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Finding Common Ground: Relationship Building and Communication between PO and Client within a Community Supervision Setting

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Supervision Setting

by

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on the community supervision model entitled Effective

Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) focuses on the increased attention trained

probation officers (POs), as opposed to non-trained POs, pay to using core correctional

practices (Smith et al. 2012). While studies like this present a picture of what POs do

during face-to-face interactions, there is little focus on PO perceptions of these day-to-

day practices. Furthermore, still less studies center the clients on supervision in order to

better understand topics such as ideal PO, ideal relationship, and perceptions of

common community supervision strategies. To address these gaps, this study uses 30

semi-structured interviews with 15 POs and 15 clients either employed by or under

supervision in West County in a northwest state in the U.S. Findings highlight the

importance of identity verification for both PO and client. Moreover, this study

highlights specific strategies used by POs seeking to balance the care and control

aspects of their job. In addition, findings highlight the negative impact that grouping or

labeling has on clients, while also showing the potentially positive effect addressing

these fears has on the PO-client relationship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Probation officers (POs) are street level bureaucrats who work directly with the

clients on their caseloads with the goals of maintaining community safety as well as

actively assisting them toward long-term behavioral change (Lutze, 2014). Lipsky (1980)

defines street level bureaucrats as public service workers who interact directly with

clients in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution

of their work. With the rise of the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) principles have come a

variety of community supervision models which have the goal of reshaping the face-to-

face interactions between PO and client. Effective Practices in Community Supervision

(EPICS) is one of these models which structures its PO-client meetings with a check-in,

review, intervention, and homework (Gleicher, Manack, & Cullen, 2013). During the

check-in POs are supposed to use their professional judgement to determine whether

the client is in crisis or not, determine what needs they have, and choose an evidence-

based tool with which to address these needs. Assessing the client's needs requires a

healthy working relationship so that the client is willing to be open and honest about

what is going on in their lives (Smith et al., 2012).

Typically, studies that have attempted to better understand the dynamic

therapist-client relationship have used traditional psychotherapy measures of

therapeutic alliance. Therapeutic alliance is defined as an active and purposeful

collaboration between therapist and patient and is considered a prerequisite for patient

engagement and positive treatment outcomes (Cournoyer et al., 2007). However, the

non-voluntary nature of the PO-client relationship is a pivotal difference between it and

the typical therapist-client relationship. Lipsky (1980) points out the ramifications on the

relationship between bureaucrats and clients due to this non-voluntary aspect, "the two

are intrinsically in conflict over objectives and the relationship is drastically unequal."

Skeem et al. (2007) agree, taking the stance that the PO-client relationship may not

benefit as much from traditional psychotherapy measures due to the fact that service

providers both care for and have control over clients. They created the Dual Role

Inventory (DRI) in order to better understand what facets of both the care and control

aspects of the relationship are most important to client success. While studies on dual-

role relationship have pointed to balance between the care and control aspects as being

most related to client success (Skeem et al. 2007, Skeem et al. 2003), still less is known

about the mechanisms that drive decision making around specific strategies used by POs

in order to achieve this balance. This study uses identity theory and labeling theory to

better understand the dynamics of the PO-client relationship in order to fill this gap.

   Identity theory is a perceptual control theory that states people use their

behavior to control their perceptions. These people will act in whatever ways they can

in order to change the meanings in the situation so their perceptions of self-relevant

meaning in the situation (including reflected appraisals) come to match the meanings in

their identity standard, thus verifying their identity (Asencio & Burke, 2011).   In other

words, when clients meet with their POs, they are taking part in a reflexive process to match their perceptions of how their PO sees them (reflected appraisal) with the ways they view themselves (identity standard). One significant shortcoming of labeling theory is that it does not address the process that POs go through to align their perceptions of how their clients see them (reflected appraisal) with how they view themselves as POs (identity standard).

This study partially fills this gap by using 30 semi-structured interviews with 15 POs and 15 clients either employed by or under supervision within West County in a northwestern state in the U.S. Questions were asked in order to answer three main research questions:

- How do POs/Clients conceive of an ideal relationship?
- What mechanisms do POs use to garner this ideal relationship?
- What mechanisms do clients report to be most impactful in developing this relationship?

Developing a working relationship with clients is critical to the success of probation and is seen as a key ingredient necessary to properly administer the evidence-based interventions that have been shown to reduce recidivism (Dowden & Andrews 2004). Furthermore, it is important that we better understand what mechanisms drive the decision making of both POs and clients within this relationship to better develop effective training and tools with which to address client needs and help achieve long-term behavioral change. For the clients, I focus on the positive and negative impact that their ability, or inability, to verify their identity has on the PO-client relationship.

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Additionally, I will highlight the practice of POs who introduce aspects of their personal identity into their supervision style. Consequently, I argue that during face-to-face meetings an identity verification process is occurring for both PO and client. Moreover, I argue that identity verification is the driving force behind the decisions POs make about which strategies are most useful to achieve the distinct goal to be viewed by their clients as a firm but fair PO whose preference is to help them succeed in life while avoiding the label of authoritarian.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of Community Supervision

In 1980 Andrews and Keissling developed five dimensions of effective

correctional practice based on social learning theory of criminal behavior. These include

effective use of authority, anticriminal modeling and reinforcement, problem solving,

use of community resources, and quality of interpersonal relationships between staff

and clients (Haas & Spence 2017). Studies gauging the association that these Core

Correctional Practices (CCPs) have with recidivism find that all five dimensions of CCP

are correlated with significant reductions in reoffending (Dowden & Andrews 2004).

