**Effects of Language Choices in Labeling People in Custody**

People think the worst part of prison is the violence, they're wrong. The worst part is losing yourself. Given enough time the dark magic of these walls can change anyone, the only real question is how much and will you be able to recover?

Dehumanization of people in custody (PIC) is a common practice in carceral settings (Graham, M. 2020; Lynch, 2015). The mental process of devaluing an individual's humanity begins with word choices by would-be oppressors, a psychological process simultaneously affecting both the dehumanizer and their target (Bidwell & Polley, 2023). When PIC are labeled with words that have negative connotations it cannot only be the catalyst for abuse by others, but also affect their individual identity; as researchers from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Denver, et al. (2024) noted when they wrote, "At its core, the labeling process is about shaping identity, and social interactions and public perceptions play a pivotal role. A negative label connects undesirable attributes to a person, and stereotypes associated with a label can influence decisions to distance from—and discriminate against members of the stigmatized group" (p.763). Therefore, labeling PIC can have collateral consequences affecting not only the treatment of PIC but their self-identity.

Understanding how PIC view and react to the array of dehumanizing symbols they are subject to is the first step in understanding how this mental construct escalates into individual damage and/or group harm. This research proposal hopes to examine the dehumanizing language used to identify PIC through the lens of labeling theory. Specifically, the role labels like convict, inmate, offender, resident, individual in custody, among others have in shaping imagery, meaning, and identity among PIC. It might also give us a window into if intentional shifts in language, such as the growing trend of persons-first terminology, is making a difference.

This study aims, in part, to identify which label or word for "prisoner" would potentially be able to reduce negative stereotypes and self-concepts, and dehumanization as filtered through labeling theory. The findings of the proposed research might suggest that specific language is more or less identity damaging or at least preferential to PIC. Additionally, if the research is able to identify better language to label PIC then, in theory, it could help shift negative stereotypes held of PIC. Furthermore, learnings gleaned from this research could be used to educate future media style guides and public policy.

Much ink has been spilled regarding the dehumanization of people in custody through labels used to identify them, but there is a gap in literature about how PIC feel about those labels and how they affect (or not) their identity (Jackman, 2016; Hoskins & Towns, 2021; Mason, 2016). Since my initial incarceration ten years ago the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has changed how they identified PIC many times: 2015: Inmates; 2018: Offender; 2022: Individual in Custody; 2025: Resident (our new phone system uses this term to refer to us). When I heard about these changes I wondered (a) Who was coming up with these labels? And (b) Who was asking for it? I am more concerned about the high levels of lead and the Legionnaires disease recently found in our drinking water (IDOC Press Release, March 11, 2022) then the word(s) the IDOC chose to refer to us in the correctional officer employee or our orientation manual.

In my research, I've noticed a similar intentional shift and interest in PIC labels. For example, new AP media guidelines instruct the use of person-first terminology to replace old jargon for PIC (see 57th Ed. The AP Stylebook, 2024, pp.275-293). Also, according to President of JustLeadershipUSA, Hoskins and VP for Criminal Justice Reform at FWD.US, Towns (2021), bipartisan organization focused on criminal justice and immigration reform FWD.US and polling firm Beneson Strategy Group conducted two national studies examining participants responses to the use of negative terms versus person-first terms used to describe PIC—they did not include PIC in their survey (n.p.). There has been some interest among advocacy groups to explore what PIC think about labels ascribed to them for example, writer for the Marshall Project, Hickman (2015) conducted a reader survey asking PIC what they preferred to be called and why. They found, based on 200 responses, that "38 percent preferred "incarcerated person," 23 percent liked "prisoner" and nearly 10 percent supported the use of the word inmate. Thirty percent selected "other" ('person in prison,' 'man or woman,' 'the person's name'" (n.p.). Jason Lyndon (2015),

who works for Black and Pink gay rights organization, wrote about a survey they were conducting with LGBTQ+ community members in prison, "Nearly 1,000 respondents, there is no agreement...there is no universal agreement amongst our membership about terminology...most respondents saying they simply want to be referred to by their name" (qtd. in Hickman, 2015), but nowhere in my research have I found any full-fledged study. My research proposal expands on these previous efforts by conducting a formal study which focuses on the PIC community and what label (if any) they prefer used to identify them or how they felt about the labels used about them or how those labels made them feel. I'm reminded of what Carter (2021) from the Urban Institute wrote:

> Honor the language preferences of labeled people. Respecting and preserving the language choices of people experiencing the criminal justice system is central to acknowledging their humanity. If academics, practitioners, researchers, and others charged with relaying the narratives of incarcerated people alter their voice by changing the language, we risk erasing their agency. (n.p.)

This research proposes to fill that gap.

This research proposal is important because it prioritizes the language preferences and identity creation of PIC. According to School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northeastern University Professors and associates of the American Institute for Research Denver et al. (2024), Sapir-Whorf hypothesizes that "language impacts cognition and perception. Language may play a role in shaping the way we think and perceive the world" (qtd. in Denver p.766). It's clear language, labels, and self-concept are intertwined.

Self-identity management is part of labeling theory, Bernburg (2009) "posits that self-identity and the behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them" (pp.187-207). The proposed research could identify the language that not only causes the least amount of harm to PIC, but also the catalyst that can reverse the history of dehumanization to this shadow community.

I hypothesize that PIC may prefer certain labels over other labels to identify themselves and their community; and that their identity and behavior may be affected by those labels. I also posit that PIC's past experiences, future expectations, and outside carceral forces like family, teachers, and friends affect their identity and behavior.

## Literature Review

### Dehumanization

Dehumanization has various definitions, but always boils down to a simple premise: the hierarchy-based process or act of an individual or in-group (Us) reducing another individual or out-group's (Them) humanity—human qualities (Haslam,2006, 252-264). According to the Family Institute (2021), dehumanization is a mental process that reduces a specific individual or groups into subhuman categories like animals or monsters usually by associating certain nonhuman characteristics through descriptive language choices (n.p.). According to Denver et al. (2024), research shows dehumanization can happen with language that likens people to non-humans, verbal abuse, and erasing one voice from discourse; symbolically through imagery, or physically through physical abuse or micro aggressions like refusing eye contact. They argue all these methods can hinder an individual from feeling empathy or correctly understanding a stigmatized group. Inevitably, throughout history (think Holocaust, ++) this leads to the inhumane, often atrocious, treatment of others. They assert, once a label has an attached meaning and mental imagery with continued media reinforcement in the public sphere and becomes part of the public lexicon it's hard to shake (Denver et al, 2024,763-789).

Dehumanization happens in the brain. As researchers and professors Harris and Fiske (2006) have noted, "Neuroimaging studies have discovered that the medial prefrontal cortex—a brain region distinctively involved in attributing mental states to others—shows diminished activation to extremely dehumanized targets (i.e., those rated according to the stereotype content model) as low-warmth and low-competence, such as drug addicts or homeless people" (pp.847-853). Thus, in my view, dehumanization

is a biological process that seems long, intentional, and complicated but actually happens subconsciously, simply, and relatively quickly. For example, over time the label "convict" became mentally associated with non-human characteristics and meaning that justified and even encouraged disregard and apathy at best and mistreatment and abuse at worst. Yet, the effects of dehumanizing language aren't deterministic, meaning there is more than just language choices at work in dehumanization.

