

The Impact of Extra-Therapeutic Factors on Recidivism

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Abstract

According to The United States Department of Justice, 83% of state prisoners released in 2005 across 30 states were re-arrested at least once following their release before 2014. Recidivism is a relapse in criminal behavior resulting in re-arrest, conviction, and imprisonment. This study focus on what former offenders have utilized to reintegrate into society and not fall prey to recidivism successfully. Reintegrating offenders into a society that may have changed substantially from when they left is only half the battle—maintenance of individual success depends on each offender's motivation and personal experiences. Implementing improved programs and holistic treatment of inmates within the prison system is critical in successfully deterring re-arrest rates and increasing community safety. This study found that increasingly high recidivism rates result from a lack of effective rehabilitative options during and after imprisonment. Identifying extra-therapeutic factors can inform the development of rehabilitation programs designed to decrease problem behaviors and recidivism.

Keywords: recidivism, factors, extra-therapeutic, reintegration, and research

1.0. Introduction

According to Beaudry-Cyr, Jennings, Zgoba, and Tewksbury (2017), recidivism is a relapse in criminal behavior resulting in re-arrest, conviction, and imprisonment. *Over 83% of state prisoners released in 2005 across 30 states were re-arrested at least once following their release before 2014* (Jones, 2021). Various Countries have adopted different methods that significantly reduce recidivism compared to the United States. Countries that have effectively reduced recidivism have employed methods of humane treatment of offenders, different approaches to sentencing guidelines, and reintegration programs that have effectively reduced recidivism. Although the United States has implemented various programs, the success rates compared to homogeneous countries are not comparable, resulting in consistently stable recidivism rates. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015), over 48 percent of the 1.2 million arrests were re-arrest individuals. The comparison of recidivism rates amongst different regions around the world provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of varying rehabilitating programs, which presents a model that the United States can emulate as a guide to reducing re-entry. Obtaining adequate evidence-based knowledge from other countries can assist the United States in modifying existing practices, ensuring the best method and policies to decrease the propensity of previously incarcerated individuals to re-enter prison. *Re-entry* is a transition process in which prisoners are released from prison and back into society. Recurring themes throughout this study include:

- Reintegration.
- The difference in approach to crime.
- The difference in treatment of prisoners.

- The cultural, historical, and sociological effects on countries.

Monumental events occurred in America over the past several decades, including deinstitutionalization and mass incarceration, leading to an increase in incarcerated populations (Alexander, 2010). As systems arduously shift from a punitive to a more encompassing rehabilitative stance, we are led to believe that correctional departments are geared to reduce crime and recidivism. Hope for change is an essential component of recidivism reduction, yet, resting on hope is not enough for rolling out rehabilitative programs across the country. Offenders released from prison remain vulnerable and most likely to re-offend within two years after release (Payne & Weatherburn, 2015). Therefore, it becomes imperative to teach responsibility, as well as assist offenders transitioning both inside corrections facilities (e.g., maximum security to minimum security facilities) and back to local communities following release (Alexander, 2010; Hodgkinson, Beattie, Roberts & Hardy, 2020).

This study focus on what former offenders have utilized to reintegrate into society and not fall prey to recidivism successfully. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018) growth of incarceration at all levels— local, state, and federal—affects the United States not only on a societal scale, but down to communities and family units as well. Federal prisons have maxed out prison populations since increasing in the 1970s persisting into the 1980s, and overcrowding (defined as the percentage of the prison population that exceeds a facility's rated capacity) continues to be a concern despite a federal inmate population decrease in recent years beginning in 2013 (Urban Institute, 2016). The reduction of incarceration (10% drop) has been predicated by policy changes, such as the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, the Smart on Crime initiative of 2013, and the Drugs Minus Two amendment of 2014, while at the same time maintaining recidivism at manageable levels (US Sentencing Commission, 2014). The most recent decrease in recidivism was due to decline in the prison population as the parole population remains stable - about 1 in 38 adults were under some form of correctional supervision at the end of 2016 (Kaeble & Cowhig, 2018; Urban Institute, 2016).