The development of CCP led to the creation of the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model in

1990. Studies show there is a significant relationship between adherence to RNR

principles and reduced recidivism (Andrews & Bonta 2010b, 2011). Still others have

found that POs trained in RNR principles spend more time addressing criminogenic

needs then those not trained (Bonta et al. 2011).

From this RNR model grew a tree of modern community supervision models

expanding the role of the PO. This new philosophy has added more "social worker" type

tasks to the PO's daily job duties, such as administering cognitive interventions during their face-to-face encounters. These programs include Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS), General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning (GPCSL), the Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Re-arrest (STARR), and the Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS). West County uses the EPICS model of supervision. Studies suggest that EPICS-trained POs are more likely to confront criminogenic needs, reinforce prosocial behavior, and assign homework and role-playing with their clients than POs without EPICS training (Smith et al. 2012). Furthermore, the specific skills that POs receive training on include: relationship building, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, and structured skill building (Smith et al. 2012).

Therapeutic Alliance, Therapist Characteristics, and the Need for Dual-Role

Therapeutic alliance (TA) has been found to be an integral part of therapy and the change process. Freud conceptualized TA as a positive transference, which was thought to drape the therapist in a cloak of authority, and to give the client faith in the therapist's work (Freud, 1913). Freud's work was then expanded upon by Greenson's (1965) conception of transference, a working alliance, and the "real" relationship as the three components in the therapist-client relationship. Ultimately, it was Bordin's (1978) theory of working alliance which became the most popular in modern research on therapeutic alliance. This theory is comprised of three elements for an effective working alliance: an agreement on the goals that the therapist and client will work on, a

collaboration on the tasks that must be worked on to achieve said goals, and an overall bond that facilitates the collaboration (Ross et al. 2008).

Research on TA supports the claim that therapists bring both who they are as a person and the effects of their professional training into a therapeutic interaction (Ross et al. 2008). Research on therapist characteristics and TA have shown interpersonal warmth, attachment style, and interpersonal problems to be factors which affect the alliance (Hersoug et al. 2001). Further, studies on attachment style have shown secure attachment being positively related to TA while anxious styles to be negatively related to TA. Marshall et al. (2003) found that self-disclosure can have a positive effect on TA. However, Goldfried et al. (2003) proposes that self-disclosure of facets of the therapist's personal life are only helpful if used to model pro-social behaviors.

Skeem et al. (2007) problematizes the use of traditional measures of therapeutic alliance to asses the PO-client relationship. They do not take the stance that these measures are not useful but point to the control aspect of the PO's job as a factor that must be accounted for. Their results show that within a dual-role relationship caring gets blended with fairness and that the style of implementing control matters within dual-role relationships more so than in traditional therapist-client relationships (Skeem et al. 2007). Other studies have confirmed these findings by showing that clients prefer balance between law enforcement and social work aspects of the job (Paparozzi and Gendreau 2005). Moreover, others have found that firm, fair, and caring relationships between PO and client have been shown to protect against rearrest (Kennealy et al, 2012).

The Dilemma of Community Supervision

Quantitative studies confirm the effectiveness of the principles of RNR showing that when POs use their RNR training in "real world" encounters with clients, recidivism rates are reduced (Smith et al. 2012, Andrews & Bonta., 2010a, 2011). Therefore, studies questioning the effectiveness of the community supervision model at reducing recidivism (Smith et al. 2012, Bourgon et al. 2010) do not call into question the value or effectiveness of the training. Instead, they highlight the inconsistency with which the POs are able to bring what they learn in the training into "real world" encounters with clients (Bourgon & Guitierrez 2012).

Specifically, we can see this trend when focusing on PO use of risk-need assessment tools (RNAs) in the field. When making subjective decisions, POs have been shown to be inconsistent in the ways they assess needs and perceive risks (Oleson et al. 2012). RNAs are meant to standardize PO decision making when assessing risks and needs of their clients (Viglione et al. 2015). However, studies have shown the resistance that POs have had to the integration of the knowledge from the RNA tools into supervision or case management decisions (Luong & Wormith, 2011; Miller & Maloney, 2013). Literature on the technology transfer of moving scientific findings into everyday life is limited (Taxman & Belenko, 2012). Still, recent studies that have focused on this issue have found that POs have ideological differences with results which prevent implementation of RNA results (Viglione et al. 2015) and difficulty identifying needs and appropriate treatment programs (Flores, 2004). Consequently, POs make decisions that

deviate from the recommendations of the RNA seeking more restrictive options (Miller & Maloney, 2013).

