Journal of Participatory Research Methods

Abraczinskas, M., Adams, B. L., Vines, E., Cobb, S., Latson, Z., & Wimbish, M. (2022). Making the Implicit Explicit: An Illustration of YPAR Implementation and Lessons Learned in Partnership With Young Adults Who Have Experienced Family Member Incarceration. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods, 3*(3, Youth-themed Special Issue). https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.38762

FULL-LENGTH ARTICLES

Making the Implicit Explicit: An Illustration of YPAR Implementation and Lessons Learned in Partnership With Young Adults Who Have Experienced Family Member Incarceration

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Keywords: YPAR, parental incarceration, non-profits, community, young adults

https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.38762

Journal of Participatory Research Methods

Vol. 3, Issue 3, Youth-themed Special Issue, 2022

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) involves a youth-adult partnered or youth-led process of inquiry, critical reflection, and action to reduce inequities in areas important to youth with lived experience. YPAR has been linked to multi-level benefits, such as increased school connectedness, enhanced relationships between youth and adults, and policy changes. Most YPAR projects are conducted as electives in schools or afterschool programs, meaning that youth opt in and are likely already interested in social change. Less is known about the YPAR implementation process in more informal community settings with young adults who are not being served by traditional systems (e.g., public schools) and YPAR with specific populations, such as youth who have experienced family member incarceration. To fill this gap, we provided a step-by-step implementation guide of our curriculum, stages of research, and adaptations to YPAR with young adults who experienced family member incarceration, graduated from an alternative school, and worked in the community. We also provided lessons learned from both facilitator and young adult researcher perspectives to aid youth workers, facilitators, and others engaged in community practice with youth in the implementation of YPAR with this unique population and setting.

Introduction

Parental incarceration perpetuates inequities for families through its sweeping impact on all aspects of daily life (e.g., Turanovic et al., 2012; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). Despite the research on the detrimental impacts of parental incarceration on youth, only recently (and sparingly) have youth been asked about their parent's incarceration. Rarer still are youth engaged as research partners related to their experiences with parental incarceration. Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) can fill this gap; it is a social justice approach to research that centers on the priorities of youth who have experienced marginalization (Ozer et al., 2020; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). In YPAR, youth engage in youth-adult (Y-A) partnered or youth-led research and action to reduce inequities (Ozer et al., 2022).

Though YPAR is an overarching epistemological approach to research with youth, there is heterogeneity in its implementation process and foci. Many YPAR facilitators utilize the YPAR process model conceptualized by Rodriquez and Brown (2009), which encompasses three components: inquiry reflecting youths' lived experience, participatory and power-sharing relationships, and transformative actions. Though all pieces are important, some components may be more or less emphasized depending on scope. For example, some facilitators hone in on the research and action components,

aiming to involve youth in all stages of research, from conceptualization to dissemination (e.g., Jacquez et al., 2013). Some facilitators emphasize inquiry and reflection about youths' lived experiences with systemic injustices and resistance, with critical consciousness and/or sociopolitical development as main aims (Cammarota, 2017; Kennedy et al., 2020; Kornbluh et al., 2015), with less focus on youth conducting formal research. There is also variety in framing, such as whether a positive youth development approach (PYD) is used to formally understand impacts on youth participants' interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes (Ozer, 2017), versus a critical approach.

Within YPAR, there is heterogeneity in the use of Y-A partnership models, as well as whether the models are formally explicated. Wong and colleagues (2010) created the TYPE pyramid, which showcases varying levels of Y-A partnerships and their link to empowerment and PYD. Rather than assuming that more youth control is always better, Wong et al. (2010) posited that a pluralistic model of shared Y-A power is most ideal for empowerment and PYD. Richards-Schuster and Plachta Elliot (2019) created a matrix of youth involvement to guide practitioners and evaluators, conceptualizing youth as consultants, collaborators, partners, or leaders. Identifying a Y-A partnership model when conducting YPAR is important to explicitly delineate power structures and decision-making processes between youth and adults.

While the use of YPAR has gained traction (Ozer et al., 2022), gaps remain. Community-based youth participatory approaches mainly involve organizing and advisory boards rather than YPAR. YPAR is typically conducted in elective classes in schools using a critical lens, such as the work of Cammarota (2017) and social justice or PYD oriented out-of-school programs (Langhout & Fernández, 2015); youth who are interested in social change are the most likely to opt in (Abraczinskas & Zarrett, 2020). Less is known about YPAR with youth uninvolved in traditional systems (e.g., public schools) and instead impacted by punitive systems (e.g., legal and criminal justice). Our overarching YPAR study sought to fill this gap through a Y-A partnership with young adult researchers (YAs) who experienced family member incarceration, graduated from an alternative school setting, did not identify as activists, and worked in different settings and neighborhoods.

Helpful guidance has been published related to participatory research, such as selecting participatory methodology (Duea et al., 2022) and implementing anticolonialism in each stage of photo voice (Fricas, 2022). However, the majority of YPAR literature focuses on case studies about the overarching project, process evaluation, and/or multi-level outcomes that result from youth participation (Anyon et al., 2018; Kennedy et al., 2019; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Practical guidance related to youth participation more broadly is beginning to emerge. Suleiman (2021) compiled publicly available youth participatory curricula and provided exemplars to aid funders in evaluating quality youth participation proposals. Ozer and colleagues (2020) created a diagram outlining the different types of youth participation approaches and choice points for each (e.g., organizing, advocacy) to promote

health equity. Despite these advances, there is a gap related to transparency in the implementation and adaptations of pre-existing curricula for specific participatory approaches (i.e., YPAR), sub-populations, and settings. The current paper fills this gap by providing a step-by-step implementation guide for YPAR with a unique population in a non-traditional setting. We provide transparency about our Y-A partnership, curriculum and adaptations, research stages, and lessons learned. We outline practical implementation examples to guide youth workers, YPAR practitioners/facilitators, and YPAR scholars working in community practice in out-of-school settings with youth who have experienced family member incarceration.

Community and University Partners

Our organizational community partners are River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding (RPCP) and Project YouthBuild (PYB). RPCP's mission is to promote best practices of peacebuilding and global sustainability. They lead police-youth dialogues and workshops around conflict resolution and social-emotional learning. PYB is an educational, occupational, and leadership program for young people ages 16–24 from low-income backgrounds who have dropped out of school. Most YAs served by PYB have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences, such as contact with the criminal justice system. Enrollees can earn their high school diploma, occupational credits, and community impact hours towards a scholarship. The YPAR curriculum was implemented through PYB.

Our project had a core YPAR implementation team (described in the following section). However, we also had a broader team of four additional people that included the CEOs of PYB and RPCP, a local community organizer and advocate, and a researcher from another institution. Our broader team was diverse in terms of racial identity, educational attainment, and experience with both incarceration and parental incarceration. Team members were involved in planning and leading sessions on topics like socio-emotional learning, storytelling, and local community strengths and perceptions of research.

