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Breaking Into Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center:

A Lesson in (Non) Quantitative Research

by

Mackenzie Seward

Honors Thesis

Submitted to:

Psychology Department  
University of Richmond  
Richmond, VA

April 28, 2023

Advisor: Dr. Jane Berry

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## **Abstract**

Gaps in the literature on juvenile justice and mental health within a juvenile correctional center prompted a study that focused on self-esteem, emotions, and empathy in residents living in a juvenile correctional center related to their participation in a storytelling course. First-year students from a local university visited the correctional center as part of a community-based learning component. They met with residents to swap stories about their lives. Several limitations and obstacles complicated the data collection process, forcing the researchers to pivot their study from quantitative analyses to qualitative observations. The experience of conducting a study within a juvenile correctional center is documented in this paper. Strategies are suggested to future researchers who may be interested in studying, understanding, and advocating for the mental health and well-being of incarcerated juveniles in a secure facility.

## **Breaking Into Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center:**

### **A Lesson in (Non) Quantitative Research**

#### **COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement**

In 2020, I recall being sent home from college at the very start of the COVID-19 pandemic, expecting to come back in a few short weeks. Weeks turned into months and the summer of 2020 was approaching. All my generation had to entertain themselves was on their screens: social media and television. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, all eyes were glued to TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram “Reels” where the graphic murder video of George Floyd by police officer, Derek Chauvin was circulating rapidly. I was familiar with police brutality and unjust deaths at the hands of the police in the past, but the isolation from the pandemic and the

increased visibility on social media was the spark myself and my peers needed to become truly active in the fight against injustice. The murder of George Floyd, and the extra time I spent inside during the pandemic, prompted me to take the time to properly educate myself on racial prejudice, and therefore incited my growing interest in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

BLM was originally created by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi in 2013 as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who murdered Trayvon Martin in 2012 (Black Lives Matter, 2019). Martin was only 17 years old when he was fatally shot in Sanford, Florida, despite being unarmed and no threat to Zimmerman (Wikipedia, 2019). Zimmerman claimed he acted in self-defense, which was upheld by Florida's stand-your-ground law (ABC News, 2013). With extensive media coverage and public outrage, the name Trayvon was tweeted more than two million times the month after the shooting, and over one thousand people attended his funeral. The BLM movement picked up speed when the murders of Black people at the hands of police did not cease. The protests erupting after George Floyd's murder put the BLM movement at the center of the revolution, and this outrage continued robustly through the summer and fall of 2020. That fall, I began looking for research opportunities for the summer of 2021 to further my independent interest in racial psychology and discrimination. I reached out to Dr. Jane Berry, who added me to her summer research team, with the intent to research generational and racial differences in attitudes towards BLM.

### **Summer Research with Dr. Berry on BLM**

During the summer of 2021, myself and other student researchers wrote a lengthy survey assessing attitudes towards BLM, both quantitatively and qualitatively. We distributed the survey

to young, middle-aged, and older adults, both Black and white, ranging from 18 - 90 years old. The central research question was whether attitudes towards the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement vary by age, race, gender, and political affiliation. Our main prediction was young, Black people would be more likely to support BLM than older, white people. We collected preliminary data exploring possible mediators of this relationship, including race-based bias (explicit racism), political affiliation (liberal/conservative), attitudes towards policing, belief in the existence of white privilege, and belief in equal opportunity for all. Building this survey from the ground up had furthered my interest in the researching how racial injustice impacts the Black community.

I filled the summer of 2020 and 2021 were filled with lots of television exposure, both for pleasure and for education. Since I was conducting research on racial bias and psychology, I consumed abundant educational programming, along with my typical sitcom rotations. After the BLM movement amped up, I noticed a visible uptick in documentaries and series focused on race in my “Recommended” selection on Netflix. The movie “13th” experienced a surge in viewership by 4,665% after George Floyd’s murder, and I was one of those viewers (Nolan, 2020). It is still impossible for me to forget all the gory details of the prison-industrial complex and for-profit prisons and I knew I wanted to pivot my future work in that direction. I began watching other shows surrounding life in American prisons, even ones leaning more reality-TV than educational or documentary styled, such “60 Days In”, “Inside the World’s Toughest Prisons”, “Jailbirds”, “Girls Incarcerated”, and “Scared Straight”. Out of the countless hours of content I absorbed, the most compelling were shows like “Girls Incarcerated” because these girls were several years younger than I was. It was hard to believe children who looked so young were committing crimes so heinous and living life inside of a jail for most of their formative years.

Despite the atrocities some girls had committed, I couldn't help but consider the factors pushing them there and how their development must be impacted from the prison experience. To start my thesis process, I began read the literature published on the juvenile justice system, what it means to be locked up at such an early age.

## **Literature Review**

### **Juvenile Corrections and the Rehabilitation Method**

The United States has come a long way in terms of the juvenile justice system, but there is significant room for improvement. The Supreme court eliminated the death penalty for adolescents in 2005, and it is now exceedingly rare to get a sentence of life without parole while under the age of 18, as science has shown young people have greater malleability towards positive change when compared to adults (*Roper v. Simmons*, 2005, *Graham v. Florida*, 2010). Psychology and neuroscience have begun prompting governments and institutions to adopt rehabilitation models, and to decrease the number of incarcerated youth in general, which has been a successful operation in many states (Lipsey *et al.*, 2010 and National Research Council, 2013 as cited in Goshe, 2019). One notable national plan is called the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) which utilized risk assessment to gauge whether a child needs to live within a secured facility and how communities can support their at-risk youth to prevent incarceration (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014 as cited in Goshe, 2019). In conjunction with the new focus on rehabilitation comes the obligation to consider which factors may shape juveniles to require this rehabilitation in the first place. Poverty, educational issues, violence, trauma, and consistent exposure to the incarceration all act as kindling to the fire pushing a juvenile towards “graduating” to the adult justice system (Children’s Defense Fund, 2017, Kim



et al., 2010, Abram et al., 2013, Petrosino, 2010 as cited in Goshe, 2019). Dr. Sonya Goshe argues in her chapter from Progressive Justice in an Age of Repression that the current juvenile justice system uses a myopic approach, which ignores societal issues placing youth in precarious positions to fall into criminal activity, but instead prioritizes “pills and programs” to try and mitigate effects of societal failings (Goshe, 2019). I will admit only arranging resources for those already in the system does not make sense on its own, when action could be taken towards initially preventing deviant behavior. However, I believe the programs set up within correctional centers provide meaningful benefits to juveniles who have already offended. Despite the underlying societal mechanisms fueling the juvenile justice system and all of its problems, those who have already been impacted by such factors beyond their control deserve to reap benefits from intervention and outreach programs correctional centers may provide.

### **Juvenile Offenders and Mental Health**

Despite the increasingly positive revisions of juvenile justice systems across the country, staff and program coordinators within juvenile correctional centers still have their hands full and many challenges have not been mitigated yet. is no longer “watered down” by those with less serious charges, meaning those who are living within a secure facility are often those who have been the most dramatically affected by poverty, violence, and upheaval. Juvenile correctional centers now have furtherly concentrated numbers of young people with increased exposure to trauma, difficulties reading and comprehending emotional states, mental health comorbidities and substance misuse before ever arriving at the correctional center (Mallet & Tedor, 2018). While considering what juveniles may have experienced prior to incarceration, one must also take into account the motivation of why a young person may commit a crime. Robert Agnew's

General Strain theory predicts delinquent behavior occurs when there are disconnections between common goals and the availability of legitimate ways to obtaining these goals (Agnew, 1992). Goals can vary between individuals, but common goals could be the desire for material objects, seen with offenders who have been charged with robbery, or the desire societal status, which one may join a gang to obtain. Not all youth who experience strain will go on to offend, with research suggesting psychological resilience may mediate the relationship between trauma and offending. Those with increased psychological resilience may be less likely to offend (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005). Armed with this information, I considered how psychological resilience can be increased, which guided me towards considering what programs could be implemented to boost psychological resilience or its factors.

### **Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center**

As it turns out, there was a juvenile correctional center located just fifteen minutes from the University of Richmond campus. Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (BAJCC) is located in Chesterfield County, VA and is the only juvenile correctional center for the Virginia Department of Justice. Two previous centers, Hanover Juvenile Correctional Center and Barrett Juvenile Correctional Center, were repurposed in the past 15 years to house other agencies, so BAJCC is the only remaining facility. [BAJCC's website](#) specifies the basic facts of the correctional center, describing it as a 272-bed facility for young men between the ages of 14 to 20 years old with crimes ranging from misdemeanors to felonies. This capacity crowns BAJCC as the largest secure treatment center of its kind in nine neighboring states (Manzanares, 2022). The residents (the official name used for the incarcerated boys under BAJCC's care) are offered a variety of counseling services, such as substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment,

aggression management, and therapeutic programming. Residents also have the ability to earn a high school diploma or GED during their time at BAJCC. All residents are also allowed visitation privileges and may communicate by mail and phone calls, but they are not allowed to have their own personal devices.