Dehumanization is about more than just labeling. Professor of Psychology Nick Haslam quoted from a BBC piece stated, "There's surprisingly little evidence that dehumanizing language causes violent behavior, but plenty of evidence says it accompanies it. People who dehumanize others are certainly more likely to treat them badly" (qtd. in Galer 2023). Dehumanization has layers of complexity. Florence Enock, a senior research associate with the Alan Turing Institute's Online Safety Team, noted, "There really isn't any evidence to suggest that humans have this natural care and empathy for one another...actually, people are harmed when perpetrators are fully aware of their humanity" (qtd. in Galer, 2023). In an interview with CurrentAffairs.org (2024) leading dehumanization scholar and author David Livingston Smith explained that "many of the worst atrocities are committed by those who are fully convinced they are on the side of good and righteous, and any of us can become a dehumanizer." Smith went on to maintain that dehumanization is "attitudinal, happening in people's heads and not a rhetorical phenomenon" like communication theories may contend, and that under "certain psychological propensities" anyone can dehumanize another (n.p.). New research is still defining dehumanization.

Leading scholars continue to explore the dark depths of dehumanization. In his interview, Smith (2024) argued that for dehumanizing abuse to occur individuals must move mentally beyond sub-human imagery to monster affiliations. He referenced philosopher's Noel Carroll's literary Monster Theory. I paraphrase, a person or group must move beyond being occasionally aligned with sub-human characteristics to encapsulate the category of monster. It's hard to not see the humanness in another's eyes and even animals deserve empathy, but not monsters. Monsters are inherently evil and fighting monsters is just "there's no quarter and there's no mercy" (CurrentAffairs.org, 2024, n.p.). In his book, *Less Than Human* Smith (2011) explained that "dehumanization is a response to conflicting motives. We want to harm a group of people" but it goes against society thus we use dehumanization to "subvert those inhibitions" (p.336).

**Dehumanization in Carceral Settings**

Studies show dehumanization in prisons can occur through the language used relating PIC to animals or simply by a number; by the media that can portray and frame PIC as subhuman and the prison industrial complex that regards and treats PIC as disposable or inferior, but most of all it appears in everyday prison life in the million papercuts (micro aggressions) PIC endure through prejudice and social exclusion (Bidwell & Polley,2023; Lynch, 2015).

Because prisons were built on the basis of implied criminality and guilt it is no surprise that prisons are dens of inhumane treatment. According to Harvard professor White and historian and researcher Huber (2024), prisons are historically and purposely built to inflict inhumane punishment and suffering. They claimed, "The legacy of prison reform and design resonate today as these concepts have shaped an entire landscape of carceral facilities and practices. The astringent expression of carceral facilities has resulted in contemporary conditions of oppression, trauma, and dehumanization" (n.p.). Academic researchers, Haque and Waytz (2015), contended that prison inherently denies PIC their humanity by the use of uniforms, prison numbers as identifiers, "lack of agency/autonomy, objectification, and moral disengagement," among others (qtd. in Lynch, 2015. pp.172-177). They pointed out that this dehumanization can lead to negative outcomes such as poor healthcare treatment or worse outright cruelty that actively contributes to suffering (Lynch, 2015, pp. 172-177).

Stereotypical portrayals of PIC as "other than" or "less than" human is at the root of their dehumanization. As author Graham (2020) explained, "Justin Piche and Kevin Walby (2010) have noted that 'dominant stereotypes of prisoners as predatory animals in need of incapacitation' (p.574) pervade the public's view of incarcerated individuals" (p.179). According to labeling theory, this can inevitably affect the individual(s) identity. In the words of Graham (2020), "The prison system tells inmates they are animals. While the official mission statement of the Dept. of Corrections focuses on inmates' needs and

treatment, in the eyes of the guards, the real mission is punishment" (p.184). He expands noting that some correctional officers have the presence of mind to notice these effects when he quoted from interviews with two retired correctional officers who said, "The nature of the prison system encourages each of us to take a side and dehumanizing everyone on the other side." They quoted their DOC trainers as saying, "training for the monster factory" (p.38).

**Language Matters**

The Family Institute (2021), housed at Northwestern University, wrote in their piece *Dehumanizing Language* that symbols are at the center of dehumanization. Language that label persons or groups of people as murderers, convicts, criminals, monsters, and other derogatory words can create subhuman imagery about others which can lead to a feeling that these groups are underserving of humane treatment (n.p.).