Identity Theory, Identity Verification, and Identity Change

Identity theory grew from the roots of two sets of ideas: symbolic interactionism and perceptual control theory. On the one hand, symbolic interactionism includes thoughts about what makes up identities as well as how they function. On the other hand, perceptual control theory concerns the nature of control systems and provides an understanding of "purpose" and "goals," which underlie all living things (Burke & Stets, 2009). Symbolic interactionism is a term coined by Herbert Blumer (1962) which describes a perspective that focuses on the unique character of human interaction that centers on the shared use of symbols. This was built on the ideas of Mead (1934) who conceived of the mind as developing in conjunction with the self as a part of a social process. In other words, the mind has the ability to reflexively recognize the self. Doing so allows the mind to think about the self and act upon the self just as it would any other object that is a part of its environment.

According to Burke & Stets (2009) an identity is composed of four basic components: an input, an identity standard, a comparator, and an output. The identity standard is the set of meanings which define the character of the identity. The inputs are perceptions of others we feel are relevant to our identity standard (self-relevant meanings). The comparator compares input and identity standard with the purpose of producing an "error signal" when the difference between the two is unacceptable.

Finally, the output is our behavior in the situation which is based on the error signal which determines the magnitude and direction of the difference between input and standard and thus guides the magnitude and direction of the adjustment needed to align the two. As an example, a PO may see themselves as being an understanding PO who would rather help clients who struggle with drug addiction than arrest them (identity standard). When meeting face-to-face with their client, said PO may see their client shut down when the topic of drug addiction is brought up. The PO may perceive the source of client behavior as being fear that they would arrest the client as the result from relapsing (input). The POs comparator would produce an error signal due to the difference of the client fear of them as an authoritarian and their identity standard of a helper. In reaction, the PO may explain to them that if they are honest about relapsing, they will not be sent to jail in order to get the client to see they are an understanding PO who would rather help than arrest their client (output).

Burke & Stets (2009) argue that identities, through the verification process, resist change. Instead, similar to the above example, they act to change the situation to bring situationally relevant meanings into alignment with the meanings in the identity, thus verifying and supporting existing self-meanings. Burke (2006) outlines three conditions under which identities change. These conditions are: (1) changes in the situation that alter meanings of the self in the situation out of congruence with the identity standard; (2) conflicts between two identities (or more) held by an individual; and (3) conflict between the meanings of an individual's behavior and the meanings in their identity

standard. To further expand on the first condition, Burke says that when changes in the

situational meanings result in a discrepancy between the identity standard and the self-

relevant meanings in the situation this causes distress and anxiety within an individual.

This discomfort then comes to serve as the driving force in people attempting to restore

the situational meanings to match their identity standard. In the case when people are

not able to do this, the only thing that can reduce the discrepancy is for the identity

standard to change to match the situational meanings.

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory draws from symbolic interactionism in an attempt to understand

secondary deviance. Lemert's (1967) secondary deviance stems from the idea that in

attempting to deal with deviance, the solutions may produce a heightened commitment

to the very behavior that enforcement agents are attempting to eliminate. This

secondary deviance conception is not an absolute where everyone who is labeled will

participate in future deviance. Labeling theorists believe that the reaction of social

control agents through the application of a label results in the actor being typified or

"cast" as deviant. The consequence of this typification process is that the actor's identity

is simplified so that the deviant identity comes to be primary and thought to represent

the "essential" self. At the same time the formerly primary aspects of the actor assume

a secondary role while the deviance becomes the "master status" and "the deviant

identification becomes the controlling one" (Becker 1963:33-34). Labeling is thought to

have three main consequences (1) alteration of personal identity, (2) exclusion from conventional opportunities, and (3) an increase in the probability of further deviance. (Paternoster & Lovanni, 1989). Labeling theory in the past has failed to anticipate its use in the "nothing works" movement in the 70s as a result of Martinson's (1974) work. Martinson took a pessimistic stance on rehabilitation and instead pushed for a more punitive approach to reentry and supervision. In order to avoid being unwillingly appropriated and have a future, labeling theory scholars must retool and change their focus. Thus, labeling theory must be part of an effort to build a theory of criminal sanction in which conditions under which labeling and societal action have crime-inducing or crime-preventative effects are spelled out (Cullen & Johnson, 2017)

METHODS

Site

West County is located within a Northwestern state in the United States. At
least in the last 10-15 years West County has embraced the modernization of
supervision philosophies and tactics. POs who had been on the job for over a decade
mention the ways that the departmental philosophy has changed during their time on
the job. Typically this change is put in the order of the old punitive approach where
violators were locked up for miss stepping, then a shift to introduce motivational
interviewing and more emphasis on rapport building, and currently the use of the EPICS
model and evidence-based tools to help reduce recidivism. The EPICS model has been
used in West County for the last eight years. This means that POs who have less than
eight years on the job have been trained their whole career in EPICS. Due to the
extended commitment to modern ideas of supervision the sample of POs in West
County that would volunteer for a study like this may lean toward more of the "helper"
than the "authoritarian."

The Research Director at the Department of Community Justice of West County acted as the main coordinator for this study. In the fall of 2018, an email containing information about the purpose and scope of the study was distributed to all the POs currently in the County. This email was sent at three different times over the course of two months. The only inclusion requirement for this project is that the PO is currently working within the county. The informational email distributed also contained contact info for the lead researcher. Responding to both email and phone inquiries, interviews were scheduled at a time and location of the most convenience for the participants.

