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A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Recidivism Among Ex-Offenders
in Missouri

by

Norman James Vick

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Recidivism Among Ex-Offenders
in Missouri

by

Norman James Vick

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education



Dr. Lynda Leavitt, Dissertation Chair



Date



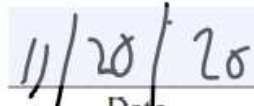
Dr. Robyne Elder, Committee Member



Date



Dr. Frank Giuseffi, Committee Member



Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Norman James Vick

Signature: Norman James Vick Date: 11/20/2020

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Abstract

Ex-offenders return home to family and friends every day in the United States of America; seeking to reintegrate with family and society. Ex-offenders recidivate as well due to numerous reasons and fail at reintegration with family and society. The purpose of the investigation was to learn if substance abuse treatment and obtaining an education in the form of a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) would help the ex-offender avoid further recidivating. The investigator was also interested in learning if trust played a vital role in gaining a GED and completion of substance abuse treatment with reintegration of the family for the ex-offender. Additionally, the investigator was interested in learning what role trust played with the ex-offender's family members as participants in the reintegration with family. The investigator utilized a mixed-methods research approach to investigate the research question and hypotheses statements. Additionally, the investigator used Likert Scale surveys and research questions as well as interviews of family members to procure the necessary data to study and analyze. The investigator found ex-offenders felt a higher level of esteem through trust of obtaining a GED and completing substance abuse treatment. Family member's levels of trust were lower concerning the ex-offender completion of substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED. The investigator found both groups held serious concerns about ex-offender felony records to be a major concern and felt higher anxiety about the ex-offender's viability due to the felony record and reintegration into the family. The investigator found for the ex-offender to be viable in society and able to reintegrate into the family more training was needed in the form of parenting classes, anger management, job readiness. Providing the

aforementioned classes during substance abuse treatment would help the ex-offender in the reintegration process.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Recidivism and reintegration were important when looking at what it takes to reunite broken families and ex-offenders. Ex-offenders came into society daily with a lack of education and employment skills and substance addiction issues. The researcher studied ways to empower ex-offenders and reunite individuals with family. The building blocks of the reunification were education, family, employment, housing, substance abuse treatment, and trust.

Background of the Study

The following study concerned recidivism and reintegration into the family and society. The researcher investigated how obtaining the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) while incarcerated, along with attending in-patient substance abuse treatment related to individual transition for an offender. Entering prison with less than a GED allowed the offender to make as much as .30 an hour working in prison industry jobs (Sawyer, 2017). Having a GED allowed the offender to make up to 1.25 an hour (Sawyer, 2017). The researcher observed substance abuse treatment assisted ex-offenders by teaching individuals new coping skills when faced with old behaviors which used ex-offenders with substance addiction issues coping method of “getting high.” The researcher investigated how obtaining a GED motivated ex-offender to look at themselves and how ex-offender families viewed the ex-offender.

Recidivism

The researcher found many individuals were serving time in American prison system. “In 2014, adult correctional systems supervised an estimated 6.8 million

individuals in the United States with 1 in 36 adults (or 2.8%) being under some form of correctional supervision” (Katsiyannis, Whitford, Zhang, & Gage, 2018, p. 686). The investigator noted many ex-offenders returned to the community and were watched by the department of corrections who released the individuals. “About 70% of individuals under correctional supervision were supervised in the community either on probation or parole; about 30% of offenders under correctional supervision were under the jurisdiction of state or federal prisons or held in jails” (Kaeble, Glaze, Tsoutis, & Minton, 2016, p. 1). Kaeble et al. (2016) suggested a large number of individuals under correctional supervision were spread all around the correctional system in jails and prisons either in the federal system or the state system as well as being supervised in the community. “Further, Black males had the highest imprisonment rate and have been in state or federal facilities 3.8 to 10.5 times more often than White men and 1.4 to 3.1 times more often than Hispanics men” (Katsiyannis et al., 2018, p. 686). The investigator found minority ex-offenders were concerned about being re-arrested on new crimes. “Unfortunately, not only are the number of individuals connected to the correctional system and the outlined disparities based on minority status worrisome, there was also persistent concern of re-offending” (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014, p. 4). The investigator found many returned ex-offenders were not considered by society viable due to past criminal behavior. Bonta et al., (as cited in Katsiyannis, et al., 2018, p.687) indicated “a vast amount of examination linked perpetrating new crimes to demographic variables including age and gender, history of antisocial behavior (e.g., criminal activity), substance use, antisocial personality, peer associations, and mental health among others”. The investigator found ex-offenders needed assistance in during reentry into society. “In

recent years, correctional and community agencies developed and promoted an array of policies and programs aimed at successfully facilitating the offender transition from prison to community” (Garland & Hass, 2015, p. 1). The investigator noted ex-offenders returning to society required many services to assist the ex-offender in re-establishing themselves in the community and family. “One model was the Reentry Partnership Initiative (RPI), which emphasized building collaborative partnerships in an effort to deliver a coordinated and continuous stream of supervision, services, and support during the transitional process and included institutional, structured reentry, and community reintegration phases” (Garland & Hass, 2015, p. 1). Garland and Hass (2015) suggested the Reentry Partnership Initiative was a way of helping ex-offenders to reintegrate back into the community by providing needed services to assist with the transition from incarceration to freedom. Few topics have been discussed more extensively within the correctional academic and professional community circles in the past few decades than prisoner reentry. “Although program and policy evaluations have been conducted, a lack of public support for prisoner reentry initiatives undermined the sustainability of prisoner reentry as a large-scale movement” (Garland, Wodahl, & Cota, 2016, p. 1406). The investigator found ex-offenders required individualized assistance during the reentry process. “The Reentry Partnership Initiative model emphasized the entire correctional process and attempted to individualize reentry interventions through intensified case management and a network of agency and support team collaborations” (Garland & Hass, 2015, p. 2).

The Reentry Partnership Initiative process worked in three distinct stages (a) an institutional phase, (b) a structured reentry phase, and (c) a community

reintegration phase. The current study examined the impact of an RPI-style model known as the Missouri Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI). Like the RPI model, the MPRI model had three distinct phases and was built upon a case management approach (Garland, Wodahl, & Cota 2016, p.2).

The MPRI design was rooted in social support frameworks. Social support theory maintained consistent presence of supportive social networks was associated with low anger, a high, internalized sense of self- control, and strong social bonds based on moral commitment to others (Colvin, Cullen, & Vander Ven, 2006, p. 28).

Family. “Despite the wide interest in legal barriers to prisoner reentry in recent years, the topic of legal financial obligations (LFOs) for individuals leaving prison received much less attention” (Beckett & Harris, 2011, p. 509). Ex-offenders with children were required to take care of financial care of those children upon release from incarceration with no employment skills or opportunities. “Legal Financial Obligations were financial obligations owed to the government from fines, court fees, treatment fees, probation, and other law enforcement fees, restitution, and child support orders” (Beckett & Harris, 2011, p. 509). Beckett and Harris (2011) suggested legal financial obligations were a large blockade to returning offenders as they provided an instant financial bill to an individual without actual employment or employment hopes. “In the last decade, prisoner reentry emerged as a critical issue affecting families, communities, state and local governments, and social service providers. Given the magnitude of the prisoner reentry phenomenon it captured local state and federal attention” (Visher & Travis, 2011, p. 1045).

Ex-offenders returned home from incarceration with financial deficits due to the various fees attached to ex-offender criminal behavior. “The criminal justice system saddled offenders with financial obligations at nearly every stage of the legal process. Two primary justifications underlined the obligations: punishment and revenue generation. Legal systems-imposed fines, fees, and restitution requirements as punitive measures” (Evans, 2014, p. 1). Ex-offenders came home from prison owing family members money which added additional problems to the reentry process. “A recent study concluded detailed interviews with returned prisoners found debt created tension and dissension between the noncustodial parent and the custodial parent, as well as other family members who helped the returned prisoner financially” (Nagrecha, Katzenstein, & Davis, 2015, p. 20). Nagrecha et al. (2015) suggested stress was caused by having child support payments when an ex-offender reintegrated back into the family with no employment or education to offset the cost of child support, which was in arrears due to the ex-offender’s incarceration. “Correctional education was traditionally defined as the educational activities which occurred while an individual was under supervision of the criminal justice system. This narrow definition of correctional education tended to limit lessons learned to the confines of the classroom” (Carver & Harrison, 2016, p. 12).

Education. “The debate around providing Pell Grants to prisoners was a central issue in considering federal funding for postsecondary correctional education. The elimination of prisoner eligibility for Pell Grants in 1994 was a severe blow to postsecondary correctional education nationwide” (Erisman & Contardo, 2005, p. 28). The investigator found some offenders were eligible for opportunities to study for GED while being held in the jail setting. “In fact, individuals held in local jails or half-way

houses or sentenced to home or weekend- only detention were eligible for federal student aid” (Erisman & Contardo, 2005, p. 29). Many offenders had a hard time being able to get government funds for basic education. “Only those men incarcerated in state and federal prisons were ruled ineligible, a policy which lead to desperate negative impact on the students who most needed this aid” (Erisman & Contardo, 2005, p. 29). Ryan (as cited in Evans, Pelletier, & Szkola, 2018) highlighted education in prison was encouraged by the federal government in providing Pell Grants for inmates to use toward education then public opinion changed and get tough on crimes laws were enacted. Society reduced the community opportunities of individuals with a conviction. Ex-offenders were reminded of prior convictions regularly through contact with others. “The conviction became a main factor in their lives and affected interactions with people they encountered after they had been labeled” (Uggen, Manza, & Behrens, 2004, p. 262). The investigator noted ex-offenders needed many types of services to help reintegrate into society and family as well as plan to receive and use those services and resources. “These barriers to successful reintegration created a variety of needs among ex-offenders as they transition back into society. The timing and type of response to ex-offenders on reentry played important roles in their successful reintegration into the community” (Morani, Wikoff, Linhorst, & Bratton, 2011, pp. 348-349).

Employment. “Criminal background checks were increasingly incorporated into hiring decisions by employers. Although originally uncompromising anyone with a criminal background could be denied employment, one motivation for allowing individuals with criminal records encouraged decreased recidivism, and encouraged desistence” (Denver, Siwach, & Bushway, 2017, p. 174). The investigator noted many

ex-offenders did not feel like, as an ex-offender, individuals could obtain employment due to having a background as a felon. “Instead of relying on courts and their increasingly antiplaintiff interpretations of Title VII 1964 Civil Rights Act, civil rights advocated pursuing other avenues particularly the legislative process to remove structural barriers which prevented people with criminal records from gaining employment” (Smith, 2014, p. 211). Many people wanted ex-offenders to have a chance to obtain employment after incarceration. “The strategy behind these efforts which ultimately became known as Ban the Box, were because advocates sought ways at a minimum to remove the seemingly omnipresent request for applicants to check a box if they had a criminal history” (Smith, 2014, p. 211).

The investigator noted many ex-offenders, when faced with obtaining employment, were required to check the box concerning having been arrested before were not hopeful about getting the job. “At the same time, the Ban the Box movement was spreading across the nation, moving criminal background inquiries to later stages in the hiring process with the goal of increased employment for those who had criminal history records” (Denver et al., 2017, p. 176). The investigator found ex-offenders lacked work histories which could recommend individuals for a job. “The academic self-efficacy of the majority of prisoners has probably been influenced by a lack of mastery experiences also a lack of modeling effects, minor persuasion from others, and physical symptoms which have been interpreted as signs of lacking ability” (Roth, Asbjornsen, & Manger, 2017, p. 107). Roth et al. (2017) suggested offenders had been seen as people with no self-efficacy due to having never seen in their lives prior to being incarcerated which could affected an individual’s future after prison. “Depending on the state,

possession of criminal records restricted or prohibited individuals from being employed in areas such as childcare, health care, finance, retail and even some trades, which subsequently limited their job opportunities” (Hong, Lewis, & Choi, 2014, p. 319). African Americans with criminal records had lower rates of employment after incarceration. “A later audit of misdemeanor arrest found modest effects, although African Americans with misdemeanor arrests had lower callback rates than other races/record groups” (Uggen, Vuolo, Lageson, Ruland, & Whitman 2014, p. 631). “Interviews with audited employers revealed in a later study they considered the offense severity and certainty represented by conviction in employment decisions” (Lageson, Vuolo, & Uggen, 2015, p. 4). Ex-offenders had to constantly deal with past criminal behaviors while seeking employment. “Of course, people must find jobs to experience such effects and those with criminal records faced formidable barriers in this process” (Vuolo, Lageson, & Uggen, 2017, p. 140). Vuolo et al. (2017) suggested checking the box about prior convictions caused ex-offenders’ problems as it made it harder to obtain employment having had a criminal background.

Housing. “For formerly incarcerated individuals, stigma associated with incarceration histories presented additional barriers to housing access which compounded issues of affordability and availability” (Keene, Smoyer, & Blankenship, 2018, p. 800). Ex-offenders had to deal with felony records throughout the reintegration phase of returning home. “Rules which bared those with felony records from public and subsidized housing limited residing with friends and family as well as increased the likelihood of homelessness” (Travis, 2005, p.247). The investigator found ex-offenders suffering from the ban were being reviewed for housing opportunities due to the law

being possibly misused by landlords. “Things have been changing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently clarified these bans likely constituted illegal discrimination under the Fair Housing Act, and an ongoing lawsuit against a New York housing provider squarely addressed the illegality” (Crowell, 2017, pp. 1103-1104). Crowell (2017) suggested illegal policies prohibiting people from living in certain areas based on their criminal history constituted illegal discrimination and was being fought against by various individuals. “Former offenders experienced economic disempowerment and housing issues before incarceration, access to stable housing allowed them to construct a new sense of economic freedom and self-sufficiency, identities provided distance from the stigmas of prison, and economic disadvantage” (Wacquant, 2010, pp. 7-8). Wacquant (2010) suggested having housing helped ex-offenders move forward beyond the former incarceration toward self-sufficiency and economic disadvantage by distancing from the stigma of being an ex-offender.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to complete a mixed methods investigation on recidivism, education, housing, and substance abuse. The researcher was also interested in researching the concept of trust between the inmate and family members when completing a substance abuse program and obtaining a GED. Current research had not answered this question.

The population for the investigation was male ex-offenders between the ages of 18 and 60 identified as a recidivist. The participants were involved in an in-patient substance abuse treatment program for a minimum of six months.

Results suggested how substance abuse treatment related to, education, housing, and how trust reduced recidivism with outcomes for a recidivist's reintegration. Trust perceptions were revealed by how both the ex-offender received substance abuse treatment and education and the type of relationship (positive or negative) with the family upon re-entry and how the family received the ex-offender.

Rationale for the Study

Education. "In 2015, almost 9 out of 10 adults (88%) had at least a high school diploma or GED, while nearly 1 in 3 adults (33%) held a bachelor's degree" (Ryan & Bauman, 2016, p. 1). The researcher found inmates and ex-offenders were not counted during the study. Wagner and Rabuy (2016) writers for the Prison Policy Initiative noted, "approximately 2.3 million inmates resided in juvenile, local, state, and federal jails and prisons" (1). "Additionally, thousands of inmates each year left U.S. prisons and correctional facilities and returned to homes and communities, with an estimated 95% of inmates eventually released from custody" (Scott, 2016, p. 147). The investigator noted many ex-offenders came home from prison and needed help to avoid going back to prison. Davis (as cited in Duke, 2018, p.45) stated "a lot of factors contributed to relapse into criminal behavior, a reform of our prison system was necessary to help combat an inmate's chance of re-offending".

The researcher recognized inmates who lacked education had greater chances of recidivating due to a lack of basic skills to exist in the community. The U.N. had declared education for inmates important for human development:

Education should be aimed at the full development of the whole person requiring prisoner access to formal and informal education, literacy programs, basic education,

vocational training, creative, religious and cultural activities, physical education and sport, social education, higher education and library facilities (Steurer, Linton, Nally, & Lockwood, 2010, p. 41)

“An individual previously lacking a criminal record delved into crime after losing his job because the benefits of partaking in illegal activities now outweighed the cost associated with such behavior” (D’Alessio, Stolzenberg, & Eitle, 2014, p. 78). According to D’Alessio et al. (2014) when unemployment rates were high, ex-offenders were less desirable and more susceptible to being laid off by employers, which translated to an increase in income-producing crime for many.

Housing. “Former prisoners were at high risk of economic insecurity due to the challenges they faced in finding employment and to difficulties of securing and maintaining public assistance in housing” (Harding, Wyse, Dobson, & Morenoff, 2014, p. 440). The researcher found ex-offenders in need of housing upon release into the community to help avoid going back to prison. Dum, Socia, and Rydberg (2017) asserted “citizens were unwilling to support policies, which improved the quality and safety of emergency housing placements when individuals convicted of drug and sex offenses were exposed to poor living conditions” (p. 835).

Substance abuse. According to Maruschak and Bonczar (2015) “In 2012 there were approximately 4.8 million adults under community supervision, and nearly 46% were identified drug offenders” (p. 7). Butzin, O’Connell, Martin, and Incardi (as cited in Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016) noted offenders who received in-patient substance abuse treatment, stayed longer, and graduated from community-based residential substance abuse treatment (SAT) programs. Offenders demonstrated a decreased likelihood of

recidivism after treatment. The researcher noted ex-offenders who received post-incarceration substance use disorder treatment recidivated less than peers who did not receive treatment.

Trust. “Sense of community, in turn, was ultimately a result of interpersonal relationships and positive relationships such as friendships. Trust was a critical precursor of close relationships in a wide variety of settings” (Jason, Stevens, & Light, 2016, p. 335). The researcher found a gap in the current literature on trust as an active part in the reintegration process between the ex-offender and family.

The research related to education, recidivism rates for ex-offenders and reintegration in the state of Missouri. The investigator developed a framework for future investigations of programs which helped lower recidivism rates nationwide using trust as a focal point. The investigator sought to learn more about ex-offender and family perceptions concerning trust in relationships.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do the family members perceive the recidivist return to the home environment?

Research Question 2: How does the recidivist perceive a readiness to return to the home environment?

Research Question 3: How does the recidivist perceive the substance abuse program?

Research Question 4: What is the family member’s level of trust towards the ex-offender after completion of the substance abuse program?

Research Question 5: What is the ex-offender's level of self-trust after earning a GED and completing substance abuse treatment?

Research Question 6: How do recidivist family members perceive the ex-offender's return home after completing substance abuse treatment?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a difference in the recidivist level of self-trust and a family member's level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a difference in the recidivist level of self-trust starting the substance abuse program or completing the substance abuse program.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the recidivism rate of ex-offenders and substance abuse training rate of completion.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the type of post-secondary experience positive or negative and the type of job the recidivist applied for.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender and the housing location.

Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between the recidivist's level of education and recidivism rates.

