

Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI)  
Cognitive Testing Quick Report – Round 1

**Prepared for**

SPI Project Staff

Bureau of Justice Statistics and  
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## **Background**

RTI International and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) are developing a new data collection instrument; the Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI). Paramount to the successful development of the survey is ensuring that the questions themselves are understood by respondents and thus able accurately capture data on the experiences of inmates during and before incarceration. To evaluate the degree to which questions are understood by respondents and to inform enhancements to the survey, RTI conducted cognitive interviews with former prison inmates using candidate SPI survey items. Cognitive interviews were conducted in Durham, North Carolina with individuals who have served time in prison but were not incarcerated at the time of the cognitive interviewing.

Candidate questionnaire items were chosen for inclusion in cognitive testing based on several considerations and included those that play a determining role in significant navigation downstream in the questionnaire and those that contain technical language or uncommon terminology. Additionally, items were selected for inclusion to test changing reference periods and the potential impact this may have on accuracy and ease of recall. Further, some items were tested in order to maintain the flow of questions as proposed for the pilot study interview to avoid any confounding order effects.

### **I. Methods**

Nine participants were selected from the population of individuals who are currently enrolled in programs at or receiving services from the Durham Criminal Justice Resource Center (CJRC). A CJRC administrative staff member selected participants through a convenience sample of individuals who were at one point incarcerated in a state or federal prison. Five of the nine participants had children under the age of 18, which was important because we wanted to test some of the survey items related to contact and visitation with children during incarceration. Aside from recruiting for the condition of having children, there were no other specific sample selection criteria. All attempts were made to have a broad distribution of demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender, and level of education; however, no specific stratification procedures were used for such a small sample size. In the end, all participants were African American men between the ages of 31 and 50.

The cognitive interviews were conducted at the Durham CJRC between October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>. All of the interviews were completed in-person. The interviews took approximately 70 minutes to complete and the participants were provided with a \$50 cash incentive as a token of appreciation for their time. Mr. Chris Stringer and Mr. Tim Flanigan, Research Survey Methodologists at RTI, conducted all nine of these interviews. The interview protocol was reviewed and approved by RTI's IRB prior to the start of recruitment and interviewing

Prior to each interview, participants were provided with a copy of the informed consent form to read. Since the reading level of the participants likely varied and may have been difficult to assess, the protocol required the interviewer to read the informed consent aloud while the participant followed along in order to overcome any limitations in literacy on the part of the

participant(s). After reading the consent form aloud with the participant, the interviewer requested that the participant check the appropriate boxes to indicate whether or not he consented to the interview and allowed the interview to be audio-taped. The interviewer then provided his signature to document that consent had been given. There were no observers present during any of the interviews. An unsigned hard copy of the consent form was provided to each participant to keep.

At the start of the interview participants were asked for the beginning and end dates of their most recent incarceration in prison. The incarceration dates were used to create a scenario in which the participant would respond to the questions as though he was still in prison. The interviewer wrote the date one day before the inmate was released from prison on a tent card and explained to the participant to answer the forthcoming questions as he would have on that particular day. Participants responded to the questions as they would have if the interview were occurring the day before they were released from prison. The interviewers administered the questions referencing the date they were admitted to prison, date of the interview (day before release), and 12 months prior to the date of the interview, and interviewers probed for any recall difficulty related to the reference periods. Participants were asked to think aloud and the interviewers utilized scripted and spontaneous probes throughout the interviews to assess participants' comprehension and understanding of the intent of the candidate survey items.

## II. Global Findings

Overall, participants had very little trouble with the recall tasks required by both the questions and the protocol itself.

The protocol required participants to answer the survey questions as they would have the day before their release from prison. This date was written on a tent card, visible to the participant throughout the interview and was referred to at times to make sure that answers to survey items were linked to the appropriate reference period. Participants were able to understand what they were being asked to do and generally showed no difficulty with either the concept or the practice of placing themselves back in time to the specified date. This proved the viability of the technique for subsequent rounds of cognitive interviewing for the SPI instrument and with this population.

When probed for how they came up with their responses and how confident they were in their answers, participants indicated that it was easy to remember the events surrounding their incarceration in prison and they were very confident in their answers, even when events occurred many years ago. Recall problems therefore do not seem to significantly impact respondents' ability to answer questions in the SPI instrument.

Although recall does not appear to impact respondents' abilities to answer questions in the SPI instrument, question wording does seem to play a role, as does the way answer lists are presented.

In some questions, participants seemed to get confused or overwhelmed by verbiage, largely related to examples provided, for instance when names of prescription drugs were presented (see item-level findings/recommendations in section II for suggested enhancements to question text).

When read aloud, some of the answer lists sounded unnatural (third person tense) or contradictory (largely due to the order of the response options), which lead to minor confusion (see item-level findings/recommendations in section II for suggested enhancements to answer lists).

### III. Question by Question Findings and Recommendations

#### Section 1 —Demographics

We'll begin by collecting some basic information about you.

IC2. What is your date of birth?

Month: \_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 12]

Day: \_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 31]

Year: \_\_\_ [Range: CURRENT YEAR – 95 TO CURRENT YEAR – 18]

***Findings:***

No findings.

***Recommendations:***

None.

IC4. Are you of Spanish, [Latino/Latina], or Hispanic origin?

1 YES

2 NO

DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings.

***Recommendations:***

None.

IC5. [IF IC4=1] Which of these categories describes your origin or descent?

	Yes	No
IC5a. Mexican-American?	1	2
IC5b. Chicano?	1	2
IC5c. Mexican?	1	2
IC5d. Cuban?	1	2
IC5e. Puerto Rican or other Caribbean?	1	2
IC5f. Central or South American Spanish?	1	2
IC5g. Some other Spanish group?	1	2

***Findings:***

No findings. None of the 9 participants received this item.

**Recommendations:**

None.

IC6. Which of these categories describes your race? You may answer yes to one or more of these categories.

	Yes	No
IC6a. White?	1	2
IC6b. Black or African-American?	1	2
IC6c. American Indian or Alaska Native?	1	2
IC6d. Asian?	1	2
IC6e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander?	1	2

**Findings:**

No findings.

**Recommendations:**

None.

IC7. At the time of the arrest that led to your current incarceration, were you...

- 1 Married,
- 2 Widowed,
- 3 Divorced,
- 4 Separated, for reasons other than incarceration, or
- 5 Had you never been married?  
DK/REF

**Findings:**

One participant said that the response “Had you never been married?” would be better understood as “Never married” This would be consistent with the other categories.

**Recommendations:**

Consider the following revision:

At the time of the arrest that led to your current incarceration, were you...

- 1 Married,
- 2 Widowed,
- 3 Divorced,
- 4 Separated for reasons other than incarceration, or

5 Never married?

IC8. [IF IC7 = 1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4] Are you now...

- ( 1 ) Married,
- ( 2 ) Widowed,
- ( 3 ) Divorced, or
- ( 4 ) Separated, for reasons other than incarceration?

DK/REF

*[Go to Next Module]*

***Findings:***

IC8/IC9: Participants were asked what they thought, “Separated, for reasons other than incarceration?” meant and seemed to struggle with this. Only 2 out of 9 participants could provide relevant examples of what this means.

***Recommendations:***

Consider a revision to response category #4 (Separated, for reasons other than incarceration) to clarify the intent. – We will revisit this suggestion following the pilot test.

Consider further delineating the difference between this item and the preceding question by placing an emphasis on the word “now”, for example using underlining:

Are you now...

Or bold text:

Are you **now**...

OR

IC9. [IF IC7 = 5 OR DK/REF] Are you now...

- 1 Married,
- 2 Widowed,
- 3 Divorced,
- 4 Separated, for reasons other than incarceration, or
- 5 Have you never been married?

DK/REF

*[Go to next module]*

***Findings:***

IC8/IC9: Participants were asked what they thought, “Separated, for reasons other than

incarceration?” meant and did not seem to understand or be able to provide examples.

See findings in I7, referencing “never married” response option.

***Recommendations:***

Consider a revision to response category #4, to make clearer the intent - We will revisit this after the pilot test.

Consider an enhancement to response category #5, as shown below:

To place emphasis on the word “now”, consider using underlining and/or **bold** text:

Are you **now**...

- 1 Married,
- 2 Widowed,
- 3 Divorced,
- 4 Separated for reasons other than incarceration, or
- 5 Single and never married?



## **Section 4 – Mental Health and Treatment**

- R17** Some people have times lasting several days or longer when they feel much more excited or manic or more full of energy than usual. Their minds go too fast. They talk a lot. They are very restless and sometimes do things unusual for them, such as driving too fast or spending too much money.

Have you **ever** in your life had an episode like this lasting several days or longer?

- 1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

### ***Findings:***

Participants struggled with the term “episode.” The description in the question text was too lengthy and distracting. Some participants focused on “spending money” and “driving fast” when they gave their answers and it appeared to distract from their understanding of the question intent.

### ***Recommendations:***

Consider a revision to pare down the verbiage and focus on the core intent of the question, such as the two examples below:

Some people have times, lasting several days or longer, when they feel much more excited or full of energy than usual. They are very restless, very talkative, and have trouble controlling their thoughts and behaviors.

Have you **ever** felt like this for several days or longer? [We will hold off on making this change, as the wording of the original question comes from validated measures and although this change was well-received by the project team it would mean that the question no longer directly maps to the validated measure]

- 1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

OR

Have you **ever** in your life had a time like this lasting several days or longer?

- 1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

- R18** Have you ever in your life had an episode lasting several days or longer when most of the time you were so irritable or grouchy that you started arguments, shouted at people, or hit people?

- 1 Yes

2 No  
DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b> Similar concern about “episode” as found in R17.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Consider removing “episode” consistent with R17, such as:  Have you ever in your life had a time lasting several days or longer when most of the time you were so irritable or grouchy that you started arguments, shouted at people, or hit people?

**R19** During the past 12 months, that is since [DATE\_12], did you have times lasting a month or longer when you were nervous, edgy, anxious, or worried most of the time?

1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b> No findings.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

**R20** During the past 12 months, that is since [DATE\_12], have you had an **attack of fear or panic** when all of a sudden you felt very frightened, anxious, or uneasy?

1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b> Participants didn’t seem to have trouble with this item. However, R20 and R21 seemed to be asking the same thing.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Consider a slight rewording:  During the past 12 months, that is since [DATE_12], have you had a <b>sudden attack of fear or panic</b> when you felt very frightened, anxious, or uneasy?

Consider removing R21 if the event being measured does not differ from that presented here.

- R21** During the past 12 months, that is since [DATE\_12], did you have anxiety attacks – when all of a sudden you felt very frightened or panicky and you had physical sensations like pounding heart, shortness of breath, dizziness, or feeling you were going to throw up – that made you feel you were going to lose control or go crazy or die?

1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

***Findings:***

Most of the participants could not provide a good description of what this question was asking. This may be due to the length of the question. Participants' appeared to focus on the last words of the question when answering. R20 seems to ask a very similar question.

***Recommendations:***

Consider whether the event being asked about in this item is similar enough to R20 to combine and drop this question. Team decision – keeping both questions for improved predictive validity, based on previous validated measures.

- R22** This question is about things that make some people feel afraid even though they know there is no real danger.

During the past 12 months, that is since [DATE\_12], was there a time when you had a strong fear of:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
R22a. Bugs?	1	2
R22b. Snakes?	1	2
R22c. Dogs?	1	2
R22d. Any other animals?	1	2
R22e. Closed spaces like caves, tunnels, closets, or elevators?	1	2

***Findings:***

No findings. The participants understood the question(s) well.

***Recommendations:***

Consider a slight revision to R22d to simply read, "Other animals"

**R31** Have you **ever** been told by a medical doctor or a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist that you had...

	Yes	No
R31a. Manic depression, a bipolar disorder, or mania?	1	2
R31b. A depressive disorder?	1	2
R31c. Schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder?	1	2
R31d. Post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD?	1	2
R31e. Another anxiety disorder, such as panic disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder?	1	2
R31f. A personality disorder, such as antisocial or borderline personality	1	2
R31g. A mental or emotional condition other than those listed above?	1	2

***Findings:***

Some participants had trouble with some terminology. In particular, PTSD was problematic, but no participants reported having PTSD. Similarly, borderline personality tripped some people up, as did obsessive compulsive disorder, which some people knew as “OCD.”

We believe that participants would know if they had any of these conditions if they were diagnosed by medical personnel and lack of familiarity on the part of participants is not necessarily indicative of problems with the question text.

***Recommendations:***

Consider changing R31e so that it reads:

R31e. Another anxiety disorder, such as panic disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder, also known as OCD?

**R38** The next questions are about services you may have received for any problem with your emotions, nerves, or mental health. As you answer these questions please do **not** include any services you may have received for drug or alcohol use. Some questions ask about prescription medicine. Prescription medicines are drugs that you take if a doctor authorizes them for you.

Have you **ever** taken any prescription medicine for any problem you were having with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings.

***Recommendations:***

None.

**R40** [R38 = 1] Since you were admitted to prison on [DATE\_ADMIT], have you taken prescription medicine for any problem you were having with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

**Findings:**

No findings. However, only one participant received the question, due to skip logic.

**Recommendations:**

None.

**R41** [IF R40 = 1] Are you **currently** taking prescription medicine for any problem with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

**Findings:**

No findings. However, only one participant received the question, due to skip logic.

**Recommendations:**

None.

**R42** [IF R41 = 2] Why aren't you currently taking prescription medicine for problems with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

	Yes	No
R42a. You have not seen a doctor to get the medicine	1	2
R42b. The doctor at the facility doesn't think you need medicine	1	2
R42c. You don't like taking the medicine	1	2
R42a4. You don't think you need the medicine	1	2
R42d. The facility is not willing to give the medicine to you	1	2
R42e. You would have to be transferred to a different facility to receive the medicine	1	2
R42f. You don't currently have problems with your emotions, nerves, or mental health	1	2
R42g. Some other reason	1	2

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None- item removed in latest version of this module.</p>

**R43** Have you **ever** received counseling, treatment, or therapy from a trained professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or nurse for any problem you were having with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings. We probed on what “trained professional” meant to the participants and they all seemed to have a general idea and were able to provide examples.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**R44** [IF R43 = 1] Since you were admitted to prison on [DATE\_ADMIT], have you received counseling, treatment, or therapy from a trained professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or nurse for any problem you were having with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings. However, only two participants received the question, due to skip logic.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**R44a** [IF R44 = 1] Since you were admitted to prison on [DATE\_ADMIT] have you been **required** to receive any counseling, treatment, or therapy?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings. However, only one participant received the question, due to skip logic.