Of the interviews, twelve were conducted in the offices of the POs participating; one was done over the phone; and two were conducted in the lead researcher's office at Portland State University. Out of the POs, eleven were women and four were men. All but four (eight women and three men) of the participants were white, non-Hispanic. The four minority officers (three women and one man) were not asked specifically about their ethnicity due to the possibility that their demographic information would jeopardize their confidentiality.

Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted which ranged in time from 25 minutes to an hour. The interview guide covered three main themes: preparation for meeting with a client, the initial meeting, and relationship building. The preparation and initial meeting themes included six items. The relationship building section contained seven items, four of which were meant to target the POs conception of an ideal

relationship. Also, three items designed to target PO feelings about the utility of EPICS as a model.

For the clients, I collected a snowball sample of participants. The only requirement for inclusion is that they were currently under supervision in West County on either probation or post-prison supervision. Initially, I reached out to people I know personally who are involved in the drug and alcohol recovery community as either counselors or organizers. I gave them a copy of the recruitment flyer and asked them to distribute it on their social media platforms as well as at their facilities. I used this same strategy with still others I knew who had criminal history themselves. Finally, I went to a multiple local drug and alcohol in-patient treatment facilities, talked to management there, and was allowed to post flyers in some of their facilities as well. Each participant was paid $20 at the conclusion of their interview which lasted between 20-45min.

The final sample included eight female clients and seven male clients. Out of the sample, three of the females and one male client were minority. The sample also represented a wide range of experience within the criminal justice system. Client experience ranged from one to thirty-one years. There were not questions that asked specifically about the crimes they committed and thus information about what kind of supervision they were on is not available. Also, no information is known as far as the risk level at which each client is scored at.

Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted over the course of a month in the fall of 2018. These interviews covered a wide variety of topics including: Ideal

relationship and PO, communication preferences, assessing their current relationship

with their PO, perceptions of most and least effective common practices by POs, and

improvements to be made by their PO or to the supervision process.

Data Analysis

This study took a general deductive approach to data analysis. Interview guides

for the POs were originally written guided by previous literature and scope of current

project, with adjustments being made in reaction to results of early interviews. The

client interview guide was created using previous literature as well as the responses

from the PO interviews to ensure as much thematic overlap as possible in order to tease

out the differences in perception between groups. I conducted all the interviews and

subsequently did all of the transcribing, coding, and analysis. All 30 interviews were fully

transcribed and put into the data analysis software Dedoose. Through transcription, I

became even more familiar with the kind of themes that were emerging from the data.

Open coding was then done to get a general idea of themes, similarities, and differences

between POs and clients. After an initial run, interesting similarities emerged around

the need to be acknowledged as individual or human for both PO and client. Returning

to the literature on identity and labeling and then subsequently recoding based on this

literature lead to the general themes for this study.

PO Codes

Supervision Equals Self

When coding for this section I include any time where the PO mentioned being real, authentic, a person, or human being. Accompanying these observations are any mention of personally held morals, values or ethics. Specifically, what is important are the different ways in which POs introduce their personal identity into their supervision style, philosophy, strategies used when working with clients, and/or day-to-day decision making.

Protecting "Self" from Therapeutic Nihilism

This section includes any mention by POs of the preconceived notions that they may have toward clients and what they did about these feelings. Furthermore, it includes the different ways POs actively worked against doing their jobs in a way that ran counter to their identity standard of a PO. These included personal decisions made, personal philosophies held, and specific strategies in their day-to-day work.

Distancing "Self" from Parts of Supervision, Tools, and Criminal Justice System

This section includes any mention of client's preconceived notions about POs. In turn, focus is then turned onto the different strategies used by POs to counter this preconceived notion. Consequently, POs were found to be distancing themselves from different aspects of supervision and the criminal justice system. Thus, a thorough search

was made for themes within the different ways in which POs were distinguishing themselves from supervision and the CJS with the purpose of rapport building.

Navigating Jail/Sanction Decisions

This section includes any mention of personal philosophy, stories told about, or specific strategies used by POs when deciding to sanction or arrest their clients. After these excerpts were collected data was analyzed by looking for mentions of the ways in which POs preserved their identity standard of a helper, and thus exhibiting balance, through the act of sanctioning or arresting their client.

Client Codes

Labeled

When coding for this section I first included answers to the question "Have you ever felt labeled by your PO?" The answers to this question helped guide what to focus on when looking at the rest of the interview for instances where client concern of being labeled appear. Overall, the fear of being labeled centers around the client's past. Subsequently, this section includes any ways in which the client reports feeling labeled by their PO, by their status as a felon or on probation, and by the different tools within supervision. On the positive side, I include all reports of clients having the above-mentioned fears addressed by their POs. These strategies are collected and displayed as a guide for proper practice based on client reporting.

Grouped

This section includes the different ways in which clients reject being grouped or categorized either by their POs or the tools that the POs use. Specifically, any negative reaction to being given resources (classes, treatment, housing, etc.). Also, client's negative feelings about the process of creating treatment plans, decision making, or PO's agendas. These negative reactions are then analyzed to find common themes. On the positive side, data was analyzed to find the ways in which the allocation of resources was met receptively and for clients who reported positive feelings about treatment plans, decision making, and PO's agendas.