Limitations

The researcher found a possible limitation to the study could be participants not understanding the survey questions due to a lack in reading ability. The researcher found participants were of various ranges of educational attainment with no participant beyond the attainment of a high school level education. The researcher would be required to

monitor the participants to assist with possible questions on the part of the participants. Another limitation could be students not completing the substance abuse treatment program and not being able to participate in the post-test and no longer eligible for the study. The researcher also noted due to the survey material being in a printed form, a limitation was delivering the survey to the participants in stages as the researcher met with 10 participants at a time to administer the survey. Upon completion, the researcher had to collect the surveys by hand. The participants were also limited by the time each participated in the survey process while attending substance abuse classes as part of the program. Participants had a schedule that required full participation throughout the day. The researcher needed to find time in-between the prescheduled activities to retrieve the surveys upon the completion by the participants. The researcher found another limitation could be the lack of participation of the participant's family members in the interview process. The researcher noted participants could be held back in the substance abuse program due to not completing modules of substance abuse treatment successfully causing them to fall outside of the prescribed requirements of six months and graduation. Another limitation was participants leaving the program early to regular performance and not being graduated from the program successfully.

Definition of Terms

Ex-offender: Individuals with a record of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment, and those who have been on parole (Subia, 2015).

Family members: Persons related by blood, legal ties such as adoption or marriage or mutual agreement, enduring relationships, commitment (Gilgun, 1998).

General Equivalency Development (GED): Courses within a distribution schema that all students must pass as a requirement for graduation (Warner & Koeppl, 2009).

Helpers: Semi-skilled workers who assist other workers with higher levels of competence or expertise (Occupational Classification System Manual, 2019).

Inpatient: An individual receiving treatment while incarcerated (Olson & Lurigio, 2014)

Laborers: Unskilled workers who perform tasks at a work area, primarily manual, and do not have an area of trade specialization (Occupational Classification System Manual, 2019).

Recidivism: Re-arrest, re-conviction, re-incarceration (Hall, 2015).

Recidivist: “The reversion of an individual to criminal behavior after he or she has been convicted of a prior offense, sentenced, and (presumably) corrected” (Maltz, 1984, p. 1).

Self-trust: The ability to understand one’s process of learning and make the right choices regarding the learning process desired (Lundry, 2015).

Trust: “Of being a good or sincere person or having ethics or integrity” (Covey, 2006, p. 2).

Summary

The purpose of the investigation was to learn how completing substance abuse treatment successfully and earning a GED assisted ex-offenders in reintegration into families. Trust was studied as a factor in families and ex-offenders to determine how the ex-offender’s education related to the reintegration process of avoiding future recidivism.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review revolved around the following topics concerning, recidivism, family, education, employment, housing, and trust in relation to ex-offenders and reintegration into society and individual families. “Between 2001 and 2004 the federal government allocated over \$100 million to support the development of new reentry programs in all 50 states” (Petersilia, 2004, p. 4). The researcher noted ex-offenders who obtained basic education from the programs in the form of a general equivalency diploma made themselves more marketable and reduced a dependence on criminal activity. “Crime fell in areas where wage growth in the bottom 25 th percentile of the distribution was faster and improvements in human capital accumulation through education systems enhanced individual labor market productivity were important in crime reduction” (Machin, Marie, & Vujic, 2011, p. 3).

Organization of the Literature Review

The researcher incorporated the following topics and keywords: recidivism, family, education, employment, and housing into the literature review. “Recidivism rates, a common measure in assessing of prison educational programs, served as the American public’s accountability gauge for monies spent on correctional education” (Scott, 2016, p. 147). Ex-offenders needed employment opportunities to become financially independent upon returning home from incarceration. The researcher reviewed reintegration habits to investigate how offenders obtained further education to help avoid future arrest. Subjects of the study included family and social ties as well as substance use, employment, and housing to determine the necessary motivation factors for offenders to remain focused and free.

Recidivism

Ex-offenders who returned to old neighborhoods were in jeopardy of greater recidivism chances. “Depending on the type of neighborhood an ex-offender returned to reintegration challenges were compounded. Ex-offenders who returned to impoverished neighborhoods were worse off than those returned to a stable residential area” (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016, p. 914). The researcher noted ex-offenders added to the poverty found within old neighborhoods since the ex-offenders were unable to provide work skills to add to the area’s economy. “Within these neighborhoods ex-offenders could contribute to worsening of the instability and poverty factors which controlled and dissuaded investment from potential employers. Neighborhood disorganization led to reentry being harder for returned offenders” (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016, p. 914). Ex-offenders who received parole were sent back to prison within a relatively short period of time. “Department of Justice noted 54 percent of parolees released by parole boards were re-arrested for new crimes within two years, compared to a rate of 61 percent for parolees who were released to mandatory supervision” (Ostermann, Salerno, & Hyatt, 2015, p. 776). The Department of Justice’s (2007) findings revealed the existence of numerous variables within recidivism to warrant further study. “Decades of mass incarcerations made an old problem more salient. Also known as mass reentry, an unprecedented number of prisoners returned to the community either on parole or when individual sentences were completed” (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016, p. 913). The researcher found an under reviewed fact of mass reentry occurred where ex-offenders resided upon release. Additionally, the researcher observed offenders who had to move back to areas in which criminal activities occurred and precipitated an arrest and incarceration.

Chamberlain and Wallace (2016) suggested many ex-prisoners returned to a small number of neighborhoods with problems caused by disadvantage and high crime, often the same communities ex-prisoners once lived in during criminal activity and followed periods of incarceration, which led to new offenses. The researcher also learned in working with ex-offenders several factors related to reentry such as mental health issues and substance abuse problems, which could cause co-occurring behavior in the ex-offender's daily life. "In addition to recidivism-related outcomes (e.g., re-arrest, re-incarceration, probation violation), prior researchers also focused on mental health and drug use as a means of assessing reentry programs' abilities to help inmates released from prison" (Lurigio, Miller, Miller, & Barnes, 2016, p. 55).

Second Chance Act of 2008 and Offender Reentry

"Offender reentry programs, particularly in jails, proliferated since the passage of the Second Chance Act in 2008. The legislation authorized federal grants to support programs designed to assist offenders in the process of reentry" (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 56). The researcher noted ex-offenders needed access to resources and programs to assist in reintegration into the communities and families. "The Second Chance Act included funds for various programs developed to aide returning ex-offenders in connecting with specific services proven to decrease re-incarceration" (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 56). Ex-offenders required help in managing reentry into society to deal with obtaining resources to assist in avoiding recidivism behaviors. "Scholars and professionals used the term "reentry program" to describe a wide variety of initiatives designed to ease pain and suffering experienced by certain individuals or groups" (Zortman, Powers, Hiester, Klunk, & Antonio, 2016, p. 419). The researcher also noted programs designed to help

people relieve stress and pain helped during reintegration into society. “Reentry programming offered offenders returning to society additional opportunities to get treatment needs met while being closely monitored by trained professionals who addressed their unique problems” (Zortman et al., 2016, p. 420). The researcher found ex-offenders dealt with many problems having returned home from incarceration. “States complained mightily about rising prison cost; yet continued to hemorrhage public funds which could be saved if more substance abuse treatment were provided to inmates with alcohol and other drug problems and increased use of drug courts” (New CASA, 2010, p. 1).

Halfway House Interventions

“Halfway houses were a common intervention for substance-abusing offenders and others recently released from prison. Privately managed facilities provided treatment for correctional populations, which often led to variations in amounts and types of services and treatments” (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016, p. 182). The halfway house program helped offenders readjust to the community as offenders sought employment and took care of any probation or parole stipulations pertaining to release conditions. “A half-way house referred to a community-based correctional program which provided reentry services to prisoners through a residential program. Provision of a stable, safe, secure housing solution was the primary tenet of the half-way house program” (Wong, Bouchard, Gushue, & Lee, 2018, p. 3). Half-way houses provided the offender with a new start in the community and a way to avoid unhealthy environments.

Stigma and Offender Reentry

“The role of stigma in the life changes and health outcomes for former prisoners was a new area of research, with stigma defined as a process in which the elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination” occurred (Tobin-Tyler & Brockmann, 2017, p. 545). Tobin-Tyler and Brockmann (2017) also suggested ex-offenders who recently returned from incarceration had the stigma of having a prison record, which played a large role in the reintegration into society and co-occurred in a power situation allowing the components of stigma to unfold. Experiences for ex-offenders were also different from attending college behind bars to attending college on a college campus where an individual’s past could be observed as an issue. “As distinct from college in prison contexts where stigma was not an issue attending college post-prison brought students face-to-face with invisible stripes. Students were expected to navigate structural challenges and psychological challenges of invisible stigma issues” (Halkovic, & Greene, 2015, p. 765). Some offenders expected negative responses to former incarceration and were less likely to talk about offender experiences openly with others. “A key aspect of understanding stigma involved explaining differences in how people responded to perceived stigma. The anticipation of experiencing discrimination explained why perceived stigma lead to maladaptive functioning” (Moore, Stuewig, & Tangney, 2016, p. 198).

“Overall, the rehabilitation programs most successful in helping ex-offenders included at least one of the following components: (a) academic skills training (e.g., adult basic education); (b) vocational skills training (e.g., acquiring and maintaining employment)” (Duwe & Johnson, 2016, p. 280). The researcher noted ex-offenders

needed to work on understanding how to exist in society and the views society held concerning an ex-offender. “Cognitive skills programs (e.g., goal setting, problem solving, and self-control); and (d) drug abuse treatment helped individuals meet the challenges of life after incarceration” (Duwe & Johnson, 2016, p. 280).

Several portions of programs used in motivating an individual’s level of self-sufficiency eased the stress of reentry and assisted former inmate’s focus on the things necessary for the ex-offender to continue to make progress. “Major criminological theories have long emphasized the importance of prosocial sources of support as a protective factor against crime” (Duwe & Johnson, 2016, p. 282). Offenders were being released from incarceration and needed various resources and services to help individuals reintegrate into the communities and families. “The needs frequently self-identified prior to ex-offender’s return into the community included transportation, clothing, food, housing, and employment or vocational training. Working with inmates to identify their needs was the first step to helping their needs to be met” (Morani et al., 2011, p. 1).

Drug Courts

“Drug courts reduced subsequent substance use and criminal activity of participants. As a practical matter, it was not likely drug court movements could be sustained without credible evidence of comparable outcomes with traditional tracks on recidivism and substance abuse” (DeVall, Gregory, & Hartmann, 2017, p. 80). The researcher found ex-offenders needed regular routines, which included classes on substance abuse and recovery to help move the ex-offenders forward in the recovery process. “Moreover, specific components (employment, education, and age) were important considerations regarding successful participant outcomes” (DeVall et al., 2017,

p. 83). During the initial stay, clients learned how to work within a therapeutic treatment environment designed to help the ex-offender maintain sobriety and become self-sufficient.

Drug Felons and Food Stamps

“Under federal law, individuals convicted of an offense with possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance as an element of the crime were banned for life from receiving food stamps through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (Mauer, 2015, pp. 4-5). Paresky (2017) suggested being able to feed families was another barrier for the recently released offender who needed assistance, to provide food for the family and reintegrate back into the home and unable to provide food for a family created more reintegration problems for returning offenders. “The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act prevented ex-offenders convicted of possessing a controlled substance from receiving food stamps for life, whereas an individual convicted of violent felonies was eligible for food stamps immediately upon release from prison” (21 U.S.C., 862a (a), 2012). Punitive measures continued to provide barriers for ex-offenders and the reintegration in society as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act continued to remind individuals, the ex-offender was still considered offenders by the law.

“Section 115 of the Welfare Reform Act placed a lifetime ban on receiving cash and food stamps for persons convicted of state or federal felony offenses which involved the use or sale of drugs” (Hall, Wooten, & Lundgren, 2016, p. 60). Many states modified the law to lessen the penalties and allowed offenders to receive some assistance depending on the commitment to rehabilitation. “In recognition of the significant impact

substance use disorders had on criminal recidivism, states increased allocations for treatment resources for state prisons through the federal government's Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program" (RSAT) (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2007, p. 1). The author found RSAT to be a good program when used to help a significant number of inmates diagnosed as substance addiction. The program assisted individuals in dealing with the disease of drug addiction and helped individuals move forward toward recovery. "Whatever the approach to addiction and criminality, drug control policies fully incorporated what researchers had consistently shown: drug addiction was a chronic, relapsing brain disease with biological, psychological, social, and behavioral concomitants" (Olson & Lurigio, 2014, p. 601). The researcher found substance use disorder in many places, especially returning offenders and family members. There was a great need for treatment communities to provide programs in the home to boost individual success (Olson & Lurigio, 2014). "With more than two million people incarcerated in U.S. prisons and jails, many of them repeat offenders, experts widely agreed criminal recidivism was a serious and costly problem in both human and economic terms" (Bramsen, 2014, p. 133).

Barriers to Offender Reintegration

"The USA continued to rely on incarceration as a form of punishment and retribution, the unique obstacles faced by people who were previously incarcerated during ex-offender reintegration became increasingly more important for social scientist and policy makers to understand" (Mowen, & Visher, 2015, p. 338). The researcher found many felony offenders with violent charges dealt with barriers in gaining employment and other basic rights upon release from incarceration. An ex-offender's

family was one way of helping the ex-offender remain in the community and the family. “People who were previously incarcerated cited family interaction as among the most important factor in successful reentry and assistance” (Mowen & Visher, 2015, p. 337). As the ex-offender lived in the community, family support strengthened family ties and assisted the former offender.

Social Control Theory

Hirshi suggested “family and individual support provided toward a successful reintegration of the offender into the community [and] was at the heart of the offender returning home” (as cited in Mowen & Visher, 2015, p. 343). The researcher found having family bonds were helpful in providing the ex-offender with motivation to avoid going back to jail for committing new crimes. Hirshi noted “Social control theory noted importance in considering social bonds as deterring an individual from engaging in deviant or criminal behavior as offenders did not want to further strain or destroy the community support system” (as cited in Mowen & Visher, 2015, p. 343).

Understanding what helped as individual offenders stopped committing crimes and going back to a life of crime upon returning home from incarceration appeared important as ex-offenders focused on the importance of family assistance in maintaining freedom. Berg and Huebner (2010) outlined three theoretical contributions about family connections and the reintegration processes: “(1) family ties had a controlling effect on the returning members behavior; (2) family members provided emotional support; (3) family provided an avenue for identity changes” (p. 385). Offenders needed family concerns to replace criminal thinking errors which caused individuals to risk individual freedoms by using old behaviors, something partially addressed by the institution’s

treatment programs. “It has been suggested the development of family and peer support networks have partially explained the connection between religion and reentry success” (Stansfield, Mowen, O’Conner, & Boman, 2017, p. 114). The researcher experienced religious services in the prison setting allowed offenders to meet with other individuals interested in maintaining a positive focus. Ex-offenders used religious resources upon returning to the community upon release from incarceration. “Religious support was recognized as an important theoretical and practical variable in current efforts to develop successful reentry pathways” (Stansfield et al., 2017, p. 112). While in prison some individuals attended religious programs to help learn more about what religion could offer to help the offender avoid going back to prison. “The risk principle stated programs should give more attention and resources to the people who had higher risk levels for recidivism” (Stansfield et al., 2017, p. 114).

Second Chance Act Program Collaborations

“Federal funding efforts increased the number of reentry programs over the past decade with corresponding evaluations of the initiatives. Reentry programming targeted [a] wide range of offenders [with] many focused on medium and high-risk individuals with substance abuse disorders” (Miller, Barnes, & Miller, 2017, p. 760). The Second Chance Act provided the ex-offenders additional resources like reentry programming and substance abuse programs through funding of more programs, with good utilization in the Delaware County Jail in Ohio. “The Delaware County Jail Substance Abuse Treatment (DCSAT) program was a residential substance abuse treatment program designed for male inmates diagnosed with substance dependency who had minor children” (Miller et al., 2017, p. 760). The programs ranged from substance use disorder treatment to

employment services and family counseling, all built to address barriers that arose as the former offender worked to reintegrate into family and community.

“Treatment professionals provided integrated behavioral healthcare services focused on addiction recovery for adults within Delaware County and adjacent Morrow County. Over the two-year grant period, 34 offenders and their families were engaged in treatment and outreach services” (Miller et al., 2017, p. 760). Residential substance abuse treatment programs helped ex-offenders by providing continued support of the individual upon arrival back into society. “When adequately funded and delivered with fidelity, reentry programs rendered recidivism reduction and other positive outcomes, such as employment” (Miller & Khey, 2017, p. 574). In some areas of the United States, substance use disorder, was a serious problem and required assistance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

“Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ranked Louisiana among the top 10 states with the highest rate of substance abuse treatment needs, mirrored by contrasts between national averages and Louisiana and between the state and the parishes” (Miller & Khey, 2017, p. 577). Louisiana had high rankings in the SAMHSA survey concerning the population of addicted individuals which led to further recidivism. “SAMHSA identified Louisiana, and the 22nd Judicial District in particular, as having a large number of substance-dependent individuals who did not receive the help needed to remain free from prison” (Miller & Khey, 2017, p. 577). Assessments along with best practices assisted Louisiana’s 22nd District to assist those with substance use disorder problems in gaining the help needed in surrounding areas. “The Louisiana

22nd Judicial District Reentry Court Program featured a battery of synthesized and complimentary evidence-based practices, including needs assessments screening, substance abuse and mental health treatment, social mentoring, and, most notably, intensive professional vocational training” (Miller & Khey, 2017, p. 578). The researcher found returning offenders needed help in the form of peers who were on the outside who helped better understand available resources and how to access the resources for forward movement in the reintegration process. “Mentors worked with inmates for up to two years on different program modules (e.g., peer-support understanding drug abuse, fatherhood skills, anger management, personal health, and personal money management) in preparation to return to society” (Miller & Khey, 2017, p. 578). Programs designed for the individual areas worked with recidivism and substance abuse, meeting ex-offenders needs in targeted geographical areas (Miller & Khey, 2017). Faith played an important role in the inmate’s life in avoiding going back to jail or prison and criminal thinking errors, which led to criminal relapse. Connolly and Granfield (2017) suggested most people attempting to recover from substance abuse lacked recovery capital, which served as a problem hindering success.

Recovery Capital

“Recovery capital was an important concept in the field of addiction studies. A person’s access to recovery capital meant the difference between termination of addiction and successful reintegration or on-going criminality and drug use” (Connolly & Granfield, 2017, p. 370). Ex-offenders who suffered from substance use disorder required assistance in the form of a substance abuse treatment program to remain free and avoid possible recidivism. “Due to the indisputable negative relationship between substance

abuse and reintegration, substance abuse treatment was critical and necessary service for most newly released offenders attempting to reintegrate” (Connolly & Granfield, 2017, p. 371). Offenders released from prison did not always have access to substance use disorder treatment or did not always participate in the process. While individuals who received treatment sometimes required even more treatment upon being released from custody. “For newly released offenders services to help alleviate substance abuse was scarce. It was a common misconception newly released offenders were provided services which helped them gain social and recovery capital necessary for reentry while in prison” (Connolly & Granfield, 2017, p. 372). Ex-offenders used resources from various locations to assist in working toward reintegration and stability. “In addition, ministries provided counseling and peer mentorship programs to help ex-offenders with reintegration efforts. In turn, peer mentorship and modeling social change eased participants’ reentry experiences” (Marlow et al., 2015, p. 98).