***Recommendations:***

None- item removed in latest version of this module.

**R44b** [IF R44a = 2 OR DK OR REF] How much did staff influence your decision to receive any of this counseling, treatment, or therapy? Would you say staff had a lot of influence, a little influence or no influence at all on your decision?

- 1 A LOT
  - 2 A LITTLE
  - 3 NONE AT ALL
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No participants received this question.

***Recommendations:***

None- item removed in latest version of this module.

**R45** [IF R43 = 1] Are you **currently** receiving any counseling, treatment, or therapy from a trained mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or nurse for any problem with your emotions, nerves, or mental health?

- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings.

***Recommendations:***

None

**R47** Are you **currently** receiving any medical treatment other than prescription medicine for manic depression, bipolar disorder, or mania?

- 1 Yes

2 No  
DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b>
No findings.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
None- item removed in latest version of this module.

### **Section 5 - Physical Health, Treatment, and Disabilities**

**P10** These next questions are about specific medical problems you may have had in the past or have currently.

**P11** Has a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider **ever** told you that you had...

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
P11a. Any type of cancer?	1	2
P11b. High blood pressure or hypertension?	1	2
P11c. A stroke?	1	2
P11d. [IF MALE: Diabetes, high blood sugar, or sugar diabetes? IF FEMALE: Diabetes, high blood sugar, or sugar diabetes that was <b>not</b> due to being pregnant?]	1	2
P11e. Heart disease, including a heart attack, coronary heart disease, angina, congestive heart failure or other heart problems?	1	2
P11f. A problem with your kidneys?	1	2
P11g. Some form of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia?	1	2
P11h. Asthma?	1	2
P11i. Cirrhosis of the liver?	1	2
P11j. HIV – the virus that causes AIDS?	1	2
P11k. Tuberculosis, also called TB?	1	2
P11l. Hepatitis B?	1	2
P11m. Hepatitis C?	1	2

<b>Findings:</b>
No findings. Participants had no trouble answering the questions or understanding the terminology.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
None.

**P12** Have you **ever** been paralyzed or unable to move your legs, arms, or other areas of your body?



Please do not include times when you may have been held down, tied up, or medicated.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings. One participant indicated he changed the way he was about to answer when "held down" was mentioned.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**P11j1** [IF P11j = 2] Have you **ever** been tested for HIV – the virus that causes AIDS?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings. All of the participants reported being tested. When probed, 8 indicated a blood draw while 1 participant said it was a mouth swab.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**P14** [IF P11a = 1 OR P11b = 1 OR P11c = 1 OR P11d = 1 OR P11e = 1 OR P11f = 1 OR P11g = 1 OR P11h = 1 OR P11i = 1 OR P11k = 1 OR P11l = 1 OR P11m = 1] Has a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider told you that you **currently** have...

**[NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS: ONLY READ THOSE THAT THE RESPONDENT REPLIED “YES” TO IN P11.]**

	Yes	No
P14a. [IF P11a = 1] Any type of cancer?	1	2
P14b. [IF P11b = 1] High blood pressure or hypertension?	1	2
P14c. [IF P11c = 1] Problems caused by a stroke?	1	2
P14d. [IF P11d = 1] Diabetes, high blood sugar, or sugar diabetes?	1	2
P14e. [IF P11e = 1] Heart disease, including a heart attack, coronary heart disease, angina, congestive heart failure or other heart problems?	1	2
P14f. [IF P11f = 1] A problem with your kidneys?	1	2

P14g. [IF P11g = 1] Arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia?	1	2
P14h. [IF P11h = 1] Asthma?	1	2
P14i. [IF P11i = 1] Cirrhosis of the liver?	1	2
P14k. [IF P11l = 1] Hepatitis B?	1	2
P14l. [IF P11m = 1] Hepatitis C?	1	2

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings. Participants had no trouble answering this question and could tell the difference between “current” and “ever” in the previous question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**P15** [IF P12 = 1] Are you **currently** paralyzed or unable to move parts of your body?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**P17** [IF P14a = 1] Are you **currently** taking prescription medicine or receiving other treatment for your cancer?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**P19** [IF P14b = 1] Are you **currently** taking prescription medicine or receiving other treatment for your high blood pressure or hypertension?

1 Yes  
2 No  
DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings. Only 2 participants received this item, due to skip logic, but they had no trouble understanding or answering the question.

***Recommendations:***

None.

**Section 7 — Drug Use**

**J1.** These next questions are about using drugs other than alcohol.

Have you **ever** used...

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>J1a.</b> Marijuana or hashish?	1	2
<b>J1b.</b> <b>Any form of cocaine</b> , including powder, “crack”, free base, and coca paste?	1	2
<b>J1c.</b> [IF J1b = 1] Have you ever used “crack”?	1	2
<b>J1d.</b> Heroin?	1	2
<b>J1e.</b> PCP? PCP is also called “angel dust” or phencyclidine.	1	2
<b>J1f.</b> Ecstasy, also known as MDMA?	1	2
<b>J1g.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used any other type of hallucinogen, including LSD, peyote, mescaline, or psilocybin, found in mushrooms?	1	2
<b>J1h.</b> Inhalants - that is substances that people sniff or inhale for kicks or to get high? These include: amyl nitrite, locker room odorizers, cleaning fluid, gasoline, glue, nitrous oxide, or spray paints.	1	2
<b>J1i.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used Methamphetamine, also known as meth, crystal, or crank?	1	2
<b>J1j.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used other illegal drugs other than those I’ve just asked you about? SPECIFY: _____	1	2
<b>J1k.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used a prescription pain reliever such as Darvon, Percocet, Vicodan, Methadone, or OxyContin that was not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused?	1	2
<b>J1l.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> use a prescription tranquilizer such as Xanax, Ativan, Valium, Klonopin, or Clonazepam that was not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused?	1	2
<b>J1m.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used a prescription stimulant such as Methedrine, Amphetamines, Ritalin, or Dexedrine that was not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused?	1	2
<b>J1n.</b> Have you <b>ever</b> used a prescription sedative such as barbiturates, Methaqualone, Nembutal, Seconal, or Restoril that was not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling it caused?	1	2

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants were able to provide a response to each of the illicit drug items (J1a-J1j). As for the prescription medications (J1k-J1n), participants were largely unfamiliar with the examples (trade names) for each prescription medication and seemed to be overwhelmed at times by the verbiage.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider scaling down the number of examples for each drug and/or a global question(s) regarding use of prescription medications for non-prescribed reasons, rather than by type of drug (i.e., pain reliever, tranquilizer, etc...)</p>

**J1a3** [IF J1a = 1] During the 30 days before the arrest that led to this incarceration, did you use any marijuana or hashish?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

**J1a4** [IF J1a3 = 1] During the 30 days before the arrest that led to this incarceration, how often did you use marijuana? Would you say...

- 1 Less than once a week,
- 2 At least once a week,
- 3 Almost daily, or
- 4 Daily
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>One participant said at least twice a week. After repeating the categories he then said "Daily"</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider a response set that is easier for the participant to comprehend. Although the response categories are technically exhaustive and mutually exclusive there seemed to be some ambiguity</p>

in how to interpret time frames.

Consider:

During the 30 days before the arrest that led to this incarceration, how often did you use marijuana? On average, would you say...

- 1 day per week
- 2-3 days per week
- 4-6 days per week
- Everyday

Also consider the order of response options in descending order of frequency.

Another option is to simply ask the number of days within that 30 day period the respondent used marijuana, as in:

Please think of the 30 days before the arrest that led to this incarceration. On how many of those days did you smoke marijuana? Would you say...

- 1-7 days
- 8-14 days
- 15-21 days
- 22-30 days

This would allow for comparison to items in NSDUH.

Item removed in latest version of this module.

**J1h3** [IF J1h = 1] During the 30 days before the arrest that led to your current incarceration, did you use any inhalant for kicks or to get high?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings. Only one participant received this question, due to skip logic.

***Recommendations:***

None.

**J1h4** [IF J1h3 = 1] How often did you use any inhalant for kicks or to get high during the 30

days before the arrest that led to your current incarceration? Would you say...

- 1 Less than once a week,
  - 2 At least once a week,
  - 3 Almost daily, or
  - 4 Daily
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings as no participants received this question.

***Recommendations:***

None - item removed in latest version of this module.

**J1i3** [IF J1i = 1] During the 30 days before the arrest that led to your current incarceration, did you use any Methamphetamine?

- 1 YES
  - 2 NO
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings as no participants received this question.

***Recommendations:***

None.

**J1i4** [IF J1i3 = 1] How often did you use any Methamphetamine during the 30 days before the arrest that led to your current incarceration? Would you say...

- 1 Less than once a week,
  - 2 At least once a week,
  - 3 Almost daily, or
  - 4 Daily
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

No findings as no participants received this question.

***Recommendations:***

None – item removed in latest version of this module.



**Section 8 — Drug and Alcohol Treatment**

**K1.** [IF J1a = 1 OR J1b = 1 OR J1c = 1 OR J1d = 1 OR J1e = 1 OR J1f = 1 OR J1g = 1 OR J1h = 1 OR J1i = 1 OR J1j = 1 OR J1k = 1 OR J1l = 1 OR J1m = 1 OR J1n = 1 OR H1 = 1] These next questions deal with treatment for alcohol and drug problems, **not including cigarettes**. Please report treatment or counseling designed to help you reduce or stop your alcohol or drug use. Please include detoxification and any other treatment for medical problems associated with your alcohol or drug use.

Have you **ever received** treatment or counseling for your use of alcohol or any drug, not counting cigarettes?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

<b><i>Findings:</i></b>  No findings. Participants easily understood the question.
<b><i>Recommendations:</i></b>  None.

**K2.** [IF K1 = 1] Have you **ever** received treatment or counseling for your use of alcohol or any drug...

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
K2a. In an alcohol or drug detoxification unit?	1	2
K2b. In a hospital overnight as an inpatient?	1	2
K2c. In a residential drug or alcohol rehabilitation facility where you stayed overnight?	1	2
K2d. In a drug or alcohol rehabilitation facility where you did <b>not</b> stay overnight	1	2
K2e. In a mental health center or facility where you did not stay overnight	1	2
K2f. In an emergency room?	1	2
K2g. In a private doctor's office?	1	2
K2h. In a prison or jail?	1	2
K2i. In a self-help group such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous?	1	2
K2j. In some other place other than these I've just asked about? (SPECIFY: _____)	1	2

***Findings:***

No findings. Participants who received treatment were able to easily select responses to the yes/no questions and seemed clear on the terminology when probed. Two participants said that they thought about “churches” when asked about other places, in K2j.

***Recommendations:***

None. Findings used to inform DAT10 Item in latest version of the instrument (content is same but reference period is 12 month).

## **Section 9 - Social Support from Outside the Facility**

ASK SS1 OR SS2

SS1 [IF ADMITTED AT LEAST 12 MONTHS AGO] In the past 12 months, who from outside the facility have you had contact with? (Check All That Apply)

1. Nobody
2. Partner, including spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend
3. Biological/adopted children under 18
4. Stepchildren/partner's children under 18
5. Biological/adopted children over 18
6. Stepchildren/partner's children over 18
7. Mother/stepmother
8. Father/stepfather
9. Sibling , brother or sister
10. Grandmother
11. Grandfather
12. Other children under 18 not related to you
13. Other family members
14. Friends
15. Other non-relative(s) or friend(s)

### ***Findings:***

Many of the participants were tripped up by “Nobody” as the first option, when the response options were read aloud.

There was some confusion as to categories 14 and 15. When probed, some participants indicated that they were thinking of a friend or acquaintance that was already selected in category 14. One participant used the category to account for people from the church he worked at, who were not friends per se.

### ***Recommendations:***

If categories are to be read aloud, consider moving the “nobody” response option to the end of the list and clarify the distinction between “Friends” and “Other non-relative(s) or friend(s)” as shown in response options 13 and 14 below:

1. Partner, including spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend
2. Biological/adopted children under 18
3. Stepchildren/partner's children under 18

4. Biological/adopted children over 18
5. Stepchildren/partner's children over 18
6. Mother/stepmother
7. Father/stepfather
8. Sibling , brother or sister
9. Grandmother
10. Grandfather
11. Other children under 18 not related to you
12. Other family members
13. Friends / Acquaintances
14. Other non-relative(s)
15. Other (specify)
16. NO ONE VISITED

SS2 [IF ADMITTED LESS THAN 12 MONTHS AGO] Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT], who from outside the facility have you had contact with? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

1. Nobody
2. Partner, including spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend
3. Biological/adopted children under 18
4. Stepchildren/partner's children under 18
5. Biological/adopted children over 18
6. Stepchildren/partner's children over 18
7. Mother/stepmother
8. Father/stepfather
9. Sibling , brother or sister
10. Grandmother
11. Grandfather
12. Other children under 18 not related to you
13. Other family members
14. Friends

15. Other non-relative(s) or friend(s)

<b>Findings:</b> Same concerns as discussed in findings for SS1.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Consider changes as recommended in SS1.

ASK SS3 OR SS4

SS3 [IF ADMITTED AT LEAST 12 MONTHS AGO] Of the people you reported having contact with in the past 12 months, who do you think will be most important when it comes to helping you once you are released into the community?

1. Nobody
2. Partner, including spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend
3. Biological/adopted children under 18
4. Stepchildren/partner's children under 18
5. Biological/adopted children over 18
6. Stepchildren/partner's children over 18
7. Mother/stepmother
8. Father/stepfather
9. Sibling , brother or sister
10. Grandmother
11. Grandfather
12. Other children under 18 not related to you
13. Other family members
14. Friends
15. Other non-relative(s) or friend(s)

<b>Findings:</b> Several participants provided multiple responses at first. Upon probing, selected one person for their response.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Consider the recommended changes in SS1/SS2 and have these categories fill in a pre-chart for the interviewer to read at the tail end of the question text.  Consider enhancing the question text to place emphasis on the “most important” to assist the

respondent to focus on choosing only one of the categories from SS1/SS2 as follows:

[IF ADMITTED AT LEAST 12 MONTHS AGO] Who do you think will be most important when it comes to helping you once you are released into the community?