PO RESULTS

Supervision Equals Self

The day-to-day decision-making discretion that POs have is purposefully vast in order for them to make necessary adjustments required to perform their duties. My data illustrates the ways POs make decisions that align their approach as a PO with who they are as individuals when they are off the clock (12 out of 15). Data analysis of POs supervision style, definitions of rapport, and strategies to build rapport, suggests that self-introduction is a primary mechanism driving the process. Overall, data suggests that for the POs, the most effective way to develop a relationship with their clients is to introduce a part of themselves into the relationship as a way of gaining legitimacy which they feel is the necessary foundation for doing the rest of their job effectively. They do this in four ways: (1) *Rapport building* via being real, authentic, a person, or human; (2) *Moral judgements* based on their values, or ethics; (3) *Personality infusion* that aligns decisions with how they are "naturally"; and (4) *Authenticity* through acting like themselves.

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Rapport building

When describing an ideal relationship, POs talk about building rapport as a crucial element to their relationships with clients. They regularly discuss rapport as being the "most important thing" or proclaiming, "Without rapport you can't get anything accomplished." Out of the fifteen POs studied, nine specifically discuss being real, authentic, a person, or human as their primary strategy in building rapport.

Monica, for example, states that building rapport is about being a "real person." She notes that she allows her clients to call her by her first name and on occasion by a nickname if she feels it is appropriate. She also talks about breaking the ice with new clients by discussing topics they are potentially both interested like sports or video games. This occurs to distance herself from her position as a PO. In turn, it allows her client to see her as a person. She says, "We can be real people, and I think that's real rapport." Likewise, Abby, a PO of four years, believes rapport occurs when two individuals have the ability to be "real people" with each other. She says, "So, rapport means really having a good solid relationship where the person feels like they can talk to you, that you can be real people and have a conversation."

Similarly, POs also try to show themselves to clients as human beings. For example, Connie, a PO of twenty years, believes that appearing as human as possible aids in developing the kinds of relationship (rapport) she wants. She says, "And so, I try and be as human as I possibly can because I think if they see you as a human being as well as what your role [is] as a PO that it really helps the relationship." Likewise, Matt, a PO of six years believes it is important for him to have respect for his clients as people.

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In return, he expects clients will respect him as a person with a difficult job. He believes that with mutual respect established he has a better chance of being able to work with his clients. He says,

> So, that's why I think that that ingredient is really respect for one another, meaning respect for the client as a person and then respect for me as a person in a difficult job. They know what job I have to do, but it's when they respect me, my beliefs, my attitudes, and how I feel about them [that] is most important because once we can establish a relationship, we are more likely to engage in real conversation about judgment and they are more likely to try some new things that I might recommend that they do.

Therapists self-disclosure (TSD) is defined as the intentional, verbal revelation of the therapist's life outside of work (Gibson, 2012). Billow (2000) says that through such disclosures, the analyst is no longer a blank screen, but is instead a real human presence with a range of emotionality, including such feelings as confusion, sadness, annoyance, envy, and humor. PO data suggests they use this self-disclosure strategy similarly as a tool to reduce the power dynamic that exists in the PO-client relationship with the intention of appearing more relatable to their clients.

Thomas shares pieces of his own life for his clients to see that the difference between them is in decision making, not in the problems that they face. By doing this, Thomas believes he meets the client on their own level instead of putting himself above

them. This in turn gains him respect, which he believes is a crucial component of his client actually taking and using the advice that he gives. He says,

> In my own personal life for example, there's some people that I know and don't respect. I'm not going to go to them for advice. If they offer me advice, I'm very unlikely to take that advice. So, for me, part of that rapport building, or relationship building, is to get them to see that I'm just a person with my own issues and challenges, but I've made the decisions. So, that I can offer them something that could be helpful to them.

This data suggests that many POs prefer building rapport by using strategies that distinguish them as a real person or human being. POs report wanting to appear more real and human to their clients because they find it effective in reducing the power dynamic that is inherent in their relationship. They are aware of the potentially negative feeling that clients may hold toward the criminal justice system as a whole and anyone who is in their position and they see themselves as gaining legitimacy with their clients through developing a relationship based not on their occupation as a PO, but instead based on who they are as people. Findings also suggest this process also introduces the need of for recognition and respect of the PO as a person for them to be satisfied in the relationship.

Data analysis suggests the second most common way (4 out of 15) POs use

interpersonal skills to develop relationships with clients is to rely on moral judgement.

POs report that while working with clients they often feel a need to offer additional

assistance during certain pivotal parts of their lives. For example, Stephanie, a PO with

four years of experience, mentions a young client who is court-ordered to finish his GED.

She explains how she made the decision to go out of her way to pick him up, drive him

to school, and meet with him and a school counselor. She admits that she does not do

this with everyone and that she does not feel other POs would have made the decision.