Family

“The Second Chance Act had several goals: expunging criminal records, providing services to offenders most in need, enhancing public safety while reducing cost, and offering opportunities for the empirical study of reentry and rehabilitation toward improving criminal justice practice” (Burriss & Miller, 2017, p. 1). In the experience of returning, ex-offenders needed to develop ways to organize the new experience around positive activities, specifically with family members. “The community reinforcement approach (CRA) to substance abuse treatment was based on operant conditioning and aimed to assist individuals in rearranging their lifestyle which produced, drug- free living and a greater benefit to society” (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 56). The

researcher noted ex-offenders who actively used drugs as well as those who had stopped using drugs needed assistance, which included a family circle to affect long-term change. “Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) was a variant of CRA which involved family members and friends, and concerned significant others (CSOs), in the treatment intervention process for client success” (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 57).

Life Course and Mass Incarceration on Families

A negative relationship existed between substance abuse and family, life, as the outcome of incarceration and reentry on children and families was significant, and in many respects difficult to measure accurately. “Life course theory was used to explain why people stopped committing crime and using drugs/ or deviant behavior. Life course theory scholars demonstrated important life events, marriage, gaining employment, or joining the military, have led to reduced recidivism” (Messer, Patten, & Candela, 2016, p. 6). Many offenders were incarcerated due to being involved in drug- and alcohol-related incidents, whether using or dealing drugs. “Much of the mass expansion was fueled by increases in arrest, prosecution, and incarceration of drug related offenses” (Ray, Grommon, Buchanan, Brown, & Watson, 2017, p. 875). The researcher found many ex-offenders dealt with drug and alcohol problems, which took a toll on family financial resources. “Chronic alcohol and drug users frequently encountered financial and job stress which created a turning point. Not only was the cost of drug and alcohol a problem, but work performance suffered which led to job termination and possible arrest” (Messer et al., 2016, p. 7). Offenders went to prison at high rates, leaving behind children who grew up with relatives, family friends, or as part of the foster care system. “The dramatic rise in mass incarceration began in the mid-1970s and has continued mostly unabated

since and meant an increasing number of individuals and families were affected by incarceration” (Turney, 2014, p. 299). Turney (2014) suggested life-course theory, which brought up the intertwined nature of the social relationships, shed light on the process for understanding how a father’s incarceration changed children’s co-residence and contact with grandparents.

Linked Lives Theory

“The relative lack of attention to the consequences of incarceration for relationships which spanned multiple generations was unfortunate as intergenerational contact was consequential for all three generations of father, son and grandfather” (Turney, 2014, p. 301). The researcher noted sons of incarcerated fathers had behavior problems; not having a father figure to learn how to be a man resulted in negative family and school issues. “While trauma, stigma, and strain theories bared social isolation and shame from the assumption paternal incarceration impacted both boys and girls and had consequences on child outcomes beyond behavior, evidence of behavioral problems concentrated primarily among males” (Haskins, 2016, p. 863). Boys who had fathers incarcerated were getting into more trouble as the child lacked a paternal figure to guide them properly. “These extremely consistent findings for boys and their behavior outcomes were pivotal in establishing the existence of harmful consequences of paternal incarceration most notably around intergenerational transmissions of male criminality” (Haskins, 2016, p. 863). Children of fathers in prison started having problems as early as elementary school age as the children dealt with not having a father to help while growing up or attend events and outings normally associated with school. “The incarceration of a parent was seen as an event capable of producing trauma, stigma, and

strain, all of which negatively impacted elementary-aged children's sense of academic competence with implications which carried on throughout their life course" (Haskins, 2016, p. 864). Children of incarcerated parents dealt with not having the close relationship needed to help children grow emotionally and cognitively due to the distance and the lack of social interaction with a parent daily. "Living with someone who underwent incarceration fell under the definition of an adverse childhood experience (ACE); hence, parental incarceration could add trauma and a potential pathway for social, emotional, and cognitive neurodevelopmental impairments" (Arditti & Salva, 2015, p. 551).

Children of an Incarcerated Parent

Children not having a parent due to incarceration lost the stability of having both parents in the home, which resulted in negative outcomes related to emotional and cognitive growth. "Parental incarceration was often an adverse childhood experience characterized as an enduring trauma which involved ongoing and repeated stressors. Parental incarceration was associated with serious visitation problems and children being raised by non-biological individuals" (Arditti & Salva, 2015, p. 551). Children suffered from various problems having a father incarcerated. Behavior problems were also prevalent among children whose parents were incarcerated. "Mounting evidence linked paternal incarceration to harmful outcomes for children" (Wakefield, 2015, p. 905). Similar findings were true across a group of important behavioral, progressive, and achievement findings, including mental health and behavioral problems, substance use, educational realization, and social inequality. Wakefield (2015) suggested fathers incarcerated and then released made coming back into the family harder due to the many

negative issues faced by the family and the parent. Children of incarcerated parents also faced additional barriers, such as substance use and educational problems.

Risk Factors for Families

Previous research noted several risk issues for children and families with a father incarcerated as the remaining parent would have to provide additional income to make up for the incarcerated father's portion of family finances as well as care for the children and living situations. "Experts expected parental incarceration to have especially negative consequences in adolescence, because many of the same mechanisms influenced a child's well-being, such as trauma of parental separation, family instability, economic strain, stigma, and labeling, often undermined adolescent well-being" (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015, p. 935). At times incarceration may have been a good thing as the father could have been violent with the family, causing the children to witness domestic violence behavior. "Parental incarceration represented little additional risk to youth who resided in a tumultuous home environment. In extreme cases, if an incarcerated parent was abusive or exposed the child to dangerous situations, incarceration represented relief from preexisting stressors" (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015, p. 934). The researcher noted children who dealt with similar issues found themselves participating in bad behavior at school and labeled a troublemaker; perhaps even suspended. "The School-to-Prison Pipeline was a collection of punitive laws, policies, which pushed young people, particularly African American students, male students, students with disabilities, and students from lower socioeconomic statuses, out of school into the criminal justice systems" (Thompson, 2016, p. 331). Thompson (2016) suggested youth having problems with the stigma of a father locked-up and an unsuccessful family life, along with harsh

laws in place such as zero-tolerance, seemed guaranteed to experience a life of incarceration as readymade prisoners.

Restorative Justice

“The restorative justice concept provided one possibility to help these adolescents avoid placement in the criminal pipeline. Restorative justice focused on correcting the harm which resulted from the rehabilitated offender” (Thompson, 2016, p. 336). Children who got into trouble and needed help learned how to cope with the stress and stigma of having an incarcerated father and a turbulent home life due to the family’s possible struggle to make ends meet. “The idea of Restorative Justice also included healing rather than hurting, moral learning, community participation and community caring, respectful dialogue, forgiveness, responsibility, apology, and making amends to restore victims, perpetrators, and community as a whole” (Simson, 2014, pp. 506-507). Family visits were found to be helpful to the inmate as well as the family in keeping family ties strong and maintaining facility security. “Inmate and family relationships were beneficial not only from a familial perspective but also from a policy perspective. Fostering family relationships among correctional populations helped prevent intergenerational criminality and reduced recidivism” (Pierce, 2015, p. 371). The author found inmates also thought about the mistakes of the past and tried to reconcile with self and family members. Pierce (2015) shared the following from an interview with an inmate:

I am a big disappointment to my daughter. She was gone from my life [in ex-wife’s custody] and then I got custody of her and two days later I was sentenced to prison. I wondered how not a dad for two thirds of her life having mattered; I tried and watched for signs (p. 380).

Maintaining Family Ties

Holding on to family ties made a difference in how an offender returned home from incarceration and began the process of reunifying with family members. “Although distinct from family support, understanding the influence of family ties on reoffending helped to partially explain a potential relationship between family support and reoffending” (Taylor, 2016, p. 335). Maintaining a family relationship helped inmates stay connected to a semblance of family life, serving as a reminder loved ones had not forgotten them. “Visits from family and friends have been a prisoner’s best option for maintaining social support networks but they were often limited. Few prison visitation programs were designed to encourage visits” (Duwe & Clark, 2013, p. 273). Many prison programs were not set up for family-friendly visiting of inmates due to past problems with contraband entering prison facilities such as drugs and cellphones. “Most prison visitation programs were subordinate to the safety and security procedures of the prison facility. Waiting hours and being searched, visitors usually met inmates in large multipurpose rooms where they were closely watched and allowed little physical contact” (Duwe & Clark, 2013, p. 273). Taylor (2016) proposed an individual who had something to live for was more likely to follow the rules both in and out of the institution to maintain family relationships. Other researchers suggested the following problems for prisoners in maintaining family relationships: long distances to travel between where prisons were and where families lived, unwelcoming visiting organization and surroundings, the cost of phone calls, administrative red tape, and the treatment of family/visitors by correctional personnel (Swanson, Chang-Bae, Sansone, & Tatum, 2013). “Researchers further indicated familial relationships prior to incarceration

influenced relationships between inmates and family members during the incarceration period” (Swanson et al., 2013, p. 457).

Consequences of Parental Incarceration

Upon release from incarceration, ex-offenders returned home and reconnected with family members, while meeting a new set of home expectations. “Among the many challenges facing prisoners as they returned home was the reunification with family. Most former prisoners’ relationships with family members were critical to successful reintegration, yet these relationships were complicated by past experiences and unrealistic expectations” (Naser & Visser, 2006, p. 20). Ex-offenders came home and needed help getting back into relationships with children and family members due to the strain incarceration created during the inmates’ time away in prison. “There was ample reason to be concerned about the effects of paternal incarceration on at-risk families. Although regular contact between incarcerated fathers and their children mitigated some of these negative consequences” (Galardi, Settersten, Vuchinich, & Richards, 2017, p. 655). Children who dealt with a father who returned from incarceration needed to redefine the parental hierarchy, and since children became used to not having a father and seeking other groups to bond with, negative situations frequently occurred during the parent’s incarceration. “This was an important step because networks not only affected well-being during adolescence but also were a critical pathway by which parental incarceration could negatively affect children’s behavior and life chances” (Bryan, 2017, p. 1479).

Proper Role Models for Children of Incarcerated Parents

When children found a group accepting and inviting, children joined the group without paying attention to the type because of the desire for acceptance. According to Bryan (2017), without the influence of a good role model, children might turn to someone like the incarcerated parent, which could lead children down the wrong path and create further issues for the remaining single parent. The single parent needed to leave the child alone to maintain a living, while the child felt isolated and vulnerable to the wrong social influences, issues which did not disappear when the offending parent left prison and returned home. “Strong and consistent evidence was found [among] teenagers with recently incarcerated fathers embedded in friend groups locally composed of marginalized and less connected kids in schools who were less academically successful and more delinquent” (Bryan, 2017, p. 1478). The researcher observed when both the incarcerated parent and the child felt lost during the father's incarceration as both missed out on growing milestones needed for both to bond and know each other as parent and child. “Parental incarceration cheated the adolescent as well as the parent out of everyday aspects of parenting. The natural progression of gradually decreasing reliance on the parent which occurred during adolescence became impossible when the parent was in prison” (Kautz, 2017, p. 558).

Consequences of Parental Incarceration

When an offender was released from prison, the individual had to start over by reuniting with families and fitting into an already-established hierarchy within the family structure. Coming home was the first part of the journey to reintegration, while the second part began as the now ex-offender sought resources to assist him/her assimilate

back into society. Naser and Visher (2006) “found family members who provided affective and instrumental support to returning prisoners often reported experiencing hardships of their own, such as financial strain and anxiety” (p. 20). Additional relationship issues occurred in the absence of a father, specifically when the child learned of the father’s negative and possibly violent behavior prior to incarceration as well as meeting and living with a stranger. The absent father missed important stages of the child’s development either before incarceration or during. “Given many challenges faced by children often during parental incarceration it was not surprising emerging evidence suggested some children were anxious or ambivalent about incarcerated parents coming home” (Johnson & Easterling, 2015, p. 62). The returning offender had to work with the existing structure of the family in meeting with and providing care for the children as others had been fulfilling the roles of caregivers for those children during the father’s incarceration absence. “Family extended beyond the nuclear setting when helping a returned inmate reintegrate into the family. Specifically, many children experienced disruptions in caregiving relationships” (Murray & Murray, 2010, p. 289).

Child Support and Enforcement

Additional problems faced by returning fathers were paying child support beyond just being a father coming home. In the researcher’s experience, the father had to find a job as soon as possible to begin eroding the mountain of debt accumulated, possibly prior to and during incarceration, which caused more stress for the family unit. “Another problem for the family’s reentry process was the offender’s child support payments. Established in 1975, the Child Support Enforcement program came about to limit public expenditures in the federal welfare program, collecting and tracking offenders’ child

support payments” (Roman & Link, 2015, p. 899). The organization’s design involved holding fathers, not the government and taxpayers, financially responsible for the children. “For newly convicted offenders under orders to pay child support and facing jail or prison time, the child support order upon prison entry varied greatly by state” (Roman & Link, 2015, p. 899). Not all states used the order in the same way as some worked with the ex-offender to assist in meeting the law’s requirements and help the new ex-offender avoid going back to prison. “Some states allowed modification as the case moved to inactive status and the prisoner did not accrue child support debt while incarcerated” (Roman & Link, 2015, p. 899). Additionally, Roman and Link (2015) suggested the decision to modify the enforcement of child support orders helped offenders avoid being put further into arrears for the unpaid child support prior to but not during incarceration. For states who followed the law, many fathers were incarcerated over the years for not paying child support, and many could not get legal support or relief to assist in making amends for the problem. “Each year family courts incarcerated thousands of Americans for non-payment of child support. The vast majority of these parents were not afforded criminal procedural protections because the courts characterized child support enforcement as a civil matter” (Katz, 2019, p. 1241). A parent who went to prison left a child who did not understand what was going and possibly felt abandoned. “Although parental incarceration occurred at any point in a child’s life, most children with incarcerated parents were young. A younger child did not fully understand why the parent was away, leading to confusion and fear of abandonment by caregivers” (Shlafer, Schuber, & Wanous, 2017, p. 299). Shlafer et al. (2017) also suggested the result of the incarceration was on many levels and entailed the whole family. In addition, the same

author noted children of incarcerated parents dealt with issues daily in trying to move forward, specifically following imprisonment of the father and head of household. The researcher observed a need for children to develop and maintain routines as the father was no longer a part of the family structure. Children also needed an understanding of what was going on concerning the missing paternal figure to maintain the emotional health of the child and the family. Shlafer et al. (2017) suggested some children handled the situation better than others. Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP, 2010) noted factors associated with resilience included the children's ability to express feelings and emotions about the parent's incarceration, caregivers' maintenance of family routines and quality caregiving, and the establishment of age-appropriate communication around incarceration. Communication also assisted the children in not internalizing issues and blaming themselves and gave the remaining parental figure a way to talk about the situation and develop workable strategies to continue to advance the remaining family members. "Age-appropriate communication was especially important, because it gave younger children an understanding of where their father was and why and allowed them to express their feelings and understanding of the situation" (Shlafer et al., 2017, p. 299).

Education

Education proved to be of great help to offenders leaving prison and re-entering society. Education also helped inmates avoid going back to incarceration as education opened new doors for employment to assist the now ex-offender in providing financially for himself and family. "Educational programs were shown to be the most effective programs to reduce recidivism: more so than vocational, counseling, religious, substance abuse, transitional services and work release programs" (Passarell, 2013, p. 12). Ex-

offenders needed education upon coming home to help open doors toward obtaining employment and assist in being able to maintain personal freedom as education supplied the solution to the need for employment. “Without an education released offenders had fewer job opportunities and less job opportunities which paid enough money to help them avoid returning to criminal activities” (Passarell, 2013, p. 1). The education for the offender could not start inside the correctional institution if the offender were unwilling to take classes toward helping themselves on the outside of prison. “The lack of education meant offenders were less likely to be able to take advantage of prison programs aimed at assisting the offenders’ reintegration into society, such as aggression replacement training, parenting classes, and substance abuse programs like skills training” (Passarell, 2013, p. 1). In the researcher’s experience, an ex-offender’s coming home was built upon all the educational opportunities and experiences inmates were willing to involve themselves in prior to the event of leaving prison. “Post-prison reintegration was likely dependent on various personal and situational characteristics best understood in a longitudinal life-course framework of (a) pre-prison education, (b) in-prison education, (c) post-release education, (d) post-release integration experiences” (Scott, 2016, p. 159).

Offender Education and Recidivism

Offenders education inside correctional institutions was one-way society judged how education related to an offender’s experience upon release. “Recidivism rates, which were commonly used in assessing the effectiveness of prison educational programs, served as the American public’s accountability gauge for monies spent on correctional education” (Wade, 2007, p. 28). The researcher noted education of ex-offenders was

needed; the higher the education level ex-offenders had helped place them in better categories for greater levels of employment. “Education was viewed as an equalizer of opportunities. It was documented going to college enabled individuals to obtain credentials for the labor market, which could open up considerable opportunities for social mobility” (Ellis & Lane, 1963, as cited in Ubah, 2004, p. 74). Education helped ex-offenders avoid recidivism and gain more employment options. “This assumption suggested inmates’ completion of or participation in a college correctional program was likely evidence of their engagement in the process of upward mobility” (Ubah, 2004, p. 74).

Public and Offender Education

“Support for postsecondary education programs in prisons long suffered the whims of public opinion and political temperament to an extent it no longer served as a barometer for national punishment policy” (Mastrorilli, 2016, p. 44). In the researcher’s experience correctional education was sustained on the whim of the public as the public felt good about offenders being rehabilitated through educational programs. “When the rehabilitative ideal was ascendant, programs expanded; when tough-on-crime rhetoric took hold, they contracted” (Mastrorilli, 2016, p. 44). Education programs suffered from the will of the public and how society felt about offenders who made past negative decisions and tried to correct the decisions for possible future life-courses with education. Simpkins (2015) researched the situation in Chemeketa Community College in Oregon, which operated within the Willamette Valley prisons. The adding on of a college program in prison had many definitions, among them success meant participants left incarceration with more education and a sense of empowerment. “College Inside had 108 graduates, 53

of them released. Of the post-release group, 41 were working and/or attending school (77.4%) and only two had returned to prison, bringing the rate of recidivism to 3.8%, far below the state average” (Oregon Department of Corrections, 2013, p. 53). Simpkins (2015) suggested Oregon Department of Corrections example worked for the motivated individual seeking to start a productive life.

Education and Employment

For the ex-offender, obtaining employment was harder, having a felony background with little to no education and not having any viable employment skills while attempting to reintegrate back into the community. “According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment rates were highest for individuals with less than a high school diploma (12.5% in April 2012), and lowest for individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher (four percent in April 2012)” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012, p. A-4). Inmates who worked on earning General Education Diplomas inside prison developed a routine that helped upon leaving prison in obtaining employment. Offenders who reentered society without proper education had a higher chance of re-arrest and return to confinement. “Prison educational achievement increased the likelihood of employment which in turn decreased the likelihood of recidivism. Post-release employment kept offenders occupied and provided them with a disincentive to engage in offending” (Duwe & Clark, 2014, p. 459).

