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**I'm Alive and I'm free": Understanding health and life satisfaction among elders recently released from prison****Angela S. Murolo***City University of New York, United States*

**Statement of the Problem:** Because a greater proportion of incarcerated people are of advanced age and high cost of incarceration, many states are focusing on reducing elderly prison populations. When released from prison, the challenges of reentry are exasperated by age and illness. The aim of this study is to understand the needs and concerns of the aging person on parole, their concerns about reintegration and stigmatization, and how health, mental health, and physical health impact the reentry process. Additionally, the aim of this study is to understand how older persons find meaning in life or life satisfaction post-imprisonment. **Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** A thematic analysis of 29 semi-structured interviews was conducted as part of a larger project that studied aging while on parole. The theoretical focus addressed older peoples' belief in their own redeemability, reintegrative shaming or whether they felt they could be reintegrated into society, and whether they had appropriate social networks or social capital. Additionally grounded theory was used to understand how older people leaving prison find life satisfaction. **Findings:** Results indicated respondents had a range of health problems including securing access to health care, mental, physical health, and substance abuse issues. Most respondents were working to repair family relationships, to gain stability in their lives, were concerned about maintaining freedom and felt stigmatized by society. Despite these feelings, most older respondents felt good about their life so far and had future aspirations. **Conclusion & Significance:** As older people are released from prison, parole officers play an important role in older people's reentry experiences. This includes ensuring that older people have access to social services, age-appropriate services, housing, and support as they work to rebuild their lives in the community. This is necessary to ensure that older people can live productive healthy lives in the free world.

**Biography**

Professor Murolo, MA MPhil focuses her teaching and research on the American correctional system and people who are impacted by its effects. Her research focuses on aging in the criminal justice system, its impacts on reentry and life satisfaction, and release mechanisms for aging prisoners. Professor Murolo has peer-reviewed publications in the Journal of Correctional Healthcare, SN Social Sciences and the CUNY Law Review addressing this topic and has been interviewed for the well renowned health policy journal Health Affairs to provide guidance and insight on the challenges of releasing older people from prison. She has presented several papers on this topic at American Society of Criminology (ASC), Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) and the North-Eastern Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS) conferences.