Item removed from latest version of the instrument.

SS4 [IF ADMITTED LESS THAN 12 MONTHS AGO] Of the people you reported having contact with since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_INT], who do you think will be most important when it comes to helping you once you are released into the community?

1. Nobody
2. Partner, including spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend
3. Biological/adopted children under 18
4. Stepchildren/partner's children under 18
5. Biological/adopted children over 18
6. Stepchildren/partner's children over 18
7. Mother/stepmother
8. Father/stepfather
9. Sibling , brother or sister
10. Grandmother
11. Grandfather
12. Other children under 18 not related to you
13. Other family members
14. Friends
15. Other non-relative(s) or friend(s)

***Findings:***

Same findings and recommendations as found in SS3.

***Recommendations:***

See SS3 above.

Item removed from latest version of the instrument.

SS5 Have you received an in-person visit from (FILL FROM SS3/SS4) [IF admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago =

“since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”?

1 YES

2 NO

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No problems - the participants understood the question as written.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Do not ask this question of prisoners whose response is coded as “Other...” or “Nobody” in SS3 or SS4</p> <p>Findings used to inform SS3 (This item is SS3a) in the current instrument.</p>

SS6 [IF SS5 = 2] Why do you think you have not received an in-person visit from (FILL FROM SS3/SS4) [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 The person lives too far away
- 2 Inmate cannot have personal visits
- 3 Inmate does not want person to see him/her while incarcerated
- 4 The person cannot afford to travel to the facility
- 5 The inmate believes visiting the facility will not be safe for the person
- 6 The person does not want to see inmate while he/she is incarcerated
- 7 Some other reason

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>If the answer categories are to be read out loud, the third person tense is confusing to participants.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>We recommend having the interviewer field code these responses and not reading the categories aloud. We also recommend stripping away extraneous verbiage in the answer categories to be only what is essential for the interviewer to make a coding decision. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 – Lives too far away</li><li>2 – Can’t have visitors</li><li>3 – Inmate doesn’t want person to see them incarcerated</li><li>4 – Can’t afford travel to facility</li><li>5 – Visiting facility will be unsafe</li><li>6 – Person doesn’t want to see inmate while incarcerated</li></ol>

7 - Other

SS7 How else have you been in contact with (FILL FROM SS3/SS4) [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”]? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

	Yes	No
1 Only been in contact through in-person visits	1	2
2 Been in contact using video visiting or Skype	1	2
3 Have you sent letters	1	2
4 Have you received letters	1	2
5 Have you made phone calls	1	2
6 Have you received phone calls	1	2
7 Have you sent text messages	1	2
8 Have you received text messages	1	2
9 Have you sent email messages	1	2
10 Have you received email messages	1	2
11 Other specify (such as dvds, cds, or tapes)		

**Findings:**

Response category 1 confused participants as they had in-person visits along with other means of contact. They were inclined to select it since they had obviously reported in-person visits in the previous questions

Participants explained that the DOC for NC would not allow several of these categories (6-10).

**Recommendations:**

Consider deleting the first response category or if keeping it, moving it to the end, so that it is not accidentally selected at the expense of going through all of the categories.

We recommend simply deleting the first answer category and reading each of them aloud so that they are answered as individual yes/no items, as they are written.

We also recommend changing the question text to read, “How have you communicated with...”, rather than “How have you been in contact with...” as was previously written.

Additionally, unless it is important for purposes of analysis to distinguish between sent letters vs. received letters and made phone calls vs. received phone calls, etc., we recommend collapsing and using the following answer list:

- 1 Through letters
- 2 Talking on the phone
- 3 Through text messages
- 4 By email



- 5 By video visiting/Skype
- 6 Some other way

Findings used to inform SS3 and SS5 in current instrument.

SS8 [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “During the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”, have you received an in-person visit from any of your biological or adopted children who are under 18 years old?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

**Findings:**

No findings.

**Recommendations:**

None.

SS9 [IF SS8 = 2] Why do you think you have not received an in-person visit from any of your biological or adopted children who are under 18 years old [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 The child lives too far away
- 2 Inmate cannot have personal visits
- 3 Inmate does not want child to see him/her while incarcerated
- 4 The child’s parent/caretaker or the child cannot afford to travel to the facility
- 5 The inmate believes visiting the facility will not be safe for the child
- 6 The child does not want to visit him/her while he/she is incarcerated
- 7 The child’s other parent or guardian does not want the child to visit him/her while he/she is incarcerated
- 8 Some other reason

**Findings:**

Same concern as SS6. If the answer categories are to be read out loud, the third person tense is

confusing to participants.

**Recommendations:**

Final Recommendation - having the interviewer field code these responses and not reading the categories aloud. We also recommend stripping away extraneous verbiage in the answer categories to be only what is essential for the interviewer to make a coding decision. For example:

- 1 – Lives too far away
- 2 – Can't have visitors
- 3 – Inmate doesn't want person to see them incarcerated
- 4 – Can't afford travel to facility
- 5 – Visiting facility will be unsafe
- 6 – Person doesn't want to see inmate while incarcerated
- 7 - Other

SS10 How else have you been in contact with any of your biological or adopted children who are under 18 years old [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT]”? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Only been in contact through in-person visits
- 2 Been in contact using video visiting or Skype
- 3 Sent letters
- 4 Received letters
- 5 Made phone calls
- 6 Received phone calls
- 7 Sent text messages
- 8 Received text messages
- 9 Sent email messages
- 10 Received email messages
- 11 Other specify (such as dvds, cds, or tapes)

**Findings:**

Same concerns as SS7. Response category 1 confused participants as they had in-person visits along with other means of contact.

Participants explained that the DOC for NC would not allow several of these categories (6-10).

**Recommendations:**

As in SS7, consider moving first response category to end, so that it is not accidentally selected at the expense of going through all of the categories. Consider an “NA” option or “Facility does not

allow” in cases where the response option does not apply to an inmate, given the rules of the facility.

We also recommend changing the question text to read, “How have you communicated with...”, rather than “How have you been in contact with...” as was previously written.

Additionally, unless it is important for purposes of analysis to distinguish between sent letters vs. received letters and made phone calls vs. received phone calls, etc., we recommend collapsing and using the following answer list:

- 1 . Through letters
- 2 . Talking on the phone
- 3 . Through text messages
- 4 . By email
- 5 . By video visiting/Skype
- 6 . Some other way

Findings used to inform SS7in current instrument.

SS11 [IF INMATE HAS Stepchildren/partner’s children under 18] [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “During the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [FILL Date of Admission]”, have you received an in-person visit from any of your stepchildren or partner’s children who are under 18 years old?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

***Findings:***

No findings. This question was only asked of 2 participants. However, this question is very similar to SS8 for which there were no concerns.

***Recommendations:***

None.

SS12 [IFSS11=2] Why do you think you have not received an in-person visit from any of your stepchildren or partner’s children who are under 18 years old [if admitted at least 12 months ago = “during the past 12 months” / if admitted less than 12 months ago = “since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [FILL Date of Admission]”? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 The child lives too far away
- 2 Inmate cannot have personal visits
- 3 Inmate does not want child to see him/her while incarcerated

- 4 The child's parent/caretaker or the child cannot afford to travel to the facility
- 5 The inmate believes visiting the facility will not be safe for the person
- 6 The child does not want to visit him/her while he/she is incarcerated
- 7 The child's other parent or guardian does not want the child to visit him/her while he/she is incarcerated
- 8 Some other reason

***Findings:***

Same concern as SS9. If the answer categories are to be read out loud, the third person tense is confusing to participants.

***Recommendations:***

Change response categories to read:

- 1 The child lives too far away
- 2 You cannot have personal visits
- 3 You do not want the child to see you while you're incarcerated
- 4 The child's parent/caretaker or the child cannot afford to travel to the facility
- 5 You believe visiting the facility will not be safe for the child
- 6 The child does not want to visit you while you are incarcerated
- 7 The child's other parent or guardian does not want the child to visit you while you are incarcerated
- 8 Some other reason

## **Section 10 – Facility Programs and Services, and Work Assignment**

Inmates often receive a wide variety of services and programs while they are incarcerated. This next set of questions is about any services you may have received or programs you may have participated in while you were incarcerated.

P1 Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT], have you attended any education programs, such as high school, General Educational Development [GED], adult basic education, and college courses?

1 YES Go to P2

2 NO Go to P4

### ***Findings:***

Participants generally understood that General Educational Development referred to GED, and all participants had heard of GED.

### ***Recommendations:***

Consider simply using GED, rather than spelling it out:

Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT], have you attended any education programs, such as high school, GED, adult basic education, and/or college courses?

P2 [IF admitted at least 12 months ago AND IF P1 = 1] In the past 12 months, that is since [DATE\_12], have you attended any education programs?

1 YES

2 NO

Go to P3

### ***Findings:***

No Findings.

### ***Recommendations:***

None.

P3 [IF P1 = 1 AND (admitted less than 12 months ago OR IF P2 = 1)] Are you currently attending any education programs?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No findings</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

P3a [IF P1 = 1 AND P3 = 2] Why are you no longer attending any education programs?

- 1 You have completed or graduated from the program
- 2 You decided to quit or drop out of the program
- 3 You were kicked out of the program
- 4 You were sent to another facility
- 5 Some other reason

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>One participant explained that he completed the program AND was sent to another facility. He was also about to be released so he provided three responses. When asked if he could only select one reason, he said the class was completed.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider changing this to “Select all that apply”</p> <p>Consider changing option #4 to read, “You were sent to another facility before you completed the program”</p> <p>Also recommend changing the description of category 3, so that they read as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You have completed or graduated from the program</li> <li>2. You decided to quit or drop out of the program</li> <li>3. You were no longer allowed to participate in the program</li> <li>4. You were sent to another facility before you completed to program</li> <li>5. Some other reason</li> </ul>

P4 [IF P1 = 2] What is the main reason you have not attended any education programs since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [FILL Date of Admission]?

- 1 You don't know anything about this program
- 2 You don't need this program

- 3 You haven't been offered the chance to attend this program
  - 4 You have heard bad things about this program
  - 5 Staff didn't want you to attend this program
  - 6 You are too busy to attend this program
  - 7 You aren't qualified or allowed to attend this program
  - 8 Some other reason
- Go to P9*

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>No findings. Only one participant received this question, due to skip logic.</p>
<p><b><i>Recommendations:</i></b></p> <p>None.</p>

P6 [IF P1 = 1] I am going to read a list of reasons why people may attend education programs. Please tell me how important each reason was for you.

Response options will be: 1 for Very important, 2 for Sort of important, and 3 for Not important at all.

- To get help you needed
- To break up boredom
- To try something new
- To better yourself
- To spend time with friends
- You were required by the court or judge
- To impress facility staff
- To impress my friends or family
- To impress the court or the judge
- To impress the parole board
- To earn good time or reduce length of sentence

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>Participants were not responding with the numeric value associated with the answer categories.</p> <p>Participants were confused by the structure of the question. There was a bit of a disconnect between the stem of the question and the categories when the responses were read.</p> <p>Some participants indicated that the judge can only sentence and not require you to attend a program.</p>
---

**Recommendations:**

Consider:

[IF P1 = 1] I am going to read a list of reasons why people may attend education programs. For each reason, please tell me whether you feel it is very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

- To get help you needed
- To break up boredom
- To try something new
- To better yourself
- To spend time with friends
- To fulfill requirements of the court or judge
- To impress facility staff
- To impress my friends or family
- To impress the court or the judge
- To impress the parole board
- To earn good time or reduce length of sentence

(The Interviewer could then select the 1, 2, or 3 associated with the answer category)

- P7 [IF P1 = 1] How much did staff influence your decision to attend education programs?
- 1 Staff made me attend this program
  - 2 Staff suggested I attend this program
  - 3 Staff had no influence on my decision

**Findings:**

No findings.

**Recommendations:**

None.

- P8 [IF P1 = 1] How much do you think attending education programs will help you...

Response options will be: 1 for A lot, 2 for Some, and 3 for Not at all.

- Adjust to living inside jail or prison?
- Get a better education?
- Get and keep a job once you are released into the community?
- Adjust to living outside jail or prison once you are released into the community?
- Avoid breaking the law once you are released into the community?



<b><i>Findings:</i></b>
<b><i>Recommendations:</i></b>
<p>Consider:</p> <p>[IF P1 = 1] I am going to read a list of reasons attending education programs may help you. For each reason, please tell me whether you feel it is very important, somewhat important or not at all important.</p> <p>Adjust to living inside jail or prison?  Get a better education?  Get and keep a job once you are released into the community?  Adjust to living outside jail or prison once you are released into the community?  Avoid breaking the law once you are released into the community?</p> <p>(The Interviewer could then select the 1, 2, or 3 associated with the answer category)</p>

**NOTE: Findings from items above, concerning education programs are used to inform decisions on other types of programs asked about in the Programs module**

P31 Since you were admitted to prison for this incarceration on [DATE\_ADMIT], have you attended any batterer treatment programs?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

<b><i>Findings:</i></b>
Most of the participants had no idea what “batterer treatment” was.
<b><i>Recommendations:</i></b>
Consider an operational definition of “batterer treatment” and base question on that.
Item removed from current instrument based on results of testing.

Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI)  
Cognitive Testing Quick Report – Round 2

**Prepared for**

SPI Project Staff

Bureau of Justice Statistics and  
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**RTI Project Number:**

0212322.001.003

## **Background**

RTI International and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) are developing a new data collection instrument; the Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI). Paramount to the successful development of the survey is ensuring that the questions themselves are understood by respondents and thus able to accurately capture data on the experiences of inmates during and before incarceration. To evaluate the degree to which questions are understood by respondents and to inform enhancements to the survey, RTI conducted cognitive interviews with former prison inmates using candidate SPI survey items. Cognitive interviews were conducted in Durham, North Carolina with individuals who have served time in prison but were not incarcerated at the time of the cognitive interviewing.

