

Sometimes, We Just Want to be Heard: Conflict Transformation in Local Jails

Compiled by Jasmine Fan, Duke Laidlaw Scholars Program
In partnership with the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC)

Background

This summer, I partnered with the **Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC)**, a community-based nonprofit strengthens communication, community engagement, and conflict resolution throughout San Mateo County, California. Their main work involves mediating conflicts between clients before escalating to court. I primarily assisted with community outreach efforts and the **conflict transformation jail program, where I taught around 20 inmates in two different jails in Redwood City.**

Goals

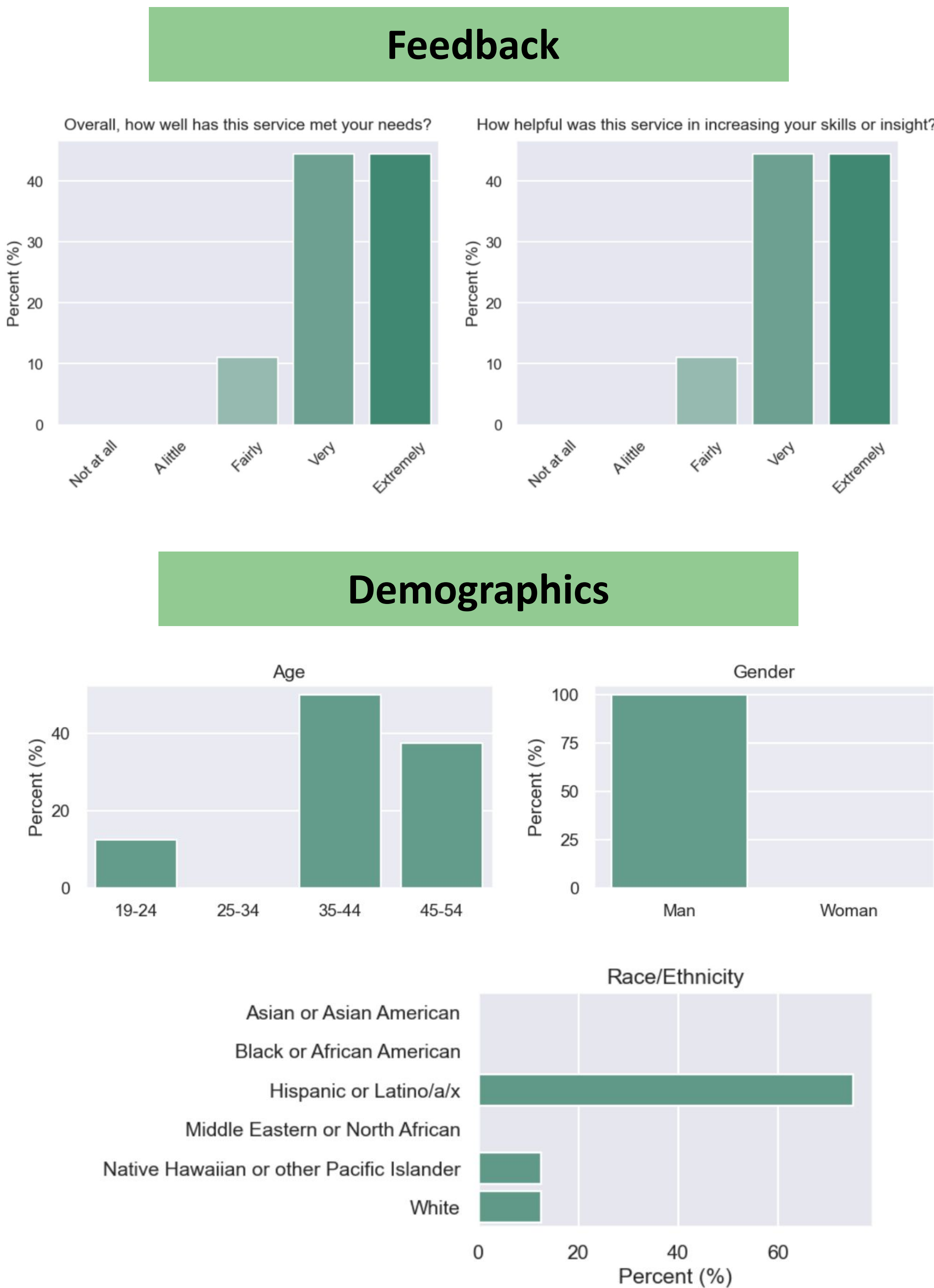
How can I better understand the experiences of incarcerated individuals and the restorative justice model?

Over the summer, I worked to complete training, shadow, and help facilitate six weeks of conflict transformation sessions in local jails

Curriculum

1. Understanding Conflict
2. Emotions
3. Values and Locus of Control
4. Hooks and Triggers
5. Conflict Styles
6. Root of the Problem
7. De-Escalation
8. Speaking and Listening
9. Impact vs Intent
10. Art of the Apology

Participant Reflections



Weaknesses

- Some expected to receive a certificate of completion and were disappointed with their participation certificate
- Respondents hoped for more classes to be available throughout the week
- Gave feedback for more PCRC programming after released

“That it gave the opportunity to understand a situation from different points of view that come from different walks of life.”

- Program Participant

Strengths

- Understanding different perspectives
- Learning solutions to navigate conflict and de-escalation
- Time from reflection and open conversations
- Tools like conflict styles and breathing exercises
- Respectful facilitators
- Routine of weekly classes

Takeaways

I find that **we are often sent out to change the world or serve our community, before we have truly taken the time to understand them.** While I was working in jails, at the end of the day, we were all in the same room—surrounded by the same gray walls, sitting on the same pale yellow chairs. **And I tried to begin with the intention of understanding.**

Sometimes, people don’t want solutions.
They just want to be heard.