Words matter. According to Denver et al. (2024), there has been a litany of words to describe people in custody throughout history. Some countries and states have evolved from names like felon/convict which fell out of favor for words like inmate/offender which were recently replaced by person-first words like individual in custody or person in custody, and may soon be replaced by neutral, less bulky words like resident/customer. Yet they believe media and individuals often return to jargon like inmate or offender which may cause a cascading stream of harm to both the treatment of PIC and their identity (n.p.). Words used to describe or refer to PIC often reduce them to the worst moment in their life—stripping them of their full identity-- as Bidwell and Polley (2023) reasoned, language like "felon," "convict," and "criminal" creates a mental imagery of subhuman, dangerous, and unworthiness of ethical treatment. Furthermore, they assert labels can become self-fulfilling affecting self-identity and future crime (n.p.). This language stems from the zeitgeist. Henster (2020) wrote that stereotypes of inmates as "predatory animals" dominate the public perception of PIC. He believed the issue was exacerbated when the dehumanizing behavior and language becomes internalized and part of the identity of the dehumanized (n.p.). Prison and Criminology researchers Bidwell and Polly (2023) pointed out that, "language has the potential to impact an individual's self-identity both positively and negatively… 'future self" is impacted by the language used to talk to them about them" (n.p.). Their research concluded that labels like criminal can have a deterministic power, "stating that once labelled as such: 'you are a criminal forever'…this view supports the theory that stigma of a criminal status makes an individual more likely to commit a crime (qtd. Bidwell & Polley, 2023). They also argued that altering the language, like calling PIC neutral names like "residents" verses "prisoner" can be the catalyst to better outcomes after release. They believed this was true for all aspect of prison life like changing the term for meals in prison from "feeds" (which is commonly used in US prisons) to simply "meals" (n.p.). Other examples of neutral language choice in carceral settings include Scandinavian countries like Norway who refer to "cells" as "rooms" or in Finland where PIC are referred to as "customers" (Abdelsalam, S. & Sunde, H.M., 2018; Muenster, B. & Trone, J., 2016).

How PIC are addressed affects them in both ways seen and unseen. Hughes (2021), writer for the Marshall Project, explained that for women in prison whom are typically victims of abuse:

> Prison labels can take you back to the feeling of powerlessness that abuse creates. In this way you're retraumatized and triggered. Words like 'criminal' and 'convict' also serve to justify poor conditions in jails and prisons and make it okay to deny people basic needs after they're released. Convicts don't deserve decent food, non-toxic facilities and quality medical race criminals shouldn't expect to have necessities such as housing and employment. (p.16)

Griffen et al. (2023), communication studies scholars, contended that many communication theorists believe once words are assigned meaning those words/symbols can construct reality (See Intro.). From this perspective the way we describe or talk about PIC can shape how they are understood, even to themselves. If this is true, then we must take a hard look at how specific word choices in labeling can affect PIC.

PIC descriptors and their meanings have evolved over time. According to the national grassroots abolitionist organization Critical Resistance, the word "Inmate" was originally interchangeable with roommate and now, someone in a mental hospital or prison. "Criminal" has become a catch-all that isn't

so much a label, but a description of a person—that a criminal is, at heart, as person who hurts others. "Prisoner" is someone who has been caged because they have been found guilty—they "did" something bad (n.p.). More recently, some stakeholders have chosen their own new descriptors for PIC.

Different groups from the media, individual states, and advocacy organizations have selected different words to describe PIC. For example, Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason from the Office of Justice Program (2016) wrote about altering his office's language, "Labels we affix to those who have served time can drain their sense of self-worth.... changing language doesn't condone bad behavior not does it fail to hold people who have committed crimes accountable," but labels hinder development and hurt everyone. She asserted, their new policy regarding how to write or talk about people who are leaving prison "replaces unnecessarily disparaging labels with terms like 'person who committed a crime' and 'individual who was incarcerated'" (as cited in Jackman, 2016a). Also, Secretary of the Department of Corrections in Pennsylvania, John E. Wetzel, chose "reentrant" to be used instead of ex-offender in their system (as cited in Jackman, 2016b). Different groups opine on the best word to label PIC and even PIC can't seem to agree on one label, but not everyone agrees that simply changing language will suddenly fix a broken system.