Starting in 2014, BAJCC claimed to begin a thorough transformation, based on considerations and criticism from the previous years. According to the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan for Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), BAJCC is focusing on new goals with refreshed leadership; included expanding reentry vocational programs and workforce developments, creating community programs, building trust within the law enforcement and judicial systems, addressing recidivism concerns for serious offenders, and creating resources for victims and families with particular needs. Virginia's DJJ addressed the need for transparency and "critical analysis of [their] successes and failures" (2022-24 Strategic Plan, 2022). BAJCC strives to hold youth accountable for their actions, but also ensure they receive the treatment necessary to prevent recidivism and balance the overall concerns of the community upon their release. In the "Risk Factors" section of their strategic plan, the Virginia DJJ acknowledges committing adolescents to a secure facility should be a last-case scenario and only after every other option is pursued. They also recognize residents will face a "complex array of challenges" including possible trauma, behavior concerns, and educational delays whilst incarcerated (2022-24 Strategic Plan, 2022). Another critical part of their transformation includes the facility itself: BAJCC does not meet modern standards for juvenile correctional centers, due to its older infrastructure. BAJCC was first constructed in 1910 as the Virginia Home and Industrial School for Girls, which was a reformatory to "confine and train incorrigible white girls under the age of 18" until it was transferred over to the state in 1914 (State Board of Charities and Corrections,

1910). Needless to say, the foundation of BAJCC is incredibly old. Construction will include demolishing several structures, building 90,000 square feet of new construction and attempting to create a layout and atmosphere similar to that of a community college. The DJJ plans to renovate BAJCC to increase shared spaces, access to natural light, single-use showers, greater access to outdoor space, and central dining (*2022-24 Strategic Plan, 2022*).

In 2020, the spread of the COVID-19 virus and subsequent lockdowns worldwide detrimentally affected the progress the Virginia DJJ was hoping to make. The Washington Post published a scathing article in April, 2020 on BAJCC and how they had severely mishandled the coronavirus outbreak. According to the article, the prison officials stopped visitors, suspended education, ended counseling, and “locked at least some teens in their cells 23 hours a day to stem the outbreak” (Jouvenal, 2020). The story centered on a resident who called his mother after his cellmate began showing symptoms, saying in despair, “Mom, I just don’t know how to stay well anymore” (Jouvenal, 2020). Despite adult prisons in the region working overtime to process releases for less serious offenses, the BAJCC was slow to release youth, rendering it a “tinderbox” where the COVID-19 virus could spread like wildfire. The BAJCC began occasionally releasing offenders who were determined not to be a safety risk, but only some were released or diverted by the DJJ, as the others needed to be freed by a judge. Youth advocates argue this occasional release was a mere appeasement and not enough (Jouvenal, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed a multitude of communication and healthcare issues within the facility. Not only was there a lack of adequate personal protection, such as masks, but residents at BAJCC were reported not to be seen by doctors, despite positive COVID test results. Residents also having symptoms but were unable to get tested, and they were concerned they were not receiving adequate information on what the disease was. Parents of residents were also

not aware nor informed if their child was sick (Jouvenal, 2020). With a “skeleton staff,” basic necessities were being overlooked, such as family communication, where one parent was interviewed saying she had not been able to speak with her son for a month (Jouvenal, 2020). The parents of the residents exhibited less concern about the virus and more concern regarding the resulting isolation. Another mother described her anxiety over her son’s serious mental health issues and previous suicide attempts because of the suspended counseling sessions music lessons, which brought him purpose and joy. He would write letters to his mother as his only form of communication, saying “I don’t know how I’m going to get through it” and the mother wished she would receive any letter simply saying he spoke to with therapist (Jouvenal, 2020).

A Virginia state watchdog agency has been investigating the Virginia DJJ for several years now, focusing particularly on demographics of who was entering the facility and from where. Although BAJCC is local to Richmond, it is hours away for many of its residents, resulting in increased separation from communities and families. According to data from Virginia’s DJJ, almost half of BAJCC’s residents from 2017-2020 were from the Eastern Region of Virginia, such as Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Southhampton, which are all upwards of two hours away (Manzanares, 2022). There are recommendations from groups such as the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) suggesting downsizing BAJCC and creating smaller facilities across the state, however, this was not mentioned in the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. The JLARC also found racial differences in those placed in the juvenile justice system. In the past decade, Black children were referred to courts at twice the rate of white children, across all levels of offenses (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2021). Almost 65% of these referrals were from law enforcement, but schools were also twice as likely to refer Black students into the system compared to white students (Masters, 2021). There were

also differences in incarceration rates based on location. In Richmond, Black youth are nearly 5 times as likely to be referred to court compared to white youth. This is an astounding rate when compared to Alexandria, VA, where Black youth are almost equally like to be referred, at a rate of 1.3 times higher than white youth (Masters, 2021).

One of the goals BAJCC possesses for the coming years is to reduce recidivism and increase programing. However, the same watchdog agency has found this current form of programming has been largely ineffective when it came to recidivism. BAJCC has been found to either not use evidence-based rehabilitative programs, or to use programs not shown to reduce recidivism. Ultimately, nearly 70% of residents released from rehabilitation programs are reconvicted within two years (Masters, 2021). A potential reason for this staggering recidivism rate could be the lack of resources for reintegrating residents into society, post-incarceration. Despite most of the state's funding designated for juvenile justice being earmarked for education, there are no remedial education programs for the residents who are likely already behind their non-incarcerated peers. Along with this, the Virginia Department of Education no longer conducts on-site quality reviews, despite overseeing this system's program (Masters, 2021). Other barriers to reentering society include the lack of housing and work-release programs designed to ease the transition. There is also no way for juvenile residents with felony offenses to have their records expunged, despite new changes to state law allowing certain adult felony records to be sealed, which in turn makes it difficult to find employment (Masters, 2021).

Based on my initial interest in prison reform and whether psychological resilience could be built in vulnerable individuals, I chose to focus my thesis on how a positive intervention may make a difference in the lives of incarcerated individuals. I had an idea of the surveys I planned to administer, and the research questions I wanted to explore, but I needed a way into a prison

facility and I needed to come up with a positive intervention to implement. Creating a program from the ground up just for the purpose of my thesis would be far too complicated for my one-year time frame, and, even if the correctional facility were to accept my proposal, I knew the University's Institutional Review Board would scrutinize my intents, methods, timing, and expenses. There also wasn't much I was qualified to teach or provide other than individual tutoring or possibly an introductory psychology course. However, after using several of the many resources the University of Richmond has to offer, including some close friends, I learned of a freshman year seminar course taught by Ms. Terry Dolson that was already offered at BAJCC. Ms. Dolson and I share a deep commitment to juvenile justice and her course on storytelling is meant to boost confidence and build connections between residents at BAJCC and her freshman year students. Once Ms. Dolson and I got to meet with one another, we realized we could both benefit from teaming up for my thesis project. She invited me to survey her class and the residents she works with prior to the start of her course and after the course ended. I had essentially latched on to the intervention I was seeking, to test whether a program such as Ms. Dolson's makes a difference to self-esteem, empathy, and emotions in incarcerated individuals and college students.

## **Method**

### **Experimental Design**

The original experimental design was a 2 x 2 mixed MANOVA, with three dependent variables. The independent variables were the between-subjects variable group designation (Resident/Student) and the within-subject variable survey distribution (Pre-course/Post-course).

Analyses were focused on comparison of pre-course survey questionnaire means to post-course means, and residents' means compared to students' means, on the three dependent variables.

	Pre			Post		
	Self-Esteem	Empathy	Emotion	Self-Esteem	Empathy	Emotion
Resident						
Student						

Paper copies of the survey were distributed during the first class of the storytelling course and after the last class of the course. All surveys were distributed and completed within the unit at BAJCC. Students and residents were given ten minutes to complete the survey sitting amongst each other. More information regarding of the entry process and logistics are described further in the discussion section.

### **Participants**

Participants were nine University of Richmond students and 16 residents at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (BAJCC). The students from the University of Richmond were either first-year or transfer students, participating in Terry Dolson's storytelling course to fulfill their first-year seminar requirement. These students had primarily self-selected into the course during registration, aware they will be entering BAJCC to learn alongside residents.

The residents at BAJCC range from 14 to 21 years old. The residents within Unit 26 agreed to take part in the course ranged from 16 to 19 years. The residents within Unit 26 work with the same social worker who assisted Ms. Dolson in establishing the course and organizing entry into the facility. The residents self-selected into the course, and were offered snacks during the class time. On average, nine to ten residents were available each week to participate. Seven



students had their background checks done in time for the start of the program, and there were two extra students who participated for the last survey distribution.

### **Consent**

Prior to distributing the survey, I read aloud a preapproved script (Appendix B) describing my interest in the course and reiterating the survey is “completely voluntary and optional” and there is “no penalty at all for refusing to participate in [the] project.” This was stated several times in the script. Participants were told they were not going to be penalized or removed from the course if they did not take the survey. If the participant chose to take the survey, they signed the consent form which certified they were 18 years old or older (a requirement by the UR IRB for providing adult consent) and they understand the conditions of consent. If signed, age certification was checked against the demographic item asking age and year of birth, and if one of these answers indicated the participant was under 18, their data were not utilized.