2.0. Literature Review

Deinstitutionalization in America's state hospitals in the 1950s led to the birth of the community-based mental health arena and an increase in those incarcerated in county jails and prison systems. The correlated factor of mental health problems aside, crime exists—on some level—in all communities and presents itself as a potential concern to all (Feinstein, 2015). Eliminating crime is unrealistic; however, searching out factors motivating those incarcerated to remain out of the criminal justice system should interest society. Therefore, the leading question exists: How does one stay out of trouble after already being in trouble? The question stated and re-phrased as “What do former criminal offenders perceive as rehabilitative factors decreasing the likelihood they would recidivate?” activates a different set of intrigues. As America's prison system arduously shifts from punitive to a more encompassing rehabilitative stance, some correctional (and rehabilitative) departments are geared to reduce crime and recidivism (Clemons, 2013; Walker, Sakai, & Brady, 2006; Payne & Weatherburn, 2015).

As researchers find that offenders released from prison remain vulnerable and most likely to re-offend within two years after release (Johnson, 2017); therefore. It becomes imperative to teach responsibility and assist offenders in transitioning inside correction facilities (e.g., maximum security to minimum security facilities) and back to local communities the following release (Clemons, 2013). Between 1971 and 2004, the prison population in the United States increased by 600% (Roth, 2018). The numbers are stark: America experienced a swell from 200,000 incarcerated persons to 1.4 million prisoners during this period. Important to note is that deinstitutionalization overlaps with this massive increase in prison growth—so begins the era of mass incarceration (Roth, 2018). As a society, we may have to prepare for a quick move to reintegrate more significant numbers of offenders as prisons across the United States have become increasingly overcrowded. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), a little over 2.1 million individuals are incarcerated in local jails, state and federal prisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018; Johnson, 2017).

Of further note, approximately 6.6 million individuals are under some form of community supervision linked to the criminal justice system (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018). According to the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), at the end of 2015, all BOP facilities were overcrowded by 20%. Nevertheless, the number of overcrowded facilities at high-security institutions rose to 45% (Urban Institute, 2016). The prison over crowdedness emphasizes the importance of offender rehabilitation and reintegration. The overcrowding problem brings additional concerns within the correctional facility, such as increased violence, inmate-on-inmate assaults, staff assaults, and multi-offender fighting. Oberlander (2018) reported on intervention principles rolling out in Washington State and Pennsylvania correctional departments to deter violent behavior by enforcing credible threats and following up with credible promises of assistance (Roth, 2018; Urban Institute, 2016).

Each state terms its focused deterrence intervention differently: Washington State Penitentiary's implemented violence reduction strategy is called *Operation Place Safety*, while Pennsylvania's Department of Correction is entitled *Operation Stop Violence* (Sedlack, 2017). Each intervention follows the common principles of deterrence, including zero tolerance for violent acts and credible promises to assist inmates through support and outreach (Oberlander, 2018). Programs such as this highlight the need for correctional settings to modify processes toward a more rehabilitative stance when working with, and in a sense, managing offenders' lives (Clemons, 2013). Subsequently, why is the proverbial light so dim at the end of this rehabilitative tunnel? To have hope for change is essential for *actual* change and improvement. Nevertheless, resting on hope is not enough to secure a grasp on rolling out rehabilitative programs across America's prison systems. Examining the strengths and limitations of prison rehabilitative programs is essential when implementing new practices in a system unyielding to change (Oberlander, 201; Sedlack, 2017).

2.1. Historical Framework

During America's colonial days, criminal law hinged on an interesting combination of English barbarity, religion, and practicality (Meskell, 1999). Punishments for crimes were mostly public affairs and ranged from prolonged humiliation to quick corporal tortures. Ultimately, colonial criminal law changed, and punishments such as hard labor were substituted for crimes, and the concept of solitary cells for hardened criminals paved the way for American prisons created in the mid-nineteenth century. This timeline parallels French philosopher Michel Foucault's explanation that punishment had ceased as a public spectacle and began to function as a loss of wealth and rights—an essential loss of liberty (Foucault, 1977). Fast forward to the present times, Meskell (1999) points out how American prison reforms attempted to distance themselves from past abuses. Whatever improvements lasted did so as they became part of American culture, which shows that social constructionism was alive and well, even at the birth of America's penitentiary system (Alexander, 2010; Foucault, 1977).