Offender Education and Reentry

Inmates in the process of being released from prison on parole or probation needed to obtain skills while still incarcerated in the form of vocational or academic education to be able to find employment upon release. “Minnesota state prisons used

postsecondary education to ready inmates for reentering society. All Minnesota state correctional facilities provided educational programming, with more than 9,000 inmates enrolled between July 2011 and June 2012” (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2013, p. 4). Inmates who received education in the form of vocational learning to obtain a skill or those who used academics to obtain greater education were less likely to go back to criminal behavior. “The prominence of education in prisons was likely due to the well-documented relationship between low educational achievement and antisocial behaviors” (Duwe & Clark, 2014, p. 455). Ex-offenders had a hard time applying for funds to go to college, specifically not being able to understand the process or dealing with drug crimes, which did not allow them to obtain government funds to further educational dreams. The key federal act, related to the drug convicted offenders’ likelihood of obtaining an education, was the 1998 Amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965. “The amendment specifically stated having a conviction for drug sale or possession resulted in ineligibility or withdrawal of federal student financial aid” (Lundgren, Curtis, & Oettinger, 2018, p. 35). The researcher found the policies hard for offenders who came home to help get personal lives back on track by using the resources in the community and for those who completed prison sentences and were still being denied basic citizenship rights due to previous crimes. “The ex-offender population completed the punishment for committing a crime, post-incarceration policies limited basic citizenship rights to vote, work, be housed, use the primary mode of transportation (cars), to economically care for their families, and to educate themselves” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 63). The formerly incarcerated population dealt with various types of political policies, which kept offenders from being able to re-start private lives over with families by being crime-

free and able to find employment and education resources. “These unjust policies were negatively affecting current and ex-offenders by not legally allowing them access to resources in the community needed to be crime free” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 63).

Broadening an Offenders Outlook

Offenders went to prison for inappropriate behavior and the crimes committed against society, and each of the individuals possessed various talents, which assisted the individuals in finding better ways to channel creative energies into positive endeavors. “The ultimate goal of a partnership between prison arts and community college academic programs was to provide intellectually stimulating educational experiences to foster human connection, an appreciation for the arts, and resources for positive self-expression and personal growth” (Brewster, 2015, p. 94). More education improved offenders’ chances of becoming functioning members of society as producers and developers. Personal growth was important to offenders’ self-esteem and positive views of themselves and the world. Robert Henri (2007) believed “each person desired to create, to be creative. Art and life were intertwined and gave opportunity and encouragement, the art spirit in each of us could be unleashed, freeing us as we became inventive, self-expressing creatures” (p. 1). Rehabilitation was about taking the offender from where individuals were as criminals and lawbreakers to be in a better state of living prior to releasing inmates back into the community to become reintegrated into family and society. “A partnership between prison arts and community college programs was one path toward self-discovery and preparation for successful transition from prison life to life after incarceration” (Brewster, 2015, pp. 97-98). Education broadened an otherwise

limited thought process and opened new possibilities to help incarcerated individuals see life on the outside with family as a reachable goal.

Postsecondary Education in Prison

“In 2008, Saint Louis University started an education program at the Eastern Reception Diagnostic Correctional Center in Bowling Green, Missouri. This program assisted inmates in obtaining an associate degree in theological studies” (Parker, 2014, p. 394). The opportunity enabled inmates to work towards post-secondary education, which helped inmates reach a higher-level education assisting them to become viable in the job market upon the release from incarceration. “Due to its success, a second program emerged to help inmates obtain an Associate of Arts degree over a period of four years” (Parker, 2014, p. 394). Offenders needed the opportunity education provided and allowed ex-offenders to take basic education, obtained either in high-school or by completing the General Education Diploma course and expand on those lessons. “To ensure students finished each year with recognized achievement, the program grouped the courses in thematic concentrations: English and communication, history and social sciences, moral and ethical formation, mathematics, and science” (Parker, 2014, p. 394). The program allowed and encouraged inmates to start seeing themselves as something more, not just inmates. “Director George Lombardi identified three ingredients for successful reentry as education, drug rehabilitation, and mental health care in a speech delivered at the Saint Louis Alliance for Reentry Summit” (Parker, 2014, p. 397).

Educational Benefits for Offenders

Education held a prominent role in all reentry strategies, as it helped expose offenders to new ideas that stimulated them to think about positive ways to express

themselves. “The potential benefits of education programs included increasing an inmate’s structured time during incarceration and facilitating employment in a desirable job or pursuit of higher education after release” (Aos & Drake, 2013, p. 5). Inmates who took the opportunity to learn a trade or participated in education while still incarcerated increased the ability to become viable in the workforce upon the release into the community and increased the ability to remain free of criminal situations. Aos and Drake (2013) estimated investing \$1,599 per inmate in education saved taxpayers more than \$5,800 in crime-prevention resources. Ex-offenders, prepared to go into society ready to work, got into less trouble. Pompoco, Wooldredge, Lugo, Sullivan, and Latessa (2017) suggested teaching and helping inmates get adjusted to returning to society was recognized as less expensive than keeping individuals locked up and the ensuing continuation of criminal activity upon release into society. In February 2001, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction authorized the Ohio Plan for Productive Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction (ORRR) (Pompoco et al., 2017). For an ex-offender to remain free, the individual needed basic education to be viable for employment. “The Ohio Plan deemed GED classes, college and vocational programs components of reentry-approved programming. Ohio required prisoners without a high school diploma or GED to participate in education classes for a minimum of 6 months when resources permitted” (Pompoco et al., 2017, p. 520). Ohio state prisons required prisoners obtain some form of education to prepare for a brighter future on the outside. “For prisoners who accessed correctional education, the role of structured learning proved invaluable in reconciling them with their past, present, and future, as well as

preparing them for lasting reintegration into society upon their release” (Utheim, 2016, p. 102).

Success and Failure of Postsecondary Assistance in Prison

Once offenders tasted success in learning, individuals became hungry for more knowledge as individual ideas and thoughts expanded in ways the ex-offenders had not imagined as successful reentry into society was essential for reducing the risk of recidivism and the associated cost to society. Ex-offenders were not used to positive feelings concerning prior educational experiences. “Most of our graduates reported their experience as a college student while incarcerated was the most pivotal change which contributed to the success they now enjoyed on the outside due to college inside programs” (Simpkins, 2015, p. 21).

Education allowed parents to begin to move past the stigma of incarceration, successfully reintegrate into the family and society, and be productive. Taxpayers wanted to know who paid for college for the inmates “Education held promises beyond the immediate rewards for those who returned to families, friends, and communities with alternate hopes and aspirations for the future” (Utheim, 2016, p. 102). Offenders located in certain prisons were able to benefit from a secondary education while incarcerated. “On June 24, 2016, U.S. Department of Education Secretary John King announced 67 colleges and universities selected to participate in the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 3). In 1994, in response to the crack epidemic sweeping the US and flooding the prison systems, the government stopped the original Pell grants inmates had used to obtain postsecondary education. “Department of Justice 2013 meta-analysis conducted by the RAND Corporation, [concluded] inmates [who]

participated in high-quality correctional education, including postsecondary correctional education, were 43% less likely to return to prison within 3 years than those who did not participate” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 3).

Beyond the General Equivalency Diploma

Ex-offenders coming home from prison and wanting to gain an education to obtain better employment faced many obstacles in meeting the goal. Ex-offenders normally had no experience in applying for educational opportunities. “Frequently the opportunities for the educational pursuits encountered were actually scams which involved low-quality (e.g., unaccredited) institutions which offered courses and degrees which held little to no value” (Ross, Tewksbury, & Zaldivar, 2015, p. 587).

Other contributions to the difficulties included the economic realities of entering higher education. “Offenders eligible for federal funds were limited due to personal convictions for criminal offenses discussed where the money would come from to pay for college. Former offenders became discouraged when they tried to negotiate mazes of financial aid regulations” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, pp. 1-2). Many inmates recently turned ex-offenders were not in touch with the modern world, and the technology that existed in school made it harder to obtain higher education, gain the competence, and compete for better-paying employment. “The pressure of trying to get ahead in society was labeled as culture shock as the feelings of offenders returning home and attempting to further their education past the GED obtained while incarcerated faced these problems of technology” (Miller, Mondesir, Stater, & Schwartz, 2014, p. 72).

Path to Decreased Recidivism

Ex-offenders faced hurdles in getting an opportunity to attend college, which started with having to divulge personal criminal history before being allowed to enter certain schools. “Some colleges also required students to report criminal offenses on admission applications. Advisors needed to know about legal rights to advocate for students with potential employers and college admission officers” (Miller et al., 2014, p. 74). Some inmates and ex-offenders felt giving all the information needed for the process of getting into school was difficult for them to handle, so inmates and ex-offenders did not go further with educational pursuits. “Inmate’s access to educational programs navigating bureaucratic channels getting admitted and participating in academic activities was challenging. When inmate’s access was daunting or the process too lengthy, it led to potential students opting out of participation in education opportunities” (Ross et al., 2015, p. 588). The researcher noted offenders who reintegrated into society and obtained and kept employment were less likely to return to old criminal behaviors, which could get them re-incarcerated. “A criminological truism was [a] lack of legitimate employment fostered criminality; conversely, holding a legitimate job diminished criminal conduct. Consequently, many reformers advocated educational programs to expand employment opportunities for ex-offenders who served time in prison” (Henry & Jacobs, 2007, p. 755). Coming home from incarceration with new skills like basic education or trade made seeking employment easier for ex-offenders and avoid recidivism. “It was believed better educated, more skilled releases would experience higher wages and employment, increasing the opportunity cost and decreasing the likelihood of crime and recidivism” (Henry & Jacobs, 2007, p. 756). Former inmates

required plans on obtaining the resources needed to be successful in education and employment searches. “Strategies for improving the employability of ex-offenders included providing them with basic education and job-specific training, assisting in identifying potential employment opportunities” (Henry & Jacobs, 2007, p. 755).

Reentry Processes

Education was not a cure-all for the ex-offender. The process included stages an offender had to progress through to get ready to be released from incarceration and placed back into society, which provided the start to a better way of life for the individual and the family. “Reentry traditionally involved a three-phase process: preparation for release, moment of release, and a phase of maintenance in the community” (Linton, 2013, p. 2). According to Linton (2013) reentry had several moving parts for the just-released offender. The process was not about just bringing people home, but also reuniting them with family and making them viable enough to begin the process of rebuilding a life through education. “Postsecondary education for inmates was championed as an important path to rehabilitation and a factor minimizing recidivism” (Ross et al., 2015, p. 585). The researcher found the offenders needed time to move through the phases of learning the basics of education while incarcerated to get prepared for the outside world. Linton (2013) suggested the following ideal: “Confined individuals should use prison time to get educated and then be ready for the challenges of free society when released” (p. 2). The important thought applied directly to the idea of proper preparation of the soon-to-be-released offender. Scott (2010) suggested “newly released offenders faced many challenges upon reentry into the community. Offenders continued making lifestyle changes which tested offender’s commitment to change. Employment was a key

component in the successful reintegration of the offender” (p. 48). The researcher identified vocational education and employment as designed to help the offender move forward toward employment and life with new choices. “Offenders who participated in vocational training were more likely to gain employment than those who participated in institutional work assignments only or no other employment programs while imprisoned” (Scott, 2010, p. 48).

Offender Records and Postsecondary Access

Another issue involved the relationship between the ex-offender’s criminal record and the chances of obtaining postsecondary education after release from prison. “The purpose of the special admission process, often called the felony review process, was in exploring a prospective student’s criminal history to predict future misconduct” (Custer, 2016, p. 35). An ex-offender had to prove themselves reformed to obtain permission to attend a school of higher education beyond release papers from prison. “Current trends called for a committee of administrators, including those from student conduct, admissions, law enforcement, counseling, legal counsel, and faculty, to review application materials of those students admitting to past convictions on their applications” (Custer, 2016, p. 35). The various committees reviewed a packet of assembled materials and decided to allow an ex-offender to enter classes based on the presented information. Ex-offenders’ expectations were important in addressing the barriers confronting offenders upon arrival back into family and school. “Issues pushed applicants away like the daunting supplemental process offenders were subjected to after disclosing a felony conviction. Some campuses required applicants to provide

recommendations from corrections, probation and parole officers who were reluctant to provide such information” (Rosenthal, NaPier, Warth, & Weissman, 2015, p. 1).

Employment

Ex-offenders needed educational and vocational training to be prepared to re-enter society and become employed citizens. “Prison administrators sought to address these problems by offering a wide range of pre- and post-release services aimed at improving employability of ex-offenders and prisoners” (Newton et al., 2018, p. 188). Correctional institutions agreed giving inmates and potential ex-offenders a chance to learn what would benefit inmates, while still incarcerated and then placed back into society would be beneficial. “Finding stable employment was identified as one of the best predictors of post-release success among prisoners. The influence of employment on a parolee’s reintegration was conditional on his or her supportive social networks” (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 28). Routines like going to school or work-study programs assisted inmates in learning the expectations upon being released into society and how to meet those expectations. “Work-study programs included work readiness training, vocational education and training, and job placement to improve skill sets, which addressed poor work histories” (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 28). The researcher noted ex-offenders who learned a skill found employment, reintegrated into individual families, and provided financial assistance and stability. “One assumption was offenders who found employment were less likely to reoffend than those who did not” (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 31). The researcher found when ex-offenders came home, some had a difficult time locating work and a place to live as well as the expectation of being able to supplement the income of families due to employment. “During the first few months after

release returning prisoners faced a range of reentry challenges including securing stable housing, finding and keeping work and reestablishing relationships with loved ones” (Shollenberger, 2009, p. 1). Ex-offenders who did not work regularly had no work history to provide potential employers as a way of verifying individual skill sets or levels to be considered for employment upon offender’s release from incarceration as well as dealing with criminal records. “Many ex-offenders exhibited unstable work histories prior to incarceration and lacked intrapersonal skills and ability to effectively communicate with others or work well in groups which further hindered their employability” (Atkin & Armstrong, 2013, p. 73). The author found many ex-offenders had trouble finding employment due to individual beliefs and criminal backgrounds stopped employers from hiring them. “By limiting employers’ access to applicants’ criminal history records, these policies attempted to eliminate the discrimination qualified ex-offenders faced in the labor market because of the stigma attached to a criminal conviction” (Solinas-Saunders & Stacer, 2015, p. 1187).

Employment and Education

The author found ex-offenders tried to avoid revealing individual criminal records to obtain employment, and not revealing criminal records allowed ex-offenders to become employed only to lose those jobs when a record check was conducted by the employer and personal criminal past were revealed. “Recognizing the increasing difficulty ex-offenders had in concealing their criminal past due to technological advancements in electronic access to legal documents and sources, researchers renewed their interest in determining the willingness or reluctance of potential employers to hire ex-offenders” (Atkin & Armstrong, 2013, p. 74). Some ex-offenders were reluctant to

look for work because of their criminal backgrounds and felt like getting a job was impossible. “The label ex-offender was the greatest barrier to employment among this population due to the widespread ability of employers to verify criminal histories of potential job applicants and added to the challenge of finding work” (Clark, 2004, p. 193). Many returned offenders required family support from parents or siblings to help them to become financially stable as offenders sought employment and housing of their own or provided support for their own spouses and children. Shollenberger (2009) suggested “two-thirds or 65% percent of family members provided returned offenders some form of financial and housing support on a limited basis” (p. 18).

Ongoing Offender Stigma Issues

When the ex-offender came home from incarceration, offenders had to deal with the label of being ex-offenders or individuals with a criminal background, and when stopped by the police for a traffic violation, ex-offender criminal histories were revealed resulting in difficulties. “When criminal offenders completed terms of incarceration, ex-offenders thought they paid their debts to society. In practice, however, ex-offenders continued to face numerous restrictions well after they completed their sentences, many of which were permanent” (Hoskins, 2014, p. 34). Being labeled an ex-offender, individuals were constantly reminded of the barriers in trying to restart personal lives and move forward. “In the United States, numerous federal and state policies restricted ex-offenders’ access to employment, housing, public assistance, voting, student loans, and drivers’ licenses as well as their opportunities to adopt or foster children, hold public office.” (Hoskins, 2014, p. 34). According to Hoskins (2014), sentence limitations continued for life, so an ex-offender would never “get from under” being identified as a

former criminal. The shame of incarceration never left the individual's mind or life while being reminded of the difficulties reintegrating back into families and society ex-offenders never felt free. "The stigma of being referred to as an ex-convict had multiple effects for returning citizens who sought to fully participate in society. Negative labeling often created a poor self-image. The person expected others would not respect the ex-offender" (Shevack, 2019, p. 1). Ex-offenders re-minded of being incarcerated numerous times could begin to fall back into old habits and activities. "Stigmatization was studied through the perspective of Labeling Theory. This theory stated once a person has been formally stigmatized as a convict, felon, ex-con he internalized the stereotypical image and conform to anti-social attitudes projected on him" (Shevack, 2019, p. 1).

Employment and Substance Abuse Treatment

Another barrier to ex-offender employment was substance addiction problems which hindered an already compromised individual due to the criminal background in the area of employability. "The history of substance abuse was a predictor of treatment success and a significant factor in substance treatment entry, treatment retention, and treatment completion. Employment was a desirable outcome of substance abuse treatment, and associated with positive treatment outcomes" (Webster, Stanton-Tindall, Dickson, Wilson, & Leukefeld, 2014, p. 200). Both completing substance abuse treatment and finding gainful employment were significant in keeping offender recidivism rates down. "In particular employment decreased the likelihood of severity of relapse and lowered depression and other mental health issues. Employment was associated with fewer arrest and more time spent in crime free endeavors" (Webster et al., 2014, p. 200). The goal was to help substance abusers find a way to change personal

coping skills so offenders could begin to move forward, inside and out of the corrections facility. “Enhancing the autonomy and well-being of individuals was the primary goal of the employment and addictions counseling community and this included promoting positive cognitive emotional and behavioral change” (Bennett & Amundson, 2016, p. 60). Assisting offenders while still incarcerated was important in offenders being returned to society, ready to continue the learning and readiness process. “Educational programs emphasized educational remedy rather than job skill development when providing educational programs in prison settings. Educational administrators had to allocate significant portions of educational budgets to providing instruction in basic literacy and high school literacy” (Nally, Lockwood, Taiping, & Knutson, 2014, p. 44). Former offenders had opportunities to pursue vocational interest, which would also help them learn a skill for future employment. “The principles of effective correctional intervention suggested providing educational and vocational programming to undereducated, higher-risk offenders who lacked legitimate work histories would lower recidivism by increasing individual odds of finding and maintaining employment” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532).

Ban the Box

Another issue was having to check the employment applications box as an ex-offender; former inmates noted employment as one of the main concerns after being released from prison. Ex-offenders wanted to work upon being released from incarceration and felt individuals would not be employable due to past criminal offenses. Preventing future offending by finding and keeping a job ranked in their top three goals to be addressed prior to parole (Bennett & Amundson, 2016).

“In response to the recent political discourse on ex-offender reentry and employment and related federal government support, many jurisdictions passed laws intended to improve ex-offender’s employment opportunities, among them closed records policies like ban the box” (National Employment Law Project, 2011, p. 4). Some offenders were being denied employment because of being individuals with a criminal background and needed help like “Ban the Box” to avoid discriminatory practices. “These policies prevented employers from disqualifying applicants solely on the basis of their criminal history” (National Employment Law Project, 2011, p. 4). The former offender needed legal help to be able to find employment due to employers’ discriminatory policies not allowing offenders to be hired due to past criminal activity. “Ban the Box policies required employers remove the question about criminal convictions from applications. Ban the Box prevented employers from requesting information about the applicants’ past criminal activities prior to determining if the applicant was qualified for the job” (Solinas-Saunders & Stacer, 2015, p. 1188). Employers now had to prove employment concerns about the ex-offender and the job individuals applied for before someone could decline to hire the ex-offender, which helped many offenders be able to move forward in the employment field and obtain jobs. “Ban the Box policies mandated employers prove a relationship between the crime for which the applicant was convicted of and a relationship with the job they were applying for existed” (Solinas-Saunders & Stacer, 2015, p. 1188).