Candidate questionnaire items were chosen for inclusion in cognitive testing based on several considerations and included those that play a determining role in significant navigation downstream in the questionnaire and those that contain technical language or uncommon terminology. Many items from the Criminal Justice section of the instrument were chosen in order to test those that collect offense information and play a fundamental role in determining the type of offense(s) an inmate committed, which impacts the way in which other data are collected regarding a respondent's criminal history. Additionally, items were selected for inclusion to test changing reference periods and the potential impact this may have on accuracy and ease of recall. Further, some items were tested in order to maintain the flow of questions as proposed for the pilot study interview to avoid any confounding order effects.

### **I. Methods**

Nine participants were selected from the population of individuals who are currently enrolled in programs at or receiving services from the Durham Criminal Justice Resource Center (CJRC). A CJRC administrative staff member selected participants through a convenience sample of individuals who were at one point incarcerated in a state or federal prison in North Carolina. Two of the nine participants were recruited for having been incarcerated for a parole or probation violation, which allowed us to test candidate survey items about arrests, charges, and sentencing for these violations. Aside from recruiting for the condition of parole/probation violation(s), there were no other specific sample selection criteria. All attempts were made to have a broad distribution of demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender, and level of education; however, no specific stratification procedures were used for such a small sample size. In the end, all participants were African American men between the ages of 19 and 52, with a mean age of 40.

The cognitive interviews were conducted at the Durham CJRC between January 22<sup>nd</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013. All of the interviews were completed in-person. The interviews took approximately 70 minutes to complete and the participants were provided with a \$50 cash incentive as a token of appreciation for their time. Mr. Chris Stringer and Mr. Tim Flanigan, Research Survey Methodologists at RTI, conducted all nine of these interviews. The interview protocol was reviewed and approved by RTI's IRB prior to the start of recruitment and interviewing

Prior to each interview, participants were provided with a copy of the informed consent form to read. Since the reading level of the participants likely varied and may have been difficult to assess, the protocol required the interviewer to read the informed consent aloud while the participant followed along in order to overcome any limitations in literacy on the part of the participant(s). After reading the consent form aloud with the participant, the interviewer requested that the participant check the appropriate boxes to indicate whether or not he consented to the interview and allowed the interview to be audio-taped. The interviewer then provided his signature to document that consent had been given. There were no observers present during any of the interviews. An unsigned hard copy of the consent form was provided to each participant to keep.

At the start of the interview, participants were asked for the beginning and end dates of their most recent incarceration in prison. The incarceration dates were used to create a scenario in which the participant would respond to the questions as though he was still in prison. The interviewer wrote the date one day before the inmate was released from prison on a tent card and explained to the participant to answer the forthcoming questions as he would have on that particular day. Participants thus responded to the questions as they would have if the interview were occurring the day before they were released from prison. The interviewers administered the questions referencing the date they were admitted to prison, date of the interview (day before release), and 12 months prior to the arrest that led to the current incarceration, and interviewers probed for any recall difficulty related to the reference periods. Participants were asked to think aloud and the interviewers utilized scripted and spontaneous probes throughout the interviews to assess participants' comprehension and understanding of the intent of the candidate survey items

## II. Question by Question Findings and Recommendations

### Section 2 – CJ Module

This section of the survey will ask you questions about your experiences with parole, probation, incarceration, and crimes you may have committed.

**A7.** Prior to this incarceration in prison, had you ever been sentenced to serve time in prison or jail?

- |   |     |          |
|---|-----|----------|
| 1 | Yes | Go to A8 |
| 2 | No  | Go to Q1 |

***Findings:***

Participants had no trouble answering this question.

***Recommendations:***

None

**A8.** [IF A7 = 1] When were you last released from prison or jail after serving a sentence in prison or jail?

- |             |                      |                              |        |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| <b>A8a.</b> | 2-DIGIT MONTH: _____ | [RANGE: 1 – 12]              | DK/REF |
| <b>A8b.</b> | 2-DIGIT DAY: _____   | [RANGE: 1 – 31]              | DK/REF |
| <b>A8c.</b> | 4-DIGIT YEAR: _____  | [RANGE: 1915 – current year] | DK/REF |

***Findings:***

Participants understood the question but many struggled to remember the actual day. Month and year were fairly easy to recall.

***Recommendations:***

None – the instrument is designed to handle month/year responses without days.

**A9.** [IF A8a = DK/REF AND A8c NE DK OR REF] What time of year was it? Was it winter, spring, summer, or fall when you were admitted to this facility?

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1 | WINTER |
|---|--------|

- 2     SPRING
- 3     SUMMER
- 4     FALL
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this question</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**Q1.** Are you currently incarcerated in this facility because you have been sentenced to serve time in prison?

- 1     Yes    *Go to Q3*
- 2     No     *Go to Q2*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>This question seemed easily understood. One participant initially responded “no” and changed his answer to “yes” when asked item Q2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Option 1 - Consider combining Q1 and Q2 to read as follows:</p> <p><i>Are you currently incarcerated in this facility because you have been sentenced to serve time in prison or because you are waiting to be sentenced or some other reason?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1    <i>Sentenced</i></li> <li>2    <i>Waiting to be sentenced</i></li> <li>3    <i>Some other reason</i></li> </ul> <p>This could be a way to refine instrument content using fewer questions and decreasing respondent burden. An interviewer instruction would prompt interviewers to find out which of the three answer choices it is in cases where a respondent just answers, “yes.”</p> <p>Option 2 – (If keeping Q1 and Q2 separate) Highlight <b>sentenced</b> to draw emphasis and differentiate from <b>waiting</b> to be sentenced (asked in the subsequent item).</p>

**Q2.** [IF Q1 = 2] Are you currently incarcerated in this facility because you are **waiting** to be sentenced to serve time in prison?

- 1      Yes    *Go to Q3*
- 2      No      *Go to Q2a*

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>No participants received this item, as all were former inmates who had served sentences (Q1 = 1).</p>
<p><b><i>Recommendations:</i></b></p> <p>See Q1 above for the option of combining the two questions.</p>

**Q3.** PAROLE INTRO: People are sometimes incarcerated in prison for violating their parole or post-release supervision, which can result from a technical violation of the person’s parole conditions, from being sentenced to serve time for new crimes or offenses, or from being arrested for or charged with new crimes or offenses. When we ask you about parole or post-release supervision, we are talking about times you may have supervised in the community after serving a sentence in prison or jail. Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a parole or post-release supervision violation?

- 1      Yes    *Go to Q3a*
- 2      No      *Go to Q11*

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>Participants generally understood this question, although the intro is lengthy. One participant confused it for probation and responded “yes” until reaching Q11 when he realized it was addressing probation.</p>
<p><b><i>Recommendations:</i></b></p> <p>Option 1 - Consider a global question that presents parole (Q3) and probation (Q11) and asks the inmate whether they are incarcerated for either, such as:</p> <p><i>The next question is about your experience with probation and parole.</i></p> <p><i>Some people are sentenced to <b>probation</b>. Other people are sentenced to <b>parole or post-release supervision</b>. This is when an individual is supervised in the community after serving a sentence in prison or jail. Violating the terms of either probation or parole/post-release supervision may result in being arrested, charged, or sentenced with new crimes or offenses.</i></p> <p><i>Are you incarcerated in this facility because you violated the conditions of your probation, parole/post-release supervision, or neither?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.      <i>PROBATION</i></li> <li>2.      <i>PAROLE OR POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION</i></li> <li>3.      <i>NEITHER</i></li> </ul>

Option 2 – If not combining with Q11, streamline the language of this question to simply read:

*People are sometimes incarcerated in prison for violating their parole or post-release supervision. Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a parole or post-release supervision violation?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

An on-screen interviewer note could then provide the omitted question text as optional, explanatory text to be read if a respondent is having trouble with the question. For example:

*[A parole or post-release supervision violation can result from a technical violation of the person's parole conditions, from being sentenced to serve time for new crimes or offenses, or from being arrested for or charged with new crimes or offenses. When we ask you about parole or post-release supervision, we are talking about times you may have supervised in the community after serving a sentence in prison or jail.]*

Consider using a transitional statement prior to this question to set the context, such as:

*The next few questions are about your experiences with parole.*

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q3.** *The next few questions are about your experiences with parole or post-release supervision.*

*People are sometimes incarcerated in prison for violating their parole or post-release supervision. When we ask you about parole or post-release supervision, we are talking about times you may have been supervised in the community after serving a sentence in prison or jail. Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a parole or post-release supervision violation?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

An on-screen interviewer note will then provide the omitted question text as optional, explanatory text to be read if a respondent is having trouble with the question. It will read as follows:

*[A parole or post-release supervision violation can result from being arrested, charged, or sentenced for a new crime or as a result of violating the parole conditions.]*

**Parole violators**

**Q3a.** In what month and year were you arrested for or charged with the parole or post-release supervision violation that led to you being incarcerated in this prison?



Enter Month: \_\_\_[@MM]  
Enter 4-Digit Year: \_\_\_\_\_ [@YYYY]  
Go to Q4

<b>Findings:</b>  Recall may be an issue in cases where there was a lot of time between the arrest and the incarceration. The arrest date may not be prominent/ salient.
<b>Recommendations:</b>  None

**Q4.** [IF Q3 = 1] So you were on parole or post-release supervision before this incarceration in prison. For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison and then put on parole?

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Go to Q5

<b>Findings:</b>  Only one participant seemed to struggle with this question and provided the description of the parole violation, rather than the offenses for which he was originally sentenced.
<b>Recommendations:</b>  1. The context for this question has already been established and the previous question asks about parole so it is clear that they were on parole, therefore consider removing the first sentence and simply ask the question.  2. Consider having the FI confirm the offense(s) with the inmate to ensure correct information is being captured.
<b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b>  <b>Q4.</b> [IF Q3 = 1] For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison and then put on parole or post-release supervision?  1 _____ 2 _____

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to Q5*

**FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT**

**Q5.** [IF Q3 = 1] When you were released from prison and then put on parole before this incarceration, how were you released from prison? Was it by a parole board, was it by mandatory release, or by some other type of release?

- 1 Parole board
- 2 Mandatory release
- 3 Some other type of release. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to Q6*

***Findings:***

One participant gave the “other” response and indicated that he had served all of his time.

***Recommendations:***

There are lingering concerns over the concept of “mandatory release.”

Option 1 – Separate out into 2 questions. First ask about whether it was a release by parole board. Then ask about what kind of release it was (for those who indicate it was not by a parole board). For example:

**Q5.** *[IF Q3 = 1] When you were released from prison and then put on parole before this incarceration, were you released by a parole board?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Q5a.** *[IF Q5 = 2] How were you released from prison?*

*Specify* \_\_\_\_\_

This would enable us to look at any open ended data collected from this item during the pilot test to inform decisions about how to word this question for SPI 2014.

Option 2 – If keeping the current question structure, clarify mandatory release. Operationalize what a mandatory release is and use that description instead of or in addition to “mandatory release”. This will help decrease the amount of recoding of other responses in cases where the inmate’s “other” response would fall into the mandatory release category.

**Q6.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 1] Did your parole violation that led to this incarceration involve being sentenced to serve time in prison for any new offenses?

- 1 Yes Go to S2Q6c
- 2 No Go to Q6c

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only 2 participants received this item. Both seemed to understand it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Although the participants understood the question there are lingering concerns over the structure of the question. We recommend asking the question in a way that focuses more clearly on the new offenses rather than the parole violation, since we already know from their response to Q3 that they violated parole. Consider the following revision:</p> <p><i>In addition to your parole violation, are you now incarcerated because you have been sentenced to serve time for any new offenses?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Yes</li><li>2 No</li></ul> <p><b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b></p> <p><b>Q6.</b> [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 1] Did your parole violation involve being sentenced to serve time in prison for any new offenses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Yes Go to S2Q6c</li><li>2 No Go to Q6c</li></ul>

**S2Q6c.** [IF Q6 = 1] In what month and year were you arrested for or charged with those new offenses?

Enter Month: \_\_\_ [ @MM ]  
Enter 4-Digit Year: \_\_\_\_\_ [ @YYYY ]

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item. Recall may be an issue in cases where there was a lot of time between the arrest and the incarceration. The arrest date may not be prominent/ salient.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>

None

**Q6a.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q6 = 1] For what new offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison for this incarceration?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to Q 6b*

***Findings:***

No participants received this item.

***Recommendations:***

1. Consider pairing down the question to simply read, “*What were the new offenses?*”

The context is already developed that the focus is on the offenses.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

***Q6a.*** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q6 = 1] *What were the new offenses?*

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

*A Parole Violation*

*B Probation Violation*

***FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT***

**Q7.** [IF Q3 = 1] Did your parole violation that led to this incarceration involve a technical violation of your parole conditions?

- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- Go to S3Q3d (Sentencing)*

***Findings:***

Only 1 participant received this item.

**Recommendations:**

Since the focus here is on a “technical violation” we should provide a description and/or example(s) of a technical violation to establish context.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q7.** *[IF Q3 = 1] Did your parole violation that led to this incarceration involve a violation of the terms of your parole conditions?*

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1 | Yes |
| 2 | No  |

**Q11.** [IF Q3 = 2] PROB INTRO: People are sometimes incarcerated for probation violations, which can result from a technical violation of the person’s probation conditions, from being sentenced to serve time for new crimes or offenses, or from being arrested for or charged with new crimes or offenses. Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a probation violation?

- |   |     |                   |
|---|-----|-------------------|
| 1 | Yes | <i>Go to Q11a</i> |
| 2 | No  | <i>Go to Q35</i>  |

**Findings:**

Participants were mixed on their understanding of what a “technical violation” is.

**Recommendations:**

Option 1 - See Q3 for recommendation to combine with question on parole.

Option 2 – If not combining with Q3, streamline the language of this question to simply read:

*Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a probation violation?*

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1 | Yes |
| 2 | No  |

An on-screen interviewer note could then provide the omitted question text as optional, explanatory text to be read if a respondent is having trouble with the question. For example:

*[A probation violation can result from a technical violation of a person’s probation conditions, from being sentenced to serve time for new crimes or offenses, or from being arrested for or charged with new crimes or offenses.]*

Consider using a transitional statement prior to this question to set the context, such as:

*“The next few questions are about your experience with probation.”*

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q11.** [IF Q3 = 2] *The next few questions are about your experience with probation.*

*Are you incarcerated in this facility because of a probation violation?*

1      *Yes*

2      *No*

An on-screen interviewer note will then provide the omitted question text as optional, explanatory text to be read if a respondent is having trouble with the question. It will read as follows:

*[A probation violation can result from being arrested, charged, or sentenced for a new crime or as a result of violating the conditions of probation]*

**Probation violators**

**Q11a.** [IF Q11 = 1] In what month and year were you arrested for or charged with the probation violation that led to you being incarcerated in this prison?