The relevant literature indicated two main concepts associated with types of formal punishment or correctional procedures within an institution: exclusion and discipline. In an original 1978 review of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Cohen (2019) refers to Foucault's archeological-type abilities as he analyzed earlier models of control (control is a critical factor within any hierarchical divide); and, when thought about, these models exist today. Exclusion gave way to the model of confinement based on a method of managing outbreaks of leprosy, while disciplinary procedures such as record keeping, classification, and surveillance were rooted in the management of the plague (Foucault, 1977). Again, acknowledging the dissolution of public torture, these two models of exclusion and discipline set the foundation in the nineteenth century for total control, whether real or illusory. To achieve total control, Foucault (1977) explains the construction of the *Panopticon*, an architectural structure—a central tower—for those in charge to survey, constantly see, and monitor all activity. He further details, "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault (1977; p. 201). The goal was to achieve a permanent *effect* of surveillance regardless of whether a person was watching (Cohen (2019; Foucault, 1977).

Why is this important in contemporary American society? As with so many historical lessons learned, the course of assisting offenders in the rehabilitation process should be spun to match the demands societal discourses place on these individuals. As Foucault (1977) points out, "The conditions to which the free inmates are subjected necessarily condemn them to recidivism: they are under the surveillance of the police; they are assigned to a particular residence, or forbidden others..." (p. 267). Of course, we cannot and should not eliminate surveillance from America's prison systems; however, why not utilize the concept within a holistic approach to rehabilitation? Yes, it is essential to recognize and intervene when disruption and violence occur, especially within a prison; yet power should not fall prey to abuse and perpetuate a sense of control one person has over another. Progression through the criminal justice system should ultimately resolve a wrong (or multiple wrongs) and assist an individual in returning to the free society from which they departed. This type of progress is not an accomplishment simply by checking boxes. To achieve reintegration, clinicians and additional helping professionals should consistently elicit strengths and extra therapeutic factors inmates, soon-to-be former offenders, already possess. The understanding of extracting and utilizing these factors warrants further exploration (Foucault, 1977; Meskell, 1999).

3.0. Importance of Reintegration

Implementing programs and processes across the United States, such as *Restorative Circles* at a Hawaii minimum-security prison and *Therapeutic Communities* run by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, assist with offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

Walker et al. (2006), in their Restorative Circles research, found that group planning processes for inmates, their families, and prison staff not only benefit the inmate when exiting prison but if provided when an inmate enters a correction facility, the process of repairing outside relationships with family and other support systems may begin sooner. In Ohio, Therapeutic Communities have been implemented as residential programs for sex and drug offenders (Pratt, 2014). The program separates males and females and allows for self-reflection of personal growth and relational enhancement as offenders hold each other accountable for progress through the program stages (Thomas, 2006). This accountability translates to a free society by enhancing an offender's personal responsibility to make choices, decreasing the likelihood of recidivism. Implementing such programs is a shift from a former punitive stance of treating criminal offenders to a more rehabilitative, goal-oriented process that also creates additional support systems (Pratt, 2014; Thomas, 2006).

Allowing offenders to take a more proactive role in their recovery will create long-lasting intrapersonal and interpersonal effects. Galli (2018) reports implementing programs where probation departments act as social supports. At times, probation officers are the sole advocating source for an offender. Increasing social support with offenders (in the form of family, friends, coworkers, and peers) is shown to decrease the risk profile of an offender under community supervision (Galli, 2018). Relating the implementation of programs in prisons to the effect on violence experienced between inmates and inmates to staff, Ortiz and Jackey, (2019) found a significant decrease in staff assaults when inmates participated in work-related programs, mainly if the programs were used as incentives. Nonetheless, Randol and Campbell (2017) recognized the impact of several factors on inmate violence, including individualistic inmate behaviors, various forms of prison management, and inmate culture (Galli, 2018; Ortiz and Jackey, 2019).