### **Confidentiality**

The surveys were packaged in manilla folders and coded with an R (resident) and a number or an S (student) and a number. Initially, we hoped the residents and students could remember their one-number participant ID in order to connect their pre-course survey with their post-course survey. We would then have a sheet with the codes and names in the case of a forgotten number. However, the Ms. Dolson informed me the residents would be unlikely to recall their ID numbers between sessions. Thus, confidentiality was protected by matching the names on the consent form with the participants' IDs by Dr. Berry (the student's mentor for the thesis), who had not been to the BAJCC and could not recognize any of the residents. The

student researcher never saw the participant identification sheet. For the post-course survey, the confidential coding sheet was and given to Ms. Dolson in a sealed envelope, who distributed the survey. Ms. Dolson was able to do this without breaching confidentiality because she was not involved in viewing the surveys or analyzing data from the surveys. I stood with my back facing the participants when the surveys were distributed. For data input, Dr. Berry removed the consent forms from the surveys before I began reading the surveys and entering the data to avoid any potential breach of confidentiality.

## **Survey**

The survey consisted of five sections (Appendix A). Section 1 was 19 items from the Questionnaire for Cognitive and Affective Empathy (Reniers et al., 2011). Ten of these items were verbatim from the Perspective Taking component (Factor 1) of the questionnaire, and nine were from the Online Simulation component (Factor 3). Both components were designed to measure cognitive empathy. Section 2 was the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965). Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 were rewritten to reword negatively connotated item that may have been upsetting for participants to consider. For example, “At times I think I am no good at all” (Item 2) was adapted to say “At times I think I am a pretty good person.” This was suggested by the IRB due to their concerns regarding the “...possible increased risk of traumatization of this particular vulnerable population” (Appendix D). Sections 3 and 5 were the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). Section 3 asked to what extent the emotions listed were felt by participants in the *past week* and section 5 asked the extent these emotions were felt at the *present moment*. Section 4 was placed between the two PANAS sections to offset

possible response set biases on the PANAS. Section 4 asked for demographic information, including age, race/ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, and year of birth.

### **Pre-course survey**

Two separate groups were established to avoid crowding during the class period. Six residents and three students met in group 1 and seven residents and four students met in group 2. These groups met from 6:30-7:15pm (Group 1) and from 7:30-8:15pm (Group 2). The same class curriculum was followed for each group, with different residents and students. In Group 1, only three of the residents' surveys were usable, because two residents did not report their age, and one was under 18 years old. In Group 2, five of the residents' surveys were usable, because one resident did not report their age and one was under 18 years old. Of the 13 residents who received the survey, only eight surveys met the criteria for inclusion. All the student surveys were usable, i.e., they met the age and consent criteria.

Survey distribution occurred in the common room where the class was being held in the center of Unit 26's block. Both residents and students took the survey at the same time and were given the same scripted speech prior to distribution. Once the surveys were completed, the researcher instructed the participants to seal the manilla folder with the survey and consent form inside and place it on a table located on the opposite side of the room. While sitting apart from the participants, the researcher took notes on any adverse reactions or behavior of interest while taking the survey, as requested by the IRB.

A timing distinction that should be noted is Group 1 received their pre-course survey at the end of the first class whereas Group 2 was given theirs at the beginning of the first class. The original plan was to distribute the survey at the beginning of the class in Group 1 as well,

however, there were logistical difficulties preventing the researcher from entering the unit in time to distribute the survey before the class began. Otherwise, the two groups had the same survey procedure.

### **Post-course survey**

Most of the same procedure was followed for the second, and last, distribution of the survey. However, instead of a Group 1 and Group 2 of students and residents at two separate times, there was only one group of eight residents who completed the class activities twice with 2 groups of students: five students arriving at 6:30pm then leaving at 7:15pm and four new students arriving at 7:30pm and leaving at the end of the class. At 6:30pm, the residents and Group 1 students completed the surveys at the start of the final class. At 7:30, the Group 2 students arrived and took the survey while the residents (who already participated) were in their rooms waiting for the medicine cart to circulate, at around the halfway point of the class. This was not the initial plan for the distribution of the post-course survey, but I had to think on my feet as the residents' schedule had changed.

### **The Manipulation: The Storytelling Course**

Ms. Terry Dolson's storytelling course has been getting students at UR involved with the BAJCC for eight years now. The course primarily consists of sharing personal stories in groups of two or three, making sure to pair up the residents and the students. To begin the first class, Ms. Dolson had the students and residents sit in a circle, with students interspersed in between residents. She asked each person to share their first name with the group and where they had gotten it from. She had told me previously first names are very important to her and to the course, because the residents are often called by their last names only, which depersonalizes

them. Asking where they got their name is a way to break the ice, and start with a little story. She also told the residents that we use first names because we are all friends. A trend I noticed is many students knew where they got their names from, but a lot of the residents did not. One of the residents stated frankly “I never thought to ask”.

Ms. Dolson has a very specific set of steps for trading stories. For example, one of the first stories the groups were to discuss was a time when they were surprised. The first step is for the storyteller to take a moment to remember as much as possible about the memory, including various sensory details. Next, the storyteller tells their story from beginning to middle to end. After the storyteller finishes their story, they say “The End” to make it clear to the listener the story is done. The most important part of the exchange is the listener saying “Thank You” after the storyteller has finished. This is because stories are a gift, and the storyteller has shared a small part of their mind and experience with the listener. Ms. Dolson made a point to emphasize that the listener has the most power in the conversation, because they have the power to make the speaker feel valued and heard, as well as the power to choose a response. The last step is for the listener to repeat a shortened version of the story back to the storyteller, to ensure they properly understood.

This process is repeated as the roles are switched, and several prompts are given throughout the class. Each week, Ms. Dolson would come in with new prompts to share and the residents and students would swap stories and converse. These stories inevitably lead to further discussion and questions, where the residents and students found ways to connect with each other despite the differences in their typical environment and situation. From observation only, it seemed like the residents and students were enjoying the time they were spending together, and it

primed my excitement to see whether the data collected show the storytelling course overall uplifting its participants.

## Results

Due to the lack of participants, there was not enough statistical power to draw any relevant conclusions from comparing the mean differences in surveys between residents and students and pre-course (Time 1) and post-course (Time 2). Thus, the statistics reported here are descriptive only, and cannot be tested using inferential statistics.

The descriptive data suggested preliminary trends that could be tested further in a prospective study with greater statistical power. The most intriguing results were from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) on how the participant felt over the past week. Mean scores for residents on the RSE show an increase from Time 1 to Time 2 ( $M = 3.14, SD = 0.88$ ;  $M = 3.42, SD = 0.40$ ). The mean scores for students on the RSE also increased over the course ( $M = 2.99, SD = 0.21$ ;  $M = 3.10, SD = 0.91$ ). Students reported lower self-esteem overall compared to the residents. PANAS results showed an increase for both groups in positive emotions from Time 1 to Time 2, with residents ( $M = 3.66, SD = 0.54$ ;  $M = 3.75, SD = 0.35$ ) reporting overall greater positive feelings than students ( $M = 2.91, SD = 0.65$ ;  $M = 3.19, SD = 0.96$ ). Negative emotions were also of interest, with residents decreasing in negative emotions ( $M = 2.02, SD = 1.26$ ;  $M = 1.10, SD = 0.14$ ) and students increasing in negative emotions across Time 1 and Time 2 ( $M = 2.26, SD = 0.71$ ;  $M = 2.46, SD = 0.27$ ).

After discussing these results, or lack thereof, with my mentor, she suggested taking all of the field notes I wrote while in the unit and writing the majority of my thesis on the

experience itself of trying to conduct research within a facility such as BAJCC. I then chose to pivot my focus from analyzing quantitative data, to discussing the qualitative aspects of experimentation in a secure facility.

### **Within BAJCC: Unexpected Qualitative Work**

As I entered, existed, and exited BAJCC to distribute my surveys, I wrote down the little details of what I saw and heard during the class periods. This was in part due to the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) request that I observe the participants for any "adverse reactions" while taking the survey (Appendix D). While the participants were completing the survey, I casually jotted down specifics about what Unit 26 looked like, sounded like, and smelled like. I also asked the guards, the social workers, and the residents questions about life in BAJCC. This was my first time in any type of correctional center, and I realized how critical the details would be when sharing my research with others who may not have had my experience. Despite only visiting BAJCC twice to distribute my pre-course and post-course survey, I filled several sheets of paper with written notes on how residents live there day to day, and how their environment may impact answers to the survey. While the students and the residents were telling their stories in pairs, I sat in the corner next to the guards' table and wrote down as much as I could with the same floppy pen that all the residents must use (real pens were too sharp and could be used to hurt one another). I attempted to tell a story myself, through the notes I had taken in the moment, so I could share them with my mentor the next day, as well as in this thesis as its own section.

## **Entering BAJCC**

### **Starting Off Strong: Getting Lost**

Entrance into Bon Air was not easy both times I distributed the surveys, but for different reasons. The first time I went to distribute the survey, I went to the wrong location on the BAJCC campus. After driving around for half an hour, panicking in the dark, I knew I missed my chance to enter the facility with Ms. Dolson and her students. There was no way to contact her either because her phone was left at the front desk prior to entry. After several deep breaths to calm my nerves, I settled on a large building with a metal front gate with what looked like an entrance button. At this point, it was pitch-black outside and I was frenzied. I was worried that I was too late to distribute the pre-course survey before the Group 1 students switched out with the Group 2 students on the way and the residents would be switched out, too. Thankfully, I was able to enter Unit 26, as the staff that evening sensed my desperation and must have guessed this was important to me. I doubt they have ever seen a young person try so hard to get *in* to BAJCC! At the front desk, the guard asked me what group I was with. I responded frantically “I’m with the University of Richmond, with a class.” He asked what class, and I said the storytelling one. He chuckled and reached for the metal detector wand, saying under his breath “Good, teach them a thing or two. They need to learn.”

