

# Exploring OT practice in the U.S. criminal justice system: Occupational justice through a jail-based reentry program



World Federation of Occupational Therapy

SE-58 Mental Health Room 1.6

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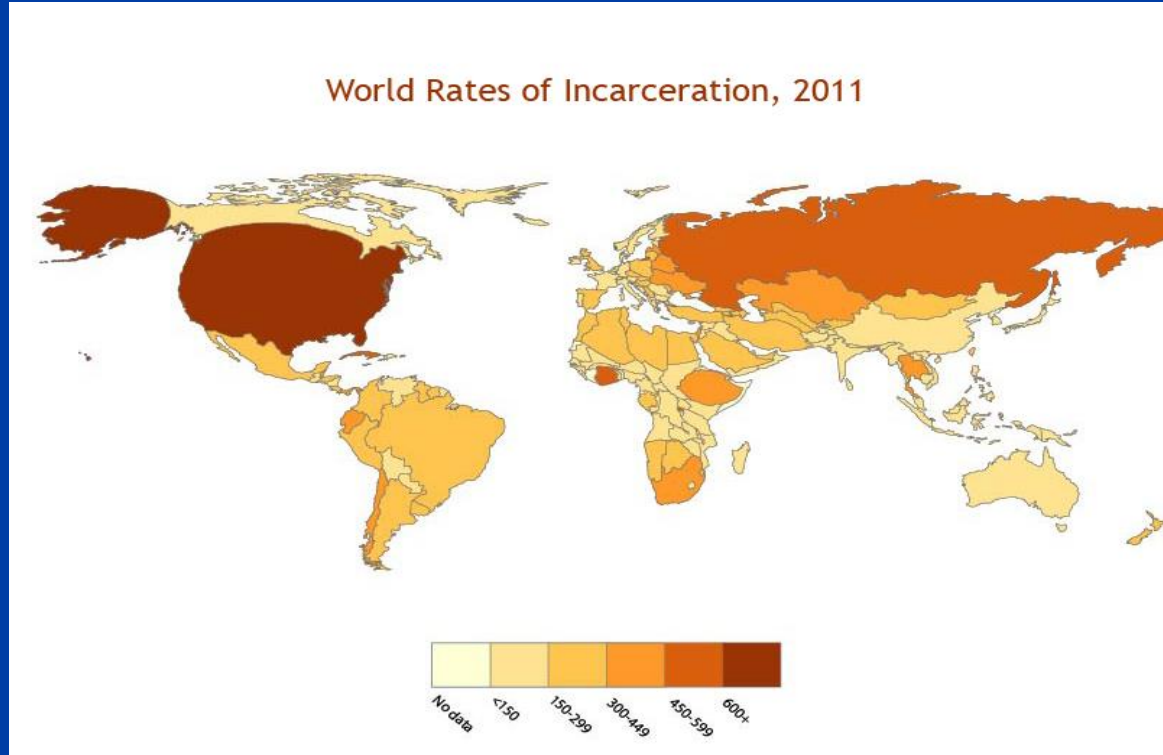
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1. Provide Background of the Problem
2. Describe Saint Louis University Transformative Justice Initiative
3. Explore collaborative program development and implementation
4. Examine the experience of a jail-based OT

# Background:

## The US leads the world in rates of incarceration



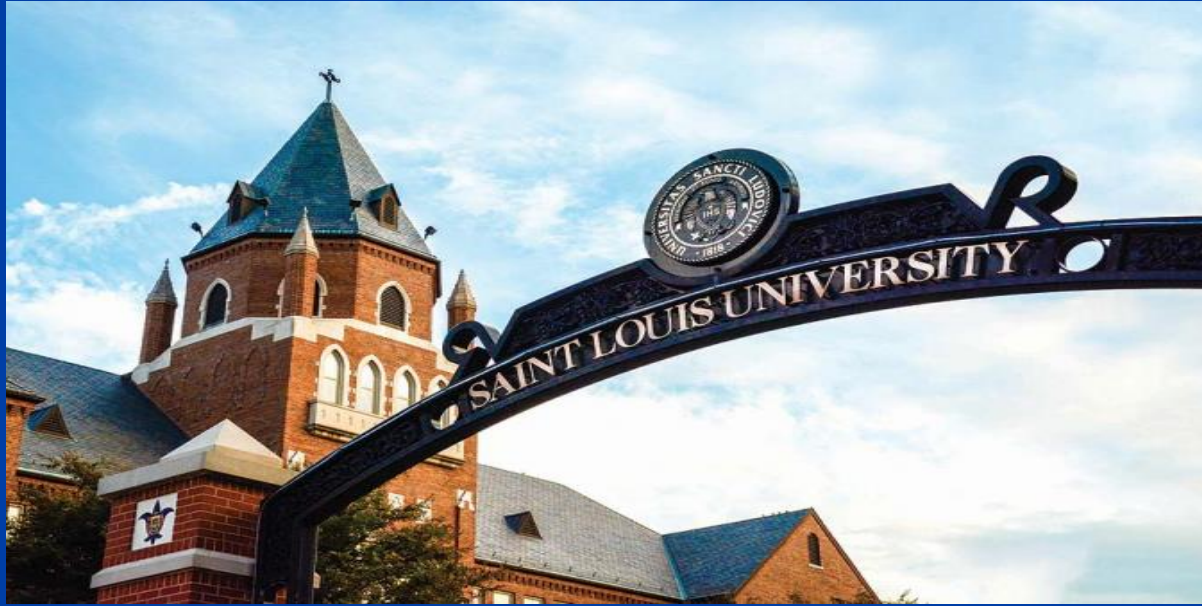


## Who's Behind Bars?

# U.S. Short Term Jail



- 11 million people cycle through jails each year in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>
- City of St. Louis has highest incarceration rate in Missouri.<sup>2</sup>
- 97% of individuals incarcerated will be released to the community.<sup>3</sup>
- OT programming in justice-based settings is rare.<sup>3</sup>
- Occupation-based programming supports healthy roles, habits, routines and activities.