However, she felt it was important he complete his GED. In explaining the reasons why

she went out of her way, Stephanie says,

> I have one client who just turned 18 who is two credits away from getting
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> his high school diploma and I can't just allow him to not get it. One, it's
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> on his court order. And, two, it's very important that he gets it. You know
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> if he ever wants to go to college or get a job, or maybe do some kind of
>
> different schooling.

Similarly, Monica, a PO with three years of experience, talks about having certain

"barriers" when working with clients. She prides herself with being straightforward in

her communication and thus talks about being upfront with her clients about these

barriers. For Monica, her barriers are that her clients have to be honest with her and

that they keep showing up. Monica explains to clients that she has two base level

requirements based on her morals. In saying this she is letting her clients know that these expectations are coming from a personal place. She explains her reasons saying,

> Because those are my morals right, they're just two things that I can't work with. And I tell them upfront these are my barriers. These might not be other POs barriers, but these are mine.

Jessica, a PO of seventeen years, explains the decisions she makes to create a positive environment for her clients. She puts herself in the client's shoes by explaining that she purposefully gives a lot of positive feedback to her clients because she knows how good it feels to receive the same kind of treatment from her boss. When describing the reasons, she makes the decisions like these she says, "My own work ethic has allowed me to be just a human, just being a human in their field with people." For Jessica the practice of treating other people how she would like to be treated is an ethical practice, which she follows in her life.

Moreover, Jacob, a PO of eighteen years, feels as if one of the biggest mistakes he sees POs make is not putting themselves in their client's shoes. He says,

> And we don't realistically put ourselves in their shoes, their placement, and what they come home to. You come home to a family, you come home to food, and you come home to… all kinds of [things]. It's not the same with them. They come home to chaos. They don't have what we have.

These findings suggest various ways in which PO make moral judgements based on their ethics and values. These decisions can range from choosing to go beyond their job description to help a client to putting themselves in a client's shoes in order to better develop a case plan. Overall, these data support the claim that POs who do this they are interjecting who they are personally into their decision making on the job as a PO.

Personality Infusion

When speaking about doing their jobs, some POs (4 out of 15) report making certain decisions that come naturally to them because of who they are as people outside of work. For example, when describing the kind of relationship she wants to build with her clients, Amber, a PO of five years, says her desire to develop an open and honest relationship aligns with her personality. She says, "I think that my personality by nature is very inclusive and accepting of all people." Furthermore, Courtney talks about building rapport with her clients being something that comes natural to her because she is a people person.

> I think that it comes naturally for me because I am a people person, not really a graphs and data person. I would rather sit and have a conversation with somebody than check off boxes and just work them through the process because that is not going to be the helpful part of the process.

Similarly, Alexandra speaks about understanding that her clients are going through a process that they have control over, but that she wants to be a part of that process. When describing this desire, she says, "I mean at the end of the day it is their probation, but I want them to be successful, that is why I'm here and it's just in my nature to want to help people." Finally, Matt, a PO of six years, talks about using a strengths-based supervision approach. He notes that he does this in part because of the research saying this is the best practice. He also notes that it aligns with who he is as a person. He says,

> For me, when people are doing good things that I really want to tell them
> that they are doing good things. There is research that talks about the
> more positive reinforcement you give somebody the more effective it is
> for behavior change to a certain extent. So, looking for opportunities to
> acknowledge someone for doing something good is really important.
> Plus, it is also just kind of my personality. I'm strength-based, I'd rather
> do that then be really negative.

These findings suggest that there are various PO decisions based solely on or at least taking into consideration how they prefer things in their own lives. For Amber and Courtney, it is easy to be inclusive and build rapport with clients because those things align with the way they see themselves as people. Alexandria makes decisions to be an active part of her clients change process because of her view of herself as a helper. Matt sees himself as a strengths-based person who prefers not to be negative. Matt is the

only person who mentions training or research, which suggests that these decisions are best practices based personal experience and expertise, rather than scientific expertise/knowledge. This does not mean that the other POs disregard their training. However, it suggests that aligning who they are as a PO with who they are as people is important to these POs for job satisfaction.

Role Authenticity

When first becoming a PO, some of the POs (3 out of 15) in this study talk about having issues with balancing how they thought they should be acting with how they would normally do things. These POs report coming into the job with the assumption that they would have to play an authoritarian role to be effective. Abby, a PO of four years, admits to feeling she is playing a role when doing her job at times. She also reports feeling as if her fellow POs are hiding behind the PO façade, which suggests that she does not feel as if they are being authentic or real. She mentions feeling a pressure to be authoritative when speaking to clients about difficult subjects and admits to preparing herself to do so when her clients sit down in front of her. However, Abby does not feel comfortable with this role. As such, she purposefully counters it by being genuine. She says,

> I guess that's what I mean [by] being a genuine person. If a client does something that is good tell them but be real about it. Don't say in some scripted way because you think that's how we're supposed to. Just be a real person like you would with your friend or your kid, or your spouse or whatever.

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Likewise, Matt talks about coming into the job as a PO as a law student without

having either law enforcement or counseling experience. He assumed that he had to do

his job with a certain level of authority, but that over time he has lost that assumption.