### **Security, Forms, and Procedures (Oh My!)**

To enter BAJCC, each visitor (and every employee checking in for work) must pass through a metal detector and be scanned with a handheld metal detector. My shoes had to be taken off and shaken out -- as well as my hair -- just in case I planned to smuggle any items into the unit. My 20 manila envelopes filled with the surveys were individually shaken out as well to



ensure there were only the surveys inserted. The guards knew I planned to bring in my surveys, as Ms. Dolson let the volunteer coordinator know ahead of time. There was a master list of accepted items and people who were allowed to enter for the course that night, which included my 20 folders with 20 surveys, and a set of individually wrapped snacks and treats for the residents participating in the storytelling course. This list became a concern when there was a new guard the last night of the distribution that could not find the list for the week. This meant no snacks or surveys allowed into the facility. Despite Ms. Dolson's negotiating, this guard refused to contact the volunteer coordinator down the hall who could resend the list or help find it herself. Part of Ms. Dolson's negotiation tactics was to sigh and say, "Well, I know the boys are going to be very disappointed" to which the guard responded curtly, "I assure you, ma'am, they will be fine." It was clear the facility seemed fed up with its residents that night, which made sense once we received context on what had occurred earlier.

### **The Fight: Losing my Participants**

While we were shaking out our hair and shoes on the last night of the storytelling course and my last distribution, the guard mentioned under her breath she was "surprised" we were still coming into the facility that night. We overheard her and asked what she meant by that. She responded, "Oh, did they not tell you guys? Unit 26 got in some trouble today." As it turns out, many of my participants had engaged in a fight that morning, which meant they were in lockdown and unable to finish the storytelling course. Obviously, they could not take the post-course survey either. This was disappointing, but my primary concern was we were about to walk into the same unit that was clearly riled up earlier. Terry had the same worry, and asked what had happened, because we had not gotten word of anything affecting our normally

scheduled meeting time. The guard told us some residents “jumped” another resident and, clearly seeing the looks on our faces, followed up with the reassurance that “it wasn’t a guard or anything” which was supposed to make us less nervous, I suppose.

### **Can my Surveys Come, Too?**

At this point, my surveys were still not permitted into the unit, so I was mentally preparing to scrap my entire survey idea and just go in to continue observing for a strictly qualitative report. While waiting in the lobby, the guard mentioned we were unable to walk to the unit until she could radio a guard to take us, which would take some time. It was obvious how understaffed BAJCC was, especially after the excitement of the day. Terry called the social worker she was in contact with for the course and asked her about what we should do about our class meeting. The social worker made her way to the front of the facility to get us when she realized that no other staff member was coming to collect us. The social worker assured us that everything was fine, and that anyone who participated just had to be separated for a little bit, but the guys who did not participate were ready and excited to engage with the class. Terry then asked quietly what we should do about my prohibited surveys. The social worker looked at the abandoned stack of manilla folders I had next to me on the table, and she softly said “What, these? They are mine, no worries.” And with the swift retrieval of my surveys under her arm and her giant keyring in her right, the social worker led us through the hallways to the unit, singlehandedly saving my potential quantitative analysis.

## **Inside BAJCC**

### **Concrete Maze**

Not many people can say they have seen the inside of a juvenile correctional center. Minus those who are employed at the facility, those who can say they have been inside were often not there under the best circumstances, whether they were resident themselves or a visiting a family member. Before visiting for the first time, I did a little research to see what I could expect inside. I watched a short video by the Atlantic called “Inside Juvenile Detention”, which went into BAJCC with a camera to document life behind the gates (Pollock, 2018). What was shown in the clip was precisely what I saw that first night. It was a quiet walk, just me and the guard, because of my late arrival to the correct entrance. In my background research, I came across a quote by Reverend Ashley Diaz Mejias, who has volunteered at BAJCC, stating, “The setup of the prison is really similar to a high-level adult facility. It has kind of the spider setup. You see only concrete walls, the basketball courts are completely enclosed” (Manzanares, 2022). I saw this for myself on what felt like the longest walk of my life to get to Unit 26. My heart was still pounding from sprinting into the facility and going through security for the first time. I felt naked without my phone or wallet, as I was armed with only my surveys. Each door the guard and I passed through was giant and steel, and we probably went through four or five just to get to the unit. The doors were remotely opened, so at each locked door, the guard had to use his walkie talkie to get security to unlock the door. The walls were teal and purple, and numbers and letters that labeled the corridors were spraypainted using a stencil. This was clearly necessary, as every hallway looked the same.

## **The Basketball Court**

One section of the facility I will never forget was the basketball court. When the guard radioed for yet another door to open on our odyssey through the hallways, and we stepped into a hexagonal space with tall walls and no ceiling. This was the basketball court that Mejias warned about in the article I had read, but nothing could have prepared me for the eerie contrast between the silent, looming basketball nets, the empty concrete ground, the tall walls with barbed wire laced on top, and the overwhelming number of stars that were splattered across the night sky above. The guard walked ahead of me the whole time, but I had slowed down, because I was so overwhelmed with the vacuum of space, the size of the walls, and the darkness of the sky. I composed myself silently before reaching the penultimate door and leaving the last bit of fresh air before reaching the next building. Finally, the guard brought me to a large steel door stamped with the number 26. He said, “This is your stop” as I peered through the little window and saw Ms. Dolson’s bright smile and frantic wave. I beamed back and thanked the guard for guiding me here and, before turning around and disappearing around the corner, he gave me a simple “Good luck.” With that, the guard within Unit 26 opened the door and I walked inside the unit for the first time.

## **“Female Entering Unit 26”**

The storytelling course had already begun for the first group of students because I was running so late, so I silently walked in and sat next to Ms. Dolson at a side table. I learned the second time I went to BAJCC that, when we all walk in as a group to start the course, the loudspeaker in the unit will announce “Females entering Unit 26” in a mechanical voice. Even without this announcement, everyone stared as I stepped into the room because I was a new face.

There were groups of residents with a student assigned to each, talking about a time they were surprised. To avoid disrupting the flow of the conversations around me, I looked around and tried to memorize my surroundings. The unit was shaped like an elongated pentagon, with 26 cells with 26 little windows on the doors about five feet up, so the residents who weren't participating could continue to observe the common area of the unit. The common room had a ping pong table set up with no balls or paddles, and a haphazardly placed acoustic guitar in one corner. There were large, plastic, curved-edge armchairs that were so heavy it took my full might to push one over to a table. The two guards assigned to the unit would occasionally circle the perimeter of the unit and peer into the cells that were still occupied by residents. If a resident was being disruptive or not following instructions, the guard would mark this down on a clipboard hanging next to the cell, and there were seemingly one board for each resident. Next to each clipboard, there was a light switch, which was something I didn't realize the guards controlled in each cell. The empty wall space was covered with signs like ones you would see in an middle school classroom, like as large poster paper with an acrostic poem about R.E.S.P.E.C.T and the messy, colorful, handwritten rules of how the residents in Unit 26 should treat each other.

## **Conversations within BAJCC**

### **The Russian Literature Resident**

Compared to the first time I visited BAJCC, I was far more comfortable the second time, despite the drama of the entrance. Once the students and residents had the opportunity to take the survey, I actually sat in on some of the storytelling groups to listen to the groups chat and even ask a few questions myself. I asked one resident who was participating often and enthusiastically if he had taken any other courses through BAJCC. He explained that most courses have not been

held at BAJCC since the start of the pandemic, and they are a great way to meet other people and converse. Part of the last day of the course was writing down programs the residents may want to participate in for the spring. I asked if there was anything specific he was going to write down, and he laughed and said he didn't really care all that much. He explained the point of the course or the subject matter isn't really important, it's more the ability to interact with other people and break up the day. I asked whether he had a favorite course he had taken and he mentioned a Russian literature course that a UVA professor taught them a few years ago prior to COVID. This professor would assign reading, but most residents did not actually complete it because they just wanted to be a part of the class environment. This particular resident wound up loving Russian literature, and he and I had an in-depth conversation regarding 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century works because I had read pieces of those for my Russian minor. I mentioned how I had just submitted a paper on *Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov and exclaimed how he was re-reading *Master and Margarita* and he had a copy in his cell right then and there. I asked if he was a big reader before coming to Bon Air, and he said no, but reading is how he now spends most of his time, especially during the pandemic. I asked if he picked up any other hobbies since then, and he said he likes to play the guitar within the unit, proudly flashing me the callouses on his fingers from playing so often.

### **New Languages**

While I was listening in on the storytelling group, the other UR student sitting in the circle with me took the opportunity to ask a rather bold question. She must have sensed that this particular resident was fairly open to chatting with us about life in BAJCC, and sure enough he answered with detail. She asked the resident what the deal was with the hand gestures that the

residents do to communicate with each other across the unit, often times in their little windows. I had noticed this behavior earlier both times I was in the unit, fascinated by how fast their fingers moved and their matching facial expressions. I considered asking the first day I was there, but I was too nervous – this language felt personal to them. It was clear that this student, in the time she had been spending with the residents every week, grew comfortable enough to ask him about the more unique aspects of living within BAJCC. She asked whether it was like ASL, and the resident laughed, saying it's far more "dumbed down" than that and you just pick it up from other residents when you are booked in. He had said he was unsure how to explain it without sounding brash but it's like "street" language. The hands pretty much look like what the letter is and you spell out words you want to convey. They would sign rapidly to each other and are able to understand what the other is spelling and respond just as quickly back with little-to-no processing time. The resident had said, during COVID, there was very little time outside the cell, and his new cellmate did not know English, only Spanish. They ended up communicating with each other, face to face, in silence, in the established sign language. Even after they both picked up on each other's spoken language, they continued signing because it removed that language barrier. The resident also said he is now very confident in his Spanish abilities.

