be a servant. I have to make sure what's going on with my cousin, what's going on with my niece. What's going on with my brother, and sister. We have to start at home.

KARLA SAPP:

I just want to add to that right there. Not just starting at home, start with me. In order to remotely think about what's going on with my cousin or uncle or my sisters and brothers. After go on what's going on with me. Especially clinicians, we have to do our own work. We have to do our work because we can't show up and broke through what others work through. We bring in this package in the room and it's all a big mess.

Working on yourself first, I have a therapist, I'm a therapist with the therapist also has a therapist and look here, we make it work. That's what we have to do. We have to be able to make sure we are all together and that way when we are together, our families can be together because we starts with us then rolls down to her family and those who we are working with.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Quick question for you, very brief, what kind of program are you running and is it cognitive behavioural?

KARLA SAPP:

I answered it in the chat box as well. I will send it to him.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. The clock is ticking, the conversation is both meaningful and dynamic. Here's the next question and let's keep our answers to 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Do any of the palace have any ideas or recommendations for incarcerated parents, strategies and so adept especially -- desperately want to stay connected with their children? Insides or experiences.

KARLA SAPP:

I will start with that one, one of the things I do with my program and we haven't been able to do with COVID because of visitations. But in the federal Bureau visitations, we are family days. On a particular Saturday at of each month, our reentry affairs department, and other various departments, we host a big family they were the kids can come in, we have games we have psychologists as well as treatment staff were available. It's not just taking come to visit and play, we are there doing work. With my program specifically, we've actually done (indiscernible) family day. We have our participants reach out to their families and find out the kinds of things their kids are like. The things they do in school. We put together a big event for them.

The kids come in and spend a whole day. And we spent the day with them, watching movies, doing lunch. I've held babies were just recently born. So I'm doing visitation walking babies at the same time. Adolescent to have those moments, to have those relationships. We have family time as well. Sometimes typically during the day, but we also have those moments, this group is going to program, we have small kids, your reach out or writing letters. Doing things so that they have that type of relationship still. They are able to spend time.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you. Prechelle?

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

To the parents I say, be there. You are their lifeline, you are their hope and their inspiration. In their encouragement. So be there for them. And educate yourself. Learn about what is going on in your community, and things that are changing.... That is super important. It is one thing to encourage and pray. We all pray. But we have to use that energy to motivate us to do something.

So continue to educate yourself about what is going on in your local government, stay informed with the changes that are coming about. Thinking up, looked towards your Senate, in your house. Find out what those bills are, who are representing those bills. They have open forms for you to call and give comment. Do not miss out for your opportunities. Chapter stay informed in order to do that. Just because that child is in prison, that's not the end all, encouraged him and take care of yourselves as well. Self-care for you too. She can encourage them and you can go there and bring joy and keep the possibility of life after incarceration. Right at the forefront. That has to always be the goal, you get to bring them home. Free them. That is what I recommend to parents to do.

Stay informed, get informed, be their lifeline, be the hope that they need.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Why do you think that racial trauma is not included within the framework of advanced childhood experience, Dr. Rommel Johnson?

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

It reflects that we have always been left out of the conversation. It has not always been done intentionally, but it goes to the pattern of you know... And again, there is a redemptive aspect to this as

well. When it comes to other people experiencing trauma, and hear what is going to happen and by the need to intervene, so that we can restore these people.

Racism, slavery, the whole history of this stuff, is America's dirty little secret that it does not want to address. Even now, we have people who don't want kids to learn about. Let's call everything critical race theory and not talk about black history or anything. I think it is one of those sometimes intentional, unintended consequences of not wanting address to the issue of race in America. It affects the entire country. This is not a black problem, this is an America problem.

When we have people incarcerated and perpetuating this trauma, they are not contributing to the economy. It affects kids who are having issues in school. What a citizens are we producing? We state affects the entire country, and so yeah, I think again it is one of those intended and unintentional consequences of not wanting to acknowledge our story and history. We have to due something with it if we acknowledge the racism, the systematic racism that still perpetuated.