Enter Month: \_\_\_ [ @MM ]

Enter 4-Digit Year: \_\_\_\_\_ [ @YYYY ]

***Findings:***

Only 1 participant received this item and clearly understood it. Recall may be an issue in cases where there was a lot of time between the arrest and the incarceration. The arrest date may not be prominent/ salient.

***Recommendations:***

None

**Q12.** [IF Q11 = 1] So you were on probation before this incarceration in prison. Was your probation a stand-alone sentence given to you by the court, or was your probation part of a split sentence or connected to serving time in a prison or jail?

(1) A stand-alone sentence given by the court

(2) Part of a split sentence or connected to serving time in a prison or jail

(h) Help – *Display help screen h\_STATUS defined after item S2Q1b*  
Go to Q13b

**Findings:**

Only 2 participants received this item but clearly understood it.

**Recommendations:**

The context for this question has already been established and the previous question asks about parole so it is clear that they were on probation, therefore consider removing the first sentence and simply ask the question.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q12a.** [IF Q11 = 1] Now we are interested in how you received your probation sentence. Was your probation sentence a stand-alone sentence given by the court with no incarceration time?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No Go to Q12b

**Q12b.** [IF Q12a = 2] Was your probation sentence part of a split sentence connected to serving time in a prison or jail?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Q13b.** [IF Q11 = 1] For what offenses were you put on probation?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Go to Q14

**Findings:**

None

**Recommendations:**

Consider having the interviewer confirm the offense(s) with the inmate to ensure correct information is being captured.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q13b.** [IF Q11 = 1] For what offenses were you put on probation?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to Q14*

**FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT**

**Q14.** [IF Q12 = 2] Earlier you told me you are here because of a probation violation. When you were sentenced to serve time in jail or prison and then put on probation before this incarceration, how were you released from prison or jail? Was it by a board, was it by mandatory release, or by some other type of release?

- 1 Board
- 2 Mandatory release
- 3 Some other type of release. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to Q15*

***Findings:***

Only one participant received this item but clearly understood the question.

***Recommendations:***

Keep this question symmetrical with Q5 and make changes that are congruent with the option selected for that item.

If Option 1 is not selected for Q5, do the following for this item.

- 1. Clarify mandatory release. Operationalize what a mandatory release is and use that description instead of or in addition to “mandatory release”. This will help decrease the amount of recoding of other responses in cases where the inmate’s response would fall into the mandatory release category.
- 2. Clarify “Board”. Parole board is understood. If there is a way to describe “board” in the context of probation, model the answer category after Q5.
- 3. Consider removing the first sentence to decrease burden on the respondent and expedite reading the question.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q14.** [IF Q12b = 1] When you were released from prison or jail and then put on probation before this incarceration, were you released by a board?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Q14a.** [IF Q14 = 2] How were you released from prison or jail?



Specify \_\_\_\_\_

This would enable us to look at any open ended data collected from this item during the pilot test to inform decisions about how to word this question for SPI 2014.

**Q15.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q11 = 1] Did your probation violation that led to this incarceration involve being sentenced to serve time in prison for any new offenses?

- 1 Yes Go to Q15a1
- 2 No Go to Q15c

**Findings:**

Only one participant received this item but seemed to understand it.

**Recommendations:**

Although the participant understood the question there are lingering concerns over the structure of the question. We recommend asking the question in a way that focuses more clearly on the new offenses rather than the probation violation, since we already know from their response to Q11 that they violated probation. Consider the following revision:

*In addition to your probation violation, are you now incarcerated because you have been sentenced to serve time for any new offenses?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q15.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q11 = 1] Did your probation violation involve being sentenced to serve time in prison for any new offenses?

- 1 Yes Go to S2Q6c
- 2 No Go to Q6c

**Q15a1.** [IF Q15 = 1] In what month and year were you arrested for or charged with those new offenses??

Enter Month: \_\_\_\_ [ @MM ]  
Enter 4-Digit Year: \_\_\_\_\_ [ @YYYY ]

Go to Q15a

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only 1 participant received this item and clearly understood it. Recall may be an issue in cases where there was a lot of time between the arrest and the incarceration. The arrest date may not be prominent/ salient.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**Q15a.** [IF Q15 = 1] For what new offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison for this incarceration?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Go to Q16

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>None</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>1. Consider pairing down the question to simply read, “What were the new offenses?”</p> <p>The context is already developed that the focus is on the offenses.</p> <p>2. Consider having the FI confirm the offense(s) with the inmate to ensure correct information is being captured.</p> <p><b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b></p> <p><b>Q15a.</b> [IF Q15 = 1] What were the new offenses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 _____</li><li>2 _____</li><li>3 _____</li><li>4 _____</li></ul> <p>A Parole Violation B Probation Violation</p> <p><b>FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT</b></p>

**Q16.** [IF Q11 = 1] Did your probation violation that led to this incarceration involve a technical violation of your probation conditions?

- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- Go to S3Q3d (Sentencing)*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only two participants received this item. Both easily answered it but were not sure exactly how to describe a “technical violation.”</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Since the focus here is on a “technical violation” we should provide a description and/or example(s) of a technical violation to establish context.</p> <p><b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b></p> <p><b>Q16.</b> <i>[IF Q11 = 1] Did your probation violation that led to this incarceration involve a violation of the terms of your probation conditions?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Yes</li><li>2 No</li></ul>

**Prisoners not incarcerated for a P or P violation; P and P status at admission**

**Q35.** [IF Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2] At the time that you were admitted to prison on [DATE\_ADMIT] for this incarceration, were you on parole or post-release supervision?

- 1 Yes *Go to Q36*
- 2 No *Go to Q39*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants seemed to understand the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**Q36.** [IF Q35 = 1] So you were on parole before this incarceration in prison. For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison and then put on parole?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Go to Q37

**Findings:**

No participants received this item.

---

**Recommendations:**

Although no participants received this question there are lingering concerns over the structure of the question.

Consider removing the statement preceding the question since context has been established.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q36.** *[IF Q35 = 1] For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison and then put on parole?*

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Go to Q37

**FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT**

**Q37.** [IF Q35 = 1] When you were released from prison and then put on parole before this incarceration, how were you released from prison? Was it by a parole board, was it by mandatory release, or by some other type of release?

- 1 Parole board
- 2 Mandatory release
- 3 Some other type of release. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:**

No participants received this item.

---

**Recommendations:**

Clarify mandatory release. Operationalize what a mandatory release is and use that description instead of or in addition to “mandatory release”. This will help decrease the amount of recoding of other responses in cases where the inmate’s response would fall into the mandatory release

category.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q37.** [IF Q35 = 1] When you were released from prison and then put on parole before this incarceration, were you released by a parole board?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Q37a.** [IF Q5 = 2] How were you released from prison?

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

This would enable us to look at any open ended data collected from this item during the pilot test to inform decisions about how to word this question for SPI 2014. (Congruent with the approach being taken for Q5/Q5a)

**Q39.** [IF Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2 AND Q35 = 2] At the time that you were admitted to prison on [DATE\_ADMIT] for this incarceration, were you on probation?

- 1 Yes Go to Q40
- 2 No Go to Q24a

**Findings:**

Participants seemed to have no trouble with this item.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Q40.** [IF Q39 = 1] So you were on probation before this incarceration in prison. Was your probation a stand-alone sentence given to you by the court, or was your probation part of a split sentence or connected to serving time in a prison or jail?

- (1) A stand-alone sentence given by the court
- (2) Part of a split sentence or connected to serving time in a prison or jail

**Findings:**

Only 1 participant received this item and had no trouble understanding it.

**Recommendations:**

The context for this question has already been established and the previous question asks about parole so it is clear that they were on probation therefore consider removing the first sentence and simply asking the question.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q40a.** [IF Q39 = 1] Now we are interested in how you received your probation sentence. Was your probation sentence a stand-alone sentence given by the court with no incarceration time?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No Go to Q40b

**Q40b.** [IF Q40a = 2] Was your probation sentence part of a split sentence connected to serving time in a prison or jail?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Q40b.** For what offenses were you put on probation?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:**

Only 1 participant received this item and seemed to easily understand it.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Q24a.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2] For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison for this incarceration?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Go to Q24b

**Findings:**

Participants had no trouble answering this question and providing multiple offenses where

appropriate.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

**Q24a.** [IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2] For what offenses were you sentenced to serve time in prison for this incarceration?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

- A Parole Violation
- B Probation Violation

**FI INSTRUCTION: VERIFY THE RECORDED OFFENSES WITH THE RESPONDENT**

**Sentencing**

S3Q3d. [IF Q1 = 1 OR Q2 = 1] Altogether, how long did you spend in jail after you were arrested or charged on (DATE\_ARREST) and before being admitted to prison on (DATE ADMIT)?

- \_\_\_\_ Years (Range 0-5, blank)
- \_\_\_\_ Months (Range 0-30, blank)
- \_\_\_\_ Weeks (Range 0-30, blank)
- \_\_\_\_ Days (Range 0-200, blank)

**Findings:**

Participants had no trouble answering this question and could provide precise answers.

**Recommendations:**

None

S3Q3e. [IF Q1 = 1 S3Q3d = 1+] How much jail time was applied to your prison sentence?

- \_\_\_\_ Years (Range 0-5, blank)

\_\_\_\_ Months (*Range 0-30, blank*)  
\_\_\_\_ Weeks (*Range 0-30, blank*)  
\_\_\_\_ Days (*Range 0-200, blank*)

--or--

(0) None  
of it (1)  
All of it  
(D) Don't know

<b><i>Findings:</i></b>  Participants understood the question and were able to answer it rather easily.
<b><i>Recommendations:</i></b>  None

### **Sentenced prisoners with one offense**

Q6b. See below

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q6 = 2 AND Q4 = 1 offense)] How long is your sentence to prison for [*Name the offense listed in Q4*]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q6 = 1 AND Q6a = 1 offense)] How long is your sentence to prison for [*Name the offense listed in Q6a*]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q15 = 2 AND Q13b = 1 offense)] How long is your sentence to prison for [*Name the offense listed in Q13b*]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q15 = 1 AND Q15a = 1 offense)] How long is your sentence to prison for [*Name the offense listed in Q15a*]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2 AND Q24a = 1 offense)] How long is your sentence to prison for [*Name the offense listed in Q24a*]? Include any suspended time.

Go to S4Q2d



***Findings:***

Participants easily answered the question and, but when probed one indicated that he did not include suspended time.

***Recommendations:***

None

**Sentenced prisoners with multiple offenses**

S4Q2a. See below

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q6 = 2 AND Q4 = 2+ offenses)] What is the total maximum sentence length to prison for ALL the consecutive sentences you are serving? [Name the offenses listed in Q4]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q6 = 1 AND Q6a = 2+ offenses)] What is the total maximum sentence length to prison for ALL the consecutive sentences you are serving? [Name the offenses listed in Q6a]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q15 = 2 AND Q13b = 2+ offenses)] What is the total maximum sentence length to prison for ALL the consecutive sentences you are serving? [Name the offenses listed in Q13b]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q15 = 1 AND Q15a = 2+ offenses)] What is the total maximum sentence length to prison for ALL the consecutive sentences you are serving? [Name the offenses listed in Q15a]? Include any suspended time.

[IF Q1 = 1 AND Q3 = 2 AND Q11 = 2 AND Q24a = 2+ offenses)] What is the total maximum sentence length to prison for ALL the consecutive sentences you are serving? [Name the offenses listed in Q24a]? Include any suspended time.

***Findings:***

There was no uniformity in the way participants responded to this question. Some participants gave answers as a range. One participant added up the entire amount of his life he's spent incarcerated. One participant gave two separate lengths (one for each conviction).

***Recommendations:***

The question is asking respondents to perform what can be fairly complex calculations in their heads in order to provide the answer. Inherent in this is the risk of measurement error attributable to respondents' inaccurate reporting. To alleviate this concern we recommend first asking the inmate whether he/she is serving consecutive sentences and then collect the length of each, aggregating it behind the scenes in the instrument.

S4Q2f. [IF Q1 = 1 AND (Q4, Q6a, Q13b, Q15a, or Q24a = 2+)] Of the (*Insert offenses from Storage Item Q4, Q6a, Q13b, Q15a, or Q24a*), for which offense did you receive the longest sentence? *Display offenses from Storage Item Q4, Q6a, Q13b, Q15a, or Q24a, numbered 1-5 above question.*

\_\_\_\_\_ (*Range 1-5, 9,0*)

(0) Only one sentence

(9) All sentences are the same length

**Findings:**

Participants with multiple offenses were easily able to recall which had the longest sentence.

**Recommendations:**

None

S4Q2d. [IF Q1 = 1] Has any part of your total sentence been suspended?

(1) Yes

(2) No - *Skip S4Q3d*

**Findings:**

Participants seemed to easily understand and answer this question. When probed, all knew what a suspended sentence was.

**Recommendations:**

None

S4Q2e. [IF S4Q2d = 1] By how much was your sentence suspended? ENTER (D) IF DON'T KNOW

Enter Years: \_\_\_\_ (*Range 1-60, blank*)

Enter Months: \_\_\_\_ (Range 1-30, blank)

Enter Days: \_\_\_\_ (Range 1-200, blank)

– or –

(1) All of it •

<b>Findings:</b>
Participants seemed to easily understand and answer this question.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
None

S4Q3d. [IF Q1 = 1] Does your sentence for this incarceration include –

	Yes	No
S4Q3d1. Court costs or felony assessment fees?	1	2
S4Q3d2. A fine?	1	2
S4Q3d3. Restitution to the victim (if there was one)?	1	2
S4Q3d4. Another type of fee or monetary condition?	1	2

S4Q3d4. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Findings:</b>															
When asked S4Q3d1 participants began to answer as though the question was open-ended and provided all the types of fees they paid, not realizing it is a small series of yes/no items covering separate fees. This caused some slight confusion and rereading of questions. Three participants mentioned probation or “PRS” fees as the “other” type of fee.															
<b>Recommendations:</b>															
We recommend structuring the question as follows:															
<i>I'm going to read a list of fees that your sentence may require you to pay. Does your sentence require you to pay:</i>															
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>S4Q3d1. Court costs or felony assessment fees?</i></td> <td><i>1</i></td> <td><i>2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>S4Q3d2. Any fines?</i></td> <td><i>1</i></td> <td><i>2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>S4Q3d3. Restitution to the victim if there was one?</i></td> <td><i>1</i></td> <td><i>2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>S4Q3d4. Some other type of fee or payment?</i></td> <td><i>1</i></td> <td><i>2</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	<i>S4Q3d1. Court costs or felony assessment fees?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>S4Q3d2. Any fines?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>S4Q3d3. Restitution to the victim if there was one?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>S4Q3d4. Some other type of fee or payment?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
	Yes	No													
<i>S4Q3d1. Court costs or felony assessment fees?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>													
<i>S4Q3d2. Any fines?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>													
<i>S4Q3d3. Restitution to the victim if there was one?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>													
<i>S4Q3d4. Some other type of fee or payment?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>													
S4Q3d4. Specify _____															



D6b1. [IF S10Q16a = 1 OR S10Q16c = 1] When you are released, do you expect to be on parole or post-release supervision?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Findings:**

Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.

