

Rewriting, Redefining, Reclaiming Identity

Feedback form answers

Workshop 1

- No feedback forms
- Introductory session

Feedback form 1 – Baseline identity questions

Workshop 2

1. “When I think of who I am, I think” Please complete this sentence.
 - A. I realise that my past has and will always be a determinant of my present and future
 - B. I think of someone being “woes” and confused
 - C. I am a father who needs to do the best he can for his kids and to be the positive role model
 - D. That I should matter in the sense of my happiness of being me
2. “When I think of who I am, I feel” Please complete this sentence.
 - A. Proud of how far I’ve come.
 - B. I feel tired and exhausted
 - C. Blessed to be able to live a life and a second chance and just grateful to be alive
 - D. Invigorated at the possibilities of what I can achieve for me and not others
3. How has the lack of enforcement of human rights in prison affected your sense of identity?
 - A. Made me realise how we take our freedom for granted
 - B. I sometimes have to think of who I really am and how others see me before I can be me
 - C. It made me feel vulnerable and stripped of what was supposed to be
 - D. It affected me majorly because as much as I wanted to be who I am, I could not, due to a set of rules I had to follow.
4. What was it like to translate your experiences into images and then into stories?

- A. Because I prefer to write, that part was easier
 - B. It takes me back to the prison setting and makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable even though I have made peace with the past
 - C. It was fun and very expressive
 - D. It was amazing to have seen the images and then see it played out
5. What did you learn about yourself during this process?
- A. That even though it is almost 6 years later, I will never forget. The experience is always “there”
 - B. I need to talk more about my experiences
 - C. To express more about who I am
 - D. That it’s always good to be yourself whether inside or outside
6. Having gone through today’s session, what other words can you add to your identity drawing and your “I am” writing?
- A. Resilient, tenacious, optimistic, positive
 - B. I am NOT who they say I am
 - C. Empathetic, loving, compassionate
 - D. That what others say really doesn’t matter. What I think of myself will carry me through to where I want to be.

Feedback form 2

Workshop 3

1. You are more than your crime. You have more than 1 identity. What else are you? Who else are you? Give at least 5 answers.
- A. /
 - B. A father, community leader, hard worker, university student, and an overcomer
 - C. I am bold, not afraid to express. I am blessed. I am a father and a husband. I am a role model. I am a positive influence.
 - D. I am brave, I am the person I choose to be. My identity is not defined by others. I can do anything I set my mind to. I’m the best version of me.
2. What have you noticed about your identity past and present?

- A. /
 - B. Some habits may still reflect, but I have grown from a pretender to being a strong independent pillar in life.
 - C. That above all I'm fearless and bold
 - D. That it has evolved from being scared and shy to an outspoken person
3. What was it like to play out those past situations in a way that it also counters the negativity as you brought in positive keywords and phrases about who you are?
- A. /
 - B. Taking me back to my past hurts but it also helps me to grow the more positive words I speak over myself
 - C. It was exciting and provoking to relive past situations and also very reflective
 - D. It felt good because sometimes these things you sit with bothers you and you have no way of expressing what you feel.
4. How do you feel about the criminal justice system's inability to uphold the right to safety and security?
- A. /
 - B. It sucks. Replace those working in the system and bring about equality.
 - C. I truly feel they should do more with safety and security and to get those affected involved
 - D. I think it's fxxxxd up because it's violating the safety and security of actual human beings. Yes they might have not done what the law requires but still, they're human in the end.
5. Briefly describe the change that you would like to see in the system's implementation of safety and security based on your experiences, as a way to better the system for the future.
- A. /
 - B. Have people in place who would uphold the constitution and not make us doubt or sit in fear
 - C. They should really involve those effected
 - D. They should see the individual as human and follow protocol as it should be based on the white paper of corrections.

6. How did today's activities, story writing and mirror image activities, help you to understand your identity, its growth and strength?
- A. /
 - B. I can do more than what I thought I could even if I have to try again and again and again
 - C. It helped me to be more open and true to myself and to reflect
 - D. It helped me to grow more into becoming the person I can see myself

Feedback form 3

Workshop 4

1. "I am". Please tell me who you are.
- A. /
 - B. /
 - C. MMM. Father of three. Lover of nature and all animals. Married to the love of my life. Sensitive, lovable.
 - D. /
2. Your right to safety and security inside prison was violated because of the ongoing violence. How did that affect your sense of identity/sense of self/sense of being?
- A. /
 - B. /
 - C. It affects me by being punished for mistakes of others.
 - D. /
3. In a paragraph, please tell me what this journey of identity has been like for you. Think about your identity in prison, your identity before this project, and your identity now.
- A. /
 - B. /
 - C. It's like being able to do more about how I see or feel about myself as to what I am and who I was in the past and in prison
 - D. /

Feedback form 4

Workshop 5

1. In what way has your identity changed, developed, or grown when you think of your sense of identity when you started these workshops?
 - A. /
 - B. /
 - C. It has developed into being able to be introspective more often
 - D. /

2. What does it feel like to be on a path to reclaiming, redefining, or rewriting identity? An identity that was altered because of having your human rights violated on a regular basis because of the dismal criminal justice system.
 - A. /
 - B. /
 - C. It feels like I can only grow in redefining my identity
 - D. /

Feedback form 5

Workshop 6 + 7

1. How did it affect how you see and feel about yourself when you were denied proper healthcare and treatment? Or if you had not experienced your health needs being violated, what was it like to witness someone else go through that experience.
 - A. /
 - B. I felt hopeless, useless and angry as I so much wanted to challenge them but I couldn't.
 - C. It's very saddening to have seen what little healthcare was accessible or available
 - D. It was not good and actually made me sad because I personally had to wait to be tended to and it was not good at all

2. How many times were you denied the healthcare and treatment that you needed and were owed? Briefly explain happened during these incidents.

