

## Leveraging Community Partnerships for Social Impact

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**Abstract :** Women's prison and reentry programs are focused primarily on reducing recidivism but neglect how an individual's intersecting identities influence their risk of violence and ways that histories of gender-based violence (GBV) must be addressed for these women to recover from traumas. Light To Life (LTL) and From Prison Cells to Ph.D. (P2P) Womxn's Cohort program recognizes this need; providing national gender-responsive programming (GRP), and trauma-informed programming to justice-impacted survivors through digital resources, leadership opportunities, educational workshops, and healing justice approaches for positive health outcomes. Through the support of a community-university partnership (CUP), a comparative evaluation study is being conducted among intimate-partner violence (IPV) survivors with histories of incarceration who have or have not participated in the cohort. The objectives of the partnership are to provide mutually beneficial training and consultation for evaluating GRP through a rigorously tested research methodology. This collaborative applies a rigorous methodology of semi-structured interviews with an intervention and control group to evaluate the impact of LTL's programming in the P2P Womxn's Cohort. The CUP is essential to achieve the expected results of the project. It will measure primary outcomes, including participants' level of engagement and satisfaction with programming, reduction in attitudes that accept violence in relationships, and increase in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that lead to healthy relationships. This community-based approach will provide opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The results addressed in the hypothesis will provide learning lessons to improve this program, to scale it up, and apply it to other similarly affected populations. The partnership experience and anticipated outcomes contribute to the knowledge in women's health and criminal justice by fostering public awareness on the importance of developing new partnerships and fostering CUP to establish a framework to the leveraging of partnerships for social impact available to academic institutions.

**Keywords :** Community-university partnership, gender-responsive programming, incarceration, intimate-partner violence, POC, women

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