**Recommendations:**

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

*D6b1. [IF S10Q16a = 1 OR S10Q16c = 1] When you are released, do you expect to be supervised in the community on either parole or probation?*

- 1 Yes*
- 2 No*

Q6a1. Is the (Insert controlling offense from Storage item Q6a) generally considered a -

- (1) Violent offense? - Mark 1 "Violent offense in Storage item 5A and ask S5Q2a
- (2) Property offense? Did you take, damage or handle someone's property, defraud them of something of theirs, embezzle something of value, burglarize a building, or obtain money or other financial gain by deceit? - Mark 2 "Property offense" in Storage item 5A and skip to S5Q12a
- (3) Violation of laws which could or did give you some financial gain, but not a violent or drug offense? - Mark 2 "Property offense" in Storage item 5A and skip to S5Q12a
- (4) Drug offense? - Mark 3 "Drug offense" in Storage item 5A and skip to FR\_INST\_5I?
- (5) Public order offense? - Mark 4, "Public order offense" in Storage item 5A and skip to S5Q12k (D) Don't know - Mark 6, "Don't know" in Storage item 5A and skip to S5Q15a

**Findings:**

Only 3 participants received this item but seemed to easily understand and provide the type of offense it was.

**Recommendations:**

None

### Attorney Questions

I am now going to ask you some questions related to your experiences with public defenders or lawyers between when you were arrested or charged on (DATE\_ARREST) and when you were admitted to prison on (DATE\_ADMIT).

B4. At any time between when you were arrested or charged on (DATE\_ARREST) and when you were admitted to prison on (DATE\_ADMIT), were you represented by a public or private attorney or lawyer? Please include public defenders when answering.

- 1 Yes *Go to B4b*
- 2 No *Go to S5Q2a*

**Findings:**

Participants generally answered with a response of what kind of attorney they had (public defender) rather than giving yes/no responses, however the interviewer was able to code appropriately.

**Recommendations:**

The question appears to work but findings may indicate a need to train interviewers on how to code these types of responses to be yes/no.

1. We recommend a revised intro to the section and revisions to the question itself so they will perform better. The proposed revisions read as follows:

*I am now going to ask you some questions related to your experiences with being represented by private attorneys or lawyers, or public attorneys or lawyers, including public defenders.*

*B4. At any time between when you were arrested or charged on (DATE\_ARREST) and when you were admitted to prison on (DATE\_ADMIT), were you represented by any kind of attorney or lawyer?*

- 1 Yes*
- 2 No*

2. Consider adding an additional question to confirm that the inmate had no legal representation, such as:

*B4a. [If B4 = 2] Did you represent yourself?*

- 1 Yes Go to S5Q2a
- 2 No Go to B4b

B4b. [IF B4 = 1] Were you represented by a public defender or a lawyer who was appointed by the court to represent you?

- 1 Yes Go to S5Q2a
- 2 No Go to B4e

**Findings:**

Participants all knew what a “public defender” was. Participants gave other than yes/no responses however the interviewer was able to code appropriately.

**Recommendations:**

None

B4e. [IF B4 = 1] Were you represented by a lawyer who you or someone else hired and had to pay to represent you?

- 1 Yes Go to S5Q2a
- 2 No Go to S5Q2a

**Findings:**

Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.

**Recommendations:**

1. Add the word, “private” to describe the lawyer being asked about in this item to further differentiate from the type of representation asked about in the previous question. For example:

*B4e. [IF B4 = 1] Were you represented by a private lawyer who you or someone else hired and had to pay to represent you?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Additional Offense and Victim Information**

**Sentenced prisoners with a violent offense as their controlling offense**

S5Q2a. The next few questions are about the victims of the [REF CTRLING VIOLENT OFFENSE] for which you are now serving time in prison.

Was there one victim of the [CTRLING VIOLENT OFFENSE] or more than one?

- (1) One victim
- (2) More than one victim - *Skip to S5Q5a*
- (3) No victim or victim was not a person - GO TO WEAPONS SECTION

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Put response category 3 in all CAPS to be a field coded answer category.

**Subsection A: One victim**

S5Q2d. Was the person male or female?

- (1) Male
- (2) Female
- (D) Don't know

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

S5Q3a. Was the person someone you knew or a stranger you had never seen before?

- 1. Knew *go to S5Q3b*
- 2. Stranger GO TO WEAPONSSECTION

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

S5Q3b. How well did you know the person - by sight only, casual acquaintance, or well known?

- (1) Sight only
  - (2) Casual acquaintance
  - (3) Well known
- GO TO WEAPONS SECTION

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only 3 participants received this item but were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**Subsection B: More than one victim**

S5Q5a. How many persons were victims?

- \_\_\_ Persons (*Range 2-20*) (D)
- Don't know

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

S5Q5b. Were these persons victims of a single incident or more than one incident of the crime?

- (1) One incident



(2) Multiple incidents

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

S5Q9a. Were any of the persons known to you or were they all strangers you had never seen before?

- (1) All known
- (2) Some known
- (3) All strangers - *Skip to COMP\_INST\_5H*
- (D) Don't know - *Skip to COMP\_INST\_5H*

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

S5Q9b. How well did you know the persons? Did you know any of them...

	Yes	No
by sight only? GO TO WEAPONS SECTION	1	2
as casual acquaintances?	1	2
well known?	1	2

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

S5Q9c. At the time of the crime, what was the relationship to you of the { well known persons and/or the casual acquaintances }? For example, friends, relatives, etc.

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- (1) Spouse
- (2) Ex-spouse
- (3) Parent/Step-parent
- (4) Own child
- (5) Step-child
- (6) Brother/Sister/Step-brother/Step-sister
- (7) Other relative - *Specify*
- (8) Boyfriend/girlfriend
- (9) Ex-boyfriend/Ex-girlfriend
- (10) Friend/Ex-friend
- (11) \_\_\_\_\_ Other non-relative - *Specify*

\_\_\_\_ ENTER THE CATEGORY NUMBER TO SELECT OR  
DESELECT ENTER (N) WHEN DONE  
GO TO WEAPONS SECTION

<b><i>Findings:</i></b> Only one participant received this item but was able to easily answer it.
<b><i>Recommendations:</i></b> None

**Drug Crime**

**[ARE ANY OF ABOVE OFFENSES (*INSERT CONTROLLING OFFENSE*)  
“POSSESSION” OF A DRUG?]**

- (1) YES - ASK S5Q13
  - (2) NO - SKIP TO S5Q13A
- DO NOT ALLOW D OR R ENTRIES**

S5Q13. You said that you were convicted for drug possession. Was that possession with intent to distribute drugs?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

<b><i>Findings:</i></b> Only one participant received this item but was able to easily answer it.
--

**Recommendations:**

None

S5Q13a. You said that you were convicted for [REFERENCE CONTROLLING DRUG OFFENSE]. What drugs were involved? Any others?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- J1A. MARIJUANA OR HASHISH?
- J1B. ANY FORM OF COCAINE, INCLUDING POWDER, "CRACK", FREE BASE, AND COCA PASTE?
- J1C. [IF J1B = 1] "CRACK"?
- J1D. HEROIN?
- J1E. PCP? PCP IS ALSO CALLED "ANGEL DUST" OR PHENCYCLIDINE.
- J1F. ECSTASY, ALSO KNOWN AS MDMA?
- J1G. ANY OTHER TYPE OF HALLUCINOGEN, INCLUDING LSD, PEYOTE, Mescaline, OR PSILOCYBIN, FOUND IN MUSHROOMS?
- J1H. INHALANTS - THAT IS SUBSTANCES THAT PEOPLE SNIFF OR INHALE FOR KICKS OR TO GET HIGH? THESE INCLUDE: AMYL NITRITE, LOCKER ROOM ODORIZERS, CLEANING FLUID, GASOLINE, GLUE, NITROUS OXIDE, OR SPRAY PAINTS.
- J1I. METHAMPHETAMINE, ALSO KNOWN AS METH, CRYSTAL, OR CRANK?
- J1J. ANY ILLEGAL DRUGS OTHER THAN THOSE I'VE JUST ASKED YOU ABOUT? SPECIFY:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- J1K. PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVER SUCH AS DARVON, PERCOCET, VICODAN, METHADONE,, OR OXYCONTIN THAT WAS NOT PRESCRIBED FOR YOU OR THAT YOU TOOK ONLY FOR THE EXPERIENCE OR FEELING IT CAUSED?
- J1L. PRESCRIPTION TRANQUILIZER SUCH AS XANAX, ATIVAN, VALIUM, KLONOPIN, OR CLONAZEPAM THAT WAS NOT PRESCRIBED FOR YOU OR THAT YOU TOOK ONLY FOR THE EXPERIENCE OR FEELING IT CAUSED?
- J1M. PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT SUCH AS METHEDRINE, AMPHETAMINES, RITALIN, OR DEXEDRINE THAT WAS NOT PRESCRIBED FOR

YOU OR THAT YOU TOOK ONLY FOR THE EXPERIENCE OR FEELING IT CAUSED?

J1N. PRESCRIPTION SEDATIVE SUCH AS BARBITURATES, METHAQUALONE, NEMBUTAL, SECONAL, OR RESTORIL THAT WAS NOT PRESCRIBED FOR YOU OR THAT YOU TOOK ONLY FOR THE EXPERIENCE OR FEELING IT CAUSED?

<b>Findings:</b> Only one participant received this item but was able to easily answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

S5Q13b. Approximately what amount of heroin was involved?

- \_\_\_ Milligrams (*Range 0.00-500, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-900, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-100, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-32, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-20, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Tons (*Range 0.00-2, blank*)

<b>Findings:</b> Only 1 participant received this item but provided his answer in a slang term; “a bindle.” It was difficult to determine the approximate weight of the substance.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Explore other options for measurement and coding slang terms, as has been done with other drugs in this section of the survey (i.e., amphetamines, marijuana).

S5Q13d. Approximately what amount of opiates or methadone was involved?

- \_\_\_ Milligrams (*Range 0.00-500, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-900, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-100, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-32, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-20, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Tons (*Range 0.00-2, blank*)

\_\_\_ Other - Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b> See S5Q13b.

S5Q13e. Approximately what amount of amphetamine or methamphetamine was involved?

- \_\_\_ Milligrams (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-500, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-32, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Rocks (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Other - Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b> See S5Q13b.

S5Q13h. Approximately what amount of tranquilizers was involved?

- \_\_\_ Pills (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-10 blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-16, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Liters (*Range 0.00-10, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Gallons (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Other - Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -

<b>Findings:</b> No participants received this item.
---

**Recommendations:**

See S5Q13b.

S5Q13i. Approximately what amount of crack cocaine was involved?

\_\_\_ Milligrams (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)

\_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)

\_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-500, blank*)

\_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-32, blank*)

\_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)

\_\_\_ Rocks (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)

\_\_\_ Other - *Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -*

**Findings:**

No participants received this item.

**Recommendations:**

See S5Q13b.

S5Q13j. Approximately what amount of cocaine other than crack was involved?

\_\_\_ Milligrams (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)

\_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)

\_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-500, blank*)

\_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-32, blank*)

\_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)

\_\_\_ Rocks (*Range 0.00-200, blank*)

\_\_\_ Other - *Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -*

**Findings:**

No participants received this item.

**Recommendations:**

See S5Q13b.

S5Q13m. Approximately what amount of ecstasy was involved?

\_\_\_ Pills (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)

\_\_\_ Grams (*Range 0.00-1000, blank*)

- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 0.00-10 blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 0.00-16, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Liters (*Range 0.00-10, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Gallons (*Range 0.00-5, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Other - *Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>See S5Q13b.</p>

S5Q13o. Approximately what amount of marijuana or hashish was involved?

- \_\_\_ Joints (*Range 1-100, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Grams (*Range 1-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Kilograms (*Range 1-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Ounces (*Range 1-16, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Pounds (*Range 1-500000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Tons (*Range 1-1000, blank*)
- \_\_\_ Other -*Allow decimal entries for amount - Specify amount and measure - entries for amount - Specify amount and measure -*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>See S5Q13b.</p>

S5Q14b. Were you ...

(1) Yes (2) No

- \_\_\_ A street-level dealer [*@1*]
- \_\_\_ A dealer above the street-level dealer [*@2*]
- \_\_\_ A bodyguard, strongman or debt collector [*@3*]
- \_\_\_ A go-between or broker [*@4*]
- \_\_\_ A moneyrunner [*@5*]
- \_\_\_ A courier, mule or loader [*@6*]

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only one participant received this item but was able to easily answer it. When probed, he indicated that the categories accurately described positions within the drug dealing enterprise and that he could not think of any others.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

**Weapons**

G1. Did you carry, possess, or use a weapon when the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE] occurred?

- 1 Yes Go to G2
- 2 No Go to I1

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>One participant indicated that he had trouble with the question since he used a fake weapon. He still gave a “yes” response. All other participants had no trouble answering this question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider adding an FI note to instruct interviewers not to include fake weapons. (This point assumes that we are not interested in collecting data on fake weapons)</p>

G2. [IF G1 = 1] How many weapons did you carry, possess, or use when the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE] occurred?