Before sessions began, our community-university team met to discuss how we wanted to be present with others who have different lived experiences and cultures. We discussed the importance of cultural humility and being trauma-informed. We also chose our guiding framework for YPAR and the Y-A partnership. For YPAR, we used Rodriguez and Brown's (2009) framing of research, critical reflection, and action, with more emphasis on research during this phase. We selected the pluralistic partnership model by Wong and colleagues (2010) because we shared the belief that youth (e.g., lived experience) and adults (e.g., knowledge of power structures) both bring unique strengths to the work that contribute to its success. We also chose youth as partners from the matrix by Richards-Schuster and Plachta (2019) because we shared the belief that YAs should be equal partners in decision-making, and

thus, discussed adultism at length, using handouts from the Stepping Stones curriculum. As one example of our process, we discussed our names/titles and how the use of specific titles can impose a power differential in relationships.

YPAR Team Self-Identifiers and Project Roles

We developed this section through a collaborative co-learning process with YAs. During a session, the facilitators provided examples from journal articles about how authors describe their identities, as well as demographic sections, on JamBoard. We all noticed that the demographics often focus on deficits and we wanted to focus on the strengths of our team. We first chose a team member and shared their strengths aloud. We each wrote a description of our identity and strengths and the first author transferred the descriptions to this document.

The first author is a PhD-level clinical-community psychologist and third-year tenure track Assistant Professor at an R1 institution. She led the YPAR implementation. She has strengths in YPAR implementation and being a problem solver. She identifies as a White, cis-gender woman in her mid 30s without experiences of parental incarceration. The second author is a PhD-level sociologist in her fourth year in a tenure-track position at an R1 institution, with strengths in expertise in the incarceration literature. She co-led the YPAR sessions. She identifies as a White, cis-gender woman in her mid 30s. The third author is a graduate student with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She assisted with implementation and coordinated logistics. She identifies as a White, cis-gendered woman in her late 20s without experiences of parental incarceration. She brought strengths of compassion, positivity, creativity, and project management to the team. The fourth author is 22, an African American woman and 2018 PYB graduate. Her strengths are in public speaking, honesty, giving feedback, and making people laugh. The fifth author is 22, a Black and Puerto Rican woman, and a 2018 PYB graduate. Her strengths are being insightful, opinionated, assertive, and open to others and new experiences. The sixth author is 23, a Black woman and 2020 PYB graduate. She brought strengths in empathy, listening, and exuding calm and acceptance to the team. The involved PYB staff member identifies as a White woman in her early 30s with a master's degree. After experiences with parental and familial incarceration throughout life, she became interested in working and organizing support and mutual aid among incarcerated people, their families, and communities. She attended planning meetings, contributed to curriculum adaptations, and co-led sessions when she had capacity.

Next, we present the stages of our YPAR planning and implementation process following the timeline in table one. Our stages of implementation were modeled off of the Stepping Stones timeline (Erbstein et al., 2020). For each stage, we discuss specific details around implementation and adaptation and then provide reflections/lessons learned from the perspectives of the core team. The lessons learned are practical about navigating institutional bureaucracy and implementation with YAs. The "Funding Allocation and Pay" and "IRB submission" sections are written solely by the first and second authors. The

Table 1. Project Timeline Cross-Walked with Stepping Stones Stages

Month	Activities	Stepping stone stage
January 2021	Funding allocated	Project planning and youth recruitment
February 2021	Submit IRB part 1	
March-April 2021	Recruit youth research team	
May-June 2021	Setting up team structures, relationship building, and introduction to research	Team building Choose an issue
June-July 2021	Decide on a research question and research methods	Develop a research question
August-December 2021	Create survey and focus group protocol, submit IRB part 2, practice research skills	Decide on research methods & develop research tools Practice research skills
January-March 2022	Continue practicing research skills, prepare for conference, attend conference	Practice research skills Share final product
April-May 2022	Recruit participants and collect data	Collect data
May-June 2022	Analysis of survey and focus group data	Organize and analyze data
July 2022	Interpret findings and plan a community event to share recommendations	Decide on recommendations
August 2022	Host community event	Finish/share final product

other sections are written in a collaborative manner. We used a nontraditional approach to YAs' contributions to the paper. All of the YAs contributed to writing the paper via JamBoard. The YAs shared that they did not want to formally write sections using Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Thus, for each stage of our YPAR implementation process, the YAs provided reflections out loud that they wanted to include in the paper. We then transferred their reflections to JamBoard and checked in with them during the next session to confirm that their words were accurately represented. Throughout the following sections, the YAs' direct work via the JamBoard process is italicized. Quotes are also used within paragraphs; those were pulled from detailed session notes of authors 1–3.

Funding Allocation and Pay

It is important to be transparent about the bureaucratic challenges when conducting participatory research within university systems that are often at odds with participatory values and processes. Participatory values assert that community members should be paid for their contributions. However, the R1 land grant university required a high percentage of overhead, which would have made it challenging to equitably pay the YAs given the relatively small award size. Instead, we partnered with RPCP to write the proposal as evaluators/consultants instead of leads, which allowed us to allocate half of the funding toward paying the YAs. Choosing this option was a trade-off due to how R1 universities prioritize grant money for tenure (i.e., total amount of funds awarded to the university). In addition to the overhead, hiring the YAs through the university would have been challenging due to being taxed on their pay, the long hiring process, and IRB-imposed pay limits when providing compensation to youth research participants (which they technically were as

Table 2. Steps to Register Young Adult Researchers and Community Partners as Unaffiliated Investigators for the IRB

Unaffiliated investigator process
1. Obtain a university ID
2. Learn how to download and use the VPN
3. Log in with Duo Mobile
4. Interact with the IRB system (i.e., create account, complete training and quiz)
5. Submit a resume
6. Be evaluated by three different university administrators

trainees in phase one). Instead of being hired by the university, the YAs earned a project stipend through PYB, a process that was already in place for their regular programming.

Lessons Learned about Allocating Funds

Partnering with an intermediary organization can help overcome university complexities that can otherwise hinder participatory processes from fully coming to fruition (e.g., equitable pay). Ideally, university structures would be transformed to accommodate and prioritize participatory work, especially land grant universities in which local benefit is a main goal. Until that goal is realized, it is an unfortunate reality that professors on the tenure track need to weigh the pros and cons of this approach, perhaps alternating basic research with participatory research to fulfill the tenure requirements. Additionally, writing process papers, practical papers, and papers about the university-community partnership can help meet tenure paper number requirements during the YPAR implementation phase.

