



Spring Update 2023

Welcome to Lionheart's Spring Update where we highlight the most recent progress in our major initiatives serving incarcerated adults, highly at-risk adolescents, and direct care staff working with youth. *Thank you for your interest and support!*

Lionheart's Prison Initiative

The Houses of Healing Victim-Offender Impact (VOI) Program

Lionheart is in first year of delivering the two-year "Houses of Healing Victim-Offender Impact Program" grant. This is **the 8th "Innovative Grant" awarded to Lionheart by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) since 2016**. The value of these grants in terms of making a positive and often life-transforming difference for thousands of incarcerated men and women, giving Lionheart the opportunity to refine and expand our programming within and beyond CA, and contributing to our financial sustainability has been and continues to be extraordinary. Lionheart employs two highly skilled facilitators to deliver the Houses of Healing VOI program, one who was formerly incarcerated in the CDCR. Feedback from the first group to complete this 16-session program at the CA Health Care Facility included:

100% of participants noted that they would recommend the program to others and all responded "yes" when asked if this program changed how they think about the impact of their offenses. Comments included:

- It has shown me the deep impact not only on my victims but also my community
- It allows me to see the gravity and impact of my actions
- It made me realize I was completely at fault. No one else
- Thank you. I'm a better father, grandfather, and all-around good person. I want to do the program again!

All participants stated that they grew in compassion and empathy.

Other comments included:

"This program helped me establish a blueprint for how to heal."

"I've obtained new tools and skills that will help me make better decisions during the remainder of my incarceration and beyond."

"It really made things clear. I was harboring a lot of feelings that I never dealt with. It will impact my future in ways that are critical to my sobriety and rehabilitation."

"I see a loving and mindful future. The experience is transformational."

Lionheart is so grateful to have the opportunity to deliver this program as we know that offering guidance that scaffolds participants to forthrightly and courageously come to terms with the impact of their crimes is essential to aligning with prosocial values and one's moral compass.

The Houses of Healing E-Learning Program

Over the past year, Lionheart has been adapting the Houses of Healing (HOH) Program into an E-Learning program, preparing for the new frontier that is upon us where most every incarcerated person throughout the U.S. will have their own tablet to use. This has involved revising existing HOH content, updating the video series, developing over 100 new resources including guided visualizations and meditations, interactive self-reflective exercises, interviews with 'credible messengers' (formerly incarcerated people who have been through HOH and attest to its efficacy), and short animated videos, as well as producing the Houses of Healing audio recording and e-book. To create a state-of-the-art E-Learning program, in addition to Lionheart's two exceptional psychologists dedicating the majority of their time to this task, Lionheart leveraged the expertise of digital curriculum development specialists and domain experts.

Lionheart is in contact with the five telecommunications / tablet and software companies that blanket the prison market. We are exploring agreements with all potential distributors/ companies in order to make the program available in as many prisons and jails as possible. We have also been working with Edovo, a company that delivers educational and rehabilitative programming on tablets in prisons and jails. The HOH E-Learning program is in Edovo's CORE and Premium offerings. The CORE offering is a Houses of Healing mini-course (about 1 hour long) which is available to any incarcerated person with a tablet, free of charge to them or the prison. The mini-course is used to introduce the program and to obtain information on utilization. As of April, a total of *2,919 unique learners* started the mini-course with 1,007 completing it. Edovo considers this a very positive outcome. A few of the many positive comments from participants included:

This has opened me up to a new world of possibilities; This course is helping me to remember that my mistakes don't define me. I can do better in life with help like this; I think with HOH I can better fine tune the steps I've already took in my recovery and have a better chance at being successful at living a good life that doesn't include re-offending and coming back to prison; The tools offered in the HOH program have helped tremendously.

Considering that these comments are from participants who completed the "mini course", we have very high expectations regarding the transformative impact of the full program.

Lionheart is Awarded the RIGHT Grant - its 9th from the CDCR

Furthering the optimization of the HOH E-Learning Program, Lionheart recently learned that it has been awarded another major grant from the **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)**. The **RIGHT** Grant - **R**ehabilitative Investment **G**rant for **H**ealing and **T**ransformation spans 2023-2025. With this funding, Lionheart will refine the content of the E-learning program and collect feasibility and acceptability data. We will conduct the grant in two CDCR institutions with the goal of offering the E-Learning version of the program throughout California and beyond. We also expect that the E-Learning program will eventually contribute to Lionheart's long-term financial sustainability.

