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### Identifying Barriers to Justice for Formerly Incarcerated Women of Color in Connecticut

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# Identifying Barriers to Justice for Formerly Incarcerated Women of Color in Connecticut



Olivia Papp '23, Anna Grant-Bolton '25, and Reese San Diego '25  
with Her Time community partner Amber Carter and Faculty Advisor Ben Carbonetti

## Overview

- 1.9 million women are released from prison and jails each year in the USA (Sawyer 2019)
- Identifying specific challenges faced by women of color transitioning out of the prison system in Connecticut is critical to developing comprehensive support services following incarceration. However, there is little research on how race, gender, and past incarceration intersect to form unique barriers to justice for formerly incarcerated women of color.
- Disseminating a digital survey to formerly incarcerated women of color affiliated with the Connecticut nonprofit, Her Time, we collected primarily quantitative data to assess which social services were and were not received and identify the role of Her Time in supporting clients following incarceration.
- We found that transportation, housing, and employment support were the most frequently requested services following incarceration and that Her Time was most effective in providing participants with community support, PTSD resources, and education services.

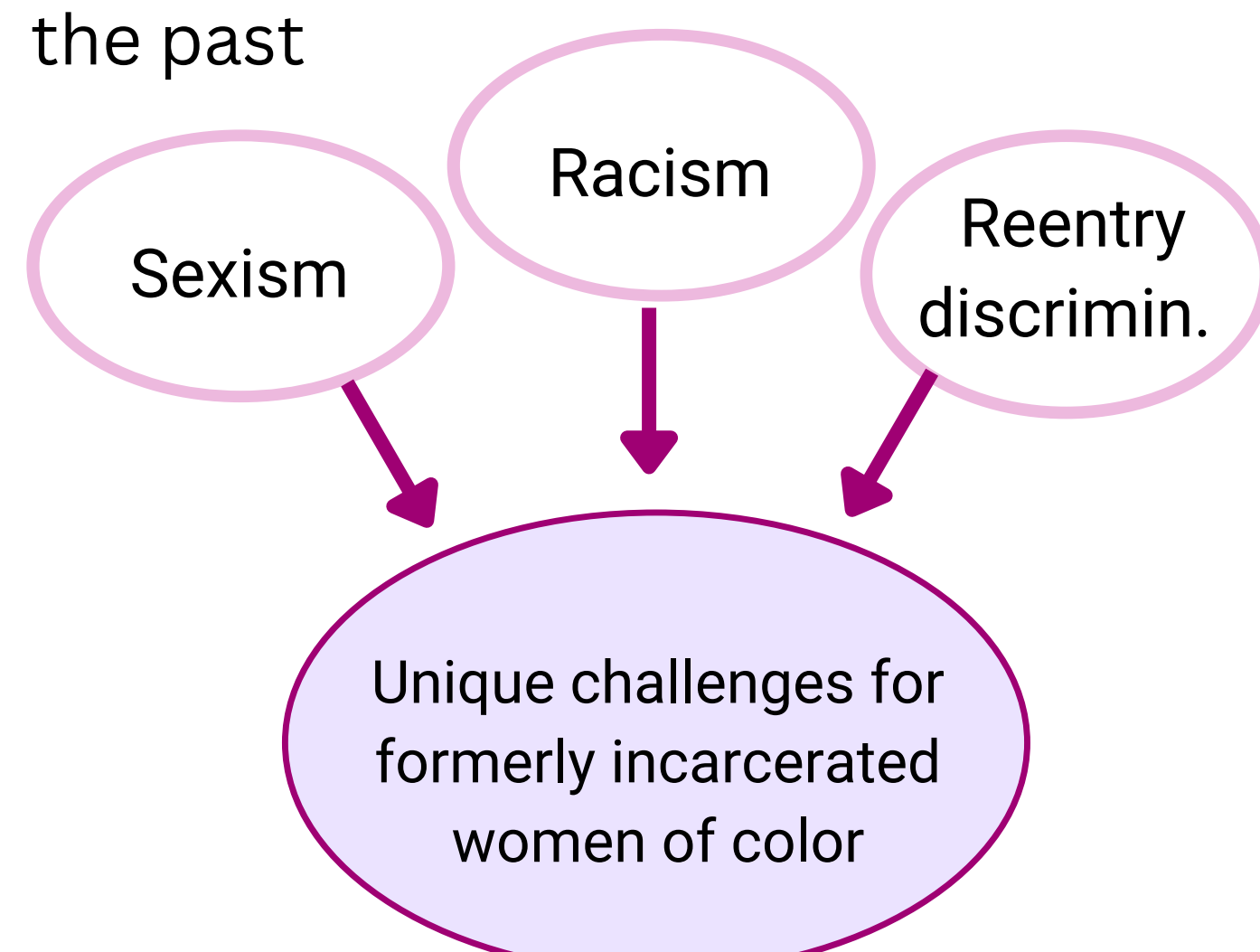
## Research questions:

- What gaps in social services exist for formerly incarcerated women of color following incarceration?
- What role does Her Time play in supporting formerly incarcerated women of color as they transition out of the prison system?

## Background

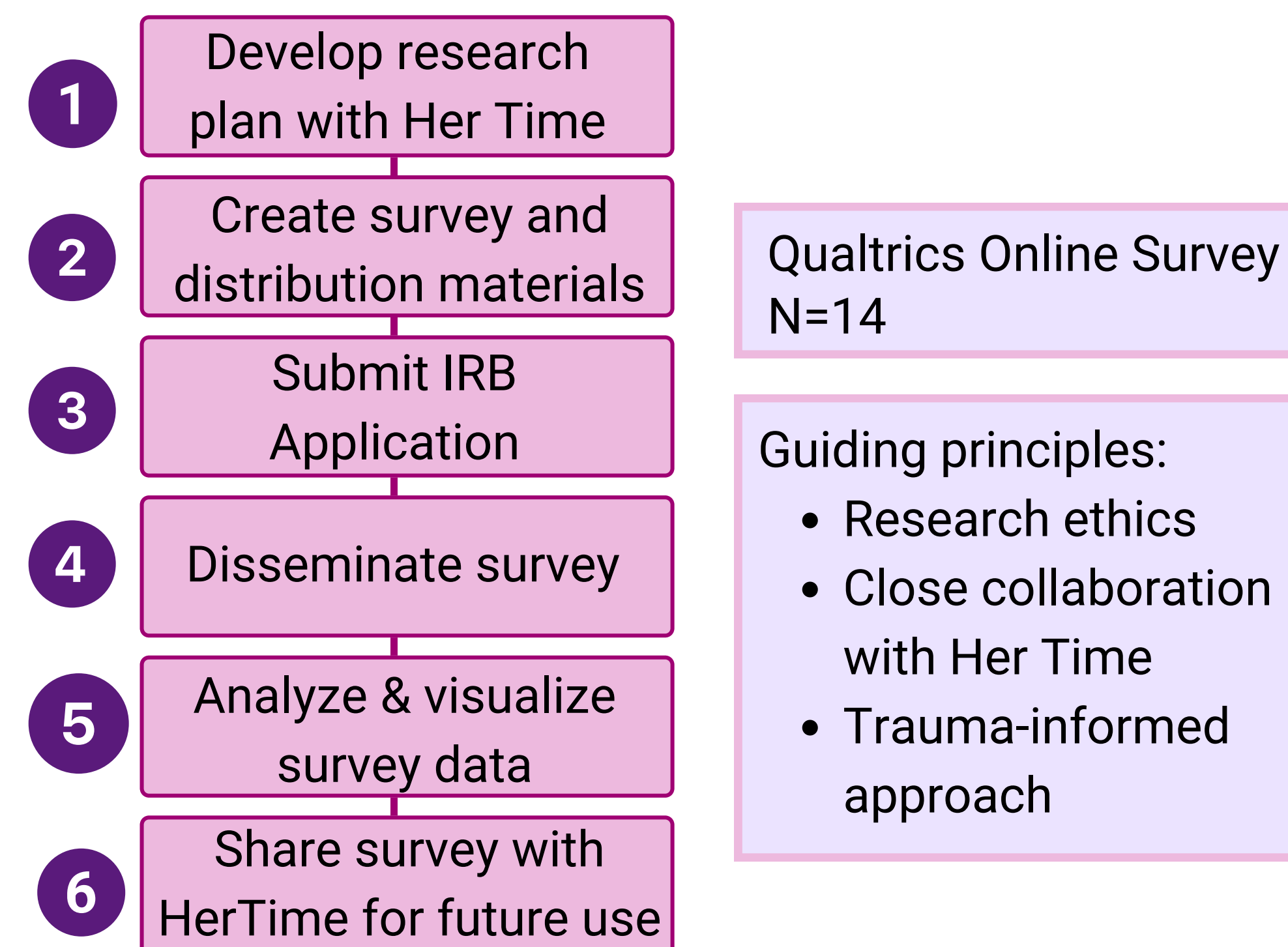
One survey by the Connecticut OBM finds that of pre-trial women in Connecticut:

- 90% had children
- 86% reported a history of sexual abuse
- 66% reported being homeless at some point in the past



## Process and Findings

### Methods



Qualtrics Online Survey  
N=14

- Guiding principles:
- Research ethics
  - Close collaboration with Her Time
  - Trauma-informed approach

### Survey Content

- Demographic information
- Experiences in the justice system
- Largest challenges faced during transition
- Involvement with Her Time
- Services received/desired during transition
- Services desired after reintegration into community

### Emerging Themes

"No access to work or other resources when I returned"

Gaps in basic needs exist following incarceration and transportation, employment & housing services are critical

Her Time is best at providing participants community support, PTSD resources, and educational services

### The role of Her Time following incarceration:

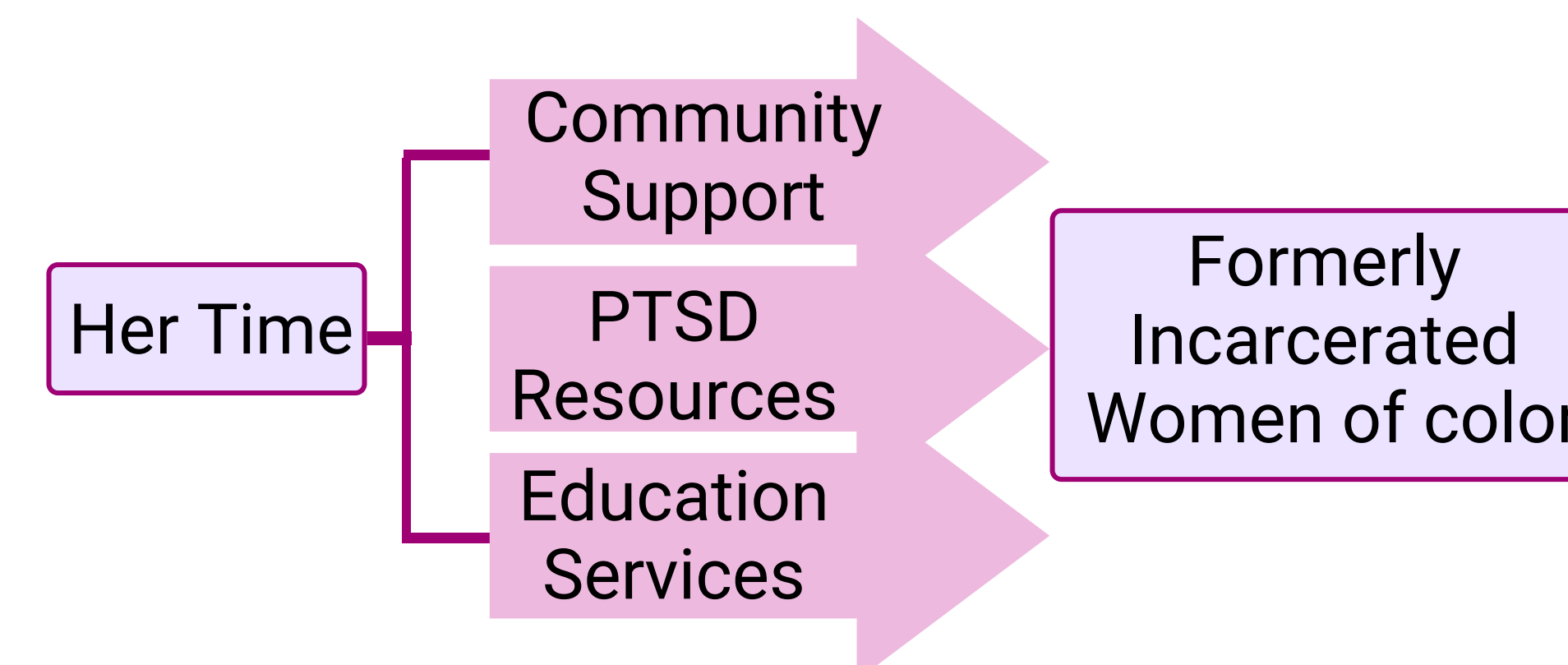
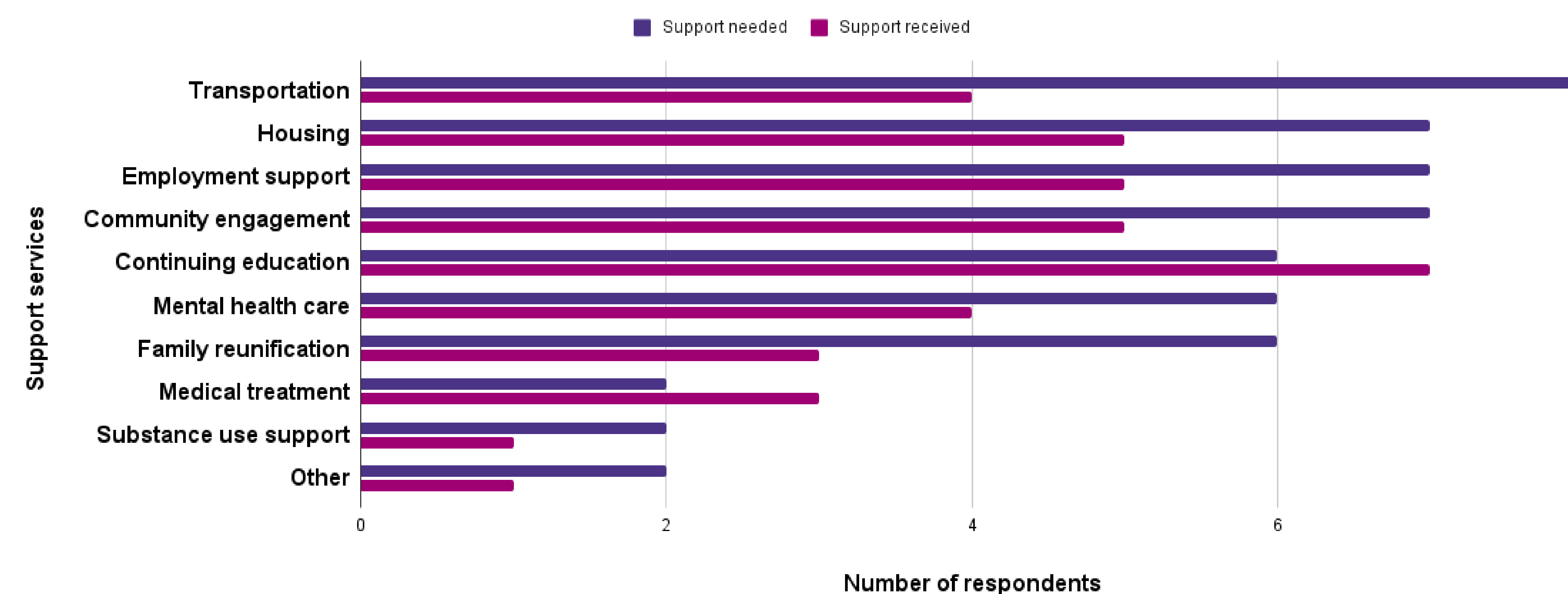


Figure description: Respondents indicated community support, PTSD resources, and educational services were most frequently received from Her Time

## Services needed vs. received following incarceration

### Support Services Needed and Received by Formerly Incarcerated Women of Color



Graph description: Support services requested by formerly incarcerated women of color immediately following release in comparison to support services received by formerly incarcerated women of color immediately following release

## Implications for Her Time

- Emphasize connecting participants with basic-needs service providers
- Organize for the expansion of free and accessible public transportation throughout Connecticut
- Provide resource sheets or case management services to support formerly incarcerated women gain access to personal documents
- Engage in political advocacy to remove legal barriers to housing and employment for formerly incarcerated individuals

## Limitations

- Semester-based timeline shortened data collection process
- Primarily quantitative methods reduced granularity of conclusions
- Small sample size limits generalizability of results

## Suggestions for Further Resesarch

- Interview HerTime participants for qualitative data to enhance analysis
- Share survey beyond Her Time to broaden sample
- Relatedly, explore how Her Time fits into ecosystem of organizations in this area
- Refine survey for future use
- Further investigate how a lack of transportation, housing & employment affect the transition following incarceration

## Acknowledgements

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