With the understanding that not every program will have effective results, Randol and Campbell (2017) took into consideration elements of programming having impactful effects by not reducing inmate assaults on staff in prisons. Interactions between high-risk populations such as individuals classified with severe mental illness and specialized staff who may be ill-equipped to handle inmates (e.g., employment, educational, prison industry) are factors to consider with programming availability. In addition, only inmates approaching a release date tend to receive programming that focuses on decreasing recidivism (Randol & Campbell, 2017). It is noteworthy that some programs may not intentionally serve to decrease misconduct and violence among individuals who remain incarcerated; Consequently, more focus needs to be placed on the behavioral patterns of inmates at different junctures of their incarceration and which programs offered in prison were viewed as helpful from the inmate standpoint (Oberlander, 2018; Randol & Campbell 2017).

Cochran (2014) found that prisoners who were visited consistently during their prison term, beginning early in their sentence, were significantly less likely to recidivate within three years of release (22% less likely) than prisoners who did not receive visitors during their sentence. Social factors play a supportive role in an offender's rehabilitation and narrowing in on any additional therapeutic factors will assist all systems involved with offenders, from law enforcement and prison staff to attorneys and court judges, as well as clinicians and social workers (Beaudry-Cyr et al., 2017). Shifting to a more rehabilitative, progressive criminal justice system in the United States has gained momentum, yet questions remain as to what offenders have utilized and continue utilizing to reintegrate and remain in society successfully. At any rate, identifying factors that positively influence offenders and lead to successful reintegration is crucial for developing policies and programs aimed at reducing recidivism (Beaudry-Cyr et al., 2017; Thomas, 2006).

3.1. Predicting Factors of Successful Reintegration

The study of Lugo (2018) reported on inmate educational programming and how inmates' participation in correctional education programs appears to reduce recidivism. Results indicated that classroom settings that were more student-focused and interactive led to varying instructional methods that consider different learning styles and address multiple intelligences and a multitude of cognitive processes—all leading to training diversity and high demand for vocational training while incarcerated (Lugo, 2018). Offenders increase their chances of obtaining gainful employment and decrease the likelihood of recidivating if engaged in educational practices while incarcerated (Blomberg, Bales, & Piquero, 2012; Lugo, 2018).

Collica-Cox and Fagin (2018) further note advancement in reintegrative and rehabilitative outcomes while using animal-assisted therapy (AAT) within a prison. According to this study, numerous factors were influenced by animal interaction, even in prison settings. Factors including social, behavioral, medical, and psychological well-being are enhanced by enabling more open and helpful communication between offenders and others. In a study on sex offenders and their perspectives on change, Elisha, Idisis, and Ronel (2013) extracted themes of familial acceptance, religious-spiritual acceptance, and acceptance through therapeutic interventions as motivating agents.

Support from and through these outlets led offenders to understand past offenses and the responsibility of engaging in change. Expressly, offenders' spouses and other family members, religious leaders, and therapists were noted as significant support systems throughout the process of change (Elisha et al., 2013). As change is not a simple process, the authors further indicate how participants use multiple sources of support in parallel, allowing for the exploration of who and what is healthy encouragement for an offender's success (Collica-Cox & Fagin, 2018; Ronel, & Elisha, 2011).

Reintegrating offenders into a society that may have changed substantially from when they left is only half the battle—maintenance of individual success depends on each offender's motivation and personal experiences. The acknowledgment must be made regarding social discourses and how they influence those individuals in which rehabilitative programs are geared to affect change. Barak and Stebbins (2017) explore a vital point highlighting how re-entry programs tend to implement oppressive social norms blatantly and coercively on a grand scale. Their study further highlights how significant political issues often set the foundation for re-entry programs leaving little room for an offender to pave their path to success based on their own experiences. This phenomenon alone intimates further inquiries (Barak & Stebbins, 2017; Elisha et al., 2013).