He says,

> You know when I first became a PO I struggled with the whole like "I'm
> authority, so I have to figure out a way of being authority." And then, I
> finally came to realize if I acted like myself, I would actually get a lot
> further. I had to kind of grow into that.

These findings suggest both clients and POs often make assumptions about the

authoritative nature of their jobs and the role that accompanies it. These data suggest

that POs go through a process of dealing with that authority assumption and learn to

navigate it. Overall, these findings suggest that POs who see themselves as helpers and

lean more to the social work side of the dual-role spectrum go through a process of

rejecting the authoritative parts of being a PO and instead choose to be themselves as

the preferred alternative.

Protecting "Self" from Therapeutic Nihilism

Polizzi & Braswell (2009) describe therapeutic nihilism as the damaging

preconceived assumptions of the therapist about who or what the offender really is,

which the authors call an immediate danger to the creation of a successful therapeutic

relationship. This frame of mind puts the therapist in danger of becoming nihilistic and

determining the success or failure of the therapy prospects before the therapy ever begins. Data suggests that POs seeking to be seen by their clients as a positive part of their behavioral change process actively work against this feeling. This section gives examples of various practices and personal philosophies that POs use and hold so as to avoid falling into the trap of therapeutic nihilism.

Avoiding Judging, Labeling, or Categorizing Clients

Data analysis suggests the most common way that POs counter therapeutic nihilism is by not pre-judging, labeling, or categorizing their clients (9 out of 15). These strategies include explicitly telling the client they do not feel it is right to do so. Usually, most of the POs express this sentiment indirectly by simply describing their own philosophies as a PO. Jessica speaks directly to the idea of nihilism. Having been a PO for seventeen years, she has experienced the shift from the "nothing works" punitive approach in supervision to the community supervision model currently used emphasizing rapport building and rehabilitation. She acknowledges how labeling her clients effects a PO and says that is not what she wants for herself. She says,

> Because back in the day, and you see it today sometimes, there is that
> person who is in the system and [you think] they are just a dirtbag, they
> are never going to change, but not getting caught up in that... And
> recognizing that it's a challenge and it's a difficulty for me not getting
> caught in that negativity. That is why it is important for the rapport
> building. Part of that rapport building is not looking at the person as, "oh

you are just a dirtbag" and "I'm just doing my job, I will do the bare basics."

Similar to Jessica, Amber feels as if it is wrong to label her clients. She believes that the client's decisions up to this point while not good are largely circumstantial. Because she as a person has never faced the challenges, she feels it is unfair to label them as criminal. She says, "...but some people have this idea like, 'criminal, criminal, criminal,' and that's just like so unfair. That's an unkind way of labeling someone..." Likewise, Jacob has never in his career come across the same two people no matter how similar their circumstances or crimes have been. Because of this he believes that it is wrong to label his clients. He says,

> Everybody who walks in my door, I have not met two of the same person. They could have the same crime, same background, same environment, and they are still not the same person. So, you can't be labeling and categorizing people as far as who walks in your door.

Along with labeling comes the categorizing of the client. This is a difficult balance to keep due to the tools with which the PO is tasked to complete their job with. Specifically, the LS/CMI risk needs assessment takes in information about the clients and literally generates categories with which to describe the client and how to best move forward. While POs see this tool as a useful way of asking open-ended questions to find more out about their clients and build rapport, they recognize the danger of these tools

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for relationship building. Kathleen sees the assessment as potentially categorizing her client and believes this is problematic. She says,

> In the LS/CMI the criminal history sometimes goes way back, and they
> could have had a terrible criminal history 10 years ago. Is that the same
> person today? No. They could be completely different in their lives right
> now... There is some good information and I think it's helpful for asking
> questions and being able to learn what people have gone through, but
> it's hard to (pause) I don't supervise my clients based on that.

Coinciding with Kathleen's position is Thomas, who makes it clear to his clients that he believes they are good people who are fully capable of making change. He does not want to them to feel as if he is always going to judge them from their past. Explicitly telling his clients he believes in them and will not judge them by their past is how he avoids being seen as an authoritarian. He says,

> I am trying to get people to accept some of the responsibility of their
> actions. Inside they are not bad people, but the decisions that they have
> made are bad choices. So, I think that it is important that they can see
> that I can see the good in them, they are decent people, they want to do
> better, that I don't keep them locked in a place where they feel inferior,
> and that I am [not] just some authoritarian who is trying to put them
> away.

Courtney recognizes that her client's decision making in the past is largely due to circumstance and not that they are bad people. Because of this belief she makes a purposeful decision to not treat her clients differently even if she does not personally believe they will succeed. She says,

I am not going to treat them any different if even inside I am thinking they're not ready [and] they're probably going to end up in prison. I'm not going to treat them like that. I'm going to treat them just like the next person that I have maybe loftier expectations for.