I watched this same resident sign something through the window of his cell to his friend across the unit, until a guard popped his head in the window. The guard said something along the lines of "Stop that" and the resident flipped him off, resulting in the guard writing something down on the disciplinary sheet on the door. The guard disapprovingly grunted, "Don't you only have a few weeks left or something? Don't push it." Sure enough, this resident had told me that he had 13 days left until he went back in front of a judge. "Third time is the charm, I guess" he

said wryly. After debriefing with the social worker months later, I learned he has not been released from BAJCC yet, as he hoped to be.

### **The Social Worker**

During my time in the unit, I got to talk more with the unit's social worker. She was very interested in my project, and not in the concerned or confused way that the guards displayed when I tried to explain it to them. She was excited to hear that someone else took an interest in her charges and cared about their experience to any degree. The social worker explained that the average amount of time a resident will spend in BAJCC is two years, but they are allowed to stay until the day before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. She said if they still had time to serve at that point, they would be transported to an adult facility the day they turn 21. All the residents in Unit 26 were under her care, but she has a few in specialty units or other comparable units that she still works with. I asked why residents may be moved, and she responded behavior issues amongst the group may require separation. At this point in our conversation, the door to the unit opened and a woman with a giant metal cart rolled into the unit.

### **The Medicine Cart**

When the medicine cart entered the unit, the guards hollered "Med cart!" and the residents dropped what they were doing and walked over to their cells to stand in front of their doors. The doors were unlocked remotely, and the residents slipped into their cells. This was when I chose to distribute the surveys to the last group of students, so while the students in Group 2 were answering that, I had the time to ask a resident what was happening as he cracked his door to go inside. He gave me a smile and said, "It's just procedure, when the med cart comes around, we gotta go back into our cells until it gets to us." Before the cell door shut, he added,



“It’s like they think we are going to hijack the cart or something.” With that, the door shut. I asked the social worker whether each resident had medicine to take, as it seemed like the cart was stopping at every cell door. I could hear the question asked over and over: “Do you want your meds?” The social worker said a good number of residents do take some form of anti-depressant or something to help them sleep, but they don’t have to take it if they don’t want to. I asked why they are given the choice, and she said it gives them a sense of autonomy over their own health, which is a feeling of control that is, for the most part, lost when living in a correctional center. If they say no for multiple nights in a row, the medication is discontinued. However, they can always request it again and have a new check in with the doctors to see whether they are necessary. This small sense of self-rule stuck with me as I watched the medicine cart rattle out of the unit.

Reflecting on my experiences within BAJCC, I realized how a good part of the reason I was able to get two sets of surveys in and out of the unit was sheer luck. I also had friendly guards, an exceedingly supportive social worker, and a foot in the door already that made the process easier for me. I am aware that, if I did not have the link to Ms. Dolson, there is a slim chance I would have ever been able to get past the front desk. With this in mind, I considered the challenges that make gathering data on an underrepresented population such as juveniles in the justice system so complicated.

### **Limitations and Further Discussion**

My work with BAJCC is the perfect example of a common scientific train of thought: A researcher may wonder, “Why can’t I find research in this area?”, then try conducting their own research in that area and realize, “Oh, this is why I can’t find research in this area.” While sitting

in BAJCC on the last distribution of the survey, waiting for the next group of participants to arrive, I realized the limitations section of my thesis will be twice as long as the methods and results! I learned that this is not necessarily a bad thing, as limitations and future directions are imperative to inspire further research and keep researchers from making the same mistakes. Even if my limitations don't achieve those goals, they can at least answer the question of why psychologists struggle to assess juvenile offenders, and identify what obstacles keep researchers out.

### **Lack of Consistent Participants**

A major obstacle to conducting the quantitative study I had planned lack of participants. I began this research with an already diminished number of participants, because I was unable to survey participants under the age of 18, as informed by the IRB, and several residents over the age of 18 were barred from participating in the first course because "...they got in a brawl and can't participate" (Communication with Terry Dolson, October 21, 2022). Of the residents I did survey at the beginning of the course, five did not end up completing the second part of the survey. Factors beyond my control had a huge impact on my study, such as resident conflicts like the fight that removed part of my participant pool from before both the first day of the course and the last day. If the overall timing of the course was a week later, maybe my resident pool would have been greater or more consistent, but that was not the case. Residents also were added and released from the unit, so the participant pool was not consistent. Additionally, the students were not as consistently present as I hoped, because it took some longer than others to complete their background checks. This meant there were students who were added for the second survey who never completed the first. These inconsistencies in number of residents and students forced me to

turn from planned statistical analyses with sufficient power to a more descriptive and exploratory approach to my research.

### **Taking the Survey Seriously**

Despite the obstacles, I did collect some data! While beginning to enter the data I did have into SPSS, I quickly realized that many residents may not have taken my survey as seriously as I thought they did. A quick scan of the surveys tipped me off to this possibility. A lot of the data seemed to suggest that the participants either rushed through the survey, did not actually read the questions, or both. As discussed earlier, there may have been pressure to finish quickly rather than take time to answer the questions, but there were clues there were other reasons for these inconsistencies. Examples were skipping several items in a block, answering one number (such as four) for every single item, or possibly making up demographic information. For instance, one resident chose to identify as a “Bengal tiger” when asked to write in their gender. I cannot predict what someone may identify as, however, this felt more like a joke than an accurate identification. There may be several reasons for this drift in intention. It’s possible that the residents didn’t care about the research at all, but just craved the social interaction with someone from the “outside.” There was also no reward or punishment on how they chose to answer, so they didn’t feel required to take the survey seriously.

### **No Compensation**

Ms. Dolson brought snacks to every class meeting she had at BAJCC, which acts as sort of an incentive (and reward) to take the course, as well as, hopefully, the opportunity to learn something new. Dr. Berry and I were hoping to find a way to provide compensation for our participants, such as Amazon gift cards for the students and commissary money for the residents,

if they did indeed have a commissary system. However, after reaching out to Ms. Dolson and the volunteer coordinator at BAJCC, there was no easy way to provide compensation for the survey work specifically. BAJCC knew I was distributing a survey about the course, but we didn't want to separate my thesis too far from the course itself by compensating just for the survey because we were trying to keep a low profile. We were not trying to incite any concerns about "researchers" coming into the unit and bribing residents. The IRB also approved my research only with the condition that I did not provide compensation for only those who participate "to reduce any sense of coercion or pressure vis-à-vis this vulnerable population" (Appendix D). Due to this, we went into the survey distribution process knowing there was no reason for the residents or the students to take my survey seriously or at all if they didn't want to. I explained why I wanted the data I was collecting, that it was an important project to me, and that it was important for Ms. Dolson to see if the course meant anything quantitatively, but that was all I could do to lightly persuade the residents and students to take the survey and take it seriously. I had even said in the pre-survey speech that "you do not have to take my survey to participate in the course," which further solidifies how little taking my survey may have meant to the residents and students (Appendix D). I believe the students may have felt some pressure to take the survey seriously because I was a Richmond student just like them, they were enrolled in the course, and they have filled out surveys such as mine many times before. Some may have even been considering writing a thesis themselves at the end of their college career, so it made sense to help me out. However, the residents didn't know me, had no connection to me, and were not being paid, nor given snacks, specifically for this survey. Why should they take it seriously or even take it at all? I believe the residents who did fill it out to the best of their ability were genuinely curious. Or maybe they realized they would be bored in the ten minutes the others spent filling

out the survey, or, who knows, they may have taken a liking to me or felt pity for me. Either way, I deeply appreciated the participation. This was an example highlighting how imperative compensation is to motivate your participants because otherwise, especially if they know its confidential, there is no reason to fully participate.

### **Unfamiliar with Surveys**

An immediate realization I had while collecting the data in real time was that many residents may have never been faced with a survey like mine before. As I flipped through my four-page, double-sided survey with all its empty bubbles and blank lines, I realized how overwhelming this may be to someone unfamiliar with questionnaire formats. I did not know the backgrounds of these young men, and I essentially assumed they understood how to fill out a survey. I also assumed they had the mental capacity at that moment to reflect on their emotions, and that it wouldn't be too difficult. This concern was validated when a resident approached Ms. Dolson and I during the time set aside to complete the survey if they chose to, and he handed it back to us completely blank. He said, "I am really sorry, but I didn't do it because I didn't know how to do it and it makes my brain hurt." We immediately assured him it was not mandatory whatsoever, and I thanked him for trying his best. He went back to the circle and sat back down. From there, I continued to keep an eye on the other participants, and I didn't see any noticeable confusion. This interaction stuck with me, and it made me consider how biased I was to assume everyone would understand what I felt was simple to comprehend. I hope other future researchers in this field learn to consider this potential confound in data collection and survey comprehension.