IRB Submission

We considered that our IRB may not have approved minor youth designing a study and collecting data given the nature of the research (i.e., incarceration, child participants). Thus, we strategically chose the older end of the funder's conceptualization of youth (ages 18–24) when recruiting for YAs. The IRB required us to submit two different protocols versus multiple revisions of one due to ethical reasons. Specifically, the IRB conceptualized the YAs as research participants because they were trainees in the first IRB (phase one), and then research partners for the second IRB (phase two), even though we conceptualized them as partners throughout. In phase two, the IRB approved the YAs to independently lead all stages of their research, including data collection, which we viewed as extremely important due to our participatory value system with youth as experts. A time-consuming aspect of the IRB application was the unaffiliated investigator approval process for our community partners in phase one (i.e., CEO of RPCP, CEO and staff member of PYB), and YAs in phase two. To illustrate the complexity of the process, the steps are summarized in table two.

Lessons Learned about the YPAR IRB Process in the Context of an R1 University

We first submitted the IRB as one application, as we had not considered the nuance between participants and researchers from the IRB's viewpoint. Most YPAR process evaluation/case studies from the literature appear to be a model in which data is collected on the youth and their outcomes are studied. In those models, though they may be conceptualized by the team as research partners, our IRB would view them as research participants, creating a gray area for disclosing names, presenting, and publications. Thus, it was important to submit the second IRB with YAs as unaffiliated investigators so that they could be involved for formal research purposes (e.g., data collection, conferences, publications) and be equal partners on paper in addition to in practice. Also related to ethics, since the YAs were trainees in phase one, our IRB restricted them from active recruitment for the YPAR team. They did approve passive snowball sampling. YPAR facilitators should consider their own timeline and the IRB's comfort with risk and previous track record of approving participatory work when planning their application and project timeline.

It is important to continuously make progress when funded for a participatory project on a short timeline. To maintain momentum during multiple rounds of full board review, we broke our project down into small chunks, which allowed us to continue implementation while having the next step under review. We recommend allotting a month and half for full board review when also requesting approval for unaffiliated investigators, though more time could be allocated as a buffer for institutions unfamiliar with YPAR.

Recruitment and Retention

We started recruiting for our YPAR team in March 2021 from YAs affiliated with PYB. The CEO of PYB and a staff member shared information with program applicants and contacted past graduates. Once YAs were interested, we conducted informal Zoom interviews. PYB envisioned that recruitment would go smoothly due to the life experiences of their students and the pay. However, PYB recruitment and the start of the school year for their programming was delayed and then under-enrolled due to COVID-19. We experienced the same challenge; we began YPAR with two YA applicants and two graduates of PYB in May 2021, though we aimed for a team of six to eight YAs.

After three months, the two YAs who were PYB applicants had disengaged from the program due to challenging life circumstances. Due to our values of inclusion of YAs who are most vulnerable, we left the option open for them to re-engage if their life challenges improved. PYB continued to try to recruit. One YA researcher told her friend, another graduate of PYB, about the project and she agreed to participate. We continued outreach, but our team did not grow. We stopped recruitment after the YA researchers finalized their project, as any YA joining after that would not be a co-collaborator in its design due to proceeding onto the next stage of the process. For the remainder of the year,

Table 3. Resources Provided to Support Young Adult Researcher Engagement

Supporting session participation	Supporting conference attendance
Biweekly stipend	Cost of flights
Free childcare	Cost of hotels
Food and beverages	Daily meal stipend
Gift cards for exemplary participation	Money for fun activities
Gas cards and other transportation support	Gift cards to purchase professional attire
Support with basic needs	Stipend for childcare

we had a consistent team of three YAs, though two took time off when in job training (e.g., police academy) or during challenging times (e.g., job schedule, car issues).

Lessons Learned About Recruitment and Retention

One major lesson that we learned about recruitment was the importance of partnering with and hosting the project within an organization that the YAs trusted. *Y'all were part of the school that we loved, they're family, so we thought, I guess y'all okay. We knew [CEO of RPCP] from school, so he was alright.* It was also important to capitalize on friendships during recruitment. *What I contributed to this project was bringing on a friend. She stayed with it the whole time. You need YAs to go to where the youth are, let them know what the people they will work with be like.*

Related to retention, the structure, consistent meeting time in a familiar setting, and high level of support was important. *We liked that the program met at the same time and place each week. We knew the school already and were used to going there.* We learned that having a team of three was a strength. *With what we've been through, we need one-on-one attention, that was what we liked about PYB too, small class sizes. If we need help with something, we like to ask in private.* There was variation in comfort of sharing experiences with incarceration and broader hardships. *I can talk about it because I'm at peace with it now, I'm grown. When I was younger, I was angry and wouldn't say nothing.* The YAs needed a high level of support to engage. Having a smaller team allowed us to provide that support, which would have been impossible with a larger group, primarily due to our amount of funding and how much support we provided. *Having someone watch my kids helped me focus and gave me a break. Y'all asked us what we needed, we said gas cards, and you did it. That helped. It let us know what we could ask y'all for.* Table three shows how funding and other resources were allocated to support the YAs engagement. We provide this list to make transparent the high level of organizational resource capacity needed for this population of YAs to thrive in YPAR. Due to the need for individualized support for learning and challenging life circumstances, and variation in comfort in discussing their personal experiences, a medium- to large-sized team may have made our implementation less effective with this specific population of YAs. A smaller team may work better for young adults who have been impacted by family member incarceration.

A lesson learned about both recruitment and retention was the importance of pay. YAs received $45 a session for $90 a week. *You paid us and that made us feel supported and loved, like you took us seriously. We used it for electric, car insurance, when the project ends, we are going to miss it. If you do this again, you should pay more. If we did not get paid, we would not do it, and definitely not this long. You have to pay youth for their time.* If there are no funds to pay YAs, it will likely affect the sample of YAs who have the time and resources to participate in an unpaid opportunity versus needing to pursue paid work elsewhere.

Starting Up

Establishing Norms

As is the case in most YPAR projects, one goal of the first few sessions was the creation of team norms using the "Setting Ground Rules" activities from YPAR hub (http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/). We brainstormed what makes us feel included, excluded, and what creates a sense of community in a group setting. At first, the brainstorming was met with mostly silence; one YA shared "just tell us what to do." In the next session, the facilitators scaffolded by sharing a list of supportive words and phrases. Everyone on the team chose and shared 1 to 3 that were important to them. As an example of centering the YAs' perspectives, some norms that the facilitators preferred (e.g., listen to understand, not to respond) did not make the final cut because the YAs disagreed on their importance.