Not everyone believes changing language/labels is enough. Carter (2021) from the Urban Institute offered a compelling argument for this view when she wrote about how changing the labels for Blacks from negro to colored, to African American, to Black didn't magically solve racism, shifting from one label to another isn't a magic panacea (n.p.). Denver et al. (2024) agreed when they argued that PIC should have a voice in the conversation of how they want to be acknowledged and, furthermore, worries that focusing on changes to language makes it easier for society to ignore the necessary institutional changes (p.767). Critical Resistance, an abolitionist organization clarified, "The point here is not just to change words we use, but to examine how changing our words changes what we can see" (n.p.). It's clear many believe language alone is not a solution to the dehumanization of PIC, but it's certainly a factor worth considering in our research especially if we want to respect the voice of PIC's preferences. As Carter (2021) declared, "Honor the language preference of labeled people," choice acknowledges humanity (n.p.). My Communication Studies and American History courses have taught me that when others control the narrative and alter the voice of marginalized people by changing language to fit their dominant frame they erase the agency over their self-identity.

**Theoretical Frames**

*Labeling theory posits that self-identity and the behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them (Nanette, 1972, 447-474).*

Words define who we are. Labeling theory expert and author Bemburg (2009) asserted, label theory contends that the labels we assign to people can influence their behavior and self-identity:

> It is associated with the concepts of self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping. Labeling theory holds that deviance is not inherent in an act, but instead focuses on the tendency of majorities to negatively label minorities or those seen as deviant from standard cultural norms...Labeling theory is closely related to social-construction and symbolic-interaction analysis. (pp.187-207)

Also, Vito et al. (2006), criminology professor and writer, explained labeling's negative effects don't happen without societal influence, how people are treated by society, especially in the act of assigning them "out group" (outsider) status versus "in group" (insider) status can affect who they become:

> Labels applied to individuals influence their behavior, particularly the application of negative or stigmatizing labels (such as "criminal" or "felon") promote deviant behavior, becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e. an individual who is labeled has little choice but to conform to the essential meaning of that judgment.

To understand which labels are present in carceral settings and to explore how these labels affect PIC identity and dehumanization we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: In light of your incarceration, what competing meaning, if any, do the labels you hear that describe you or your fellow community have?

RQ2: In what ways does the current competing carceral labels animate and give meaning to your identity and relationships?

Interpersonal communication theories' like label theory is well suited to examine the meaning making power of language in identity creation. Communication scholars, in particular, view identity as partially symbolically constructed (Griffin et al., 2023). The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes and feelings of PIC as we investigate specific words' relationship with self-concept.

## Method[1]

### Participants

The goal of this study is to use the current APEP student body (n=30) as a subset of the IDOC PIC (n=30k). The APEP community represents a diverse ethnographic sample of PIC. We will use pseudonyms to ensure participant anonymity. These participants will be selected from the larger sample because they are accessible and available during APEP study hall sessions. The multiple perspectives would allow us to triangulate emergent themes and, as a result, enhance the validity of the findings (Berg, 2009).

Participants will be recruited through notice in their mailbox, posting in classrooms, and word of mouth. Participants will also be asked after their interview if they know of someone else who might be willing to participate. The use of third party (e.g., cellmate) can give others the freedom to decline participation. These sampling strategies and the use of gatekeepers could further assure the other participants of the project's legitimacy (Berg, 2009).