The National Solitary Project

Since launching the National Solitary Project, Lionheart has provided the **Making Time Count Self-study Program** (based on *Houses of Healing*) to 22 solitary units in 12 states. Missouri and Tennessee are currently reviewing the program. To date **more than 700 men in solitary** have received the program.

On the program evaluation, participants are asked to check the boxes (there are 18) to indicate the ways they were impacted by the HOH Self-study Program. An option that is often identified as one of the top 3 impacts is “participating in this program helped me become more hopeful about my future”. Amazingly, even after months and years of solitary confinement, a place the United Nations has deemed torture when people are confined there for more than 15 days without meaningful human contact, participants feel more hopeful and more empowered. Comments like the following are representative of the many responses we regularly receive on solitary program evaluations....

I recommend this program to everybody who is willing and wants to do some serious soul searching. I read the book everyday even though I've read it. (Age: 31 AA male. 14 years in prison - 2 years in seg, FL)

This program changed my life. It taught me how my drug abuse and life of crime came about and that “I'm not a failure. I've just been delayed.” (Age: 38 White male. 14 years in, 3+ years in solitary, FL)

This course saved my life from self-destruction, drugs and made me a stronger, better person. It's a road map to succeed in life and remain a free man. (Age: 26 White/ male. 7 years in prison, 10 months in seg.)

I have been incarcerated since I was 17 years old (now 33) and this was the most in depth and meaningful course I have participated in. It's been life altering. (Chicano male. 6 months in solitary, CA)

Lionheart's Youth Initiatives Power Source

Lionheart's evidence-based Power Source Program is now one of the primary interventions, a gold standard, for the Departments of Juvenile Justice in Oregon and Texas. The **Texas Department of Juvenile Justice** recently reported that they have some **early recidivism data** that looks very promising. This will be exciting and invaluable data for Lionheart.

Power Source Trainings

Requests for professional trainings on Lionheart programs keeps increasing. Beth Casarjian and Jess Linick, Lionheart's Clinical Director and Director of Youth Services, respectively, are conducting numerous professional PS and EQ2 trainings.

In January, Jess provided another virtual 8-hour Power Source (PS) training for the **Oregon Youth Authority** and continues to provide monthly consultations. This Spring, she conducted a full-day PS training for the **Pinal County Youth Justice Center in Arizona**. She is providing an in-person training for the **Boys and Girls Club of Indianapolis** as 4 or 5 youth clubs will all be using PS. Later this year, Beth and Jess plan to train the **Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice** staff in

PS, as well as present on EQ2. In June, Jess returns to the **Texas DJJ** for 3 days to train a new cohort of PS facilitators, offer a refresher training to those who were trained in 2020, and visit a secure facility housing youth that is currently using PS and interested in implementing EQ2. Jess will also have an opportunity to meet with youth who have been through the PS Program to begin brainstorming about a possible App and online version of the program for use in the community. We continue to receive inquiries from agencies around the country about using PS.

Our program for juveniles uses the Power Source books. The kids love them. I had a teacher call me and ask what book we were using. She said the students talked about it nonstop! I hear from my program leaders all the time about how they and the kids both love it... Thank you for the great work!!

Joyce Clevenger, E.D., the CARE Group, Inc.

EQ2 **for direct care staff working with high-risk youth**

EQ2 continues to make a deep impact in the lives of staff serving system-involved, trauma-impacted youth by building the self-regulation skills and trauma-knowledge needed to help youth in their care. Since the last update, **significant upgrades** have been made to the **EQ2 app**. In addition to revising all of the video-based learning content, a new SOS button will be launched this month. This feature provides real time support to staff by leading them through a guided breathing exercise and suggesting cognitive and behavioral skills to help them regulate their emotions and behavior. The EQ2 program is also undergoing a major revision to the train-the-trainer e-learning platform. We anticipate this will be completed by June.

On a recent call with a Canadian agency serving primarily indigenous youth who have committed serious violent offences, the program director shared data revealing a reduction in mechanical restraints of youth after staff engaged in EQ2. She stated that EQ2 significantly transformed the way staff perceived and responded to youth, leading to more trauma-responsive and therapeutic interactions.

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Please DONATE today.

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