4.0. Common Factors

Several studies show that multiple factors are responsible for inmate rehabilitation (Beaudry-Cyr et al., 2017; Duncan & Sparks, 2010; Ronel, & Elisha, 2011; Thomas, 2006). Nevertheless, one of this study main focuses is identifying extra therapeutic factors associated with offender rehabilitation from a therapeutic stance. Duncan and Sparks (2010) highlight four common factors assisting with the general change process regardless of the origin of delivery, profession, job title, or theoretical approach to helping by any professional. Percentages originating from Lambert & Ogles (2014) were assigned to each of the four common factors totaling 100%. These estimated percentages make up the specific contributions to change, and the common factors along with their respective breakdowns are as follows: Client (i.e., offender), extra-therapeutic factors (40%), relationships with therapist or additional helping professional (30%), placebo/hope/expectancy (15%), and model/theoretical approach/techniques (15%). The highest factors influencing change in a therapeutic setting are clients and the extra-therapeutic factors they bring to the therapeutic alliance (Duncan & Sparks, 2010; Lambert & Ogles, 2014). Such factors include personal characteristics such as optimism and persistence and identified strengths such as religion/spirituality, personal interests, and solid family and social support systems (Lambert & Ogles, 2014; Ronel, & Elisha, 2011).

The contexts in which common factors are typically discussed tend to be more therapeutic. There is merit, however, in discussing these factors about offender rehabilitation, as inmates are likely to encounter someone in a helping profession (e.g., psychologist, social worker, counselor, or additional therapist) during their time of incarceration or after release if placed on probation or parole. Without discounting the additional 60% of common factors to change, arguments hold strong that more is attributed to therapeutic change than empirically supported treatments and the type of psychotherapeutic approach utilized by a therapist (Lambert & Ogles, 2014; Laska, Gurman, & Wampold, 2014).

Louden and Manchak (2018) explored the form and function of social networks (the individuals who comprise a social network and the effect the relationships have on an individual's life, respectively) and their relevance to treatment adherence for Latino offenders on probation that, also are diagnosed with a mental illness. Results indicated that higher quality relationships within an offender's core network influenced treatment adherence rather than leading to non-compliance. Subsequently, the significance of exploring social relationships and the functional role they play specifically in an offender's life as research findings do show that strong, helpful social bonds decrease the likelihood of recidivism (Cochran, 2014; Loudon & Manchak, 2018).

Although factors may not necessarily be referenced by the term "extra-therapeutic," previous works and additional research continue to note practical aspects of life guiding offenders into successful reentry to society. In a study by Ortiz, and Jackey (2019) they summarized the significance of referencing an individual's strengths and resiliencies regarding criminal offenders. The review is based on Andrews and Bonta's (2010) book, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct, 5th ed.*, which indicates criminal conduct is reduced when things such as education, resourcefulness, and good relationships are acknowledged. Hlavka, Wheelock and Jones (2015) similarly found in their research study that social and emotional support allows for successful reentry from prison for both men and women regardless of background or social location (Andrews and Bonta, 2010; Hlavka et al., 2015).

5.0. Reforming Recidivism

Factors influencing recidivism are worth noting when considering the decline of the incarcerated population. In a large-scale meta-analysis, Katsiyannis, Whitford, Zhang, and Gage (2018) reviewed 19 recidivism studies spanning over two decades from 1994 to 2015.

Referencing predicting factors associated with traits that cannot be changed versus traits that may be changed (in sex offenders) and targeted for treatment, respectively Pratt (2014) found several predictors of recidivism similar to previous studies. Static variables such as age, antisocial history, family criminality, family rearing, and gender, along with dynamic variables such as antisocial personality scales, criminogenic needs, personal distress, social achievement, and substance abuse, served as the highest predictors of adult recidivism (Katsiyannis et al., 2018; Pratt, 2014).