A key part of the norms discussion was attendance policies. So that their involvement did not seem like a job within a punitive system, and since they were the leaders in the work, the YAs generated their attendance policy and how it affected pay. *We decided on a two-week grace period. After that, we only was paid for program we attended. If we needed to miss a session, we needed to communicate. Call or text the school or y'all. As time went on, we changed the rules. We have been committed to the project so long now. It's the longest I've been involved in anything. If I miss there is a good reason for it, don't question it.*

Formalizing Decision-making Processes

Typical in most YPAR projects, though it may be more implicit in some, in the initial sessions, we explicitly chose our decision-making process in the initial sessions, using the "Making Democratic Decisions" module from the YPAR hub. Together, we discussed how decisions were made for us when we were younger, who makes them now both individually and in society, and how we want things to be different. The facilitator then presented decision-making strategies, pros and cons of each, and, due to participatory values, a choice between democracy by voting or consensus. "We chose majority rules by voting because everyone agreeing takes too long. Not everyone needs to agree. If the majority wants it, we accept that and move on." We then approved the team norms and attendance policies by voting. We discussed how to use the norms, and decided to place them on a JamBoard and review them at the beginning and end of each session.

Choosing a Meeting Time

Unique to a community-based YPAR project, we had to be especially deliberate choosing schedules due to YAs living and working in different areas of town, working various shifts, and having different schedules for their children. This poses different challenges compared to YPAR in schools where youth follow a typical schedule and opt into a YPAR class or program at a specific day/time. In the initial recruitment materials, a schedule of three hours, twice a week was advertised. However, when that schedule was presented to the YAs, they shared "There is no way we can learn and pay attention that long." *We chose after work/school but before child bedtime and 1.5 hours, two days a week.*

Structuring Team Communication

Due to the difference between YPAR in schools versus community settings, choosing an effective communication method during the initial sessions was crucial. At first, YAs preferred individual communication from the PYB staff member because they were not comfortable sharing their number with everyone in a group text. The first and second authors wanted to reduce staff burden, so piloted communication apps, but none stuck. After six months, the YAs became comfortable sharing their phone numbers both with the first and second authors and each other, and we relied on group texts from then on. Despite this, there were times when individual communication worked better for specific YAs.

Technology Considerations

Based on prior experiences collaborating with colleagues conducting YPAR in school settings, the first and second author's initial plan was to utilize Google Suite to complete part of a session on PYB computers and have YAs complete small project tasks on their own time. However, the YAs only had a smartphone and only one had internet access at home, making Google Apps challenging both when working via Zoom during times of high COVID-19 transmission and for tasks at home. Related to working at PYB, two YAs shared that they were not interested in writing or learning additional software programs when we asked about their professional development interests. We respected their preferences, and they completed out-of-session assignments via text or email, and in-session work verbally, which was then transferred to JamBoard by the first or third author or written by YAs in small sections on paper.

Even without COVID-19, the challenging life circumstances of the YAs would have required at least occasional virtual attendance. We chose to utilize Zoom, due to the YAs being familiar with it, and allowed for flexibility in engagement, such as being sensitive to their home-life needs (e.g., they could leave their cameras off and attend to their children as necessary; they could join while running errands).

Planning for Learning

In the initial sessions, the facilitator asked about learning styles and preferences to help structure sessions. YAs preferred video examples and practical, hands-on application. They also preferred to hear from people with different personalities, styles of conveying information, and perspectives. *Sometimes I get tired of one person, like when it gets serious, so I like that y'all switch it up. Just as I get tired of one person, there's someone new.* If there is the capacity for it in a long-term project, having multiple facilitators and avenues to learn about research from diverse perspectives can aid in participants' learning.

Lessons Learned About Starting Up

Having team norms and going over them each time was one of the most important things we did. It worked because we all came up with them and agreed. The first author was a problem solver when we had problems in the group and that helped. We cannot over emphasize how important creating norms are for a long-term Y-A partnership to overcome challenges in decision-making and interpersonal domains.

The project structure ended up looking very different than the community partners and facilitators planned. We modified the YPAR Hub and Stepping Stones curriculum to focus only on key elements. It was important to meet YAs where they were in terms of their use of, and interest in, technology and structured curriculum. *It did not feel like school which was good because that would not have worked for me.* We were creative in how YAs contributed to writing, including the surveys, focus group protocol, and this paper. Though this approach was non-traditional, structuring professional development and learning around what YAs preferred was important for our participatory values and our authentic power-sharing Y-A partnership.

Relationship Building

Though setting team norms and decision-making processes are part of relationship building, we felt it was important to have a separate section on relationship building with youth who have experienced family member incarceration, and to extend the relationship building phase. Relationship building began in May 2021. We asked the YAs how they wanted to be referred to and they shared that young adult researchers worked best. They did not conceptualize themselves as youth.

To show that we valued YAs' input as co-collaborators in session structure, we implemented a regular feedback process. At the end of each session, we presented questions on a JamBoard, asking what went well and what could be improved. We provided options to accommodate differing levels of comfort—they could share out loud, in a private survey response via Google forms, or a check out slip without their name when in person. Post session, the university team would process out loud about the YAs' feedback and how well we shared power with them. We then wrote individual reflections to use for continuous quality improvement. The YAs requested that we add an extra

check-in Post-it that asked, "What do you need?" which we implemented going forward. One suggestion was gas cards, so we built that into our budget, showing that we took YAs needs seriously.

The entire first and second sessions focused on relationship building with all members of our team (all community, university, and young adult partners). We began each session with three ice breaker choices on JamBoard to get to know each other, but after five to six months, the YAs expressed their desire to discontinue ice breakers during post-meeting feedback. While this helped us maximize the 1.5-hour sessions, it did create a different atmosphere in which we had to be more intentional about connection.

In the initial sessions, the YAs asked, "Why do you want to work with us anyway?" Though not all of us have lived experiences of parental incarceration, we did share personal challenges of feeling alone, unheard, unimportant, forgotten, or silenced as youth that led us to participatory work or work focused on prioritizing youth perspectives. The PYB staff member had experiences with parental incarceration and shared occasionally, but did not have her perspective dominate to center the views of the YAs as most important conceptually for the project.

Lessons Learned in Relationship Building

We learned from the YAs that it was important to be real with them. *We know you on a first name basis and ask you what's going on in your lives. If it was more formal like a teacher it would not have worked for me. Though y'all led in the beginning, by the end we were all friends. We different but that's what makes it work. I feel supported and loved. I can tell y'all really care. I know I can come to y'all for stuff outside the program too.*

Introduction to Research

The facilitators introduced research using the "What is YPAR" module in the YPAR hub. The facilitator used a white board and, in line with the curriculum, the YAs brainstormed what the words youth, participatory, action, and research meant to them. Then, in subsequent sessions for about a month, the facilitators and community partners tailored our YPAR curriculum to our specific population. We opted to expose the YAs to examples of traditional research related to incarceration since they would be designing their own formal study, and since their definition of research from the "What is YPAR" module was "researching someone online." The second author presented an overview to the YAs via PowerPoint and then we all critiqued it together. We did not like the demographic sections and focus of the outcome studies the most, as they were deficit focused. The YAs chose topics for future sessions that were most interesting to them (e.g., parent-child communication about incarceration, parenting). Each session, the facilitator introduced a few concepts from the research literature and asked the YAs what they thought. They often opted to share their personal experiences with the topic, creating a processing time for those who wanted to share, though that was not the

original intent. As they shared about their experiences, they learned areas of difference and similarity, and how others coped. "It was like group therapy in a way. We shared and learned from each other."

