

Tips for Addressing Bias Against Incarcerated Survivors

1. Address organizational culture

- Review training and outreach materials – are they inclusive of the communities in your service area? Do they address specific needs/concerns of incarcerated survivors? Do they include incarcerated people as a part of who your organization serves?
- Look at mission/vision/values – are they inclusive or could they seem exclusive to an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated survivor?
- Look at recruitment and interview materials – do they address the need for unbiased and nonjudgmental staff, specifically in regards to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated survivors?
- Walk through organization's office(s) – what would a formerly incarcerated survivor need to feel welcome there?
- Get feedback on your organizational culture from incarcerated survivors and other community organizations working with incarcerated people.

2. Start the conversation

- Use the readiness tool with your advocacy team or whole organization – where are you at in this process?
- Identify internal barriers – what is getting in the way?
- Address training needs – what does your team need to feel capable and confident?
- Connect with community partners – who is already serving incarcerated people?

3. Create change

- Take deep breaths – unlearning bias is a slow but important process
- Confront discomfort – have the difficult conversations necessary to create growth, but ensure safety by withholding judgment
- Set clear expectations – include serving incarcerated survivors in the recruitment and interview process for new staff and volunteers
- Review program policies – make sure incarcerated survivors are incorporated into all programs and that all advocates are able to provide services if needed

