Life after prison: Research analyzes ex-offenders' stigma management

August 18 2014, by Pete Gemmer

Todd Callais, an assistant professor of Sociology at UC Blue Ash College, presented his findings on how ex-inmates cope with life after prison at the American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, held August 16–19 in San Francisco.

As part of his three-year research for a new book, Callais conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 60 ex-offenders, but he focused specifically on 13 former inmates for his presentation, titled Ex-offenders and Stigma Management: Redemptive Contestation.

Roughly two-thirds of former inmates in the U.S. eventually return to prison, some for committing crimes and others for probation violations. Callais studied ex-inmates who were successful in making the transition from prison to civilian life. The subjects of the research were convicted of felony crimes and had remained out of prison for at least two years after their release.

Callais' research focused on the stigma these ex-offenders carry with them and considered how they develop a positive self-identity and manage how they will be perceived in daily interactions. "There has been a lot of research on social capital as the key to reentry for ex-offenders, but I didn't think enough had been done to look at the unique stigma faced by this population and how those who successfully stay out of prison manage that stigma," said Callais.

He notes that everyone he interviewed carried some anger about how

they were treated by the system – this counters the idea that they had served their time and should be able to become productive members of society. "I found the people who successfully make the transition to life after prison are those who address this anger and take a somewhat hopeless situation and use that as motivation to redeem themselves," said Callais.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

Citation: Life after prison: Research analyzes ex-offenders' stigma management (2014, August 18) retrieved 17 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2014-08-life-prison-sociology-professor.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.