Lessons Learned about Introducing Research

During the research phase, the facilitators learned that JamBoard worked better than Google or PowerPoint slides for both conveying information and promoting discussion around topics important to YAs. The sticky note function allowed us to build on ideas in a formative way during a session. Having a few words on JamBoard to review what we discussed in previous sessions was helpful to reorient to the work and to practice describing content out loud. The YAs regularly practiced their elevator pitch, building on it as they developed more of the research. *We repeated things throughout the year until we got it. By the time the conference came around I got describing our project and method. The same thing with the focus group introduction and ice breakers.*

Videos were crucial in helping the YAs understand YPAR; the most helpful video was "Complete Streets" (Diaz, 2014). "There need to be more videos, we barely found any." We mainly found videos with youth sharing why their project was important to them or how they were impacted, which is meaningful, but not helpful for learning methodology.

The facilitators felt uncomfortable even describing current research to the YAs because of its pathologizing nature and presenting youth from a deficits perspective. We actively worked to counter the narrative by presenting strengths in conversation and making strengths part of the research question. Often, in methods sections of papers, researchers only describe the deficits or challenges of the participants, but participatory research gives the participants control and agency over describing themselves and their stories. For those who do not conduct participatory work it can seem foreign, but we urge all researchers to reconsider how they describe participants and their life experiences. The facilitators learned the importance of not hypothesizing or projecting about what YAs' experiences were like beyond what they shared when processing their own experiences with family member incarceration. During this stage of the process, the facilitators mainly used active listening, validation, and affirmative statements.

Development of the Research Question

The facilitators modified the "Defining the Research Question" module from the YPAR hub and Activity 4.3 "Developing a Research Question" from the Stepping Stones curriculum (https://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu/OurApproach.html) to teach the concepts of overarching research questions and sub-questions. The facilitators modified the curriculum structure due to the YAs' preference for not feeling like a school setting, and instead created a JamBoard with topics they expressed interest in, questions or comments about those topics, and notes. Together, we grouped the topics, questions, comments, and notes into categories, and then higher order categories, until we settled on a question that would encompass most of the topics. The YAs shared

that illustrating their interest areas as raindrops and a cloud as an overarching research question that can encompass some (or all) of the domains helped. The discussion led the YAs to ask sub-questions around how youth found out about the family member's incarceration, and how they would have wanted to find out.

The community organizer with lived experience also led a session about YPAR during this time. She discussed the importance of highlighting their strengths and they discussed how they do not view themselves and their communities as poor and disadvantaged. She shared her past experiences with YPAR and the importance of having control over stories and how data is shared. The experience with the community organizer, and previous discussions around the deficit focus in the literature, led the YAs to their first research question: "What are the strengths of youth who have had incarcerated parents?"

The CEO of RPCP led a session in which he used an iceberg metaphor to lead the YAs in brainstorming root causes and solutions around incarceration. The YAs brainstormed surface level causes that are visible to others (the visible portion of the iceberg), systemic factors (the iceberg portion under the water), and ideas to prevent incarceration at multiple systemic levels (around the iceberg). Reflections during the iceberg activity led to the YAs developing the research question: "What are the support needs of youth who have had incarcerated parents?"

During the question development, facilitators shared the difference between research questions about sub-populations versus all youth. We then discussed gender, race/ethnicity, and age preferences. *We chose this topic because we wanted to help youth get the support that we maybe didn't have. We chose to start at age 12 because they are old enough to know what's going on. We chose to stop at age 19 because they are grown and out the house. We wanted to help them before it's too late. We wanted to focus on all youth because everyone experiences incarceration, and it's important to not leave anyone out. We did not want to focus on just Black kids and incarceration because there is already enough attention on that.*

Lessons Learned about Developing Research Questions

Developing the research question was probably the most challenging part of our research process. When the YAs got frustrated, the facilitators increased our comments to affirm that their perspectives were more important than ours and this was their project. By the end, the YAs were all jumping in to disagree or provide a different perspective.

Research questions are challenging to teach in a practical, hands-on way because they are often theoretical and ephemeral. In line with YPAR values, it was important to identify a question that could result in actionable data. Metaphors (i.e., iceberg) and diagrams (i.e., cloud) worked best to organize information with YAs who were hands-on, visual learners. Generating a

research question required many different strategies with different team members leading, which aligned with YAs' learning needs of wanting different perspectives.

Learning and Choosing Methods

The next step in the process– learning about different research methods– took roughly two months. The facilitators adapted the Stepping Stones Activities 4.8 "Round Robin Tool Selection" and 4.13 "Research Tool Overview" and YPAR Hub Module "Research Methods Round Robin." Since the YAs preferred hands-on learning, learning entailed participating in an example of each method when feasible. The YAs participated in a mock focus group about their experiences at PYB, an individual interview, and a survey. The facilitators also showed videos of focus groups, photo voice, community mapping, and participatory arts. Once the YAs understood the methods, the facilitators shared pros and cons of each on JamBoard sticky notes using information from YPAR hub and Stepping Stones worksheets. The facilitators also asked YAs for their own personal pros and cons of each. *We chose to do focus groups and surveys. Interviews you are too on the spot. It's too much pressure just the two of you. In a group you hear other people share which can give you ideas or help you share. Since they also might have private stuff to say that they don't want to talk about in front of the group, we also chose surveys.*

Lessons Learned about Research Methodology

The templates provided by Stepping Stones and YPAR hub, though comprehensive, needed to be extensively adapted as they were not feasible for our allotted time each session and learning preferences. Through a co-learning process the facilitators learned different perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of focus groups and surveys, which was opposite to what they had initially conceptualized. The facilitators also learned the importance of not assuming which methods YAs would prefer just because they are young. For example, facilitators introduced the community mapping, photo voice, and participatory arts methodologies thinking that YAs would want to do them. However, two YAs shared that they did not like art, and related to photovoice, "It's too hot to walk around taking pictures, driving around is creepy, and we all do not live in the same neighborhood." Finally, we learned that it is important to provide options to increase the likelihood that the method will be something YAs like and look forward to. *I kept staying with the project because I wanted to talk to kids who have gone through what I have to help. It was not the research piece that kept me coming back, the topic is important to me.*

Survey Protocol Development

The survey development process took one to two months and was mostly completed via Zoom. The facilitators adapted Stepping Stones modules, including Activity 4.10 "Research Question to Tool Development", and Activity 4.11 "Tool Games (Defining Your Research Tool)". The facilitators taught the YAs about the different types of surveys, response options, and pros and cons using the curriculum. The facilitators added a piece about the pros

and cons of creating a survey versus using a pre-existing one from research literature. The YAs shared examples of surveys that they had completed online. They also discussed completing intake questionnaires in doctor's offices, and what they liked and did not like about them. The YAs initially opted to create their own items and use two pre-existing measures from the research literature about adverse childhood experiences and types of support in their survey.