Furthermore, efforts to reform recidivism points to how reentry classes often do not cover the specific topic intended. At times, these classes were taught by individuals not qualified to provide an expert stance on the information (Ortiz, & Jackey, 2019). For example, a culinary department officer taught a reentry health class with no training on reproductive health, mental health, or substance abuse, which was clearly, a mismatch blurring the lines between communicating helpful information and simply checking a box (Walker et al., 2006). Jerome Dillard, a formerly incarcerated citizen, currently a reentry coordinator in Dane County, Wisconsin, accounts for the disproportionate number of African Americans serving prison sentences for drug-related crimes. He explains the importance and invaluable experience of peer support and the direct effect that specific support has on substance abuse and mental health recovery. Jerome further notes the ballooning effect racial disparities have on perpetuating an “us” and “them” mentality, a continual barrier to reform. He suggests implementing cultural competency training as a valuable tool in all prison systems (United States Congress, 2016). After all, the numbers are staggering and genuinely telling: The imprisonment rate for sentenced adult black males (2,336 per 100,000 Black male U.S. residents) approached six times the number of sentenced adult white males (397 per 100,000 White male U.S. residents) at the end of 2017 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019; Ortiz, & Jackey, 2019).

Even more eye-opening, Ortiz and Jackey (2019) suggest that recidivism rates may give the illusion that rehabilitation is in progress; however, the criminal justice system is designed to marginalize the formerly incarcerated. They posit that the justice system comprises deliberate structural violence perpetuating inequality by implementing tactics such as fees, eventual debt, and oppressive supervision conditions (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). How did we get here? How has a system with such hefty consequences evolved over centuries into an entity with rehabilitative goals yet muddled with disciplinary processes and other systemic concerns? (United States Congress, 2016; Walker et al., 2006).

5.1. Strengths-Based Practice and Extra-Therapeutic Factors

Discovering extra-therapeutic factors can significantly impact therapeutic gains for any client, let alone those facing reintegration into society with minor to no hope for their future success. Strengths naturally fall into the category of extra-therapeutic factors as they already exist in an offender's way of functioning prior to meetings with professional staff (Duncan, Miller, Wampold & Hubble, 2010). Offenders must be viewed as humans that possess some form of strength, resiliency, or protective factor on some level. Ward and Brown (2004) create a platform addressing a rehabilitative stance when working with offenders—a shift from a problem-saturated, risk-need model to a model promoting prosocial behavior and more satisfactory goal attainment. The Good Lives Model (GLM) of offender rehabilitation (covered later in this manuscript) is introduced as a strengths-based approach to guiding offenders by emphasizing human agency and constructing personal identity to help meet basic needs (Ward & Brown, 2004). Furthermore, the introduction of the conceptual perspective of positive criminology integrates several known models and theories of criminology yet incorporates the strengths and positive influences of the offender (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). This view sheds light on bridging the gap between understanding processes leading to deviant behavior (i.e., criminal activity) while simultaneously exploring what leads to the cessation of the criminal behavior (Duncan et al., 2010; Ward & Brown, 2004).

Some may naturally question the reasoning behind taking a stance on strengths-based approaches when working with offenders; however, is this population not the most severely in need of searching out and utilizing their strengths to move forward in life? Strengths allow for a rehabilitative approach to blossom and utilizing approaches such as the GLM—a strengths-based rehabilitation framework for adult offenders—helps focus on offenders as social beings who strive to create good lives within a social context (Ward & Brown, 2004). Two goals ultimately create the momentum behind the GLM framework: The GLM focuses on helping the offender fulfill primary goods (i.e., needs) and reducing the likelihood of recidivism (Ward, Mann, & Gannon, 2007). It is essential to note that focusing on strengths does not imply discounting other models of approach, including the medical model. Rehabilitative approaches have their value, and an interdisciplinary approach integrating models will allow professionals to gain insight into what improvement means and looks like for each offender (Louden & Manchak, 2018). Striving for improvement helps abandon all-or-nothing stances of curing or eliminating someone of a disease, disorder, or criminal behavior (Pratt, 2014; Ward et al., 2007).

