

Evaluating Reentry Programs and Interventions for Transitional-Age Incarcerated Youth: A Systematic Review of Reintegration Outcomes

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Abstract:

The high recidivism rates among transitional-age incarcerated youth (TAY) highlight critical challenges within the juvenile justice system. Despite ongoing efforts to implement rehabilitative and community-based interventions, existing programs often fall short in addressing the developmental needs of these youth or effectively reducing recidivism. This systematic review evaluates current programs and interventions targeting TAY, examining their impact on recidivism. Following PRISMA guidelines, the review synthesizes empirical evidence from peer reviewed studies, revealing that 50% of interventions positively impacted recidivism rates, 28% yielded mixed results, and 22% showed no impact. Four key themes emerged: fidelity, intervention effectiveness, training, and funding. These themes underscore the importance of quality implementation, targeted interventions, high-quality training, and sustainable funding models. The review also identifies gaps, such as the underrepresentation of females and older youth in research. It suggests future research directions, including the comparative effectiveness of group versus individual interventions and the development of proactive interventions to prevent initial system engagement. Addressing these gaps and focusing on the identified themes can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of programs aimed at reducing recidivism among TAY. This review provides valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth and contribute to more effective reentry strategies.