To create the survey, we revisited the JamBoard with the topic areas of interests and asked the YAs whether those overarching domains (e.g., parenting, support, communication about incarceration) were still important to them. As the YAs spoke, the facilitator asked, "Could that be a question? Do you want to talk to more youth about that?" The YAs would brainstorm out loud and the facilitators took notes for each of the main interest categories. The lived experience of the YAs was prioritized over facilitator knowledge about "best practices" in research. Many times, YAs had issues with traditional wording or types of questions and facilitators left off questions that YAs found offensive despite being expected in the academic publishing world. For example, the facilitators introduced YAs to demographic questions, and asked them which ones were important to them to fully describe their participants. They found it inappropriate to ask someone about their income as they viewed this as invasive and rude. Instead, the YAs preferred to ask about the neighborhood participants lived in as this gave similar information. "I would not answer that. The city and political leaders do not care about poor people anyway, they would not help. If collecting this information is really about helping, ask what neighborhood they live in. They can find out the information they need that way."

As part of the module, facilitators showed the different types of survey answer format options (e.g., Likert scale, short answer), and the YAs participated in each one and then shared their thoughts. For example, all YAs shared that they did not like Likert scales, and the fifth author said it seemed like they were trying to "trick people." "Questions should be as simple as possible." *We chose yes/no, short answer, and multiple choice*. The YAs also opted to drop the validated measures because they felt they were repetitive and made the survey too long.

Once the full survey draft was created, we spent about a month revising it. The facilitators initially emailed the survey to the YAs for review on their own time; however, this approach did not lead to much response. The facilitators switched to a more applied approach; the YAs completed the survey in Google forms and came to session with at least two aspects that they liked and two to improve. This strategy worked better, as it could be overwhelming to provide general feedback. The YAs asked family and friends in the study age range to look over the questions to make sure they were at an appropriate reading level.

Lessons Learned from Survey Development

Especially during this module, the facilitators' critical reflection process post-session was important as we had to be mindful to release control of our preferences. As academic researchers versed in quantitative methods, we knew

that the repetitiveness and Likert scales served a very important purpose, but we went with YAs' preferences because it was their project and we wanted to stay true to findings that innovatively come from their perspectives of lived experience. Research practices viewed as gold standards can be viewed as invasive and inappropriate from the perspectives of people with lived experience. Using best practices in methods and protocols does not matter if people do not feel comfortable answering honestly.

Focus Group Protocol Development

To create the focus group protocol, the facilitators created our own process rather than pulling from Stepping Stones and the YPAR hub. The focus group protocol development followed a similar process as the surveys (e.g., mostly via Zoom), but lasted longer, about three months. To assist the YAs with conceptualizing a focus group protocol, the second author shared an example and then created a template to fill in with sections titled introduction, icebreakers, questions, and summary. Next, we worked to fill out the template together. We first grouped topics from the JamBoard into question categories, and questions were added and removed as the YAs solidified what was important to them. When creating and revising the questions on Zoom, the facilitator shared the screen and went through the protocol line by line. The YAs would generate questions, the facilitator would type them, and then the YAs would make verbal revisions. The process was tedious—and at times boring—but is what worked best for our team.

Once the YAs were satisfied with the questions, we moved on to creating the verbal introduction to the project and consent. The YAs had a template for the introduction and verbal consent but modified it multiple times to make it their own. They also created two ice breakers to serve as a segue between the introduction and the questions about parental incarceration. They decided that, during the focus groups, they could share about their lived experiences to help build trust, which is different than a traditional focus group format. Once the protocol was completed, we submitted the second IRB.

Lessons Learned from Focus Group Protocol Development

The YAs thought multi-part and follow-up probes were invasive. "The first time it's mentioned they know what you're asking. It's ok to ask did you understand the question, but if they don't answer the question the first time it's because they don't want to share more and you should move on." Our compromise was to turn the important probes into new questions, and to follow up if more details were important, but not push if the participant looked uncomfortable. The YAs did eventually realize that probing serves an important purpose (i.e., obtaining details about youths' support needs, showing interest).

Starting with a template for YAs who are new to research is important so they can envision a product. In creating a protocol, asking the questions out loud and attempting to answer them helped the YAs with wording and revisions. Answering out loud made them realize when questions did not sound quite right.

Ethics Training

While waiting to hear back on the second IRB, the facilitators trained the YAs in ethics using the "Ethics" module from YPAR hub and information from the local IRB university site. The facilitators focused more intensively on the ethical pieces that were most relevant to their project (e.g., privacy, confidentiality, protecting children).

A second, equally important, piece of this module was ethically, because the YAs have their own experiences with the research topic, it was important to protect their mental health. The facilitators offered coping strategies to use when listening to participants' experiences with parental incarceration during the focus groups. The community partner at RPCP with expertise in trauma-informed practices and socio-emotional learning and the first author with training as a clinical psychologist jointly led these sessions. Sessions focused on self-regulation, identifying socio-emotional strengths and challenges, active listening, and how to ask for support. *I knew that my strength was intrapersonal. I have grown and know a lot about myself and why I act the way I do. I don't do as well with interpersonal I like to talk. I learned to be quiet and let others speak.*

Lessons Learned in Ethics Training

With ethics training, it aided in comprehension to focus on the big picture and aspects most relevant to the project, rather than all the small details of the local IRB training. For the YAs, this kept the training from feeling too much like school. In addition to considering ethics for participants, it is critical to protect YAs wellbeing, particularly when working with YAs who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

Focus Group Training

The focus group training spanned three months and mainly stemmed from a process the facilitators developed to fit our YAs and context. Though the development of the focus group protocol occurred mostly via Zoom, the facilitators quickly realized that the YAs preferred focus group training in person. First, the facilitator led a mock focus group around a general topic with the YAs, the other facilitator, and undergraduate volunteers as participants. The YAs shared what they liked, did not like, and were confused about the execution of a focus group. "For my focus groups, I did not want to do them in a circle. It felt depressing, like we were at AA or something. I want us to feel in charge when we lead, like with rows of seats with us at the front." In contrast, the other YA researcher liked the more informal, circle format. The facilitators told them that they could conduct the focus groups in whatever format they preferred.