In a multidisciplinary review, Vandeveld, Vander Laenen, Van Damme, Vanderplasschen, Audenaert, Broekaert & Vander Beken (2017) critique the implementation of strengths-based approaches such as the GLM when applied to offenders with mental illness focuses extensively on groups associated with drug offenses and sexual offenses. This research category further measures recidivism rates and the likelihood of symptom reoccurrence rather than highlighting protective factors and individual strengths, most likely supporting recovery and amplifying hope and expectancy for change (Vandeveld et al., 2017). Offenders are more likely to heal and move forward and create a groundwork for change when focusing on strengths and additional factors already in their lives prior to the offense they committed (i.e., acknowledge and account for those extra-therapeutic factors) (Duncan et al., 2010). Listening to heroic stories, developing a change-focus perspective, validating an offender's contribution to their change, and tapping into an offender's world are strategies to utilize not only with clients on a therapeutic journey (Duncan et al., 2010) but offenders as well. Vandeveld et al. (2017) express their support for switching from a deficit-oriented view to an abilities-oriented view when engaging offenders with mental illness (Duncan et al., 2010; Vandeveld et al., 2017). As the self-determination theory purports, humans flourish when the basic needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are met (Deci & Ryan, 2008). As social work practitioners support and motivate change in any person, it is crucial to support offenders in a rehabilitative stance as a vessel of hope and change, no matter how small or slow the progress. Hope plays a key role here. In Lambert's (1992) original model, the factor of hope and expectancy was assigned a 15% contribution to change. Over a decade later, Thomas (2006) validates the importance of hope and expectancy as a factor for change in a study resulting in both clients and therapists increasing this factor's percentage from 15% to 30% (client's view) and 27% (therapist's view). Nevertheless, it may be viewed, this abstract phenomenon of hope is clearly an influencing factor to consider when providing services as a helping professional. Compound the process of helping with delivery to a vulnerable population such as offenders, and the need for hope profoundly increases (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Roth, 2018; Thomas, 2006).

Vandeveld et al. (2017) view individuals who have offended as deserving the respect of self-agency and autonomy when reintegrating into society, even if specific parameters exist. Clinicians working at any juncture of an offender's rehabilitative journey have an ethical obligation to aid in this process, conveying hope that change—no matter how small—can occur, leading to successful reintegration and creating a quality of- a life worth living for every individual (Lambert's (1992; Vandeveld et al., 2017).

5.2. Solution-Focused Approaches to Reoffending

The literature on solution-focused therapy (SFT) has evolved since its inception decades ago (de Shazer, 1985; de Shazer, 1988; de Shazer et al., 1986; Walter & Peller, 1992). Initial light is shed that focusing on the positive and moving toward solutions does not discount the problem. Instead, the goal is to facilitate future solution-oriented talk to change the desired direction (Walter & Peller, 1992). Regarding criminal offenders, a behavior was performed leading to arrest, charge(s), and incarceration. Whatever crime was committed, that action did not work and led to negative consequences; therefore, something different should be done (de Shazer, 1985). SFT is an all-encompassing model rooted in goal setting and follows several assumptions guiding the acting and thinking involved in a therapeutic alliance (Walter & Peller, 1992). The hallmarks of SFT and their relevance to influencing the punitive turning rehabilitative world of prisons are worth noting. Previous researchers have addressed the practical value of assumptions guiding SFT (de Shazer, 1985; de Shazer, 1988; de Shazer et al., 1986; Walter & Peller, 1992). However, this study will focus on a handful of assumptions, as Walter and Peller (1992) described, including exceptions to problems, the inevitability of change, and more minor changes leading to more significant changes (de Shazer, 1988; Walter & Peller, 1992).

5.2.1. Exceptions to problems.

Exceptions to problems may be discovered through the art of conversation. No matter the professional, an offender should be able to engage in collaborative discussion regardless of the topic. In the case of behavioral change, for example, it is essential to understand how one views solutions to problems. As most people become entangled in problem-solving mindsets, shifting focus to exceptions allows for a new perspective. Prisons implement punitive measures to extinguish behaviors essentially (Walter & Peller, 1992). A shift to rehabilitative measures should allow for recognition of exceptions (no matter how seemingly insignificant) to problematic behavior. Exceptions should be explored jointly with an offender leading to the increased realization that control over problematic behavior is within their grasp. Problems do not occur 100% of the time. These exceptions are crucial in the development of healthy decision-making (Cardoso, 2012; de Shazer, 1988).