### **Timing Restraints**

Another reason for my lack of serious or complete data could be due to the timing constraints. Ms. Dolson only had about an hour each week per group to conduct her class, and I did not want to infringe on her teaching time to distribute my survey. The script I needed to read, the distribution and collection, and the time to fill out the survey all had to fit within about 10 minutes, which required a speedy process to complete a survey of its length. The lack of time may have impacted the ability to read through and fully understand the questions. This could have explained why it looked like some participants may have rushed through, and why some participants even forgot to sign the consent form or report their age.

### **Blank Consent Sheets and No Ages**

A factor that Dr. Berry noticed before I did was that some of the consent sheets were not signed, despite the completed survey. Or worse, the consent form was signed, but there was no age reported in the demographics section. This was especially disappointing, because it was clear that the participant wanted to take the survey, but because they did not sign the separate consent sheet or indicated their age, we were unable to use their data. This happened to four of residents, which was the group most limited in scope to begin with. Although I had discussed the consent sheet, and said it needed to be signed to participate, that piece of information clearly fell through the cracks. I wonder if some of the residents may not have been listening closely with all the excitement that the visitors to the unit bring. However, I did not want to push the signing of the consent sheet due to concern of coercion.

### **Storytelling or Just Socializing?**

A major limitation of my study is that there may be a confound with the storytelling manipulation. That is, storytelling per se may not be affecting the dependent variables of self-esteem, mood, and empathy. Instead, effects on these variables could be due to socializing with the students and the researcher, and not due to the process of sharing stories. The Russian-literature resident mentioned several times that he did not necessarily care what the course was about, but rather, that he got to interact with people from outside of BAJCC, which seemed to be an echoed sentiment across the group. In hindsight, I would have reframed my initial research question to examine socialization as the intervention manipulation, rather than storytelling. Based on what I observed from the residents, it seems like socialization with peers from beyond BAJCC and an opportunity to discuss freely with each other may be the real cause for any change of dependent variables, and not the storytelling aspect itself.

Future studies could examine four conditions/groups: 1) residents have no exposure to anyone outside of BAJCC, and simply complete the surveys at Time 1 and Time 2, 2) residents who simply talk with students in a free-form manner with no course, 3) residents who take the storytelling course without students (teacher only), and 4) residents who take the storytelling course as it is currently conducted with students. I would implement manipulation checks throughout to see if the course is playing a role. If the storytelling course was indeed making a difference, we would see the storytelling course alone to be at least more impactful than the control group, but it would be compelling to compare those means with the just socializing group as well. If just socializing with students has the same level of change as the storytelling course with no students, and the storytelling course as currently does not affect self-esteem, empathy, and emotions, that would be a provocative finding. That result would support the hypothesis that

the socialization has a similar or larger effect than the course itself. However, this experiment would require vast resources to be conducted in a scientifically-sound way that would avoid all the obstacles and limitations that I experienced with just *one* condition.

### **Conclusions**

My project has gone through several metamorphoses this year, and it emerged in a place I could never have predicted. Despite all the twists and turns, I gathered some exploratory data with exciting trends that pique my interest towards future studies. More importantly, I gathered field notes that led to a more qualitative approach to my thesis, and taught me more about myself as a researcher, student, and person. Thanks to the bonds I built with Ms. Dolson, the residents, and the staff at BAJCC, I hope that a future student will take my initial data and observations and go on to conduct further research with either Ms. Dolson or BAJCC and learn from the experiences I had.

Even if further research is not conducted, I hope what I have learned from my experiences and what I have shared will inspire people to reconsider how they approach juvenile justice. I believe the qualitative perspective of my thesis is a reminder that these young men are not just statistics, but people who deserve the chance to make a change. After talking with staff and residents within BAJCC, meeting Ms. Dolson, and consequently inheriting her passion for working with those young men, I have faith that there are countless individuals who want to continue pushing towards a more effective and positive juvenile corrections system.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Consent Form and Survey

#### Bon Air JCC Story Sharing Class Survey Survey Consent Form

Ms. Terry Dolson's story sharing class has been offered at Bon Air JCC since 2014. We are working alongside Ms. Dolson on a related research project, which seeks to understand how students and BAJCC residents experience the class. As students and residents, you are being asked to take part in a survey to evaluate the storytelling process. Details about this survey are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in our research project.

Our project asks that you complete a short questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire is **completely voluntary and optional**. You can participate in Ms. Dolson's story telling project without participating in our project. There is **no penalty at all for refusing to participate in our project**.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this project is to learn more about how storytelling may change the views and feelings of UR Students and BAJCC residents towards each other. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take the same survey two separate times: 1) **prior** to starting the storytelling class, and 2) at the **conclusion** of the last storytelling class.

#### Contact Information

This research is being conducted by Mackenzie Seward and her research adviser, Jane Berry. , If you have any questions about the project, please contact Mackenzie Seward at [Mackenzie.seward@richmond.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.seward@richmond.edu), or Dr. Jane Berry at [jberry@richmond.edu](mailto:jberry@richmond.edu). You can also talk with the [social worker](#) to facilitate contact.

#### Possible Risks

There is no more than minimal risk involved in participating in this study. That is, the risks for completing this study are no more than the risks experienced in daily life. If you do experience any discomfort during the study, remember **you can stop at any time without any penalty**. You may also choose not to answer particular questions in the study.

#### Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this project. It is possible that you may gain some insights about yourself and others through the story-telling experience.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that your individual results will remain confidential. However, as with any research process, the risk of a breach of confidentiality is always possible. Nevertheless, to the best of the investigators' abilities, your answers in this study will remain anonymous and confidential. Once the study is completed, we will completely "de-identify" our data. All identifiers will be removed from the identifiable private information and only then will the information be used for future research studies.

### **Use of Information and Data Collected**

We will not tell anyone the answers that you give us. Your responses to the survey will not be associated with you by name and the data you provide will be kept secure. Ms. Dolson will not know which students participated in the study unless they share this information with her. BAJCC staff will not know which residents participated in the study unless they share this information with them. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will never be used in these presentations or papers.

### **Protections and Rights**

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may reach out to the social worker to facilitate contact with the Chair of the University of Richmond's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research at (804) 484-1565 or [irb@richmond.edu](mailto:irb@richmond.edu).

### **Statement of Consent**

The study has been described to me and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially and used only as described in this consent form. I understand that if I have any questions, I can pose them to the researcher. I have read and understand the above information and I consent to participate in this study by signing below. Additionally, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witnessing Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Welcome to our survey!**

We are interested in your reactions to sharing your stories in this class. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes for you to complete. As a reminder, your responses will remain

confidential. If you do not want to answer a question, you are welcome to leave it blank. We appreciate your time and thank you!

**Section 1.** For each statement below, please circle an answer for each item below, indicating if you **strongly disagree** (SD), **disagree** (D), **agree** (A), or **strongly agree** (SA) with it.

I can easily work out what another person might want to talk about. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I can tell if someone is masking their true emotion	SD	D	A	SA
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. ....	SD	D	A	SA
At times I think I am a pretty good person. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I feel that I have a number of good qualities. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I am able to do things as well as most other people. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I feel I have much to be proud of. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I feel capable at times. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I feel that I'm a person of worth. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I have respect for myself. ....	SD	D	A	SA
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am doing the best I can. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I take a positive attitude towards myself. ....	SD	D	A	SA
Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I was in their place. ...	SD	D	A	SA
When I am upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while. ...	SD	D	A	SA
I always try to consider the other fellow's feelings before I do something. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I can usually appreciate the other person's viewpoint even if I do not agree with it. ...	SD	D	A	SA
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view. ....	SD	D	A	SA
Before I do something I try to consider how my friends will react to it. ....	SD	D	A	SA
I find it easy to put myself in somebody else's shoes. ....	SD	D	A	SA

**Section 2.** Please circle an answer for each item below, indicating if you ... **strongly disagree** (SD), **disagree** (D), **agree** (A), or **strongly agree** (SA) with it.

**Section 3.** This scale consists of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word. **Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.**

1 = Very Slightly or Not at All

2 = A Little

3 = Moderately

4 = Quite a Bit

5 = Extremely

\_\_\_ 1. Interested

\_\_\_ 2. Distressed

\_\_\_ 3. Excited

\_\_\_ 4. Upset

\_\_\_ 5. Strong

\_\_\_ 6. Guilty

\_\_\_ 7. Scared

\_\_\_ 8. Hostile

\_\_\_ 9. Enthusiastic

\_\_\_ 10. Proud

\_\_\_ 11. Irritable

\_\_\_ 12. Alert

\_\_\_ 13. Ashamed

\_\_\_ 14. Inspired

\_\_\_ 15. Nervous

\_\_\_ 16. Determined

\_\_\_ 17. Attentive

\_\_\_ 18. Jittery

\_\_\_ 19. Active

\_\_\_ 20. Afraid



**Section 4. Background Information**

What is your age (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your race/ethnicity?

A race that is not listed below (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Alaskan Native

Asian or Asian-American

Black or African-American

Latinx or Hispanic

Multiracial (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Native American Indian

Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander

White or Euro-American

What is your gender?

A gender that is not listed below (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Female

Male

How would you describe your religious affiliation?