Afterwards, the facilitators reviewed the basics of focus groups and discussed two video examples. Next, we watched a video with both high- and low-quality implementation of focus groups. The facilitator then demonstrated low quality examples during another mock focus group. The YAs pointed out what was appropriate and why about what the facilitator did. We discussed how they felt when being interrupted or when the focus group leader talked a lot.

Then, we began working with the protocol. We split the introduction into smaller sections to practice out loud in session. As YAs practiced, they continued to edit to make sure they selected words and phrases they were most comfortable using. Once they were comfortable with each section, the YAs took turns practicing the full introduction. Next, each YA practiced the core protocol questions about parental incarceration with each other. As they practiced, they individually edited to continue to make the language more their own and collectively dropped or modified questions. Then, they each practiced the full protocol. The facilitators proposed challenging scenarios using a version of Activity 5.4 "Challenging Participants" from Stepping Stones to facilitate comfort and skill development around the protocol.

After practicing a full protocol with their team members, the next step was to practice with participants outside of the YPAR team. However, the YAs did not feel comfortable practicing the incarceration questions on people without that lived experience. "If we just asked anyone, they would probably get their answers from a TV show or a movie, and that would be offensive." To respect their preferences, the facilitators created a protocol about undergraduate student support needs that was as like the parental incarceration protocol as possible. One YA led a full focus group with university students twice, including receiving feedback from them.

Next, the CEO of RPCP and the facilitator led a joint session on probing and showing empathy when people share about challenging situations. The YAs generated their own phrases to use. when participants share something difficult, like, "Thank you for sharing that" and, "That sounds like it was challenging for you." We discussed a situation that arose during the college student focus group, in which a participant appeared slightly misunderstood about a cultural need that she was missing in the university town. The YA practiced what she would have said instead and apologized next time she saw the participant. The next step was to practice the real protocol with adults who had experienced incarceration or parent incarceration. Conducting this mock focus group with adults allowed them to practice their questions while not practicing on youth who would ideally be recruited for the study. The community organizer that led a few YPAR sessions was one of the mock participants and gave the YAs feedback on their style and questions.

Focus Group Practice Lessons Learned

After participating in the mock focus group, the adults who had experienced parental incarceration shared that this experience was meaningful because the YAs controlled the narrative around the research results. They thought it was important that the YAs chose to share their personal experiences when it felt

right to build rapport. In typical focus groups, facilitators do not answer the questions; however, the YAs sharing their answers to some questions (albeit briefly) was a way to highlight similar experiences and increase participant comfort when discussing a sensitive topic.

Related to focus group practice, it was extremely important to respect YAs' boundaries around who can answer sensitive questions. Although asking their incarceration questions with facilitators and undergraduate volunteers without lived experience generating answers would have provided more opportunities to practice their specific protocol, it would have placed YAs in an uncomfortable situation and potentially damaged trust if responses were offensive. That said, we found a variety of creative ways to prepare and practice in person.

Finally, it was important for the facilitators to relinquish control of how the focus group should be implemented. After training the YAs in focus group facilitation, the facilitators knew it was critical for the YAs to have ownership over implementation, even when their strategies conflicted with formal professional training. Ultimately, releasing control allowed the YAs' personalities, strengths, and lived experiences to shine through.

Conference Attendance and Presentation

All authors (except the second) attended the conference in New Orleans. The community organizer was also registered and planned to attend, but life circumstances arose that led her to have to disengage. The conference was a requirement of the funding contract and exciting for the YAs due to travel. *Going to New Orleans was one of the most exciting parts of the project. Someday I'd like to take my kids and travel like that but for now that was a once in a lifetime opportunity*.

The facilitators initially thought we would have preliminary results for the YAs to share; however, participatory work takes time and due to COVID-19 roadblocks we had not collected data when the conference occurred. Instead of presenting results, the YAs decided to share their experiences in the YPAR project. *We made our section question and answer. We included questions about what kept us engaged, how PYB supports us, what we are looking forward to, and what youth who have experienced parental incarceration need. We wanted it to be like a conversation, that is how we felt most comfortable.* Though conference presentations typically are not structured in that way, that is how we presented our work together. The first author presented some background, the fourth author led the slides about the project methods, and then the first author conversed with each of the three YAs. We briefly practiced the night before and in the room before the presentation began.

The YAs had never presented in front of an audience before this experience and did not know what to expect at a research conference. The facilitator explained that there would be classrooms, kind of like in a school, where different groups present about a variety of topics, and we did not know how large our audience would be. Though they were nervous, the YAs thrived during the session; it was inspiring to watch. As one example, the night before

the conference the fifth author shared that she only wanted to answer three questions from the audience because she might feel overwhelmed. However, during the question and answer, she was the most vocal in sharing her opinions, especially around tips for recruitment and retention of youth. "You need to get people like us to go into schools. You have to go to where the youth are. They have to know it will be us doing the research, people like them. They could also tell their friends. I told a friend and she is still here. They also need to get paid."

All the YAs enjoyed the conference presentation experience. *Presenting was better than I expected. There were people that looked like me in the audience. The clothes I was wearing made me feel like what I was doing was serious. I felt important answering the audience questions, like my voice mattered.* We presented to an audience of about 75 people, including practitioners, community members, and other academics and scholars. This reflects the relevance of this work—YPAR and youth perspectives as children of incarcerated parents—and the impact it can make in scholarship and in society.

Lessons Learned Related to Conference Preparation and Travel

It is important for YAs to guide the conference process, even when that means preparing and presenting in a less traditional way. The YAs decided how they wanted to prepare (more informal practice) and present (question and answer format, choosing specific questions), which helped make the process empowering rather than controlling. As part of preparation, we also revised our group norms for conference travel and talked as a team about what we were most worried about to proactively discuss how to handle potential challenges. We also reviewed our socio-emotional strengths and challenges and how they might surface during the trip. At the conference, the YAs informally shared with conference attendees about the usefulness of the group norms.

Related to choosing a conference to attend, the fifth author shared that it was important that she saw herself in the audience. Around half of the audience members appeared to be of a similar age or race/ethnicity to the YAs, and there were also youth activists in the audience. The makeup of the audience improved their comfort in presenting. Especially for YAs without experience in academic spaces, presenting in accepting and welcoming spaces in which YAs can see themselves in the audience is crucial.

