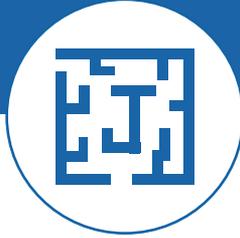


# Justice Maze

A metaphor for ineffective, inefficient and inequitable aspects of the criminal justice system



## The story you're telling:

Our current criminal justice system is like an exceptionally difficult maze, with too many paths in and too few ways out. Let's redesign it.



## Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:

Criminals = Rational Actors;  
Fatalism; Individualism;  
Moral Judgment

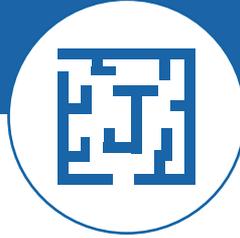


## Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

- **Criminal justice system as maze:** Focuses attention on institutional structural problems: structures can be redesigned to improve how they work.
- **The maze as structure illustrates:** How the contexts in which individuals are embedded affect the choices they make and the outcomes they experience.
- **System as maze without enough exits:** Helps to define the problem at the structural level. People are getting stuck in the system because too many paths dead-end in prison.
- **Multiple clear routes out of the maze:** To the right rehabilitative or restorative services will help people get where they need to go.
- **If the maze is too dense or too complex, or if it has too many dead ends, it's set up to get people stuck:** Sets up a discussion of recidivism as a consequence of the system's flawed construction.

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## Ways you might apply these concepts in communications:

- **The criminal justice system we have now is like an exceptionally difficult maze, with lots of entrances, but not many exits—and lots of dead ends.**
- **Some routes are just too rigid and narrow:** Can be used to open up a conversation on mandatory sentencing reform, lack of judicial discretion, lack of detention alternatives.
- **Let's think about creating clearer paths and well-designed exits out of this maze:** Can set up communications about re-entry programs, the various resources they require, and what well-supported return to society looks like.
- **For some situations, it doesn't make sense to get into this maze:** Sets up conversations about diversion programs, appropriate use of social services, avoiding criminalization of behaviors better addressed in schools, etc.
- **We need to redesign this maze, so that it has fewer entrances, clearer paths through, and better exits:** Focusing communications on the design of the maze, rather than the people in it, keeps public attention on the system.
- **This reform is about redesigning the maze so that people don't get stuck needlessly:** Locates specific policies or initiatives as needed changes to a flawed structure; frames such changes as substantial, but feasible.