Developing Offender Employment Skills

“The term prison industry was commonly used to refer to workshops and other facilities within prisons which provided work opportunities and sometimes traineeships

for adult prisoners” (Day, Wodak, Graffam, Baldry, & Davey, 2017, p. 899). Offenders needed a program while incarcerated, which would help offenders to learn the necessary skills to be employment viable upon release from incarceration. Minnesota’s corrections department started a program that helped offenders find, obtain, and maintain employment at a living wage. EMPLOY provided offender participants with help to build job skills for post-release employment, providing community resources for several months after release from prison to help former inmates support themselves (Duwe, 2015). Minnesota prison staff acknowledged offender populations would one day return to society and sought to prepare individuals for successful reentry. “EMPLOY staff helped participants during the final 60 to 90 days prior to their release from prison” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). Inmates who prepared to go home needed help with various resources that would equip the ex-offender to be successful in individual reintegration with family and society. “The staff searched for job leads based on inmate vocational skills, made phone calls to felon friendly employers and addressed issues, like skill assessments, resumes, job searching and interviewing skills” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). The author observed the program helped future ex-offenders begin the process of being self-sufficient by encouraging individuals while still incarcerated to continue the process of learning when each reached release to find jobs and get hired. “As evidenced by the recent evaluation of Minnesota’s EMPLOY program, prisoner employment programming was effective in increasing employment and reducing recidivism” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). The researcher believed the EMPLOY program helped inmates become citizens again with services which assisted those individuals to be viable in society.

“In contrast to programs which provided services only in prison or the community, EMPLOY offered a continuum of employment programming by delivering services in both the institution and the community” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). EMPLOY provided ex-offenders with continuing services to remain in the community, with wrap-around services to help the individual readjust to the outside world while providing for self and family with employment services and skills. As soon as participants were released from prison, a retention specialist scheduled an appointment to meet with the individual in the community. “At this meeting, the retention specialist provided participants with a portfolio which contained copies of their resume, any certifications submitted to EMPLOY, job leads, and any additional resources or tools (e.g., bus fare, interview clothing, supplies)” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). Duwe (2015) suggested EMPLOY services took what the offenders had learned and presented newly learned knowledge to potential employers to heighten the chances of ex-offenders getting and keeping a job in a field the offenders knew something about. The offenders learned new skills, such as operating a computer to conduct employment searches by utilizing Internet search engines and did not have skills prior to incarceration and entry into the EMPLOY program. “Offender attitudes and motivation towards employment in addition to a lack of social capital was shown to impact the types of jobs former prisoners could obtain and offender’s abilities to be successful in this job” (Scott, 2010, p. 46). Many offenders never held regular employment prior to being arrested and later incarcerated. “Prison industries was a unique correctional program which offered inmates both vocational training and real work experience” (Richmond, 2014, p. 232). Prison industry programs did not translate to outside work environments as in the skills learned by inmates. “The

lack of connection between the training received and employment opportunities in the community limited the ability of inmates to transfer the skills obtained” (Richmond, 2014, p. 233). Inmates prior to leaving prison needed more training from the work industries programs to increase an offender’s work readiness upon release from prison. “Inmates believed prison industries employment would be more valuable if it included professional level development training such as job search assistance, resume and interview advice and budgeting help” (Richmond, 2014, p. 233). The researcher experienced developing good work habits and skills readied inmates to reenter society and enabled offenders to find employment as for work release programs. Adult transition centers (ATC) were secure institutions in a community that offered programs designed to assist prisoners preparing for release on parole. An Illinois inmate finished serving a portion of the sentence in other statewide prisons; the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) selected offenders who maintained a good record of behavior for transfer to an Adult Treatment Center (ATC) to begin transitioning to the outside community and back with the offender’s families (Illinois Department of Corrections, 2015).

Employment as a Crime Deterrent

Ex-offenders who obtained employment felt empowered and viewed themselves as successful, minimizing the stigma. The state of Illinois used Adult Transition Centers (ATCs) as a vehicle, which helped prepare members of the inmate population to return to work upon release from prison. In the process for selection, one of the most important criteria for the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) was safety and security because IDOC displaced prisoners into residential areas (Illinois Department of Corrections, n.d.). The employment programs offered returning offenders a chance to

prepare themselves for release and community reintegration with the latest information and technology. The idea of releasing untrained ex-offenders into the community had been a longtime concern, one better addressed by providing individuals with skills and training, and subsequently a way to avoid returning to old negative habits. “The high imprisonment rates among men in the United States led to growing concerns of releasing large numbers of unskilled and stigmatized men from prisons. Community-based work programs were one of the means of preparing inmates for successful reentry” (Jung, 2014, p. 397).

Offenders and Employment Earnings

Most inmates had plans upon returning home and reintegrating with family and society but no way to execute the plans since multiple barriers blocked an ex-offender’s return to society. “For offenders who persevered despite limited size and scope of the labor market ex-offenders expected to work fewer weeks each year and earn less money received less benefits and had more constrained upward mobility prospects than their non-offender counterparts” (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010, p. 10). The researcher found ex-offenders continued to deal with the past as the criminal background continued to provide barriers to future financial stability. Thus, offenders started employment with making less money and working fewer hours while trying to earn a living for themselves and their families. “A criminal background produced an 11% reduction in hourly wages, 9 fewer weeks of annual employment, and a 40% reduction in annual earnings” (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010, p. 10). Many employers did not hire ex-offenders due to criminal backgrounds and unsubstantiated fears the individuals would commit new crimes at the employer’s business due to the records being so easy to locate. “Employers accessed

criminal history information using public court records, Internet searches, and private data harvesting companies, each of which became more accessible in the past decade” (Uggen, Vuolo, Lageson, Ruland, & Whitham, 2014, p. 628). Many ex-offenders felt unfairly targeted for arrest because of individual ethnicity. “Arrest experiences were unevenly distributed across the population, with approximately 49% of Black males experiencing an arrest by 23 years of age; the comparative figure for White males is 38%” (Brame, Bushway, Paternoster, & Turner, 2014, p. 471). Social disorganization theory identified communities characterized by poverty, residential instability, and racial multiplicity suffered from higher crime rates because neighbors failed to form social networks that worked together to reduce crime (McNeely, 2018). Ex-offenders returned to former communities with high poverty and lack of stable housing locations, which added to an already tough situation to seek reintegration into society. “It has been argued poverty, heterogeneity, and mobility undermined neighborhood networks and social ties contributed to a breakdown in normal social control within a community which allowed increased crime rates” (Rountree & Warner, 1997, p. 1).

Housing

“Housing discrimination against men and women with criminal records was ubiquitous in American society. Considering America imprisoned more of its population than any country in the world” (Crowell, 2017, p. 1103). The researcher found housing issues were an immediate hurdle for reentrants to navigate, particularly as housing discrimination in the United States affected anyone with a criminal background.

“Individuals released into stable homes had significantly greater chances of reintegrating into society” (Crowell, 2017, p. 1104). Ex-offenders went back to old neighborhoods

where the trouble began and had a harder time not recidivating through continued criminal activity. “Individuals released into unstable and short-term housing were at risk of instability and recidivism, leading to long-term patterns of social exclusion” (Metraux & Culhane, 2004, pp. 141-142). The ex-offender was placed in negative situations, which led individuals toward a higher rate of homelessness. “Formerly incarcerated offenders were at elevated risk for homelessness. Homelessness among formerly incarcerated individuals was a growing concern, given the rapid expansion of the American Penal system over the past four decades. Processes of cumulative disadvantage highlighted this situation” (Remster, 2019, pp. 437-442). The author recognized ex-offenders needed a place to call home upon the return home to help begin the process of reestablishing themselves in the community and families. “Efforts to increase public receptiveness to offender-based transitional housing ultimately seemed to require implementation of effective educational campaigns. The public recognized the social benefits of transitional housing, believing it to be an effective way to reduce post-release recidivism” (Garland, & Wodahl, 2017, pp. 880-881). The researcher found ex-offenders had an easier time upon release when there was a place to live right away, which provided an address to use for mail and applications as well as the contact for the probation parole. “Transitional housing facilities for released prisoners existed in the United States for nearly 200 years and evidence suggested post-release offenders had benefited from transitional housing during reentry” (Garland, Wodahl, & Saxon, 2017, p. 23).

Principle of Least Eligibility

Ex-offenders found themselves not able to obtain the resources needed due to citizens in the community feeling, as former inmates, help was not deserved. “A standard

topic in corrections textbooks was the “principle of least eligibility doctrine,” which said prisoners ought to receive no goods or services in excess of those available to people who lived within the law” (Clear, Reisig, & Cole, 2016, p. 356). Many ex-offenders returned home to society and were not allowed to live with immediate family because of former crimes; specifically, the crime of drug trafficking which did not allow any individual with the criminal conviction to live with family members in a public housing apartment or house. “It was well documented former prisoners suffered from many civil disabilities such as statutory restrictions placed on public and private employment and eligibility for public assistance and public housing” (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014, pp. 195-196). Former offenders needed a home address to begin to obtain needed resources like a driver’s license, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits as well as an address to be located by the probation and parole office for supervision. “One of the most urgent concerns facing returning ex-offenders was where would an offender live” having a physical address was often a prerequisite to interviewing for jobs, applying for public benefits, regaining child custody, and enrolling in school” (Lawrence, 2017, p. 9). The researcher found when ex-offenders had a place to live, individuals were able to move forward in the process of reintegration into society by being able to climatize to the community as a citizen again. “Being stably housed reduced the time returning citizens spent on the street, meaning offenders were less likely to run afoul of laws against loitering, sleeping in public, and panhandling” (Lawrence, 2017, p. 9). Having a home helped offenders find a place to go and to stay away from old friends in the street. “Having a place to call home was significant for individuals returning home from

incarceration. Having housing also reduced the risk of drug use, a strong predictor of recidivism” (Lawrence, 2017, p. 9).

Barriers for Substance Abusers

Another issue concerning housing was the individual’s conviction on substance use crimes. Substance use offenders had to avoid areas in which individuals formerly used or sold drugs to move forward in personal recovery processes. “The problematic housing situations for formerly incarcerated individuals supported the importance of understanding the relationship between housing and substance abuse” (Whipple, Jason, & Robinson, 2016, p. 549). Offenders found themselves triggered to use drugs due to stress and expectations not being met. “Substance use recovery was fraught with episodes of relapse. Individuals in recovery often suffered from multiple relapses, due to various stressors” (Whipple et al., 2016, p. 548). In the researcher’s experience many former offenders required home plans before the release from prison. “If criminal behavior is inextricably tied to social context, then by separating individuals from those contexts associated with their previous criminality, residential change may be one-way to reduce offending and foster desistance” (Kirk, 2012, p. 3).

Correctional Supervision

Ex-offenders found themselves under probation and parole supervision upon arrival back in society. To receive parole or probation supervision, ex-offenders needed a stable address in the area in which the ex-offenders received supervision, and the probation and parole department approval for the residence. “At the end of 2015, 1 in 37 adults in the United States (about 2.7% of the population) lived under some form of correctional supervision, which included prison, jail, parole, and probation” (Kaeble et

al., 2016, p. 1). The researcher noted ex-offenders suffered from various requirements to maintain freedom and probation or parole stipulations. “Many times, a condition of parole or probation was to be disassociated from others on parole or probation; this could be difficult when members of the same family or neighborhood were under post-incarceration supervision” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 59). A guilty verdict for certain types of felonies had the power to keep families just as separated as when the offender was away in prison. “Consequently, these policies denied offenders and their families the ability to obtain safe, stable, and affordable housing, which increased the ex-offender’s risk for homelessness” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 63). Ex-offenders had to deal with the new barriers upon release from incarceration, and some lacked the necessary tools to be successful in the new reality on the outside of prison. “The post-incarceration policies many ex-offenders dealt with were unfairly punitive, ineffective, and in many instances, discriminatory” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 63). Many ex-offenders had problems re-uniting with family and friends upon release due to past problems associated with the offender’s criminal lifestyle and drug use, which hindered the ex-offender’s ability to form healthy connections and get help when the individual returned home. “Social capital was the ability to secure benefits (e.g., information, connections, advice) by virtue of membership in social networks” (Portes, 1998, p. 6). Not having a secure place to live caused a myriad of problems for individuals and families. “Given the parolee’s situation, successful completion of parole was affected by the depth of capital parolees had accumulated. The critical factor which activated social capital was having a residence” (Walker, Hempel, Unnithan, & Pogrebin, 2014, p. 319). Ex-offenders, who did not form solid relationships or damaged previous relationships lacked social capital. “Those deficient forms of Social

Capital contrasted with what was considered acceptable among the general population which demanded members possess a residence, education conforming to behavior and job stability, and stressed social networking” (Walker et al., 2014, p. 317). Additionally, Walker et al. (2014) viewed social capital as activated by the offender having a home as a stable base and allowed the offender to successfully move forward. The researcher found many ex-offenders had no money or place to live upon the return to society and needed the help and resources of family members to have a better chance to avoid going back to prison. “Having stable housing afforded returning offenders an opportunity to restart their lives using the available resources in their areas” (Bahr, Armstrong, Gibbs, Harris, & Fisher, 2005, p. 246). Many ex-offenders noted having the family to come home to offered a higher level of support and motivated the ex-offender. “In a series of pre- and post-release interviews with prisoners from Maryland, Illinois, Ohio, and Texas a majority of newly released prisoners relied on family and friends for housing immediately on release” (Bahr, Armstrong, Gibbs, Harris, & Fisher, 2005, p. 246). Formerly incarcerated individuals looked forward to reuniting with family members in the home. “Prisoners believed stable housing and family relationships were key to staying free of prison. Stable housing provided the foundation for successful reintegration by allowing offenders to focus on employment, treatment, while maintaining compliance with conditions of their supervision” (Bahr et al., 2006, p. 246). Ex-offenders who stayed in contact with family and friends were able to use the resources provided by the family members to start the process of rebuilding lives free and off drugs. The concept was in line with Walker et al. (2014), who suggested social capital began with the returning offender having a stable place to live and available resources to start the rebuilding

process by reaching out and connecting with family and friends. Stable housing helped returning offenders by lowering stress from having to worry about the family as individuals concerned themselves with establishing employment and reintegration into the family. Hamilton, Kigerl, and Hayes (2015) suggested not having a place to live could start to unravel the ex-offender's plans, as most releases required a solid home plan. Offenders returned home from incarceration with a list of requirements, including a home address, first on the list. "Failure to acquire a suitable place of residence could interfere with these other conditions of reintegration and made desisting from crime more difficult" (Hamilton et al., 2015, p. 256). Inmates also had an opportunity to move back into society with the families, knowing of the continuing services available for assistance. "Recovery housing also known as recovery residences, sober homes, and sober living represented a promising approach to extend the acute care treatment model and support long-term recovery and freedom for ex-offenders addicted to drugs" (Pannella Winn & Paquette, 2016, p. 163).

The Housing Voucher Program

The housing voucher program was another way ex-offenders reunited with family, albeit with certain stipulations for eligibility. The residences were in distressed areas, which created additional issues for the returning felons since federal, state, and local policies excluded drug users or family members from receiving or maintaining Housing Choice vouchers. "The federal 'One Strike and You're Out' law (P.L. 104-120, Sec 9) passed in 1996, allowed federal housing authorities to consider drug and alcohol abuse and convictions by people and their family members when making decisions to evict them" (Dickson-Gomez, McAuliffe, Obidoa, Quinn, & Weeks, 2016, p. 2). For

some ex-offenders, a criminal past caused family members to lose a home, when the ex-offender lived at the home after leaving prison. The law automatically stopped some ex-offenders from finding housing in places that were less problematic due to the previous crimes and was particularly hard on minorities. “African American men comprised 3% of Connecticut’s population, and 47% of the state’s inmates in prisons, jails, and halfway houses. Because of this disproportionate representation, African Americans had harder times securing stable housing opportunities due to their past” (Dickson-Gomez et al., 2016, p. 2). Formerly incarcerated individuals dealt with many barriers to the reintegration into the family, drug abuse recidivism, and housing laws, which led to homelessness for some and re-incarceration for others. “In recent years, U.S. housing policy concentrated on ending chronic homelessness by providing affordable, service-enriched rental housing for homeless and at-risk people, many of whom suffer from mental health and substance abuse problems” (Dickson-Gomez et al., 2016, p. 2).

Summary

The review of the literature in Chapter Two covered the following areas of study: recidivism, family, education, employment, and housing of the recidivist ex-offender. The investigational studies revealed the need for the ex-offender to avoid recidivism by first obtaining an education. “Correctional education significantly reduced an inmate’s likelihood of returning to prison and recidivism. The relationship between participation and completion of correctional education programs was important to the role of education as a tool for recidivism reduction” (Hall, 2015, p. 12). The review also highlighted the importance of reintegrating with family, gaining stable employment to secure housing and substance abuse treatment assistance.

Recidivism was a strong factor in America. Gottschalk (2011) suggested the U.S. incarceration rate was the highest in the world, and the increasingly high incarceration rates resulted in the infamous title, “World’s Warden.” The literature reflected a need to provide ex-offenders with the means to provide for themselves and the families by obtaining education, employment, and housing (Taylor, 2016).

Ex-offenders’ lack of literacy revealed a need for education of the ex-offender; with or without educational attainment, the employment prospects were already weak. A felony record diminished the likelihood of future employment (Duwe & Clark, 2014).

Family support for the ex-offender to help avoid future recidivism was important. Taylor (2016) suggested a returning offender depended on the family as the first line of support upon exiting incarceration for a place to live. The researcher also noted when the returned offender was accepted by family and friends, the offender began to see themselves as part of the family. “Family support promoted desistance by playing a role in the certification process of individuals as former offenders. As family members and others embraced the individual as a non-criminal the individual was likely to internalize this identify” (Taylor, 2016, p. 334).

Employment and housing were top priorities in the ex-offender’s success at avoiding recidivism. “When offenders entered Minnesota’s prison system, inmates were advised about programming opportunities including work release during intake procedures into the facility” (Duwe, 2015, p. 535). Stable housing was important to returning offenders. “Instead of private residences, many who left prison moved to community-based programs such as halfway houses, work-release programs, or treatment facilities which removed them from the broader community” (McNeely, 2018, p. 783).

The literature review ultimately provided information on ways the resources could assist returning offenders on returning home to individual families and becoming productive citizens while undergoing substance abuse treatment. Upon being released, the literature revealed several resources the ex-offender could use to remain free of recidivism issues such as residential programs. “Generally, findings suggested community treatment programs were argued to work and possessed stronger effects when programs adhered to risk principles. Residential drug-treatment interventions possessed positive effectiveness and the risk principle was strongly related to criminal recidivism” (Hsieh & Hamilton, 2016, p.185). The following Chapter Three included the research methods and mechanisms used to explain and describe the populations and locations of the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The researcher investigated ex-offenders avoiding future recidivism by obtaining education, employment, and housing. Ex-offenders completed in-patient substance abuse treatment and obtained a General Education Diploma while incarcerated prior to returning to individual families and society. The investigator reviewed topics concerning, research design, research approach, context of the study, participant selection, ethical protections of participant individuals, ex-offender status, and data collection, and analysis.