That is the thing.!, "Slavery is done." Yeah, but it is still here. Why are we so concerned with the discomfort of people hearing about it? We can talk about racism because people feel our kids are so fragile? But we can have all kinds of other things gimmick anyways, let's not...

THURSTON S SMITH:

Right, sounds like the three cousins of the night. Minimalize Asian, rationalization and justifications. Monica, you have a few comments to add?

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

Absolutely. The question about the ACEs and how racial trauma is not included in there, we need to look at who wrote the ACEs questionnaire and what they look like. I can guarantee you without doing any googling, they didn't look like anyone sitting on this panel today.

It was not considered to be a priority to them and to the reviewers of that questionnaire. Until we bring it to the table and put it right here in your face, just like this here, it is never going to be addressed. We have to be very cognizant and aware of always keeping the trauma that our race has experienced since slavery tell now, we have to make sure that it is at the forefront in order to be in on that conversation and crash that party as Alisa said.

We have to make sure that we don't let anybody forget that our ancestors have been through, and also whether kids are going through today. And I think it was Prechelle who mentioned today, who mentioned the connection with the adult child who is incarcerated. The best advice that I can give, I know a lot of times as parents it is hard especially if you have a child who is constantly reoffending and involved with law enforcement, due not wash your hands of the child. Due not give up on them. That is the biggest disservice that you could due to them as well as to the community for them they feel like, "My own mother does not want me, so why not? Why not just live a life of crime. Don't give up on your family, friends. I believe it was Dr. Karla who mentioned self-care. If you can't help yourself, you cannot help anyone else.

THURSTON S SMITH:

I'm going to do two lightning rounds, and I want my panel to limit themselves to one sentence and answer. We will go from Dr. Lisa, to Dr. Karla, to Dr. Prechelle, to Dr. Johnson and then Monica. Here's the lightning round question.

Which therapeutic models or practices help assist with healing the wounds of rage? Lisa?

LISA CONNORS:

As I practice, I am an eclectic clinician. It is really not about the theory or the models, it is about the relationship that I develop. I think Dr. Rommel talked about that. If you want to pinpoint a theory, CBT. I would say, it is based on the client. It is where they are going full stop we are not the expert in this situation. It is the client that is the expert. They lead us. Whatever is going to be beneficial and meaningful for them, we go with that. At the end of the day, it is their progress and journey.

If you want to look at a variety of them, you can, but I would say what is going to help them? What can they take away that is going to help them move forward?

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. Prechelle?

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

Yeah, I would have to mirror what Lisa said. It is a combination. Be with your client, build that rapport, understand what they have gone through and their experiences that make a decision at that point, what is the best option. Person centered, CBT, DBT? Everything works if you work it.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. Dr. Karla?

KARLA SAPP:

I will also piggyback off of Lisa and Prechelle and add taking an integrative approach, also looking at body centered approaches with their trauma manifested in our bodies, and if we are not healing our bodies we cannot heal our minds and souls.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Dr. Johnson?

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

Well, I completely echo that any approach can be used if you understand your client and have that connection.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Very good, Monica?

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

When you water the plant, the plant will grow. That is the investment that is required on the part of our participants in the clients that we treat the top I was a CBT or solution focused therapy or blending of the boat.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Last question. 30 seconds. Any strategies... So you work with adolescents or adults who have seriously made a transformation in their behaviors, but have to initially return to dysfunctional households and neighborhoods. Any strategies for aftercare, following the core level of treatment, be that residential or intensive outpatient?

Monica?