- 1 One Go to G3
- 2 Two or more Go to G4

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b></p> <p>G2. [IF G1 = 1] How many weapons did you carry, possess, or use when the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE] occurred?</p>



- 1 ONE
- 2 TWO TO THREE
- 3 FOUR TO FIVE
- 4 MORE THAN FIVE

- G3. [IF G2=1] What kind of weapon was it?
- (1) Gun or Firearm *Go to G6*
  - (2) Toy or BB gun *Go to G6*
  - (3) Knife
  - (4) Other sharp object, such as a scissors, ice pick, ax, etc.
  - (5) Blunt object, such as a rock, club, blackjack, etc.
  - (6) Another weapon - *Specify* \_\_\_\_\_
- If DK or RF use "weapon" for later fills.*

***Findings:***

Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.

***Recommendations:***

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

- [IF G2=1] What kind of weapon was it? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
- (1) Firearm
  - (2) Toy or BB gun (INCLUDE FAKE OR NON-FIRING GUNS)
  - (3) Knife
  - (4) Other sharp object, such as a scissors, ice pick, ax, etc.
  - (5) Blunt object, such as a rock, club, blackjack, etc.
  - (6) \_\_\_\_\_ A
- Another weapon - *Specify* \_\_\_\_\_
- If DK or RF use "weapon" for later fills.*

- G4. [IF G2=2] What kinds of weapons were they? MARK ALL THAT APPLY
- (1) Gun or Firearm *Go to G5*
  - (2) Toy or BB gun
  - (3) Knife
  - (4) Other sharp object, such as a scissors, ice pick, ax, etc.
  - (5) Blunt object, such as a rock, club, blackjack, etc.
  - (6) Another weapon] - *Specify* \_\_\_\_\_
- If DR or RF use "weapon" for later fills.*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

G5. [IF G2 = 2 and G4 = 1] How many guns did you carry, possess, or use when the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE] occurred?

- 1 One Go to G6
- 2 Two or more Go to G7

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

G6. [IF G3 = 1 OR G5 = 1] What type of gun was it?

- (1) A handgun? Go to G8
- (2) A rifle? Go to G8
- (3) A shotgun? Go to G8
- (4) Some other type of firearm? – Specify \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it; however, there is inconsistency in terminology for the answer category 4.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider changing answer category 4 to read as follows:</p> <p><i>Some other type of gun? – Specify</i></p>

G7. [IF G5 = 2] What types of guns were they? MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- (1) A handgun?
- (2) A rifle?
- (3) A shotgun?
- (4) Some other type of firearm? – Specify \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>See recommendation for G7 above.</p>

G8. Did you show or point (the gun/ any of the guns) at anyone during the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE]

- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- Go to G9

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

G9. Did you fire [the gun/any of the guns] during the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE]?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

G12. [SINGLE WEAPON] How did you obtain the (*Insert response from G6*) that you carried, possessed, or used during the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE]?

- 1 STOLE IT
- 2 RENTED IT
- 3 BORROWED IT FROM OR WAS HOLDING IT FOR SOMEBODY
- 4 TRADED SOMETHING FOR IT

- 5 BOUGHT IT *GO TO G14*
- 6 SOMEONE BOUGHT IT FOR ME *GO TO G16*
- 7 SOMEONE GAVE IT TO ME AS A GIFT
- 8 OTHER – SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

*Go to G14*

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None</p>

- G13. [MULTIPLE WEAPONS] How did you obtain the (Insert responses from G7) that you carried, possessed, or used during the [REFERENCE CONTROLLING OFFENSE]?  
**MARK ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 STOLE IT
- 2 RENTED IT
- 3 BORROWED IT FROM OR WAS HOLDING IT FOR SOMEBODY
- 4 TRADED SOMETHING FOR IT
- 5 BOUGHT IT *GO TO G15*
- 6 SOMEONE BOUGHT IT FOR ME *GO TO G17*
- 7 SOMEONE GAVE IT TO ME AS A GIFT
- 8 OTHER – SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

- G14. [SINGLE WEAPON PURCHASED] Where did you buy the (*Insert response from G6*)?

- 1 Gun shop or gun store
- 2 Pawn shop
- 3 Flea market
- 4 Gun show
- 5 From the victim(s)
- 6 From a friend or family member

- 7 From a fence/black market source
- 8 Off the street/from a drug dealer
- 9 Other – Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only 3 participants received this item but were easily able to answer the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider whether the answer categories should be read aloud or field coded based on the open-ended response.</p>

G15. [MULTIPLE WEAPONS PURCHASED] Where did you buy the (*Insert responses from G7*)? MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Gun shop or gun store
- 2 Pawn shop
- 3 Flea market
- 4 Gun show
- 5 From the victim(s)
- 6 From a friend or family member
- 7 From a fence/black market source
- 8 Off the street/from a drug dealer
- 9 Other – Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider whether the answer categories should be read aloud or field coded based on the open-ended response.</p>

G24. At the time of the arrest or violation that led to this incarceration, were you a member of a gang?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants understood this question and were able to easily answer it. When probed, all participants were able to give a good definition of a gang. Participants seemed very forthcoming</p>
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when answering this item; even the individual that was in a gang at the time of the arrest/violation. We do not anticipate respondent reluctance to answer this question honestly during data collection.

***Recommendations:***

None

### **Criminal and Incarceration History**

B1. These next questions are about your experience with crime and the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems over your lifetime. When answering these questions, please think about your entire life and include things that you may have already told me about.

Please think about the first time you committed any crime or offense. What were the main reasons that you committed that crime? Was it...

- 1 for excitement? Y/N
- 2 because your friends got you into it? Y/N
- 3 to get money? Y/N
- 4 to get food or medicine? Y/N
- 5 because you got mad and lost your temper? Y/N
- 6 to build your reputation? Y/N
- 7 because everyone around you was doing it ? Y/N
- 8 because someone forced you or threatened you? Y/N
- 9 because someone dared you to do it? Y/N
- 10 because someone committed a crime against you first? Y/N
- 11 for some other reason? Y/N

Go to B2

***Findings:***

Participants understood the question and were able to answer it; however, it took some time for participants to remember what their first crime or offense was. Altogether, this question took the most time to administer out of all candidate items in the test. The interviewers felt that asking this question generally helped to improve rapport with the participants however.

***Recommendations:***

Consider the analytic value of the data from this question without knowing what the crime or offense was. Without the crime it lacks context. Consider adding a question to collect the crime or offense before asking this item.

**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

We will propose that this item(s) be deleted from the final instrument content based on a number

of factors including the length of time to administer and the quality of the data we are likely to get.

B2. How old were you the first time you were arrested for any offense?

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 6 – CALCAGE]

***Findings:***

Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.

***Recommendations:***

None

B3. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been arrested for any offenses? Please include any arrests you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times

*Go to B10*

***Findings:***

Participants provided answers with varying degrees of certainty regarding the accuracy of their responses. When probed, most participants indicated that they were only somewhat confident and one participant changed his response.

***Recommendations:***

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

We will move this item (B3) to after we ask B8d in an effort to increase the accuracy of responses since the inmate will have already been asked about arrests for various types of offenses – violent, property, drug. It will read as follows:

*B3. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been arrested for any offenses? Please include any arrests you have already told me about and times when you may have been arrested but not convicted.*

\_\_\_\_\_ times

*Go to B10*

B10. [IF B3 = 1+] Altogether, how many times in your life have you been *convicted* of a *felony* offense?

\_\_\_\_\_ times

**Findings:**

Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.

**Recommendations:**

**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

We will move this item along with B3 (above) to after B8d so that it will be asked right after B3.

B4. [IF CONTROLLING OFFENSE IS NOT VIOLENT] Have you ever been arrested for a violent offense? Violent offenses include crimes like physical or sexual assault, rape, robbery, manslaughter, murder, attempted murder, or kidnapping.

- 1 Yes *Go to B4a*
- 2 No *Go to B6*

**Findings:**

Only one participant received this item and appeared to understand the question.

**Recommendations:**

None

B4a. [IF B4 = 1] Have you ever been *convicted* of a violent offense?

- 1 Yes *Go to B4b*
- 2 No *Go to B6*

**Findings:**

Only one participant received this item and appeared to understand the question.

**Recommendations:**

None.



B6. [IF CONTROLLING OFFENSE IS NOT PROPERTY] Have you ever been arrested for a property offense? Property offenses include crimes like burglary, larceny, theft, auto theft, bad checks, fraud, forgery, arson, or possession of stolen goods.

- 1 Yes Go to B6a
- 2 No Go to B8

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B6a. [IF B6 = 1] Have you ever been *convicted* of a property offense?

- 1 Yes Go to B4b
- 2 No Go to B8

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B8. [IF CONTROLLING OFFENSE IS NOT DRUG] Have you ever been arrested for a drug offense? Drug offenses include crimes like possessing, selling, trafficking, importing, smuggling, or manufacturing illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.

- 1 Yes Go to B8a
- 2 No Go to B11

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B8a. [IF B8 = 1] Have you ever been *convicted* of a drug offense?

- 1 Yes Go to B8b

2 No Go to B11

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood the question and were able to answer it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B8b. [IF B8a = 1 OR CONTROLLING OFFENSE IS DRUG] Altogether, how many times in your life have you been convicted of a drug offense? Please remember to include any drug offenses you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B8c

<b>Findings:</b> Only three participants received this item but appeared to understand the question.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B8c. [IF B8a = 1] Have you ever been convicted of a felony drug offense?

1 Yes Go to B8d  
2 No Go to B11

<b>Findings:</b> Only two participants received this item but appeared to understand the question.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B8d. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been convicted of a felony drug offense?

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B11

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only two participants received this item but appeared to understand the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

B11. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been sentenced to probation or shock probation? Please remember to include any probation sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants were mixed in their reactions to this item. None had heard of shock probation and the term seemed to confuse them. This may be attributable to geography however, as all of the participants were from NC and the term may not be used within that state. One participant could not remember the number of times he was sentenced to probation as it was a large number.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider removing the term, “shock probation.”</p> <p><b>Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:</b></p> <p><i>B11. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been sentenced to probation (INCLUDE SHOCK PROBATION)</i></p> <p>_____ times</p>

B12. [IF B11 = 1+] Altogether, how many times in your life have you had your probation sentence revoked?

\_\_\_\_\_ times

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants generally answered this question with ease. When probed, all could accurately describe a “probation sentence.”</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>

None.

- B13. Altogether, how many times in your life have you been released from prison and been put on parole or post-release supervision? Please remember to include any parole or post-release supervision sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times

**Findings:**

Participants generally answered this question with ease.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

To be consistent with the way we ask about parole and then probation at the beginning of the module we will switch the order here to ask about parole violations and then probation violations.

- B14. [IF B13 = 1+] Altogether, how many times in your life have you had your parole or post-release supervision revoked?

\_\_\_\_\_ times

**Findings:**

One participant confused parole for probation.

**Recommendations:**

None

- B15. Have you ever been sentenced to serve time in a juvenile correctional facility?

- 1 Yes Go to B16  
2 No Go to B19

**Findings:**

Responses to this item varied. Participants used terminology like “youth camp”, “training school”, and “youth development center.”

**Recommendations:**

Consider adding examples to the question text. For example:

*B15. Have you ever been sentenced to serve time in a juvenile correctional facility, such as a youth camp, training school, or youth development center?*

1 Yes Go to B16  
2 No Go to B19

- B16. [IF B15 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a juvenile correctional facility? Please remember to include any sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B17

**Findings:**

Only three participants received this item but appeared to understand the question.

**Recommendations:**

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

*B16. [IF B15 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a juvenile correctional facility?*

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B17

- B17. [IF B15 = 1] When was the first time you were admitted to a juvenile facility to serve a sentence?

B17a. 2-DIGIT MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 12]

B17b. 2-DIGIT DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 31]

B17c. 4-DIGIT YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1915 – current year]

**Findings:**

Only three participants received this item and were unsure of the accuracy of their responses.

**Recommendations:**

Consider removing this item from the instrument and deriving the year based on the age of the respondents at time of interview and their responses to B17d

B17d. [IF B15 = 1 AND B17c = DK/REF] How old were you the first time you were admitted to a juvenile correctional facility to serve a sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_ years-old

<b>Findings:</b> Only three participants received this item. All easily answered it.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B18. [IF B15 = 1 AND B17a = DK/REF] What time of year was it? Was it winter, spring, summer, or fall the first time you were admitted to a juvenile correctional facility to serve a sentence?

- 1 WINTER
  - 2 SPRING
  - 3 SUMMER
  - 4 FALL
- Go to B18a*

<b>Findings:</b> Only one participant received this item and could not remember.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None.

B19. Have you ever been sentenced to serve time in a local or county jail?

- 1 Yes *Go to B20*
- 2 No *Go to B23*

<b>Findings:</b> One participant indicated that he was not sentenced but was in jail awaiting a prison sentence.
<b>Recommendations:</b> Consider adding an interviewer note to not include times the inmate may have been in jail awaiting a prison sentence.

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

*B19. Have you ever been **sentenced** to serve time in a local or county jail?*

- 1 Yes*
- 2 No*

An on-screen interviewer note will then provide the omitted question text as optional, explanatory text to be read if a respondent is having trouble with the question. It will read as follows:

*[This does not include times you may have been in jail awaiting a prison sentence.]*

B20. [IF B19 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a local or county jail? Please remember to include any sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
*Go to B21*

**Findings:**

Participants appeared to answer the question with ease.

**Recommendations:**

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

*B20. [IF B19 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a local or county jail?*

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
*Go to B21*

B21. [IF B19 = 1] When was the first time you were admitted to a local or county jail to serve a sentence?

- B21a. 2-DIGIT MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 12]
- B21b. 2-DIGIT DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 31]
- B21c. 4-DIGIT YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1915 – current year]

**Findings:**

Participants could not remember more than the year.

**Recommendations:**

None.

B21d. [IF B19 = 1 AND IF B21c = DK/REF] How old were you the first time you were admitted to a local or county jail to serve a sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_ years-old  
DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b> Participants appeared to answer the question with ease.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

B22. [IF B19 = 1 AND IF B21a = DK/REF] What time of year was it? Was it winter, spring, summer, or fall the first time you were admitted to a local or county jail to serve a sentence?

- 1 WINTER
- 2 SPRING
- 3 SUMMER
- 4 FALL
- DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b> Only three participants received this item. Each could answer easily.
<b>Recommendations:</b> None

B23. [IF Q1 = 2] Have you ever been sentenced to serve time in a state or federal prison?