Problem and Purpose Overview

“There was a large body of research devoted to understanding how offender outcomes were shaped by economic challenges faced by offenders after prison” (Western, Braga, Davis, & Sirois, 2014, p. 1). Returned offenders needed help with resources, which enabled individuals to restart personal lives moving forward toward self-sufficiency. Ex-offenders dealt with past criminal records with a desire to be successful. “Each week, approximately 10, 000 offenders were released from state and federal prisons. Many returned offenders faced trying to secure employment with the question about offender criminal history often placed on job applications” (Agan, 2017, p. 177). Agan (2017) suggested criminal offenders, released into former communities, frequently inhabited similar locations prior to being arrested and placed into prison. Individual communities needed to provide for former offenders to help individuals reintegrate into former communities and families and assist individuals in avoiding future criminal behavior. “In response to the growing financial and social pressures of mass

incarceration, policymakers evaluated policies and practices in the criminal justice system and searched for ways to reduce correctional burden while protecting the public interest” (Luallen, Edgerton, & Rabideau, 2018, p. 742).

Research Design and Approach

The research design for the recidivism study was a convergent mixed-methods design approach. Butin (2010) explained basic mixed methods research was “a design which used both types of research methods (qualitative and quantitative) to amass more varied data and reinforce the validity of the final conclusions” (p. 76). Convergent mixed methods design involved “the separate collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The research intent merged the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis” (Creswell, 2015, p. 36). The researcher used a qualitative and quantitative methodology in the form of interviews along with Likert scale sets of questions, which revealed ex-offenders’ perceptions of completing substance abuse treatment, trust, and self-esteem with earning a GED. Family members’ levels of trust concerning individual perceptions of offender substance abuse treatment and obtaining of General Education Diplomas while incarcerated were investigated using a Likert Scale trust relationship survey along with six interview questions. The voluntary interview and survey highlighted the family members’ perceptions of ex-offender family members’ viability upon gaining GED and substance abuse treatment resources to avoid future recidivism and reintegrate with family and society. Butin (2010) noted, “Qualitative research methods by their very nature of attention to nuance and detail allowed for data gathering which could be very deep and took into consideration options and perspectives not initially visible or obvious” (p. 76).

Null Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

Null Hypothesis 1. There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust and a family member's level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification.

Null Hypothesis 1a. There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust starting the substance abuse program or completing the substance abuse program.

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of ex-offenders and substance abuse training rate of completion.

Null Hypothesis 3. There is no relationship between the type of post-secondary experience, positive or negative.

Null Hypothesis 4. There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender and the housing location.

Null Hypothesis 5. There is no relationship between the recidivist's level of education and recidivism rates.

Research Questions

Research question 1: How do the family members perceive the recidivist return to the home environment?

Research question 2: How does the recidivist perceive their readiness to return to the home environment?

Research question 3: How does the recidivist perceive the substance abuse program?

Research question 4: What is the family member's level of trust towards the ex-offender after completion of the substance abuse program?

Research question 5: What is the ex-offender's level of self-trust after earning a GED and completing substance abuse treatment?

Research question 6: How do recidivist family members perceive the ex-offender's return home after completing substance abuse treatment?

Setting, Population, and Sample

The researcher received approval of the Institutional Review Board of the Reentry Center. The researcher studied substance abuse recidivists with GEDs in treatment at reentry center. The researcher acquired permission to further the study process from the Institutional Review Board of Lindenwood University as well as the Department of Mental Health to begin data collection.

For the convergent design, the quantitative sample proceeded from a random sampling procedure (ex-offenders) while the qualitative sample proceeded from a purposeful sampling of ex-offender family members (Creswell, 2015). The researcher selected 75–100 voluntary members by random sample of the treatment program. The researcher selected a homogeneous convenience sampling of offenders who met the researcher's study criteria: males 18–60 years old, recidivist (incarcerated at least twice) who completed a year-long, 6-month, or 120-day inpatient substance abuse treatment program, toward successful completion and graduation. Ex-offenders who attended aftercare in a reentry center aftercare program located in St. Louis met criteria for possible study inclusion.

The researcher conducted audiotaped interviews with ex-offenders' 10 selected family members concerning family perceptions about the treatment program and purpose. The researcher provided ex-offender participants with a release of information form to review and voluntarily agree to sign so the researcher could approach selected family members to interview with six questions and complete a 17 question Likert scale Trust in Relationships survey (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna 1985). on family perceptions of the ex-offender's readiness to reintegrate into family and society. The researcher read the informed consent information to potential members and discussed the study objectives.

To analyze Null Hypothesis 1, the researcher conducted z -test of proportions to measure a possible difference in the percentage of recidivist who were rated low, middle and high in self-trust and a family member's level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification. The researcher analyzed hypothesis #2 through #6 by using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected to answer RQ #1-5. The researcher transcribed all qualitative interviews to answer Research Question #6 and the researcher analyzed the qualitative data seeking common themes.

Instrumentation and Materials

The researcher utilized the following instruments: Texas Christian University Treatment Engagement Survey (TCU) (see Appendix A), Trust in Close Relationships Survey (see Appendix B), Trust Self – Assessment (see Appendix C) and Family Interview (see Appendix D). The TCU survey was administered in person with the researcher and the ex-offender participant; the survey was in paper form and completed with a black ink pen. The survey consisted of 10 questions measuring the participants'

engagement with the treatment program as a pre-test prior to entering the after-care program and as a post-test upon participant's completion of the aftercare program. Ex-offender participants were also given a paper form 12 question Trust Self-Assessment survey concerning participant's self-assessment of individual trust perceptions to be completed with a black ink pen at the conclusion of the treatment program. Ex-offender participants had approximately one minute to answer each question to conclude the survey. Family members received a Trust in Relationships survey consisting of 17 questions concerning family members' relationship perceptions of the ex-offender. The survey was in paper form to be completed with a black ink pen. Family participants were given approximately two minutes to answer each question before the survey was completed. Family participants also completed a voluntary six-question, audiotaped interview concerning family perceptions about ex-offender family members' viability in being able to reintegrate into the family after the return from incarceration.

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the aforementioned IRB authorities, the investigator collected data from the voluntary participants of the reentry center reentry program and selected family members. The collected information from the ex-offenders was of a numeric value. The researcher printed hardcopies of The Texas Christian University (TCU) Likert survey of 10 multiple-choice questions and met with each voluntary ex-offender participant on an individual basis to review the instructions to complete the survey. The researcher provided participants with a black ink pen to complete the pre-test upon participant's entry and continuing participation in the program. The researcher advised participants an initial pre-test would be conducted and

again upon the client's completion of the program as a post-test. At the completion of the TCU survey researcher provided participants with a Trust Self-Assessment survey of 12 multiple-choice questions for a single time to gauge participant's perception of individual self-trust. The researcher provided paper forms to selected ex-offender family members after the offender agreed to and signed a release of information form describing the information the participant was interested in the family having and sharing about the ex-offender participant in the study. The researcher met selected family members in the conference room located at the Reentry Center Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and discussed study objectives and provided chosen family members with informed consent forms. The researcher provided selected family members with a Trust in Relationships survey form consisting of 17 multiple-choice questions. The researcher provided family participants approximately two minutes to answer each question and collected the completed surveys. The researcher interviewed family participants with six interview questions to gauge family perceptions of ex-offenders' viability who received a GED while incarcerated and completed offender substance abuse treatment while incarcerated. The researcher audiotaped the interview and transcribed the responses for further analysis and coding for common themes.

Data Analysis

The ex-offender assessments revealed the following scores, which represented offender perceptions of the offender treatment program (TCU) and Trust Self-Assessment. The family members of the ex-offender's assessment and interviews revealed the following information about family perceptions of the levels of trust family had in the ex-offender members' ability to avoid recidivism and reintegrate into the

family unit. The investigator analyzed 77 ex-offender participants using Likert scale statements to measure the perceptions concerning participation in substance abuse treatment and obtaining GED basic education while preparing to reintegrate with family. The investigator used six interview questions and Likert Scale surveys to obtain descriptive statistics and thematic analyses of 10 family members' perceptions of the return of ex-offenders to the family.

Ethical Protection of Participants

Each individual ex-offender and family member participant involved in the study agreed to participate assisted by strict protocol procedures ensuring the safety of the participant and the integrity of the researcher process. At no time were the individual participants identified in the study findings. By maintaining confidentiality, protection was afforded the ex-offender participants and ex-offender's chosen participating family members in the study. No participant was pressured to be involved in the study at any time. The investigator informed individual participants participation could be stopped at any time without fear of retribution or detriment to treatment programs, parole, or probation.

Limitations

The investigator found a possible limitation to the study could be participants not understanding the survey questions due to the individual's lack of reading ability. The researcher found participants were of various ranges of educational attainment with many participants at the attainment of high school level education. The investigator informed participants assistance with possible questions about the study would be provided concerning misunderstood words and sentences on the part of the participants. The

investigator noted another limitation could be participants not completing the substance abuse treatment program and not being able to participate in the post-test due to study ineligibility. The investigator noted survey material being in a printed form was brought to the participants in stages as the researcher met with one participant at a time to administer the survey. Upon completion, the researcher had to collect the surveys by hand. The participants were also limited by the time the participants could participate in the survey process while attending substance abuse classes as part of the program. Participants had a pre-determined schedule requiring an individuals' full participation throughout the day. The investigator needed to find time in-between prescheduled activities to retrieve the surveys upon completion by the participants. The investigator found another limitation could be the lack of participation of the participant's family members in the interview process. The investigator noted participants could be held back in the substance abuse program due to not completing modules of substance abuse treatment, causing ex-offenders to fall outside of the prescribed requirements of three months and graduation. The investigator noted an additional limitation was the ex-offender participant's unwillingness to involve family members in offender treatment programs and not allowing family members to be interviewed or surveyed by the investigator for the study. Ex-offenders not allowing study participation could alter the qualitative portion of the researcher's study as the data would impede the family survey and interview completion portion of the study.

The Research Site and Participants

The study participants included clients of a reentry treatment program in the Midwest and the population for the investigation included male ex-offenders between the

ages of 18 and 60, identified as recidivist with substance abuse problems and a GED. The site was a secure facility as the ex-offenders needed to sign in upon arrival for daily treatment and sign out upon leaving the facility. The facility was not open to the general public. The ex-offender participants also needed to have a basic education in the form of General Education Diploma obtained while involved in the correctional system. Additionally, the research participants were required to have been involved in the inpatient treatment program for substance abuse for a minimum of 12 months, six months or one hundred- and twenty-day increments and currently involved in the aftercare substance abuse treatment program for a minimum of three months length.

Summary

Reentry center was working with several local prisons housing and conducting inpatient substance abuse treatment and behavioral modification of offenders identified with substance addictions in offender populations. The investigator used the reentry program ex-offender population participants to investigate substance abuse treatment while obtaining a General Education Diploma in readying ex-offenders to become reintegrated back into individual families and communities. A convergent mixed-methods approach was used to gain informational scores as feedback from ex-offenders and ex-offender's chosen family members as additional study participants. The convergent mixed methods study allowed perceptions to be gauged as well as examined to determine what change occurred in the participants and the trust levels of change by family and ex-offenders' family members' feedback. The investigator shared the results from the mixed method study in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

The analysis in Chapter Four targeted the relationship between an ex-offender's obtaining education in the form of a General Education Diploma and completing substance abuse treatment to avoid recidivism while reintegrating into former families. The analysis also examined how trust and self-esteem played an integral part in the ex-offender's life in remaining viable enough to avoid further recidivism while regaining the trust of family members to participate in daily family life. The investigator also analyzed family perceptions on the ex-offender's return to the family having obtained new life skills to assist in the reintegration and socialization process. In addition, the investigator sought to determine if the data resulted in the rejection of the null hypotheses. The investigator utilized a mixed-methods approach with Likert Scale surveys directed at identifying ex-offender participants' level of self-trust and ex-offenders' perceptions of substance abuse treatment programs. The investigator also reviewed collected data from the ex-offender selected family members in the form of completed Likert Scale survey concerning perceptions of relationship trust. Upon completion of all the surveys by the participants, the investigator analyzed and stored the data in a password-protected file. The investigator then reviewed the qualitative data while coding the family interview data for common themes. In Chapter Four, the investigator presented the hypothesis and research questions as described in the previous chapter, quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Null Hypotheses and Research Questions

The researcher investigated the following 6 null hypotheses and 6 research questions for the study:

Null Hypothesis 1. There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust and a family member's level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification.

Null Hypothesis 1a. There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust starting the substance abuse program or completing the substance abuse program.

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of ex-offenders and substance abuse training rate of completion.

Null Hypothesis 3. There is no relationship between the type of post-secondary experience positive or negative.

Null Hypothesis 4. There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender and the housing location.

Null Hypothesis 5. There is no relationship between the recidivist's level of education and recidivism rates.

Research Questions

Research question 1: How do the family members perceive the recidivist return to the home environment?

Research question 2: How does the recidivist perceive their readiness to return to the home environment?

Research question 3: How does the recidivist perceive the substance abuse program?

Research question 4: What is the family member's level of trust towards the ex-offender after completion of the substance abuse program?

Research question 5: What is the ex-offender's level of self-trust after earning a GED and completing substance abuse treatment?

Research question 6: How do recidivist family members perceive the ex-offender's return home after completing substance abuse treatment?

Self-Trust and TCU Assessment Scoring

As noted in Chapter Three, the Trust self-assessment instrument contained 12 statements connected with individual competencies. The participants rated themselves on the self-perceived frequencies of the demonstrated behavior referred to in the statement. The rating contained options with a point value; rarely (1), sometimes (2), often (3), very often (4), always (5). The researcher averaged the score for each participant to determine if a difference existed in each of the competencies. To obtain the overall score of the statement groups the researcher averaged the summed totals of the groups of statements: self- commitments, value reflections, honesty with others, emotional risk, consistent and predictable, confiding in me, focus on lessons, my word is my bond, accountability, rethinking ideas, apologizing, achieving results. The results informed the participants about areas of improvement depending on how often the ex-offender exhibited the behavior according to the scoring table. The assessment revealed areas in which the participant was strong and able to continue to move forward in life. The Texas Christian University client engagement survey (TCU) contained 10 statements concerning perceptions of ex-offender participants' engagement levels in treatment. The participant rated individual levels of engagement in the substance abuse treatment program using

survey statements and answers. Participants rated themselves on self-perceived frequency of the demonstrated behaviors named in the statement. The rating contained options with a point value strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), uncertain (4), agree (5), strongly agree (5). The researcher averaged the score for each participant to determine if a difference existed in each of the competencies. To obtain the overall score of the statement groups, the researcher averaged the summed totals of the groups of the statements. The results informed the participants about areas of improvement depending on how often the ex-offender exhibited the behavior according to the scoring table. The assessment also revealed areas in which the participant was strong and able to continue to move forward in life.

Null Hypotheses and Research Questions

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust and a family member's level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification.

The investigator analyzed participant data from the Trust self-assessment instrument (ex-offender) and Trust in Close Relationships instrument (family member) to calculate the percentages of identified ex-offender individuals (n=10) as having high, medium, or low self-trust. The investigator analyzed family participant data from the Trust in Close Relationships instrument (n=10) as having high medium and low trust levels. To test whether or not a relationship existed between the offenders' levels of trust and the family members' levels of trust, the investigator calculated the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient and ran a *t*-test. The analysis showed the coefficient of correlation ($r = .123$) was not significant; $t(8) = 0.35$, $p = .735$. The

investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the levels of trusts of the offenders and the family members were not related.

Null hypothesis 1a: There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust starting the substance abuse program or completing the substance abuse program.

The investigator analyzed participant data from the Trust self-assessment instrument (ex-offender) to calculate the percentages of identified ex-offender individuals ($n=77$) as having high, medium, or low self-trust. The investigator obtained 154 responses total from the ex-offender participants. The investigator analyzed the self-trust response of ex-offenders using a dependent sample t -test. The investigator ran a dependent sample t -test to see if the trust variable increased after the year-long course. The results showed that the increases in scores ($M = 0.25$, $SD = 5.78$) were not significant; $t(76) = 0.37$, $p = .355$. The investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the trust variable did not increase.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of ex-offenders and substance abuse training rate of completion.

The investigator analyzed participant data from the substance abuse treatment program graduates ($n=25$) and recidivist ($n=25$). The investigator analyzed the date using a t -test of means. The investigator conducted a t -test of two means to see if the times of completion between those who graduated and those who recidivated were different. A preliminary test of variances revealed the variances were equal. The analysis revealed the time for completion of the graduates ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 4.47$) was not significantly different from the recidivists ($M = 7.32$, $SD = 4.42$); $t(48) = -0.73$, $p = .468$. The

investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the time to complete the program for the two groups were not significantly different.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between the type of post-secondary experience positive or negative and the type of job the recidivist applied for.

The investigator defined positive relationships as having a skilled job and unskilled negative relationships as having an unskilled job. The investigator analyzed skilled participants (n=25) and unskilled (n=25) currently employed. The investigator eliminated 26 additional study participants due to being unemployed. The investigator analyzed the data using a z-test of proportions. The investigator conducted a z-test of proportions to determine if the proportion of recidivists who acquired a skilled job was different from the proportion of recidivists who acquired an unskilled job. The test revealed the proportion of recidivists who acquired a skilled job (n = 25, 32.5%) was not significantly different from the proportion who acquired an unskilled job (n = 25, 32.5%); $z = 0.00$, $p = 1.000$. The investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the proportion of recidivists who acquired skilled and unskilled jobs was similar.

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender and the housing location.

The investigator analyzed the relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender participants and ex-offender participant's housing locations. The researcher defined the housing locations as "original" housing locations as where the ex-offender lived prior to incarceration or a "new" location as where the ex-offender moved into after being released from incarceration. The investigator used a z-test of proportions to analyze the data. The investigator conducted a z-test of proportions to determine if the proportion

of recidivists who returned to the old housing was different from the proportion of recidivists who found new housing. The test revealed that the proportion of recidivists who returned to old housing ($n = 32, 41.6\%$) was not significantly different from the proportion who found new housing ($n = 32, 41.6\%$); $z = 0.00, p = 1.000$. The investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the proportion of recidivists who returned to old housing and those who found new housing was the same.

Null Hypothesis 5: There is no relationship between the recidivist's level of education and recidivism rates.

The investigator analyzed the relationship between the recidivist's level of education and ex-offender participant recidivism rates utilizing a z -test of proportions to analyze the data. The investigator conducted a z -test of proportions to determine if the proportion of recidivists who came into the program with only a GED was different from the proportion of recidivists who came into the program with a high school diploma or higher. The test revealed the proportion of recidivists who came into the program with a GED ($n = 39, 50.6\%$) was not significantly different from the proportion who found new housing ($n = 38, 49.4\%$); $z = 0.15, p = .882$. The investigator failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded the proportion of recidivists who entered the program with a GED and those who entered with a high school diploma or higher had no appreciable difference.