Throughout our project, our goal was to combat adultism by fully sharing power with YAs as colleagues. The first author was nervous about how to do this while supervising travel to a new city and needing to ensure safety and debated with the other facilitators about potentially needing strict rules. We decided that we needed to respect their independence as adults and colleagues, even though this approach made the first author nervous as it was her first time supervising an out-of-state trip with YAs in the role as the academic supervisor on the trip. Ultimately, we relied on our group norms and collaboratively decided on a few key boundaries on which we could all agree. *We are grown so we would have done our own thing anyway, so we are glad y'all did what you did.*

The community partners and facilitators modified the budget to allocate a substantial amount of the grant money to childcare for the YAs' children and siblings in their care. The facilitators presented some childcare options, and YAs chose the option of family members being paid. *I liked that you asked us how much we needed versus just telling us what we would get. When y'all first told us about the trip, I thought, who is going to watch my kids, I can't go.*

It is important to have a section of the budget allocated for surprise expenses such as this; when we applied for the funding, we did not know that the YAs would have children.

Looking Ahead

The next steps are the YAs conducting the focus groups and collecting survey data, analyzing the data, disseminating their findings to political and criminal justice stakeholders, and advocating for systems change. The YAs specifically chose the questions that they did because they wanted to make change in those areas, for youth to receive the support that they did not get, especially at school. As one dissemination mechanism, the community partners will host a community event to bring together formal and informal groups that serve youth or focus on incarceration to advocate for practice, policy, and legislative change. YAs will present and also decide on action steps most important to them. For example, the fifth author expressed interest in creating a youth-led support group and presenting their findings to girls in juvenile detention. We will continue to find ways to pay YAs for future roles in this project, even when funding ends. We will submit a proposal for the YAs to present the findings from their study at a conference in June 2023. We will continue to partner with PYB to integrate youth-led aspects into their regular programming.

Closing Reflections

The purpose of this paper was to provide a step-by-step guide to YPAR implementation in an out-of-school setting with youth who have experienced family member incarceration. The paper provided implementation and adaptation examples as well as lessons learned to serve as a guide/starting point for practitioners conducting YPAR in non-traditional contexts (e.g., out-of-school, incarceration facilities) with populations uninvolved in advocacy or research. The facilitators made adaptations unique to the community context, working with marginalized YAs, and collaborating with YAs who have experienced family member incarceration.

Of particular importance for the community context compared to traditional YPAR in schools was coordinating a meeting time around child and work schedules, communication mechanisms, and structuring an active learning environment with hands-on experiences and a small group size. Additionally, the YAs' conceptualized community as other youth who have experienced family member incarceration rather than a particular context/location, such as a school. This influenced the methods chosen and questions asked. When working with marginalized YAs, partnering with a trusted

organization, facilitators sharing personal details, being on a first name basis, support for basic needs and life challenges, flexibility with attendance, and receiving pay for all activities were especially important.

Related to adaptations specifically for YAs who have experienced family member incarceration, facilitators added sessions on emotion regulation and socio-emotional learning for YAs to have the resources to cope with potentially triggering content that research participants may share during data collection. Based on the YAs' request, they only practiced their actual focus group protocol with people who had lived experience. Once we had a core team, we did not introduce new people to sessions (e.g., undergraduate volunteers) unless the YAs approved it in advance due to content of discussions and expressed desire for privacy. When developing the research question, YAs guided the process of learning more about the traditional research literature based on what was most important and relevant to their lived experiences of family member incarceration. Facilitators also worked with the YAs to deconstruct the paradigm around the characteristics and outcomes of youth who have experienced family member incarceration that perpetuates the research literature and included space for processing.

The current paper also provided insights into the logistical and institutional challenges of conducting YPAR as academics on the tenure track at R1 universities. The way current tenure track guidelines are constructed, with emphasis on research, teaching, and service, and the high required number of publications each year, does not leave much space—or reward—for community practice. Similarly, short grant funding timelines and challenges with including community members as PIs makes it difficult to pay community partners equitably and allot the time to dissemination and action that the results deserve. Though more work needs to be done, progress is being made through initiatives such as the Institutional Challenge grant funded by the WT Grant Foundation (Ozer, 2021) and work to build Community-Based Participatory Research processes into IRBs (Tucker et al., 2017). However, most of the IRB work has focused on community members involved in research more broadly, and youth are a protected population with unique ethical challenges to their involvement (e.g., role as participant versus partner). In this specific case, the PIs found ways to circumnavigate the bureaucratic barriers by working with young adults and partnering with community-based organizations for overhead and stipends. These strategic decisions required extensive extra time and effort on their part, with greater personal but less career reward. Transforming university systems to reward community practice and engagement, especially at land grant universities, is necessary if their mission is truly to serve local communities.

The PYB staff member and the community organizer with lived experience had to leave the project after a few months due to capacity and life challenges. Due to the constraints of participatory work through universities, it is crucial to build capacity within interested youth-serving organizations to apply for funding for participatory work so that they have allotted time and pay for

staff. Since we chose to prioritize YAs' pay and basic needs, we had no money left over to compensate program staff and community members. It will also be helpful for participatory focused grants to provide more money, time, and resources to be able to fully engage marginalized populations like youth who have experienced parental incarceration and the organizations that work to support them.

Increasing the visibility and transparency of YPAR can aid in progress towards change. Curricula like the YPAR Hub and Stepping Stones, as well as practical examples published in participatory method journals, can aid implementation and adaptations. Normalizing Y-A partnered and youth-led presentations at conferences and involvement in publications can also move progress forward. Finally, providing funders with examples of YPAR work conducted with quality (Suleiman, 2021) can potentially increase their willingness to allocate more funds to innovative YPAR work.

In conclusion, illuminating the black box of YPAR implementation is crucial for increasing its reach to new settings and populations. If one of the goals of YPAR is to equitably include youth in shared power and decision-making in society, especially youth at the margins, it is critical to make the implicit explicit so that youth workers/facilitators can learn from practical examples. To change societal structures so that stakeholders with power to make change routinize youth-led and youth-adult partnered YPAR approaches into everyday practice, stakeholders must first understand what the process looks like on the ground.

Acknowledgements

The project aims were funded by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention through a contract with the American Institutes for Research. We are grateful for the call for projects on YPAR with children of incarcerated parents, and the resulting funder support, that created the opportunity for this project. Having the funding to implement some of the strategies we describe as foundational to working with this population made it possible for the young adult researchers to remain on the project given their life circumstances. We are grateful to our community partners River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding and Project YouthBuild Gainesville. They played integral roles; the project would not have been successful without this community-university partnership. Most importantly, we are inspired by our team of young adult researchers and grateful that they shared their lives and expertise with us over the course of the past year. We look forward to future collaborations, friendship, and continuing to provide support for their success in using their new research skills, as well as other aspects of their lives. The young adult researchers are grateful for the stipend, for being involved, and the travel funds that gave them the opportunity to travel to New Orleans for a conference.

Submitted: April 08, 2022 EDT, Accepted: September 19, 2022 EDT

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