# DESCRIBE SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY'S TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE INITIATIVE



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# OT pre- and post-release transition & integration program

City of St. Louis Division of Corrections

4 cohorts of women

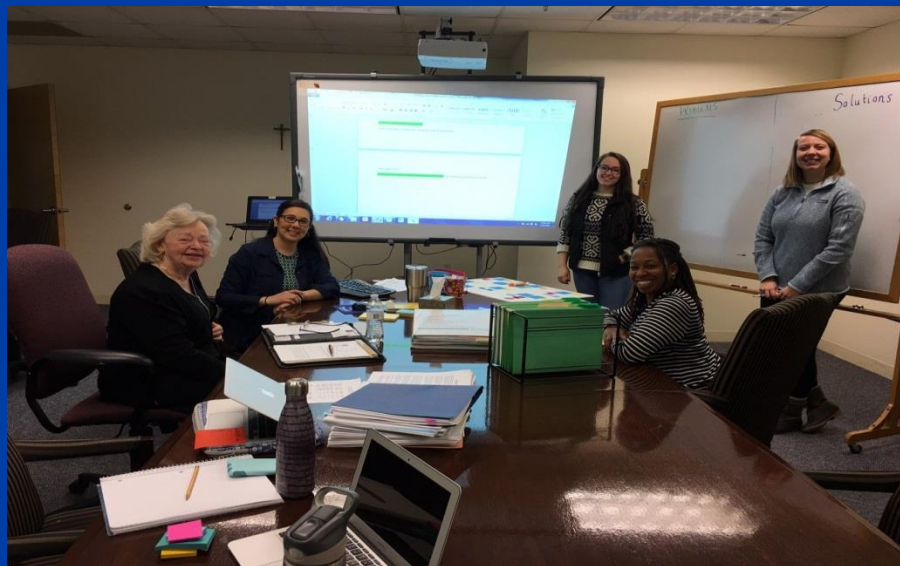
8 week sessions

- Assessment
- Reentry training topics
- Interactive discussions
- Applied activities
- Assigned homework



## Transformative Justice Initiative's OT Transition and Integration Program

<https://www.slu.edu/mission-identity/initiatives/transformative-justice-initiative.php>



# EXPLORE COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION



# Collaborative Programming

## Collaborative Approach

- Interprofessional partnerships
- Community members, volunteers, experts, etc.
- Social work, family and community medicine, nutrition and dietetics, law, psychology, career services, community health workers, case managers
- Functional community presentations
  - Activities focused on skill building for community living

# Collaborative Programming

## Participatory Approach

- Create visuals for “direction” of services
- Treat correctional officers with respect
- Work together to meet common goals

# Collaborative Programming

## Client-Centered Approach

- Storytellers
- Informal Interviews
- Strengths, Struggles, and Interests
- Learn from unique, lived experiences





# EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCE OF A JAIL-BASED OT



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# Using a Reflective Approach



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## Methods of Reflection

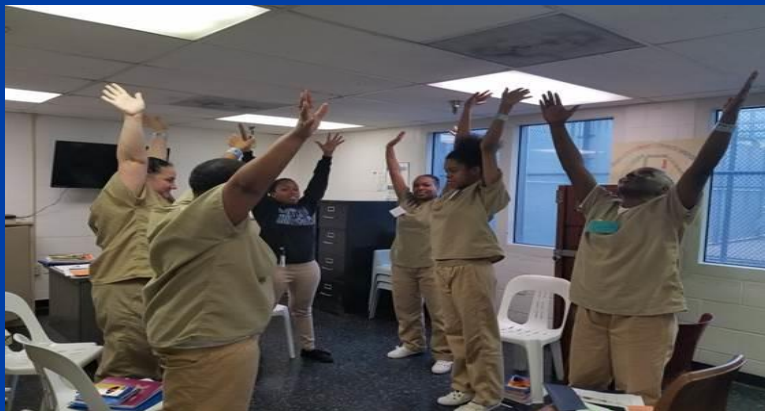
- Field Notes
- Session Logs
- Team Meetings
- Pausing for Reflection
- Feedback from OT group members



“We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.”  
—John Dewey



# The Pursuit of Occupational Justice



# Conclusion

- **Saint Louis University's OT-based Transformative Justice Initiative has implemented a collaborative, interprofessional program within an urban jail.**
- **Individual and team reflection prove to be effective methods of program development and implementation**
- **Jail-based occupational therapists in reentry programming can assist correctional facilities in reducing rates of recidivism and promoting occupational justice.**