Null Hypothesis 6: There is no relationship between the rate of completion of the substance abuse program and receiving a GED.

The researcher, after meeting with the dissertation committee, agreed to discard Null Hypothesis 6. The hypothesis was discarded after a review of earlier data was found to be redundant to the investigation.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do family members perceive the recidivist return to the home environment?

The investigator utilized the Trust in Close Relationships survey containing a Likert scale to answer the research question. The following questions were used to develop answers to the research question, (#1-Column 1) my partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him engage in activities which other partners find too threatening. (#2- Column 2) Even when I do not know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him anything about myself even those things of which I am ashamed. (#7- Column 3) I have found that my partner is usually dependable especially when it comes to things which are important to me.

Table 1

Research Question 1: How Do Family Members Perceive the Recidivist’s Return to the Home Environment?

Survey question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1	–	–	3	3	4
2	–	–	3	–	7
7	3	–	1	–	6

The investigator utilized the Trust in Close Relationship Survey questions 1, 2, and 7 to analyze research question #1 (see Table 1). The purpose of the research question

was to determine how family members felt about the ex-offender's return to the home environment concerning family safety and ex-offender substance use. The investigator analyzed the data supplied by family member responses, which revealed the following information. Family members noted being able to reunite with the ex-offender was possible by building strong lines of communication between each other. As cited in Chapter 2, Hirshi suggested, "Family and individual support provided toward a successful reintegration of the offender into the community [and] was at the heart of the offender returning home" (as cited in Mowen & Visher, 2015, p. 343).

Research Question 2. (Pre-Test/ Post- test): How does the recidivist perceive their return to the home environment?

The investigator analyzed the research question using (n=77) study participants. The investigator utilized the Texas Christian University Client Engagement Form question #6 to analyze the research question for Pre-test and Post-test (see Table 2). The purpose of the research question was to determine how the recidivist perceived ex-offender readiness to return home and family relationships. The investigator analyzed the data supplied by family member responses, which revealed family members perceived the ex-offenders were willing to discuss ex-offender feelings openly about being home. As cited in Chapter 2, "People who were previously incarcerated cited family interaction as among the most important factor in successful reentry and assistance" (Mowen, & Visher, 2015, p. 337).

Table 2

Research Question 2: How Does the Recidivist Perceive Their Readiness to Return to the Home Environment?

Test	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
Pretest	29	39	8	1	–
Posttest	30	38	8	1	–

Research Question 3: How does the recidivist perceive the substance abuse program?

The investigator utilized the Texas Christian University client engagement form questions 2, 3, and 8 to analyze research question 3 (see Table 3). The purpose of the research question was to determine how the recidivist perceived the substance abuse treatment program and the role ex-offender will fulfill in returning to the family. The investigator analyzed data supplied by recidivist responses, which revealed the recidivist perceived attending substance abuse treatment as necessary to being able to remain viable in reintegration into family and society. As cited in Chapter 2 “Due to the indisputable negative relationship between substance abuse and reintegration, substance abuse treatment was critical and necessary service for most newly released offenders attempting to reintegrate” (Connolly & Granfield, 2017, p. 371).

Table 3

Research Question 3: How Does the Recidivist Perceive the Substance Abuse Program?

Survey question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
2	–	1	5	46	25
3	–	7	5	40	25
8	–	3	5	41	28

Research Question 4: What is the family member’s level of trust towards the ex-offender after completion of the substance abuse program?

The investigator utilized the Trust in Close Relationships Survey to examine the question. The statements reviewed included statements 1 and 10 (see Table 4). The purpose of the research question was to determine the level of trust of family members’ perceptions concerning the ex-offender having completed substance abuse treatment programs and length and level of relationship commitment concerning ex-offenders’ substance abuse treatment completion. The investigator analyzed the data supplied by the responses of the family, which revealed the following information. Family members noted a strong trust in faith concerning ex-offenders sharing information with them for needs concerning substance abuse treatment and reintegration. Several family members were also neutral when it came to family member perceptions concerning ex-offenders proving to be trust-worthy when negative activities were involved, such as drug use within the relationship. As cited in Chapter 2 “Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) was a variant of CRA which involved family members and friends, and concerned significant others (CSOs), in the treatment intervention process for client success” (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 57).

Table 4

Research Question 4: What Is the Family Member’s Level of Trust Towards the Ex-Offender After Completion of the Substance Abuse Program?

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him engage in activities other partners find too threatening. (dependability)	–	–	6	–	4
10. Even if I have no reason to expect my partner will share things with me, I still feel certain that he will. (faith)	–	–	3	–	7

Research Question 5: What is the ex-offender’s level of self- trust after earning a GED and completing substance abuse treatment?

The investigator examined the research question using the Trust- Self Assessment Survey following statements, 1, 2, 7 & 9 (see Table 5). The purpose of the research question was to determine the ex-offender’s level of self-trust after earning a GED and completing substance abuse treatment as well as family trust upon ex-offender treatment completion and GED attainment. The investigator analyzed data supplied by ex-offenders, which revealed the following information. Ex-offenders noted the strongest response to the research question was about learning from mistakes instead of focusing on the mistake itself while strengthening family bonds. Ex-offenders used the resources available to change individual thinking errors. As cited in Chapter 2, “Director George Lombardi identified three ingredients for successful reentry as education, drug rehabilitation, and mental health care in a speech delivered at the Saint Louis Alliance for Reentry Summit” (Parker, 2014, p. 397).

Table 5

Research Question 5: What Is the Ex-Offender’s Level of Self-Trust After Earning a GED and Completing Substance Abuse Treatment?

Statement	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
1. I make and keep commitments to myself.	6	13	24	16	18
2. I am honest and open with others.	5	10	12	19	31
7. When things go wrong, I focus on the lesson instead of the blame.	4	11	12	22	28
9. I hold myself accountable.	–	6	9	20	42

Research Question 6: How do recidivist family members perceive the ex-offenders return home after completing substance abuse treatment?

The investigator analyzed the research question through open-ended questions developed by the investigator (see Table 6) to secure family perceptions on ex-offenders return home. The investigator conducted qualitative analysis through transcribed interviews seeking common themes among the responses. The themes consisted of the following points, relationship support, ex-offender relationships, relationship roles, time lengths, forward progress, returning home.

Table 6

Family Interview Questions

Question number	
1	Describe your personal feelings about the ex-offender’s substance abuse problems and family safety.
2	Describe your relationship with the ex-offender.
3	Describe the role the ex-offender will fulfill in the family upon returning home.
4	How long have you been in the relationship with the ex-offender?
5	Describe your feelings about the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED.
6	How do you perceive the ex-offender’s return home after the second incarceration?

Relationship support. Participants shared family perceptions of relationship support for returned ex-offenders with substance abuse issues and the families’ safety in dealing with the ex-offender’s family member. One family member stated, ‘I think it really is an issue for him, especially when there are problems in his relationship. Anytime that we have been apart, this has been an issue with him, overdosing.’ Another family member stated, ‘I am pretty much the only family and that is one thing that really bothers me is he tells me that all the time, do not get me wrong, I want it to be that family for him.’ Family safety as part of relationship support began to appear in responses when one family member stated, ‘I feel safe with him interacting with my kids and as far as his substance abuse history he has been open and honest with me about his life and things that he has been through.’ Another family member stated, ‘I know that he is on the straight and narrow path. My daughter being around him, she loves him and cares about him. I have no worries he is not bringing none of that bad stuff back around our family.’

Lastly, another family stated about their perceptions of the ex-offender and their feelings of safety concerning the ex-offender re-integrating with the family was noted as the following, 'I personally do not like his drug of choice, but I'm there to help him in any way possible. Any way he needs help with, I am there. Anytime he has asked for any help.'

Several responses included the additional perceptions of family members concerning the returned ex-offender to the family, "Well, I do not like him to have a substance abuse problem. If he has got one, I wish he would come out and get some treatment for it because he can be helped.' Another family member stated, 'Security is good and his sobriety, he has sobriety for quite a while, and I would have no problems introducing him to my family and friends.' The responses included relationship perceptions of ex-offender substance abuse problems and family members' feelings of safety around the offender upon the ex-offender's return home after incarceration.

Ex-offender relationships. When asked about the nature of the relationship between the ex-offender and the family a friend stated,

'It is complicated does not even begin to sum it up he has multiple personality disorder. I do not know if you are aware of that. There are four of them and I say that, and people look at me like I am nuts, but I swear to GOD there is Josh, JP, and Fred. I love every single one of them, and that is what makes it very complicated.'

Another family member stated, 'He is my favorite person in the world. I am going to cry; I have never met anybody like him. He is the first guy that has ever treated me good. He has never put his hands on me.' An additional family member stated, 'He feels

comfortable talking to me about anything even when he may not feel like it is something that I want to hear he knows that I will honestly give him my honest opinion and listen thoroughly.’ Additionally, a friend participant had future and continuing relationship plans concerning an ex-offender relationship, ‘We are going to get married soon, and I have known him since July of last year. We are a lot alike in our temperament and our personality and how we interact with each other.’

Relationship Roles. The theme of relationship roles emerged with the following statement, ‘He keeps me going a lot of ways. He says the same about me it is crazy. It would go back and forth with this all the time, he tells me all the time, ‘Babe you keep me sober.’ The investigator found the family shared an additional perception concerning the ex-offender, ‘I think I do help him, but he also helps me, he keeps me on the right track he makes me want to do better. He makes me want to live a sober life.’ One family member stated, ‘He plays a very important role as far as his nephews looking to him seeing what he does because he is doing better leading by example. He is learning a lot leading by example and to honestly do that. Furthermore, participants shared future plans for the ex-offender, and a family member stated, ‘He will be my husband shortly and as far as his role in the family, he is pretty much already been accepted by my family members so yeah it is all good. Basically, like I said, he is my partner. He is the one who will help provide for our children we are going to be a family. He is going to be that long-term forever person. He is not here for the short amount of time you know what I mean.’ Another family member participant stated, ‘He is going to play the father role as far as our children we have together. It is going to play a big role because the kids missed him or whatever and that plays a big part in, they life because that is what they have been

missing.’ The investigator noted participants’ perceptions of planning and helping make futures were strong as well as the support provided mutually in ex-offender relationships with interview participants.

Time lengths. Participants’ statements concerning length of relationships were, ‘A year it will be at the end of March and we have had our ups and downs, on and offs. Obviously, at first, he did not tell me that he had four personalities.’ Additionally, a participant stated, ‘A year I would say the first few months before he got home was long. I feel like he would never come home but it has gone really fast since he has been here.’ Finally, a participant shared a statement about the relationship between themselves and the ex-offender and how the participant feels about the length of time, ‘Well, we are four months in. I mean it seems like we have known each other forever. It has been a short amount of time, but there has been a lot done in that short amount of time.’ The investigator found various ranges in the time participants had known the ex-offender and the various turns the relationships had taken while the ex-offender was incarcerated and when the ex-offender returned home to re-integrate into the family along with the depth of feelings expressed in the participant’s perceptions of time length of relationship.

Forward progress. The investigator noted participants’ perceptions on forward progress through the following statements, ‘He has his GED, but I want him to keep going from there. He is looking into going to Ranken Tech this week and I am really pushing for both of us to remain sober.’ Another participant stated, ‘He got his GED diploma while incarcerated. That is one thing I do not have but honestly, I think if he sticks to his treatment and knows what he is getting into he can do anything in the world.’ An additional participant stated, ‘I am very proud of him I just want him to continue with

sobriety because it is important though some days are hard, I want him to stay strong because this is well worth it in the end.’ Another participant stated, ‘He has obtained his GED and I think learned lots from his talks he has in group treatment with the different people. He is becoming more aware of how other people’s character that may not be good but shady.’ Finally, a participant stated, ‘I am very proud and very excited I know he has been wanting to do this for a really long time and no one’s really given him the time of day. The programs are definitely helping him.’

Returning home. The investigator found returning home again from incarceration to be a common theme among participants, which were shared through the following statements, ‘It will be good because we have not wanted to do programs because of separation. Many places separate males and females and it is hard to find shelters or help for both of us at the same time.’ Another participant stated, ‘They say you need to change your people, places, and things he needs to learn how to do that. If you want to live and do good, sometimes you have to cut out bad people from your life.’ Furthermore, a participant stated, ‘I feel as though he is taking being out a lot more serious this time. He is really looking forward to staying out here and he is more grounded. He is just taking his freedom serious.’ Moreover, a participant stated, ‘I think of it as him just getting back on his feet and doing what he needs to do to get back on his feet. He has to better himself and build relationships with people by networking with people that will be able to offer him work while he just stays focused and doing what he needs to do.’ Another participant stated on the ex-offender’s return home, ‘I mean I know the severity of things people may think differently but I don’t. I mean he is still a really good person inside and out and he has a good heart and is a good provider.’

He is there for me and my family and he loves me unconditionally and I am staying for him we are making this a forever thing. This is not something that is just going to pass time while he was locked up or anything like that. This is the real deal this is the person I want to spend the rest of my life with no matter the circumstances before. That is not who he is.’ An additional participant stated,

‘I do think he needs to push himself a lot more as far as being a man and being a father and stuff like that and be more responsible and take ownership to his own actions stuff like that. I want him to know that do it for yourself; do not wait for somebody else to do it for you. If anything, be there for yourself. So, I want him to know that nobody is going to feel sorry for you out here. You got to do it for yourself.’ Finally, a participant stated, “I am sure it will be hard for him at first, but I will be there to support him. I know it is going to be hard to adjust since from being away from his kids for so long.”

Summary

The investigator presented findings and analysis in Chapter 4 for Null H1, H1a, H2, H3, H4, H5, along with Research Questions RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, RQ5, RQ6. The Null Hypothesis 1 was analyzed, and the null failed to be rejected as trust did not increase. The researcher analyzed Null Hypotheses 1a -5 and rejected all. The Null Hypothesis 6 was removed after discussion with the dissertation committee due to redundancy issues with the already expressed data. The qualitative data revealed family perceptions of the ex-offenders and ex-offenders’ return home from incarceration after receiving GED and completing institutional substance abuse treatment program successfully while attending aftercare substance abuse treatment. The research discussed in Chapter Five future investigator opportunities to use the findings concerning ex-

offender and family trust for improvement in substance abuse treatment and family relationships toward avoiding recidivism and encouraging reintegration.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Reflection, and Recommendations

Overview

The researcher investigated the aftercare program to evaluate ex-offender(s) recidivism by obtaining a General Education Diploma (GED) and completing substance abuse treatment. The investigator conducted a study with ex-offender recidivist concerning ex-offender perceptions of trust in the efficacy of the substance abuse treatment program and the GED obtained while incarcerated and the continued refresher aftercare substance abuse treatment to help ex-offenders reintegrate into the community. The researcher also analyzed the perceptions of the ex-offender's family members concerning the ex-offender's return home and the ability of the ex-offenders to reintegrate into the family. To evaluate the null hypotheses and research questions, the investigator utilized Likert Scale surveys focused on trust self-assessment statements and trust in relationship statements as well as a *t*-test, *z*-test of proportions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to better understand the participant response data. The investigator analyzed the scores of completed surveys to determine the high, medium, and low values noted by ex-offenders and ex-offenders' family members. Additionally, the investigator conducted interviews with ex-offenders' chosen family members—specifically, six interview questions related to family perceptions of the ex-offender's viability to remain home and avoid further incarceration based on completing substance abuse treatment while having obtained a GED. The investigator transcribed the interviews and coded the responses for common themes among the family responses. Through investigation, the researcher hoped to learn more about the levels of trust ex-

offenders and family members needed to assist the ex-offender in the reintegration into family and society.

Discussion of the Results

Null Hypothesis 1. *There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust and a family members' level of trust upon the ex-offender completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED certification.* Through examining the results of the Trust Self-Assessment for the ex-offender and the Trust in Relationships Likert scale surveys, the investigator found the levels of trust were different for the ex-offenders and the family members and no relationship existed. The investigator noted ex-offenders' trust perceptions were higher as ex-offenders completed the in-patient phase of treatment while incarcerated and obtained individual GED's prior to exiting the correctional facility. As cited in Chapter 2, "Educational programs were shown to produce positive outcomes and reduce recidivism: more so than vocational, counseling, religious, substance abuse, transitional services, and work release programs" (Passarell, 2013, p. 12). The investigator found education would support an ex-offender feeling a higher level of self-trust after obtaining a GED to feel accomplished. The family members' level of trust was found not to be related to the ex-offenders' perception levels. The family members' Likert scale survey Trust in Family Relationships was based on the following variables: faith, dependency, and predictability. Family members of ex-offenders' trust levels appeared lower than current offenders. As cited in Chapter 2, Naser and Visser (2006) "found family members who provided affective and instrumental support to returning prisoners often reported experiencing hardships of their own, such as financial strain and anxiety" (p. 20). The reason an ex-offender family member's trust perception

was lower than ex-offenders' trust perceptions could be related to the ex-offender's substance abuse history. As cited in Chapter 2, "in addition to recidivism-related outcomes (e.g., re-arrest, re-incarceration, probation violation), prior researchers also focused on mental health and drug use as a means of assessing reentry programs' abilities to help inmates released from prison" (Lurigio et al., 2016, p. 55). The investigator believed, based on the findings, further study should be conducted into the gap between how ex-offenders' and family members' perceptions of trust about ex-offender viability in society concerning ex-offender felony records. The investigator concluded more study was needed concerning the nature of how each group understood what trust was and how trust applied to societal and social reintegration could possibly assist both groups in the reunification of the family and help reduce further recidivating in the ex-offender's life.

Null Hypothesis 1a. *There is no difference in the recidivist level of self-trust starting the aftercare substance abuse program or completing the substance abuse program.* The researcher found examining the results, of the levels of trust when the participants started the program and when the program was completed, was unexpected.

The investigator found using a dependent sample *t*-test the analyzed data revealed the ex-offender study participant's level of trust did not increase. The results revealed, the ex-offender participants did not perceive obtaining substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED as a significant gain to help avoid further recidivism and family reintegration. The investigator found a more significant factor for the ex-offenders was being able to obtain employment to maintain freedom from further re-incarceration as well as further substance abuse relapse. The investigator found ex-offenders concerned about being recidivist with felony records could reduce the chances of being able to

obtain employment. As cited in Chapter 2, “the researchers suggested providing educational and vocational programming to undereducated, higher-risk offenders who lacked legitimate work histories would lower recidivism by increasing individual odds of finding and maintaining employment” (Duwe, 2015, p. 532). The investigator concluded additional study of the ex-offender perceptions were needed to assist the ex-offenders in building trust in the vocational and academic skills ex-offenders were able to obtain while still incarcerated. The results of further study could provide a more balanced aftercare program for future recidivist exiting in-patient incarceration substance abuse treatment and entering an aftercare substance abuse treatment program. The goal would be to increase the ex-offender’s ability to make contact with employment resources while using the skills obtained during incarceration like the GED and completion of the year-long substance abuse treatment program to increase ex-offender confidence in the ex-offender’s readiness for family and societal re-integration.