- 1 Yes *Go to B24*
- 2 No *Go to NEXT MODULE*

<b>Findings:</b> Participants understood this question and easily answered it
<b>Recommendations:</b>



**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

Since the answer categories for Q1 now are 1, 2, and 3 we will add a new value to the universe for this item so it reads as follows:

[IF Q1 = 2 OR 3]

- B24. [IF B23 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a state or federal prison? Please remember to include any sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B25

**Findings:**

Participants understood this question and easily answered it

**Recommendations:**

**Final Question Text - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

B24. [IF B23 = 1 OR Q1 = 1] Altogether, how many different times in your life have you been sentenced to serve time in a state or federal prison? Please remember to include prison sentences you may have already told me about.

\_\_\_\_\_ times  
Go to B25

This also adds a universe condition to ask this of sentenced inmates who have had more than one prison incarceration, since we would otherwise not know this information.

- B25. [IF B23 = 1] When was the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

B25a. 2-DIGIT MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 12]

B25b. 2-DIGIT DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 31]

B25c. 4-DIGIT YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1915 – current year]

**Findings:**

Participants understood this question and easily answered the year; however, several could not remember the month.

**Recommendations:**

Consider adding a universe restriction to not ask this item of individuals who have been sentenced and have only been admitted to prison once, since the date admission is already known.

**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

B25. [IF B23 = 1 OR (Q1 = 1 AND B24 ne 1)] When was the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

B25a. 2-DIGIT MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 12]

B25b. 2-DIGIT DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 31]

B25c. 4-DIGIT YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1915 – current year]

This adds a universe condition to ask this of sentenced inmates who have had more than one prison incarceration, since we would otherwise not know this information. It also adds a refinement to the universe to not ask of inmates who have been sentenced and have only been sentenced to serve time in prison once, since we will have already asked this earlier on in the module.

B25d. [IF B23 = 1 AND IF B25c = DK/REF] How old were you the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_ years-old

**Findings:**

Participants understood this question and easily answered it.

**Recommendations:**

**Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:**

B25d. [IF B25c = DK/REF] How old were you the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_ years-old

Since we have changed the universe for B25a, B25b, and B25c (above) this item can depend solely on the answer to B25c and will still be asked of the appropriate people.

B26. [IF B23 = 1 AND IF B25a = DK/REF] What time of year was it? Was it winter, spring, summer, or fall the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

- 1 WINTER
- 2 SPRING
- 3 SUMMER
- 4 FALL
- DK/REF

***Findings:***

Only three participants received this item. Each could answer easily.

***Recommendations:***

***Final Decision - Based on RTI/BLS Discussion:***

B26. [B25a = DK/REF] What time of year was it? Was it winter, spring, summer, or fall the first time you were admitted to a state or federal prison to serve a sentence?

- 1 WINTER
- 2 SPRING
- 3 SUMMER
- 4 FALL
- DK/REF

Since we have changed the universe for B25a, B25b, and B25c (above) this item can depend solely on the answer to B25a and will still be asked of the appropriate people.

**Section 3 - Socioeconomic characteristics**

I'd like to collect some basic information about you.

SES103 I would like you to think about how other people would describe your race. Do you think they would describe you as... (NEW)

- 1 White
- 2 Black or African American
- 3 American Indian or Alaska Native
- 4 Asian
- 5 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander or
- 6 Something else

DK/REF

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>When probed, participants indicated that the question was asking what their race was.</p>
<p><b><i>Recommendations:</i></b></p> <p>Consider highlighting as follows:</p> <p><i>"...how other people would describe your race..."</i></p>

SES104 [IF SES103 = 6] How do you think other people would describe your race? (NEW)

\_\_\_\_\_ [ALLOW 40 CHARACTERS]  
DK/REF

<p><b><i>Findings:</i></b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b><i>Recommendations:</i></b></p> <p>None</p>

SES105 And do you think other people would describe you as Hispanic, that is as a person of Hispanic origin or descent?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants appeared to understand the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Consider highlighting as follows:</p> <p>“...you think <b>other people</b> would describe you as Hispanic...”</p> <p>Move this item before SES103 to be consistent with standards on asking ethnicity/race questions.</p>

**Family structure and living arrangements (prior to incarceration)**

S2Q32 [FOR PROBATION OR PAROLE VIOLATORS] Think about all the places you lived in the 12 months prior to [DATE\_CHARGED] when you were charged with a [parole/probation] violation. At any time during those 12 months did you live... [SVORI/MFS-IP]

[FOR ARRESTEES] Think about all the places you lived in the 12 months prior to the arrest on [DATE\_ARREST] that led to this incarceration. At any time during those 12 months did you live... [SVORI/MFS-IP]

	Yes	No
S2Q32a. In your own house, apartment, or mobile home?	1	2
S2Q32b. In someone else’s house, apartment, or mobile home?	1	2
S2Q32c. In transitional housing for former inmates, such as a halfway house?	1	2
S2Q32d. In a residential treatment facility?	1	2
S2Q32e. In a rooming house, hotel, or motel?	1	2
S2Q32f. In a car, truck, or other motor vehicle?	1	2
S2Q32g. In a homeless shelter, on the street, or in some outdoor location?	1	2
S2Q32h. In a prison, jail, or some other type of detention facility?	1	2
S2Q32i. In some other place?	1	2

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Participants routinely answered as an open-ended response while the interviewer read S2Q32a</p>
--

and appeared annoyed by the end of the question.

**Recommendations:**

Consider adding some text to clarify that a list is going to be read to the respondent such as:

*[FOR PROBATION OR PAROLE VIOLATORS] Now I'm going to read you a list of places you may have lived during the 12 months prior to [DATE\_CHARGED] when you were charged with a [parole/probation] violation. At any time during those 12 months did you live... [SVORI/MFS-IP]*

*[FOR ARRESTEES] Now I'm going to read you a list of places you may have lived during the 12 months prior to the arrest on [DATE\_ARREST] that led to this incarceration. At any time during those 12 months did you live... [SVORI/MFS-IP]*

S2Q34

Where were you living just before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration?

- 1 THE INMATE'S OWN HOUSE, APARTMENT, OR MOBILE HOME
  - 2 SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE, APARTMENT OR MOBILE HOME
  - 3 TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR FORMER INMATES, SUCH AS HALFWAY HOUSES
  - 4 A RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY
  - 5 A ROOMING HOUSE, HOTEL, OR MOTEL
  - 6 A CAR, TRUCK, OR OTHER MOTOR VEHICLE
  - 7 A HOMELESS SHELTER, ON THE STREET, OR IN SOME OUTDOOR LOCATION
  - 8 A PRISON, JAIL, OR SOME OTHER TYPE OF DETENTION FACILITY
  - 9 SOME OTHER PLACE
- DK/REF

**Findings:**

When probed, participants were unable to distinguish between this and the previous item however each participant answered this question with a single response, as it is intended.

**Recommendations:**

Consider drawing greater emphasis to "just before", highlighting it as follows:

Where were you living **just before** the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration?

SES444 [IF S2Q34 = 8] Were you incarcerated in a prison, jail, or some other type of detention facility for the entire 30 day period before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

**Findings:**

Only one participant received this item but appeared to understand the question.

**Recommendations:**

None.

S2Q33 At the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, were you living alone or with other people? [NEW]

- 1 LIVED ALONE
- 2 LIVED WITH OTHER PEOPLE
- DK/REF

**Findings:**

Participants were able to easily answer this question

**Recommendations:**

None.

S7Q7b. [IF S2Q33 = 2] **Excluding yourself**, how many people were you living with at the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration?

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: \_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 15]

DK/REF

**Findings:**

Participants easily answered this question and indicated they were confident in their answers. One participant mentioned that “excluding yourself” may be confusing to a less educated inmate

and he might not know whether to count himself or not.

**Recommendations:**

Remove “excluding yourself” to simplify the question text as follows:

*S7Q7b. [IF S2Q33 = 2] How many people were you living with at the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration?*

*NUMBER OF PEOPLE: \_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 1 – 15]*

*DK/REF*

S7Q7g [IF S7Q7b NE 0 OR DK/REF] At the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, how many of the people living with you were 15 years old or older?

# 15 OR OLDER: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 0 – VALUE OF S7Q7b]

DK/REF

**Findings:**

Participants seemed to understand the question and easily answer.

**Recommendations:**

None

SG.1 How many of the [S7Q7g VALUE] people living with you at the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration were under age 18?

#UNDER AGE 18: \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:**

Participants seemed to understand the question and easily answer.

**Recommendations:**

None

SES102 [IF SES101 = 1] Think about the income you and the [S7Q7g VALUE] other



people 15 or older living with you were receiving from all sources at the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration. What was your total household income at that time?

TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 0 - ???]

DK/REF

***Findings:***

Participants provided answers with differing time references (i.e., monthly, yearly, weekly, every two weeks) and several did not know. In subsequent employment questions a 30 day reference period is used.

***Recommendations:***

Anchor the income estimation to an appropriate reference period (30 days) within the question text, as follows:

*SES102 [IF SES101 = 1] Think about the income you and the [S7Q7g VALUE] other people 15 or older living with you received from all sources in the 30 days before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration. What was your total household income in those 30 days?*

*TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 0 - ???]*

**Inmate parents and their children**

S7Q9a2. [IF SG.1 = 1] How much of the daily care for this minor child did you usually provide? Would you say...

[IF SG.1 > 1] How much of the daily care for these [SG.1 VALUE] minor children under 18 did you usually provide? Would you say you provided...

- 1 All of it,
- 2 Some of it, or
- 3 None of it

DK/REF

***Findings:***

“Minor child” was not uniformly understood. When probed, participants gave varying responses to the age when asked about what a minor is/how old a minor is.

***Recommendations:***

This validates the recent decision to drop references to “minor child.”

S7Q9b. Who are your [SES556 VALUE] children that you were living with you just before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration living with now? MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 CHILD'S MOTHER / FATHER (INCLUDING STEP PARENTS)
  - 2 CHILD'S GRANDMOTHER
  - 3 CHILD'S GRANDFATHER
  - 4 OTHER RELATIVES
  - 5 INMATE'S BOYFRIEND / GIRLFRIEND / PARTNER /SPOUSE
  - 6 INMATE'S FRIENDS
  - 7 FRIENDS OF THE INMATE'S CHILD(REN)
  - 8 FOSTER HOME
  - 9 AGENCY OR INSTITUTION (INCLUDING CORRECTIONAL OR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS)
  - 10 ALONE
  - 11 SOMEONE ELSE; SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only three participants received this item. All understood and easily answered it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

S13Q10. At the time of the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, did you have a legal agreement either through a court or child support agency that specified the amount of child support you should pay for any of your children who were under the age of 18? [SVORI]

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only three participants received this item. All understood and easily answered it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

S13Q12. [IF S13Q10 = 1] Do you owe any back child support? [SVORI]

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Only one participant received this item. When probed, he provided a good description of back child support.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

S13Q13. [IF S13Q12 = 1] How much back child support do you owe? [SVORI]

- 1 Less than \$1,000
- 2 \$1,000 to \$3,999
- 3 \$4,000 to \$6,999
- 4 \$7,000 to \$9,999
- 5 \$10,000 or more
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

S13Q14. [IF S13Q12 = 1] Since you entered prison on DATE, has the state forgiven or decreased any of the back child support debt that you owe? [SVORI]

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- DK/REF

<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>No participants received this item.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>

None.

## Employment

S2Q11a. [IF S2Q32h NE 1] Excluding any illegal activities, during the 30 days before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, did you have a job or business? Please only think about jobs or businesses you worked at **before** you entered prison on [DATE\_ADMIT].

- 1 YES *go to S2Q11b.*
- 2 NO *go to S2Q18*
- DK/REF

### **Findings:**

Participants understood and easily answered this question.

### **Recommendations:**

Consider combining this item with S2Q11b.

S2Q11b. [IF S2Q11a = 1] Excluding any illegal activities, during the 30 days before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, how many different jobs or businesses did you have?

- 1 ONE
- 2 TWO
- 3 THREE
- 4 FOUR OR MORE
- DK/REF

### **Findings:**

Only three participants received this item. One participant answered, “none” and indicated he thought the question was asking whether he had any other jobs.

### **Recommendations:**

Consider combining with S2Q11a to read as follows:

*Excluding any illegal activities, during the 30 days before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration, how many different jobs or businesses did you have? Please only think about jobs or businesses you worked at in the 30 days **before** you entered prison on [DATE\_ADMIT].*

- 1 ONE*
- 2 TWO*

3 *THREE*  
 4 *FOUR OR MORE*  
 5 *NONE*  
 DK/REF

S2Q11c. [IF S2Q11b = 1] Was this full-time, part-time, or occasional work? [SILJ]

1 FULL-TIME  
 2 PART-TIME  
 3 OCCASIONAL  
 DK/REF

<b>Findings:</b>
One participant could not describe a difference between part-time and occasional work.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
Consider enhancing the question text to read:  <i>Was this full-time, part-time, or work done occasionally?</i>

S2Q11d. [IF S2Q11b = 2 – 4] Were any of these jobs or businesses ...

	Yes	No
S2Q11d1. Full-time work?	1	2
S2Q11d2. Part-time work?	1	2
S2Q11d3. Occasional work?	1	2

<b>Findings:</b>
No participants received this item.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
See S2Q11c for recommendation concerning “occasional work.”

S2Q18 Think about the income you received from all sources during the 30 days before the arrest or charge that led to this incarceration. What was your total income for that 30 day period?

TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME: \_\_\_\_\_ [RANGE: 0 - ???]

DK/REF

***Findings:***

Participants understood the question and were able to provide responses; however, we have some concerns about recall and some responses seemed incongruent based on other questions. One indicated he had no job and made 3900 dollars, but he also reported that none of the total income came from illegal activity (subsequent question S2Q19).

***Recommendations:***

None.

S2Q19 How much of your total income during those 30 days came from illegal activity?  
Would you say... [SVORI modified]

- 1 All of it
- 2 Most of it
- 3 Some of it, or
- 4 Just a little of it?
- 5 None (only used for testing)

DK/REF

***Findings:***

Participants understood the question and appeared to answer it candidly; however, there is no way to assess accuracy of the responses.

***Recommendations:***

None.