5.2.2. Change is inevitable.

Situations and other events change all the time. The assumption of change referenced as inevitable in SFT works with the underpinning that language heavily impacts the meaning of change for every person. The rehabilitation literature confirms that a therapeutic alliance is built, established, and nurtured using language (Ward, & Brown, 2004). If the inevitability of change is to be communicated to a criminal offender, then words must be chosen carefully to promote situations as temporary and change as a condition of moving through life. Someone who made choices leading to incarceration will have indeed interacted with others who condemn and punish. Clinicians and other helping professionals should collaborate to design and implement rehabilitative interventions and encourage action deterring offenders from problem behaviors to productive ways of living with positive outcomes (Cardoso, 2012; Galli, 2018).

5.2.3. Small changes lead to bigger changes.

Within the field of mental health, it is common to hear phrases such as "complicated client," "difficult patient," or "repeat offender." Enter the punitive world of corrections, and inmates' descriptions may intensify. If those in the helping professions view other people as negatively as these descriptions, how does change begin to form as a thought, let alone a possibility? The assumption of more minor changes leading to more significant changes not only alters the perspective of an offender but can also enable a practitioner to understand views and actions on a smaller scale. The daunting task of reintegrating into a community deserves careful preparation and assurances that achieving success is manageable. Circling back to the common factor of hope and expectancy (Lambert, 1992), this assumption holds such importance that problems of all types may be solved one step at a time. Celebrating small successes and communicating hope will not only strengthen a therapeutic alliance but also fuel the strength and rehabilitation of someone making a change for the better (Cardoso, 2012; Walter & Peller, 1992).

7.0. Implication To Practice

Identifying extra-therapeutic factors can inform the development of rehabilitation programs designed to decrease problem behaviors and recidivism (Hlavka et al., 2015). The BOP, however, reports frequent disruptions in correctional facility programs due to the high number of people in prisons, which exceeds the capacity for program availability (Urban Institute, 2016). In other words, there is not enough human capital to run programs inside prisons. Addressing the concern of prison staff shortages is outside the scope of interest specific to this research. However, the programs offered to offenders during incarceration are of extreme value and imperative to discover, recognize, and attend to extra-therapeutic factors leading to successful reentry into communities with a decreased chance of recidivating. Johnson (2017) referenced it best when stating that correctional programming helps provide a sense of hope and encourages pro-social behavior. It is essential to uncover what helps maintain that sense of hope from an offender's point of view (Hlavka et al., 2015; Urban Institute, 2016).

Recidivism is an issue that will continue to reoccur if the United States fails to act upon its draconian methods of sentencing and treatment of offenders (Urban Institute, 2016). The United States may turn the page in reducing recidivism by improving the treatment of offenders by providing an effective and efficient evidence-based program to ensure success in reentry and recidivism rates. Understanding and addressing the inhumane impact of incarceration and its toll on individuals' mental faculties are vital in implementing the necessary programs for rehabilitation. Reintegrating individuals who have committed a criminal act should be handled with care and in a humane manner (Johnson, 2017). Harsh treatment experienced by offenders in prison may have a long-term effect on their self-worth as individuals. Although these individuals violated a societal norm, punishment should be meted out appropriately and consistently, ensuring our goal is the restoration of the individual and society. Every individual has the propensity to make a mistake and find themselves in the web of the criminal justice system (Johnson, 2017; Kaeble, D., & Cowhig).

The United States approach should be based on the golden rule many hold dear, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Galli, 2018). This rule is essential when applying justice and modifying the current prison system. The prison system must provide a sense of individualism and funding for improving holistic treatment within the current sentencing options. The need for structural improvement within our criminal justice system is demonstrated in our relatively high recidivism rates. The present study found that the result of high recidivism rates is due to the lack of available options other than imprisonment. Implementing effective programs within our criminal justice system and increased funding will reduce recidivism rates in the United States (Galli, 2018; Lugo, 2018).

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