Null Hypothesis 2. *There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of ex-offenders and substance abuse training rate of completion.* Through examining the results to see if the times of completion between those who graduated and those who recidivated were different, the data analysis revealed the time for completion of the graduates was not significantly different between the graduates and the recidivists. The investigator found the graduates were able to exit treatment by following, as required, the prescribed treatment rules (e.g., weekly treatment groups, individual counseling sessions, and weekly negative urinalysis submissions). The recidivists were able to complete treatment around the same time as the graduates by attending extra group meetings and providing more self-treatment homework concerning daily group topics completed as

homework after treatment was completed for the day. The homework task increased client graduation points for program completion. The recidivist was also required to attend self-help meetings to increase client treatment participation substance abuse recovery education as well as meeting all common substance abuse treatment program standards for extra credit.

As cited in Chapter 2, “the history of substance abuse was a predictor of treatment success and a significant factor in substance treatment entry, treatment retention, and treatment completion. Employment was a desirable outcome of substance abuse treatment and associated with positive treatment outcomes” (Webster et al., 2014, p. 200). The investigator concluded ex-offender participants had options to assist them in meeting the graduation requirements for treatment completion and found adding additional treatment opportunities outside of the regular required treatment day would give ex-offenders an opportunity to take the initiative to seek self-help groups such as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. The treatment provided daily meetings around the researched area which could allow the ex-offender to feel a sense of ownership of ex-offender sobriety and recovery processes. The additional groups could provide ex-offenders an outside support network and opportunities for employment and recreational activities within the local recovery community.

Null Hypothesis 3. *There is no relationship between the type of post-secondary experience positive or negative and the type of job the recidivist applied for.* Through data analysis, the results revealed the proportion of recidivists who acquired a skilled job was not significantly different from the proportion who acquired an unskilled job. The investigator found for both the skilled ex-offenders and the unskilled ex-offenders the top

priority was to have a job to go to daily to help develop a routine that would assist individuals in avoiding further recidivism chances while making a living. The no significant difference finding exposed the need for ex-offenders to become employed as soon as possible to help move forward in reintegration into family and society. As cited in Chapter 2, “the high imprisonment rates among men in the United States led to growing concerns of releasing large numbers of unskilled and stigmatized men from prisons. Community-based work programs were one of the means of preparing inmates for successful reentry” (Jung, 2014, p. 397). The investigator concluded providing both skilled ex-offenders and un-skilled ex-offenders with multiple work opportunities through work readiness programs during incarceration and aftercare substance abuse treatment processes would assist the ex-offender population in striving for stability while preparing both groups for future opportunities.

Null Hypothesis 4. *There is no relationship between the recidivism rate of the ex-offender and the housing location.* The researcher found the proportion of recidivists who returned to old housing was not significantly different from the proportion who found new housing. The investigator concluded ex-offenders found having a legal address upon exiting incarceration were willing to live in old areas as well as new areas to maintain some form of normalcy and stability upon release. The ex-offender study participants reminded the investigator no matter where the ex-offender chose to live, ex-offenders had to make a decision to succeed or fail in reintegration and reunification with family and society. As cited in Chapter 2, Walker et al. (2014) suggested social capital began with the returning offender having a stable place to live and available resources to start the rebuilding process by reaching out and connecting with family and friends. The

investigator concluded providing more resources in the form of housing options could provide ex-offenders a more solid base to compliment the substance abuse treatment process in after care. As cited in Chapter 2, “recovery housing also known as recovery residences, sober homes, and sober living represented a promising approach to extend the acute care treatment model and support long-term recovery and freedom for ex-offenders addicted to drugs” (Pannella Winn & Paquette, 2016, p. 163).

Null Hypothesis 5. *There is no relationship between the recidivist’s level of education and recidivism rates.* The investigator analyzed the data which revealed the proportion of recidivists who came into the program with a GED was not significantly different from the proportion who obtained a high school certification. The investigator found more ex-offenders were taking advantage of the High School Equivalency (HISET) opportunities offered through Training and Employment programs offered downtown near the substance abuse treatment center. Ex-offenders sought to increase the current level of education, revealed in the data analysis. As cited in Chapter 2, “Education held promises beyond the immediate rewards for those who returned to families, friends, and communities with alternate hopes and aspirations for the future” (Utheim, 2016, p. 102). The investigator concluded offering courses during the substance abuse treatment schedule would assist ex-offenders in receiving on-site education, negating the need to leave after the treatment day was over to travel to another location. Ex-offenders could obtain the education resource on-site while utilizing public transportation with little to no money to pay for bus fare or Metrolink passage by coming to one location.

Research Question 6: How do recidivist family members perceive the ex-offender's return home after completing substance abuse treatment?

The purpose of the research question was to determine family perceptions on ex-offenders' return home after completing substance abuse treatment and interaction upon reintegration. The investigator analyzed data supplied by ex-offender's family members, which revealed the following information. Family members noted happiness and relief in several responses about the ex-offender coming home from incarceration and being reunited with the family. As cited in Chapter 2, "Life course theory was used to explain why people stopped committing crime and us[ing] drugs/or deviant behavior. Life course theory scholars demonstrated important life events, marriage, gaining employment, or joining the military, have led to reduced recidivism" (Messer et al., 2016, p. 6).

Reflection on the Study

On January 13, 2020, the investigator received approval from the Missouri Department of Mental Health to begin data collection for the study. The title of the investigator's study was "A mixed-methods investigation of recidivism among ex-offenders in Missouri." The investigator investigated how receiving a General Equivalency Diploma and completing substance abuse treatment would help recidivist avoid further incarceration risk while providing reintegration into family and society for the ex-offender. The investigator chose for potential study participants a vulnerable population as the participants were on parole or probation from the Missouri Department of Corrections, which required further dispensations from IRB Committees, and the aforementioned Missouri Department of Mental Health. The investigator met with 77-ex-offenders attached to the substance abuse treatment program. Along with the 77 ex-

offenders, the investigator also met with 10 family members by consent of the ex-offender participants who allowed the investigator to speak with family members concerning family perceptions of the ex-offender's reintegration capabilities. The ex-offender participants showed interest in participating in the trust self-esteem survey and the treatment engagement survey and learning more about trust related to ex-offender life and family. The family members chosen by ex-offenders and who agreed to participate in the trust in relationships survey were interested in moving forward with the ex-offender being released from probation and parole requirements to rejoin the family. The investigator found both study groups of study participants were concerned about reintegration into the family and society concerning the ex-offender's substance addiction issues and the felony records the ex-offenders held toward obtaining employment and housing in the community. The investigator found through the literature review and direct knowledge through working with ex-offender populations of substance-addicted ex-offenders the difficulty of reintegration and employment along with housing. Obtaining employment was a priority for ex-offenders; employment was required as a condition of the ex-offender's probation or parole agreement and to be viable in the family unit. The difficulty of obtaining employment lay with divulging the past felony record the ex-offenders held to possible future employers. The investigator noted the concerns for future discussion in the recommendation section of this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The investigator recommends the ex-offender population obtain additional resources through substance addiction treatment programs and employment resources. The investigator found ex-offenders feel more confident after completing the GED and

substance abuse treatment, but confidence lessens upon returning home and attempting to find employment and reintegration with family. The investigator suggests adding more work readiness programs to substance use aftercare programs which target specific issues concerning felony record information on completing applications for employment and interviews.

The first recommendation includes a need for additional curricula on reintegration into society by discussing topics which provide insight into the re-adjustment into society after incarceration ex-offenders need. The investigator found ex-offenders understood the addiction problem faced upon the return home but lacked enough resources to help combat the problem. The investigator proposes locating more local self-help group resources to help provide the ex-offender with new opportunities to meet with others also in the process for positive change like Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, which sponsors sober activities in the local area.

The second recommendation includes parenting classes for returning ex-offender fathers during addiction treatment. The classes could be folded into the aftercare program to assist in providing the ex-offender father with tools to employ within reintegration into the family dynamic. During the study, several participants noted the need to learn how to be dads as most ex-offenders had not been involved with families prior to incarceration. During aftercare processes, the ex-offender could receive direction and instruction and be provided take-home assignments to show competence in the skill levels of the program.

The third additional area of need is anger-management assistance. The investigator found several ex-offender participants had never learned how to handle anger during incarceration or the lack of family involvement while the ex-offender was

incarcerated. Many ex-offenders want classes while involved in the addiction treatment to address anger management. The investigator proposed inserting an additional module of anger-management into the treatment programs to assist ex-offenders with thinking errors and how to identify and handle issues appropriately to help avoid further recidivism chances through poor decision making.

The fourth additional area of need is employment. Ex-offenders have felony records to contend with in seeking employment. The investigator found an additional resource for the ex-offender population would be employment readiness modules designed to prepare the ex-offender to move forward into the employment market. The ex-offenders have limited to no basic computer skills. A computer basic skills resource could enable the ex-offender to learn computer skills while moving through substance abuse treatment. While taking time to attend basic computer skills classes and learning how to prepare a resume highlighting the skills learned during incarceration, such as being on time, operating machinery, and skill certifications would be perceived as helpful. Each of the recommendations proposed by the investigator can help focus the ex-offender's attention on moving forward in society and build further self-esteem.

Conclusion

The investigator designed the mixed-methods investigation to examine recidivism, education, housing, and substance abuse involving ex-offenders returning to former families. The investigator was interested in researching the concept of trust between the ex-offender and the ex-offender's family when completing a substance abuse treatment program while inside prison and being released to participate and complete an aftercare substance abuse treatment program in the community. The researcher found ex-

offenders returning home from incarceration dealt with several needs, which could make it hard for the ex-offenders to reintegrate with family and society if not met. The needs were determined by the investigator to be avoiding recidivism, reintegrating with family, gaining education, employment, and housing. The investigator found ex-offenders failing to avoid recidivism were in jeopardy of being re-incarcerated. Failure could come from ex-offenders going back to old neighborhoods and not changing old behaviors causing further criminal behavior and incarceration chances to arise. As cited in Chapter 2, “Depending on the type of neighborhood an ex-offender returned to reintegration challenges were compounded. Ex-offenders who returned to impoverished neighborhoods were worse off than those returned to a stable residential area” (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016, p. 914). The investigator also noted a need for ex-offenders to reunite with family. The investigator noted ex-offenders coming home from incarceration needed support in the form of a place to live to receive mail and visits from probation /parole officers as well as a place to use for applications for employment. A place to live with family also influenced the ex-offender being able to remain viable in the community while re-establishing themselves and reintegrating with family. As cited in Chapter 2, “Although distinct from family support, understanding the influence of family ties on reoffending helped to partially explain a potential relationship between family support and reoffending” (Taylor, 2016, p. 335). The investigator reviewed the need for education on the ex-offender’s behalf as important due to helping the ex-offenders move forward to obtaining employment to help provide for family members. The investigator found most ex-offenders did not have a lot of education. Education helped ex-offenders build routines as well as knowledge to assist ex-offenders in

improving themselves with knowledge. As cited in Chapter 2, “Post-prison reintegration was likely dependent on various personal and situational characteristics best understood in a longitudinal life-course framework of (a) pre-prison education, (b) in-prison education, (c) post-release education, (d) post-release integration experiences” (Scott, 2016, p. 159). During the investigation, the investigator noted re-employment was important for ex-offenders who had little education. Additionally, the investigator found “According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment rates were highest for individuals with less than a high school diploma (12.5% in April 2012), and lowest for individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher (four percent in April 2012)” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012, p. A-4). The investigator also noted employment as an integral part of the ex-offender reintegration process. Ex-offenders being returned home through release in the form of probation or parole from prison needed employment to help family members pay bills. Ex-offenders who found employment were less likely to re-offend due to focus on the family and being able to provide monetarily. As cited in Chapter 2 “Finding stable employment was identified as one of the best predictors of post-release success among prisoners. The influence of employment on a parolee’s reintegration was conditional on his or her supportive social networks” (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 28).

The investigator noted housing as a need for ex-offenders who were released from incarceration. Ex-offenders dealt with special conditions related to ex-offender probation or parole, such as not being around other felons. Another condition of probation or parole could be requiring the ex-offender to have legal employment as a part of the ex-offender release experience. As cited in Chapter 2 “Many times, a condition of parole or probation

was to be disassociated from others on parole or probation; this could be difficult when members of the same family or neighborhood were under post-incarceration supervision” (Hall et al., 2016, p. 59). The investigator also investigated ex-offender problems with substance abuse as another negative experience which caused additional problems for the ex-offender attempting to maintain ex-offender freedom and reintegration. The investigator noted ex-offenders with a drug addiction required more assistance through substance abuse programs to assist the ex-offender to remove substance abuse from ex-offenders’ lives, which helped reintegration with family members and society. As cited in Chapter 2, “Due to the indisputable negative relationship between substance abuse and reintegration, substance abuse treatment was critical and necessary service for most newly released offenders attempting to reintegrate” (Connolly & Granfield, 2017, p. 371).

Implications for practice were presented and connected with the conceptual framework. The investigator noted a major theme for the returned ex-offender to society was a need for more job readiness programs in addition to substance abuse treatment programs. The investigator found family members supported ex-offender goals about reunification with the family. “Inmates believed prison industries employment would be more valuable if it included professional-level development training such as job search assistance, resume and interview advice and budgeting help” (Richmond, 2014, p. 233).

Recommendations for future research included substance abuse treatment inside the prison facility and the aftercare treatment program include more resources for ex-offenders to move forward reintegration with the family and society. The investigator found the following programs could be introduced into future in-patient prison substance

abuse treatment programs and aftercare programs to provide society and families of returning ex-offenders a more viable returnee. The resources suggested are, parenting classes and job readiness curriculum as well as anger management and conflict resolution modules while in the addiction treatment program. “Post-prison reintegration was likely dependent on various personal and situational characteristics best understood in a longitudinal life-course framework of (a) pre-prison education, (b) in-prison education, (c) post-release education, (d) post-release integration experiences” (Scott, 2016, p. 159).

Further research into trust between the ex-offender and the family was recommended. The investigator believes enlarging the study through using a wider variety of ex-offenders beyond those currently in treatment to those ex-offenders being women as well as men. Possible question asked could be learning how trust is built with individuals who recidivate and the family’s offenders are coming back to. In specific what encourages trust in the returning offender by the family.

As more and more offenders leave prison facilities, ex-offenders will be coming to a neighborhood near you. The goal of rehabilitation is to take damaged individuals and make them better or at least viable to be in the community and individual families safely. “Rehabilitative programs teach inmates skills that help them successfully reintegrate into society, which therefore decreases their rates of recidivism” (Corleto, 2018, p. 113). Resources are important for ex-offenders to learn how to provide for families using appropriate reintegration tools and skills so ex-offenders can be a part of the community as providers for families. The returning offender has a first experience with freedom through probation and parole, along with aftercare programs. The goal of the program should be to provide needed resources to the newly released offender designed to assist

individuals in re-acclimating to society and geared to make ex-offenders self-sufficient to provide for themselves and individual families, specifically in the areas of program resources and family support.

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Appendix A

Texas Christian University Engagement- Form Survey

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each statement.

1. You have made progress with your drug/alcohol problems.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

2. Your treatment plan has reasonable objectives.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

3. You are satisfied with the program.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

4. You are similar to (or like) other clients of the program.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

5. This program location is convenient for you.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

6. Personal counseling is available at the program.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

7. The staff is efficient at meeting all job requirements.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

8. The program has clear client treatment goals.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

9. The program expects you to learn responsibility and self-discipline.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

10. Time schedules for counseling sessions at the program are convenient for you.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree Strongly Agree

Appendix B

Trust in Close Relationships Survey

- 1. My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which other partners find too threatening. D
- 2. Even when I don't know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed. F
- 3. Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support. F
- 4. I am never certain that my partner won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me. P
- 5. My partner is very unpredictable. I never know how he/she is going to act from one day to the next. P
- 6. I feel very uncomfortable when my partner has to make decisions which will affect me personally. P
- 7. I have found that my partner is unusually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me. D
- 8. My partner behaves in a very consistent manner. P
- 9. Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare. F
- 10. Even if I have no reason to expect my partner to share things with me, I still feel certain that he/she will. F
- 11. I can rely on my partner to react in a positive way when I expose my weaknesses to him/her. F
- 12. When I share my problems with my partner, I know he/she will respond in a loving way even before I say anything. F
- 13. I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught. D
- 14. I sometimes avoid my partner because he/she is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something which might create conflict. P
- 15. I can rely on my partner to keep the promises he/she makes to me. D
- 16. When I am with my partner, I feel secure in facing unknown new situations. F
- 17. Even when my partner makes excuses which sound rather unlikely, I am confident that he/she is telling the truth. D

Scoring

The items marked with a D are the Dependency items. Items marked with an F are the Faith items, and Items marked with a P are the Predictability items.

One can score the questionnaire based on the 3 subscales separately, or combine the subscales to create an overall trust in close relationships score.

Appendix C

Trust Self-Assessment Survey

TRUST SELF-ASSESSMENT

1	2	3	4	5
Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

Please respond to each statement as it applies to you personally:		1	2	3	4	5
1	I make and keep commitments to myself.					
2	My behavior reflects my values.					
3	I am honest and open with others.					
4	I am not afraid to take emotional risks by admitting to my limitations.					
5	I am consistent and predictable.					
6	People can safely confide in me.					
7	When things go wrong, I focus on the lesson instead of the blame.					
8	My word is my bond.					
9	I hold myself accountable.					
10	I am open to rethinking my ideas.					
11	When I am wrong, I apologize quickly.					
12	I have a track record of achieving results.					
Total						
Add Totals from Column 1-5 for your self trust score						

My self trust score: _____

How did you score?
 48 – 60 = Outstanding! Your personal credibility is strong.
 36 – 48 = Good. You're on the right track.
 24 – 36 = Keep working at it!
 Below 24 = Pay attention! There's lots of room for improvement.

Appendix D**Family Interview Questionnaire**

1. Describe your personal feelings about the ex-offender's substance abuse problems and family safety?
2. Describe your relationship with the ex-offender?
3. Describe the role the ex-offender will fulfill in the family upon returning home?
4. How long have you been in the relationship with the ex-offender?
5. Describe your feelings about the ex-offenders completing substance abuse treatment and obtaining a GED?
6. How do you perceive the ex-offenders return home after the second incarceration?

Vitae

Norman James Vick

Substance Abuse Counselor III

Address

1430 Olive St.
Saint Louis Missouri 63103

Home address

9610 Lewis and Clark
Saint Louis Missouri 63136

Phone 314-219-9029

Email njv711@lindenwood.edu

Substance abuse counselor licensed in Missouri for professional counseling. 5+ years' experience in group work, person centered counseling modality and case management skills and client assessment for treatment needs. Working at Gateway Foundation with a 30-individual caseload of ex-offenders with substance abuse problems.

EDUCATION

KAPLAN UNIVERSITY

2010 to 2014

Bachelor's Degree in applied science criminal justice

Kaplan University Miami FL.

Summa Cum Laude / GPA 3.96

June 2014

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

2014 to 2017

Master of Art in Professional Counseling

Lindenwood University St Louis MO.

GPA 4.0

May 2017

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2017-11-21 Missouri Professional Counseling License awarded

2020-1-1 Counselor level III awarded

BOOKS

2020-08 The Education Dissertation: A guide for Practitioner Scholars: Corwin/ Sage

2020-08 A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research: Sage

2018-01 The Elf-Queen of Shannara: Del Rey Books