Buddhist

Christian (please specify)

Non-Denominational

Other Christian religion \_\_\_\_\_

African Methodist Episcopal (AME)

Baptist

Episcopal

Evangelical

Lutheran

Methodist

Pentecostal

Presbyterian

Roman Catholic

Hindu

Islam

Judaism

What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 5.** This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word. **Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment.**

1 = Very Slightly or Not at All

2 = A Little

3 = Moderately

4 = Quite a Bit

5 = Extremely

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| ___ 1. Interested   | ___ 11. Irritable  |
| ___ 2. Distressed   | ___ 12. Alert      |
| ___ 3. Excited      | ___ 13. Ashamed    |
| ___ 4. Upset        | ___ 14. Inspired   |
| ___ 5. Strong       | ___ 15. Nervous    |
| ___ 6. Guilty       | ___ 16. Determined |
| ___ 7. Scared       | ___ 17. Attentive  |
| ___ 8. Hostile      | ___ 18. Jittery    |
| ___ 9. Enthusiastic | ___ 19. Active     |
| ___ 10. Proud       | ___ 20. Afraid     |

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out our survey! We will share the results of our survey in Spring 2023 when the data have been collected and analyzed, and the story-sharing class is over.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Jane Berry, Terry Dolson, or Mackenzie Seward through [the social worker](#) of Unit 26.

Thank you!

## Appendix B: Speech Prior to Survey

Hello! My name is Mackenzie, and I am a senior at the University of Richmond.

I'm here today to invite you to participate in my senior research project. One of my best friends was in Ms. Dolson's class three years ago, and I remember him telling me about it when we were freshmen. As I was developing my senior project, I thought back to those conversations with my friend, and became very interested in Ms. Dolson's class on story sharing and studying how the class affects the students and BAJCC residents who take the class.

I'm here to invite you to help me with my senior research project by completing a brief questionnaire, which involves answering questions about 1) being around other people, 2) your feelings about yourself, and 3) some background information including your age, gender, and your religious affiliation. The questionnaire should take about 10 minutes to complete. If you choose to participate, we will take 10 minutes now to complete the questionnaire. We will invite you to complete the questionnaire again when the story sharing class is over.

Completing the questionnaire is **completely voluntary and optional**. You can participate in Ms. Dolson's story telling project without participating in my project. There is **no penalty at all for refusing to participate in my project**.

Remember, you are free to participate in Ms. Dolson's class without completing the questionnaire. If you do choose to participate, we will ask for your informed consent and your signature at the bottom of the consent form. If you choose not to participate, please just check the box at the bottom of the consent form, saying I don't want to participate. We will collect all questionnaires and store them in a locked filing cabinet in my advisor's lab at the University of Richmond.

Thank you and let me know if you have any questions!

## Appendix C: IRB Application

### University of Richmond IRB Review Form

This form is required by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Richmond (URIRB) in its review of research projects that involve human participants. When completed, please submit this form (with other documentation, such as the consent form, instruments, and recruitment messages) to [IRB@richmond.edu](mailto:IRB@richmond.edu).

- Do not begin the project until you have received approval from the IRB.
- Depending on staff availability and type of review required, review can require several weeks.
- If you need additional information, please consult the "[Guidance Sheet: Completing the IRB Review Form](#)" posted at [IRB.richmond.edu](http://IRB.richmond.edu).
- 

#### Section One: Investigator Information

1-1. Date of submission: 10/18/2022

1-2. The title of the project: Does structured story-sharing with juveniles living in a correctional center increase positive feelings in self and others?

1-3. Name of the Principal Investigator (PI): Terry Dolson (PI), Jane Berry (co-PI)  
 faculty/staff  student

1-4. PI email, phone number, and department/school affiliation:  
[tdolson@richmond.edu](mailto:tdolson@richmond.edu), Bonner Center for Civic Engagement  
[Jberry@richmond.edu](mailto:Jberry@richmond.edu), Department of Psychology

- 1-5. Date of CITI online training in research ethics course completed by PI. (The course for faculty /staff is titled “UR faculty and staff researchers;” the course for students is “UR students conducting no more than minimal risk research.”)

Dolson (3/8/2021)

Berry (10/9/2020)

- 1-6. For student projects, please identify a Faculty Advisor/Supervisor and the name of the course (if any):

Faculty Mentor, Dr. Jane Berry; PSYC 491 Honors Research

- 1-7. If other researchers are working on this project, provide their names, emails, and CITI completion dates (add table rows if necessary); provide contact information for any engaged collaborators at locations other than the University of Richmond.

Name: Last name, first name	University email	Date of completion of CITI training in research ethics
Mackenzie Seward	Mackenzie.seward@richmond.edu	1/29/2021
Jane Berry	Jberry@richmond.edu	10/9/2020

- 1-8. *Qualifications*: Please describe your level of experience and/or training in the conduct of human research.

Terry Dolson: My training and experience as a Teagle Assessment Scholar has prepared me to handle sensitive academic record material carefully and confidentially and to collaborate on academic research. My work with juveniles at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center over the last seven years has sensitized me to the issues facing incarcerated youth, and the procedures which must be followed in the carceral setting. I also serve on the Volunteer Board for BAJCC and maintain good working relationships with Superintendent Jennings and the volunteer coordinator (Tawnya Hayes), Mr. Lowery, Community Coordinator of Unit A-3 and others in the facility. I have been through volunteer trainings annually. With the completion of the CITI training, I now have a more nuanced understanding of the aspects we need to attend to in the completion of this assessment/ research so that we protect the rights and well-being of our participants.

Jane Berry: I am trained as a cognitive aging psychologist, and have been doing research for over 40 years, first as undergraduate student, then full-time research assistant, graduate student, postdoc, and tenure track faculty member at four different institutions of higher education. Since 1991, I have conducted research with humans ranging in age from 18 through 95 at the University of Richmond. I have trained hundreds of UR undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral trainees while on the faculty at Richmond. Our research conforms to the ethical standards and principles of the UR-IRB and CITI training.

Mackenzie Seward: My experience as a 2021 Summer Research Fellow on Dr. Berry’s Attitude Towards Black Lives Matter (BLM) in project has prepared me to design my own research project, including distribution of surveys and collection of data in a thorough and ethical manner. During the Attitudes Towards BLM project, I learned the importance of confidentiality and coding participants so that their personal information stays protected. I also now feel confident in my ability to write an effective consent form and I am prepared to debrief all participants in depth in the spring. Along with this research experience, I have completed the PSYC 300 research with Dr. Berry and received my CITI Program certification for “UR Students conducting no more than minimal risk research”. Specifically for this project, I have also chosen to further my education in conducting ethical human participants research by signing up to complete certification for the CITI Program course “Community-Engaged and Community-Based Participatory Research,” (completed 10/17/2022).

1-9. Do you declare any conflict of interest regarding this research?

No  Yes (if yes, please describe below)

## **Section Two: Research Procedures**

2.1. *Synopsis*: Describe the scientific purposes of the project, including study aims and hypotheses to be tested. (For most projects, a 200 word or less summary is sufficient; use additional space for more complex projects.)

The purpose of the project is to assess whether the experience of story sharing between individuals changes how those individuals view and feel about each other. Specifically, Mackenzie Seward and Jane Berry are partnering with Terry Dolson and her students in *FYS Storytelling and Identity* in a collaborative project with residents at the Bon Air Juvenile Corrections Center (BAJCC). Participants in the project are the students and residents, who will partner and share stories for 5 sessions over 6 weeks. Prior to the start of the structured story sharing, residents and students will complete a brief set of questions that measure perceived empathy, current emotions (feelings), and self-esteem. We hypothesize that the empathy between students and residents will increase, and that positive feelings will increase and negative feelings decrease over the course of the project. Self-esteem, as a more stable trait, is likely to remain constant.

2.2. *Summary of Research Procedures*: Describe the research methods that will be used, including research design, type of measures, procedures, and locations. (For most projects, a 200 word or less summary is sufficient; use additional space for more complex projects.) If the project uses self-report methods, such as surveys, questionnaires, and interviews, copies of the actual items used must be submitted to the IRB as a separate document.

Research Design: We will use a “pre-post” research design. Participants will complete our measures prior to and at the conclusion of the story-sharing project conducted by Ms. Dolson and her students. Data will be analyzed using a one-way, within-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Types of Measures: Three questionnaires (see attached) measuring empathy, emotions/feelings, and self-esteem will be completed by participants. Participants will also provide demographic information (see attached).

Procedures: Participants will meet with students and Ms. Dolson for the class project. Mackenzie Seward and Jane Berry will administer the questionnaires to participants in person, in a group setting.

Locations: The location is in Bon Air, VA, at the Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center located at 900 Chatsworth Ave, Richmond, VA 23235

- 2.3. Participants: Describe the study participants, including approximate anticipated number of subjects, their age, and any specific characteristics. Note if they are members of any identified vulnerable population, any factors that may affect the ethical acceptability or conduct of this research for this population, and describe steps taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence.

The participants are students in Ms. Dolson's FYS course, and residents at BAJCC. Students and residents will be invited to participate but their participation is entirely voluntary. Ms. Dolson will not know which of her students volunteer for and participate in the research project, unless they self-identify as such. Dr. Berry will know the identities of the student participants, but these will be kept confidential and not shared with Ms. Dolson.