- A. /
 - B. 3 times. Being constipated for nearly 40 days. Members accused me of storing something and I could not see a doctor until I nearly collapsed.
 - C. I was denied seeing the dentist while having a toothache for weeks with little to no pain meds.
 - D. Too many to count. One incident was when I wanted to see the sister. I was told to wait as apparently there were not members and I had to wait for more than like 2 or 3 hours to go to the hospital.
3. What was it like to create a monologue/story that exposed what actually happens in prisons in contrast to what the news article said?
- A. /
 - B. It has some play back, some laughter, but some sadness and regret too.
 - C. It felt sort of relieving trying to portray a better picture of what actually happens
 - D. It felt good because they all sugar coated it a lot.
4. What did you notice about the images you created with your body regarding image 1 and image 3? What were the differences there?
- A. /
 - B. Pain, strengths and weakness. The ability to only do so much
 - C. The first image is like reliving what happened and the third was like what we wanted to happen or see.
 - D. The difference was that in image 1 there was no remorse or emotion whereas in the last image it shared more concern towards the inmates.
5. What was it like to be able to transition from the actual image to the ideal empowered image?
- A. /
 - B. It felt great but to a certain extent
 - C. It's challenging to try and get to the last image
 - D. It felt very good because it felt like I had a say in how I should be treated and made me feel good.

Feedback form 6

Workshop 8

1. How did the poor living conditions (unsanitary and unhygienic bathrooms, toilets, cells, general areas, inedible food) affect your sense of identity or sense of self?
 - A. In Worcester everything was clean and hygienic but the short time I spent in Pollsmoor completely disorientated me and I felt completely lost
 - B. I felt homeless. It made me feel like I was living in that condition before I was incarcerated.
 - C. It made me feel like I was less than human and like I was being violated in every possible way
 - D. It made me feel belittled and not important as someone who was just put there as a burden for them
2. How has your sense of identity developed or changed since starting this workshop process?
 - A. Having time to think about my experiences in prison and reflect on the changes that I have gone through; I realize how much I have changed since my incarceration. So, this workshop has helped me to identify the areas where I have changed.
 - B. I was able to reach for the old me and create a new me
 - C. I was able to reassess my old me and recreate my new me.
 - D. I have a better sense of my identity don't feel inferior anymore as I felt like I was not human in prison.
3. Give 5 keywords or phrases for what your sense of identity or sense of self was like in prison.
 - A. Guilt-ridden, reflexive, contemplative, fearful, over-confident
 - B. Scared, worried, beggar, clueless, and ghetto
 - C. Lost, belittled, down, useless, burdened.
 - D. Inferior, non-existent, little, burden, senseless, purposeless
4. Give 5 keywords or phrases for what your sense of identity or sense of self is now that you are no longer in prison?
 - A. Confident, resilient, honest, less judgmental, reflexive
 - B. Confident, fearless, empowered, humble, crazy

- C. Equipped, confident, honoured, belonging, blessed
- D. Able, confident, purposeful, reliable, overcomer

Final comments about the workshop series

How do you see your sense of identity now compared to when you were incarcerated and post-incarceration? Have you been able to in a way reclaim/redefine/or rewrite your sense of identity in anyway since participating in the project?

- A. /
- B. From being the g to person in the community and the neutral one in my family, to the “don’t trust him” kinda person really broke me. I felt that I had no sense of belonging and that I too would be best learning the traits of those who I surrounded myself with in prison. If I may say, I felt like a badass and I guess that’s where it just started with the IDGAF attitude. However, I realized despite being incarcerated, I am the same person who I was back then. I am the same person now and I firmly believe I will be the same person going forward in life. I may sometimes behave in contradictory ways, but I am the same person I used to be. So yes, I have been able to reclaim my identity but that’s because of who I surround myself with. I changed some of my approaches to certain things and people and because I found myself and changed a few things, learnt new values and meanings in my life. I finally rewrote my identity where I am able to say I love and I am proud of myself.
- C. Yes. I do feel that I’ve reclaimed my identity to what I want for myself now and I’m still busy rewriting my identity in a sense of what I want people to see me as. I also find it easier to be myself now as to when I was incarcerated as I had to put up a front of being hard enough to survive, and also pushing aside feelings that were actually the real me. Now I feel more in touch with my true feelings and true self and also who I’m aspiring to become.
- D. My sense of identity compared to when I was incarcerated is much more confident and stronger. When I was incarcerated, I couldn’t really express myself in the way I wanted to. I also couldn’t do what I wanted to whenever I wanted to. I feel that after participating in the project I have reclaimed my identity to such an extent where I don’t feel inferior in the presence of people in authoritative positions or people superior to me. I can see myself now in a league with them as well.