Qualitative studies which are primarily geared toward small-N samples, are not without limitations. The findings generated from a small sample size can neither determine causal inference nor be generalized to a larger population (see Mahoney, 2000). Our aim in this study is not to generalize from the findings but rather to examine the meaning the labels give to their individual and group identity. Given the complexities of legal/policy, media, and public perception of incarceration and prison culture vernacular and their effects on the individual and community as well as the little research available on this unique population, this exploratory study can gave us the opportunity to examine very rich interview data and to identify intricate language dynamics and communication patterns over time that might otherwise not be possible with other methodologies (e.g., household surveys) (Snijders, 1992).

### Interview Procedural and Data Collection

The author will collect data through in -depth interviews, ethnographic interviews (Blumer, 1969). The interviews and open-ended questions may promote the emergence of "unanticipated statements and stories" (Charmaz 2010, p.26) and offer information that might not be available in written documents (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Specifically, narration and interviews may allow participants to both "tap into the complexity of [their] experiences and beliefs' (Blee, 1993, p.599) and to interpret their experiences (Denzin, 1978, p.215). Ethnographic and in-depth interviews have advantages for both the interviewer and interviewee (Charmaz, 2010). First, ethnographic interviewing in particular, allows the research to enter the private sphere and observe firsthand how participants initially react to labels. Second, the interviewer is able to shift the conversation and follow hunches, to ask for clarification, to come back to an earlier point, to go beneath the surface of the described experiences(s), and to slow or quicken the pace. Third, the interviewee is able to tell his story, to be the expert, to choose what to tell and how to tell it, to share significant experiences, and to teach the interviewer how to interpret them. Last, qualitative researchers are able to corroborate stories (Daley, 1992) and triangulate findings (Berg,

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[1] Based on methodology from Sporer, K. & Toller P.W. (2017). Family Identity Disrupted by Mental Illness and Violence: An Application of Relational Dialectics Theory. *Southern Communications Journal* vol. 8, No. 2, 89-100.

2009) after interviewing or observing multiple students, thus producing a more solid depiction of the shared experience.

It will be critical to establish rapport rather quickly as interviewer will only have a few hours with each participant. It is recommended that the interviewer self-disclose early to minimize apprehension in the beginning of the interview. Next, participants will be asked descriptive questions (e.g. "Can you tell me what labels/names you've been referred by since your incarceration and how that made you feel?) to spark the conversation and allow them to speak freely (Spradley, 1979). Open-ended follow-up questions will also be posed, which will evoke clarification without leading the participant (e.g., "You mentioned a CO called you by your number. Can you explain how you responded?").

Though participants will not specifically be asked about their identity meaning and creation, these topics will hopefully become apparent through the preliminary data analysis. The questions will include three categories that we hope will yield a complete narrative, including opening and contextual questions (e.g., "I've never been referred to as a convict/felon/inmate/offender/etc., could you tell me what that was like for you?"), relationship-related questions (e.g. "Can you tell me how those feelings changed over time?"), and clarification and concluding questions (e.g. After having these experiences, what advice would you give someone who is new to prison?") Additional topics and conversation points may arise as participants discuss issues not previously considered. As such, the interview guide will be a starting point for each interview. The author will conduct all the interviews.

Each participant will select their date of the interview and each interview will last approximately 90 minutes. The author will then transcribe the interview data and begin initial coding by reading the entire interview transcripts in order to identify analytic ideas to pursue in later interviews.

**Data Analysis**

We will analyze the data using a labeling theory filter, through an analysis by this lens we will examine data for themes of meaning and identity. Labeling theory contends that behavior and self-concept can be affected through the symbols (read, words) reflected back to them through their communication interactions.

To identify patterns or differences we will begin by reading each interview unit entirely. We will then conduct a line-by-line coding on each transcript. The author will then meet his research mentor to discuss which initial findings are most relevant to our goals. We could then decide if follow-up interviews are recommended.

## Concluding Remarks

The impact specific labels have on PIC's identity is relatively unstudied by communication scholars and significant more research is needed in this important field. While this would be the first study to our knowledge to use labeling theory for this specific purpose, future research would benefit from a larger sample so that more patterns may emerge during analysis.