Ms. Dolson has worked for eight years with residents at BAJCC (Unit 62), which houses, on average, 12-14 juvenile residents. The residents range in age from 17-21 years, and a large number of them have completed high school. They are a vulnerable population as incarcerated individuals. Ms. Dolson will work with BAJCC staff to ensure that residents understand that their participation in the class and in the research is entirely voluntary. We make clear on the consent form that participation is optional and they can drop out of the class and/or the study with no penalty at any time. If a participant is under the age of 18 years, we will work with the Bon Air JCC to seek and gain parental support and consent for their child; if consent is not obtained, we will exclude that participant from our research pool.

- 2.4. Recruitment: Describe how you will recruit subjects. Will you use word of mouth, Spider Bytes, emails, posters, etc.? The word-for-word recruiting messages are required. Insert them here or as a separate document with this research form.

We will use word-of-mouth. Two staff members at the BAJCC will announce the class opportunity and the survey component to all current residents of Unit 62.

The UR students who registered for the FYS class will have the opportunity to participate in the study, but their participation is completely voluntary. They will be subject to the same protections as the residents of BAJCC are and are welcome to opt out of any or all questions at any time during the study. Ms. Dolson will announce the opportunity to her students to participate in the study.

- 2.5. Dissemination Plans: Describe how the findings will be disseminated, such as presented to external audiences (e.g., presentations in symposia), submitted for publication, posted on the Internet.

Mackenzie Seward will present an overall summary of the study and an analysis of the survey data at the annual Arts and Sciences Student Symposium, and the annual Department of Psychology Honors Presentations, in April 2023.

### **Section Three: Participant Protections**

- 3.1. *Direct benefits:* Describe the benefits of the proposed research for those who take part in the research. (Indicate if there are “no direct benefits”; if compensation is provided, describe the compensation amount and distribution process.)  
Possible benefits to participants include positive experiences from the social interactions with same-age peers in different social groups: BAJCC residents interacting with UR students, and UR students interacting with BAJCC residents. Participants may also benefit by gaining insights about themselves and others through story-telling methodology. Monetary compensation is not allowed at BAJCC but Ms. Dolson brings snacks to the sessions.
- 3.2. *General benefits:* Describe the general benefits of the research, other than the direct benefits to participants listed above.  
This assessment/research will inform Ms. Dolson in the design of future teaching and community-engaged learning programs at BAJCC, already grounded in her extensive and substantial community outreach and teaching efforts. Measuring empathy and mood levels that may increase following participation in the story-sharing program could be important to improving the day-to-day lives of residents while living at BAJCC, their transition back into the community, and perhaps, other similar intervention efforts. Our results could inform Ms. Dolson’s future work in this FYS community-based learning program.
- 3.3. *Identification of Risks and Steps take to Minimize Risk:* Describe any possible risks to participants in this study, including physical, psychological, or emotional harm, and steps taken to minimize those risks (Note: any risks noted here must be included in the consent form for this study).  
Participants may possibly experience some social awkwardness at sharing their stories with strangers. Ms. Dolson will be present to minimize discomfort and anxiety. In her experience over the last eight years at BAJCC, the residents and students in this program enjoy the opportunity to meet, talk, and open up with UR students in this setting.
- 3.4. *Risk level:* Indicate if, in your judgment, the study’s risks are greater than minimal, where “Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests” (Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR 46).  
 Yes       No
- 3.5. *Privacy Protections:* Describe precautions that will be used to ensure subject *privacy* is protected.  
Each participant will receive an ID number for their questionnaire data. Dr. Berry is the only person who will maintain a separate list of participant IDs and names. BAJCC requires that we not seal any envelopes with survey materials so that they can inspect for contraband. Attaching IDs but not names will provide a level of privacy to the residents.

3.6. *Data Safety*: Describe precautions that will be used to maintain the confidentiality of identifiable information.

If participants use their names or co-residents' names in their stories, we will redact that information when we present data in the public domain. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Berry's lab space in Richmond Hall. Mackenzie Seward will have access to the data but not the names of participants.

3.7. *Additional Requirements*: Indicate any features of the research requiring additional regulatory review below:

- This project is funded by a federal agency
- Participants are recruited from an identified vulnerable population (e.g., less than 18 years of age, employees, prisoners)
- This project requests a waiver of an element of consent or documentation of consent
- This project includes international sites
- This project is a multisite study
- This project requires an authorization agreement with one or more external agencies or institutions
- The project qualifies as a clinical trial and so must be registered on ClinicalTrials.gov

#### **Section Four: Documentation of Consent**

4.1. *Elements of Consent*: Submit as a separate document the consent form to be used for this project. Before submitting it, verify it includes all required elements of consent or provide a justification for the absence of any required elements of consent.

Verify (**by checking each statement below**) that the consent form includes:

- A statement that the study involves research
- An explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject's participation
- A description, in language understandable by a layperson, of what the subjects will do as participants in the study (e.g., reports of personal information or experiences, complete of self-assessments, making judgments, solving memory problems, reporting their opinions), including identification of any procedures that are novel or untested
- Contact information for the investigator(s)
- A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject
- A description of any benefits to the subject that may reasonably be expected from the research
- A description of the use of information and data collected
- A description of how confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained; participants should be told if identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens and that, after such removal, the information or biospecimens could be used for future research studies



- An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject
- A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.
- A means to indicate understanding and acceptance of the conditions of consent

4.2. *Justification.* Please provide a justification for any waiver of the requirement for an element of consent below.

4.3. *Additional elements.* Indicate, if required, other elements included in the consent:

- For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained
- For treatment studies only: A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject

### **Section Five: Affirmation**

Please check the following indicating your acceptance of these statements:

- To the best of my knowledge, the answers in this form are accurate.
- For students: My Faculty Advisor/Mentor will review and approve this study's protocol prior to submission to URIRB.
- I will read and abide by all of the Notices of Actions and Conditions of Approval from the IRB that I receive.
- If the research involves a distribution of gift cards or gift certificates, pre-approval from [the Controller's office](#) is required.
- If one or more of the Board's requirements are not acceptable, I understand that I may ask the Board to reconsider its requirements, but may not enroll subjects until the issue is resolved in a manner acceptable to the Board.

When completed, submit this form, as well as other required documents (e.g., consent form, survey items) as files (pdf, doc, or docx; no zipped folders, please) directly to URIRB at [IRB@richmond.edu](mailto:IRB@richmond.edu).

## Appendix D: IRB Conditions

Your proposal has been approved by the University of Richmond Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research (IRB). It is your responsibility to ensure that your research adheres to these conditions.

**Review confirms** that the **work involves vulnerable populations**, and as requires revisions as part of approval to **guard that population**. This determination is based on the information about the project provided to the IRB. Investigators are responsible for carrying out the project as they have described it. Changes shall not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

1. Condition 1: Efforts should be increased so that incarcerated participants are **clearly aware that participation is voluntary** and that will **not be any kind of possible penalty for refusal to participate**. This should be made clear at the **start of the consent form** and at the **start (introduction) of the questionnaire**. Additional steps, beyond notices in the survey and consent form, should be taken to convey to possible participants the voluntary nature of participation and non-punitive nature of not participating; these additional steps should be noted in Point 2.3 of the IRB proposal form.
2. Condition 2: **No participants will be under the age of 18** (in which case parental consent is not required).
3. Condition 3: To reduce any sense of coercion or pressure vis-à-vis this vulnerable population, **snacks** (as compensation) should be **available to everyone**, not only to those who agree to participate (cf. Point 3.1 of the IRB proposal).
4. Condition 4: Because this vulnerable population might not have an available means to contact outside entities (e.g. the IRB) for help or to report negative consequences of participation, **at least one of the investigators** (one faculty PI, or one faculty PI and the student researcher) should **directly engage participants afterward** to inquire as to possible negative consequences of participation. This should take place at a reasonable time afterward (e.g. **3 weeks or so**). The researcher could share ongoing outcomes of research with participants while asking about any possible negative effects of participation. (This relates to the consent form.)
5. Condition 5: Because of possible increased risk of **retraumatization** of this particular vulnerable population, the **questions of Section 2** of the survey should be **reworded** to avoid negative language (e.g. of “failure” and the like, e.g. in current questions 2, 6, 9), and instead to use a scale in which questions are **positively valenced** (but still can capture intended information of the original form of those questions).

6. **Approval** is for a **period of one year**. Before the expiration date, the research is required to officially close the investigation by removing all identifying information from any data that have been collected; stored data sets must be de-identified once the project is complete. If this research project extends beyond one year from the date of this letter a request for renewal of approval must be filed at least 2 weeks prior to the expiration date; the URIRB is not responsible for issuing a notification of pending renewal deadlines.
7. The IRB requires all investigators complete training in the protection of humans in research, and that they renew that training every three years. The Principle Investigator is responsible for maintaining, in his or her project record files, documentation for all researchers engaged on the project. The IRB can assist the PI in making certain these records are accurate. For more information, please consult information regarding **CITI training** at [irb.richmond.edu](http://irb.richmond.edu).
8. Any **adverse reaction or other complication of the research** which involves real or potential **risk or injury** to subjects must be **reported to the Chair of the University of Richmond IRB** as soon as possible but no later than **three working days** after the occurrence.
9. This determination pertains only to the requirements of 45 CFR 46 regulating research with human participants, and therefore does not address other local, state, federal, or international requirements or restrictions, such as regulations pertaining to the use of data (e.g., the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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