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

I would say making sure that there is that bridge. A lot of times when adolescents come out of certain programs, there is no bridge for them. For example, in the juvenile justice system in Michigan, we had a young man incarcerated until the age of 18. When he came out, he was still 10 mentally. When he came out, he had no skill set. At the age of 18, the community embraces him and says that they are there to help them. What is he duking a key reoffend. There was no bridge. We need to create that bridge and build it for our young people to be able to cross over.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Outstanding. Prechelle?

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

Just what Monica said, having a plan and to not neglect to have that conversation. They wanted their incarceration, you should be planning, doing treatment and therapy for how are they going to return? If you don't plan, or fail to plan, you plan to feel.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. Dr. Rommel if anything?

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

This thing of sanctuary, having a space where you can take care of yourself. I always want to help the young person with. What is that space, and we talk about what that can be for the meditation, a friend, but out in nature. Having a sanctuary and a space.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Dr. Karla?

KARLA SAPP:

Healthy support system. An understanding what that looks like.

THURSTON S SMITH:

And Lisa?

LISA CONNORS:

Our last thing would be that we don't always to, is really helping them create a safe space for grieving. They have had a lot of losses was a loss of freedom, identity, culture. One of the things that I would say is creating that safe space to grieve and doing it in a healthy way.

THURSTON S SMITH:

Outstanding full substance you are speaking last, give us some closing remarks.

LISA CONNORS:

Who, me? This is how I am going to end. I am ending with the poem. I want us to really think about what is being said. This is how I'm going to end it. It is called wake up!

Wake up, my sisters and brothers, are we summering and sleeping? There is no time for murmuring, groaning or complaining or weeping. We got up and grab hold of what is true! Grab hold of this message, it might just concern you! Wake up, and look and learn and hear. Criminal, justice reform is far from over full stop indeed, it is very near full wake up, stand up, shout and get in a hurry for those get complacent, tired, and comfortable. Spread the word! Stigma, why worry! Wake up my people. This is the real deal. Don't sugar coat, fronted or fake it was up remover to keep it real. Wake up, let's fight together to read our communities of the oppressive forces that we see! There is no time to be slow, and hesitant. Now is the time to ACT! Wake up!

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you. Prechelle you

PRECHELLE SHANNON:

I can't follow that. Wake up!

THURSTON S SMITH:

Thank you so much. Monica?

MONICA RICH-MCLAURIN:

I yield my time to Lisa, well said! Let's wake up people.

KARLA SAPP:

I am also... Just letting everyone know, let's put the act in action.

ROMMEL JOHNSON:

The appeal has been meet by the preacher. I will leave it by that! Amen!

THURSTON S SMITH:

All right. This was absolutely a fantastic, fantastic panel discussion. Absolutely superb, excellent full stop all of those adjectives and adverbs! Listen, I will be remiss, I received a very special text message, right? To share a very special announcement with the audience. The text message reminder

was so timely. The NAADAC issues in the black community just released our position paper on critical issues in the black community with an emphasis on (indiscernible) treatment. It is posted on the webpage of NAADAC's website. By all means, I encourage all of the participants to access that.

Secondly, for those who are interested in the critical issues of the black community, we have two outstanding cochairs, after (Unknown name) Madison, and (Unknown name) Palmer. If you go to the NAADAC website and go to the committee stop, you will be able to find their information. Please feel free to reach out to any of these panelists, myself. Anyone on the critical issues in the black community to keep the dialogue going.

Please join us for our next NAADAC session, which is the trauma informed care, addressing trauma and addiction in the black community. With presenters Dr. Anthony Andrews, and Dr. Travis Andrews. It is also going to be facilitated and moderated by Dr. Phyllis Barnett. That session will begin at 4 PM Eastern standard Time. During this break, I encourage you to visit our sponsors. Many of them have Zoom rooms and are waiting for you to stop by to discuss ways that they can support you and your practice.

You can access them by accessing the sponsors page. Again, thank you for joining us for this very memorable and poignant discussion on criminal justice reform. Utilizing activism and advocacy.

Thank you so much for your NAADAC membership. Take care, have a great day.

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