Two limitations of the current proposed research are directly related to identity. Study participants will not be asked about their pre-incarceration identity or their post-incarceration (participants will all be currently incarcerated) identity—and whether that has changed over times incarcerated. I urge a longitudinal study following these initial findings to examine these factors. Additional factors could also be added to the data collection such as time incarcerated, age of initial incarceration, length of sentence, experiences during incarceration (seg time, programming, etc.) mental health history, etc. Overall, traditional research should attempt to include as many individual factors as available

What I hope comes from my research is a better understanding of the effects of labels on the dehumanization of PIC. The lens of label theory may likely reveal that personal identification through dehumanizing language is more complex than previously thought. The use of label theory lens may help us explore how changes in language might affect behavior and identity.

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## Appendix

Interview draft that compares attitudes towards various labels for PIC. The questions are designed to explore preferences and feelings about each term.

Interview on Attitudes Towards Terms for PIC

Purpose: This interview aims to understand people's feelings toward different labels used to refer to PIC by using open-ended questions to assess emotional responses and language preferences. Responses will help us gather insights into how different language affects feelings, behavior, and self-concept.

Introductions/meet and greet. Explain process and expectations, without bias. Remind that all responses are confidential.

1. Collect demographic info
    a. Age
    b. Gender
    c. Location
    d. Job
    e. Incarceration date
2. Explain feelings towards following labels
    a. Prisoner
    b. Inmate
    c. Convict
    d. Felon
    e. Offender
    f. Individual in Custody
    g. Person in Custody
    h. Resident
    i. Customer
    j. Client
    k. New potential words created by AI
        i. Havenant from "haven" (a safe space) + "ant" (person).
        ii. Solvian from "solve" (suggesting transformation, not punishment) + soft human-sounding suffix "-ian." Implies someone undergoing a process or journey, not just confinement.
        iii. Novent from novus (Latin for "new") = "-ent" (being). Meaning: one who is becoming new.
3. Which of the terms we've discussed do you believe is the most respectful?
4. Most stigmatizing/hurtful?
5. How do you think labels for you affect PIC in society?
6. Which one would you like to hear used in carceral settings?
7. How about in public policy, laws, police, court, CO employee manuals?
8. How about the media?
9. In your opinion, if the labels changed, would it change anything?
    a. How you're treated?
    b. How others think of you?
    c. How you think of you?
10. What have I missed about language and labels of PIC?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING! YOUR INPUT IS INVALUABLE.

**Labels**

The findings of the research could help us understand the importance of labels in the carceral system. Dehumanizing language can have detrimental effects on PIC affecting both their current and future behavior and identity. On the other hand, labels that highlight humanity and potential may promote rehabilitation and create more positive outcomes in carceral settings and society. The findings from this report could create suggestions for word use in correctional facilities, media, and policy.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of PIC participants (Qualitative)

| Characteristic | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| White | | |
| Black/AA | | |
| Hispanic/Latinx | | |
| Asian | | |
| Other | | |
| Age (Mean, SD) | | |
| Social Class | | |
| Poor | | |
| Middle class | | |
| Upper class | | |

Note: This is a template for a data table and will be populated with actual data upon completion of the study. Follows APA 7th. Edition guidelines.

Table 2: Themes Identified from Interviews with PIC

| Theme | Description | Example quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Feeling like a number | Feels insulted about being referred to by a number | "They yell out your number for mail call, like I don't have a name? |
| Associate negative feelings with "inmate" | Individuals internalize negative labels, impacting their self-esteem and hope | "Inmate is an insult in prison, they should never call us that." |
| Associate Positive feelings with "Resident" | Individuals internalize positive labels, impacting their self-esteem and hope | "Resident makes me feel like I'm just staying here for a while." |

Note: This is a template for a data table and will be populated with actual data upon completion of the study. Follows APA 7th. Edition guidelines.