Avoiding biasing in client meetings

Studies have shown that in the CJS, detailed information on clients is available long before the therapist and client meet. This information often chronicles the client's failures and negative behaviors in past therapy experiences and can set up negative expectations about the client that can affect the quality of the therapeutic alliance they can form (Ross et al. 2008). Some POs (5 out of 15) choose to not read such information before meeting with their clients for the first time. Jacob says, "I usually don't read the police report until after they are gone… if I read the report it can put bias in my mind." Monica chooses to not read the file because of the way that a particular crime could be reacted to. In this she is acknowledging her personal opinions and feelings that she brings into her job as a PO and wants to make sure that these do not negatively impact how she carries out her work. She says,

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Their crime, I don't read about before I meet with them the first time

because I feel like it puts a barrier up depending on what the crime is. So,

if it's something that's a person to person crime, I could go in there with a

little bit of a mindset like, almost like a bias, but I try not to read

that. And, I know a lot of POs would be mad that I say that, but it's just

my opinion.

Similarly, Connie does not read the file before meeting with her clients because

she does not want to prejudge them. Interestingly, she does not want to be pre-judged

as a PO, so she uses this to purposefully leverage for the same treatment from her client

toward her. She says, "I typically don't read the file before I meet them. I don't want to

have a preconceived notion... So, I always ask for the same sort of respect from them in

return." Courtney says that while she does go over some of the paperwork on a client

that she does not put too much credence into it because it is only one side of the story.

It is important for her to hear the client's side of the story both for informational and

rapport building purposes. She says,

I want to at least have it on my radar if something comes up that's a red

flag for me in the conversation, but usually I don't read the police report

or anything like that. I'm just trying to meet with somebody.

Overall, these data suggest various ways in which POs who desire to be seen as

helpers protect themselves from therapeutic nihilism. What these data have highlighted

is that many of these strategies are personal occupational philosophies that POs have

adopted with which to maintain a positive outlook when interacting with clients. Polizzi and Braswell (2009) mention that one strategy of developing trust with a client within a coerced therapy setting is by addressing negative preconceived notions they have at the outset of the relationship. But even though many POs hold this personal philosophy, they fail to communicate this explicitly to their clients, thereby limiting their effectiveness and missing pivotal opportunities to build rapport. In general, neither therapeutic nihilism as a concept nor any of the above-mentioned strategies to avoid it were addressed in formalized training according to POs. Therefore, it is likely that these strategies are personally developed.

Distancing "Self" from Parts of Supervision, Tools, and Criminal Justice System

Berger & Luckmann's (1966) concept of "institutionalization" occurs whenever there is "reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors." This is defined as the process that the client or the therapist encounter when either one habituates or defines the actions of the other from a limited perspective. Typically, the focus of research has been on the impact of this process on the therapist, but Berger & Luckmann suggest there is a similar process that the clients are going through with potentially damaging ramifications for relationship building. "Just as the therapist constructs the image of the offender from a specific social perspective...so too does the client construct the therapist, case worker, or probation officer from a similar set of socially generated meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Data suggests that the POs in this study are very aware of the negative preconceived notions that clients have toward POs, supervision, and the CJS as a whole. This section highlights the different strategies

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used by most POs (12 out of 15) to distance themselves from, while at the same time

validating, past negative experiences of their clients. This is done in order to be seen as

different, thus preserving the legitimacy they seek through the rapport building process.

Distancing from Past POs

Data suggests the most commonly used strategy (8 out of 15) is acknowledging

past negative experiences clients have had with other POs. For some POs, this is not

done with clients specifically but via a philosophic difference they have crafted as a

result of observing their co-workers. Jacob talks numerous times about his belief that his

common practices are exactly designed to counter what he thinks most POs are doing

wrong. These practices include, but are not limited to, what considerations he makes

when delivering sanctions and the care he takes in explaining the differences between

his expectations and past POs expectations. John mentions the ways he sometimes

overhears his fellow POs speaking to their clients in ways that he believes are not

helpful. John chooses to do his job differently in part due to the negative reaction he

sees his colleagues get and in part because he believes certain behavior gives his clients

no motivation to work with him as a PO. He says,

> So, if I, and I have witnessed this among colleagues and observationally, if
> I have someone come in here and I give them the what for and the
> business, and the authority, and the 'this is what thou shalt do', they
> don't give a shit (laughing). they don't care. (client thinking) 'Great
> you're the same thing I have been dealing with at every other stage of my

life, so what makes you different?, why should I talk to you?, why should I engage?, why should I do anything different?

On the other hand, other POs address these past experiences directly with their clients. They open dialogue with their clients about negative past experiences with POs. They do this with the purpose of validating the client's feelings from the beginning of the relationship.   They feel as if this dialogue and validation process allows them to be seen as different which they feel a necessary step toward building the kind of relationship they want. Alexandra lets her clients know that the overall philosophy of supervision is changing and urges her clients to forget what they know from past experiences which are typically authority driven. She instead explains her desire to be seen as a support as proof the client should give the new way a chance. She says,

> So, what I think is important for everyone to hear is that, 'hey forget what you know about PO's in years past. We are doing business differently and we are here to support you. I don't want you to think of me as your enemy but as a support person.

Similarly, Connie allows her clients to voice their displeasure about past experiences as a way to allow their voice to be heard while distinguishing herself as someone who is different and who cares. When describing going through this conversation with a client she says,

So, if they've been treated poorly in the past I like to talk to them about that. "How were your prior experiences with your prior POs?", "What was your experience like when you were on supervision as a juvenile?", [and] "Tell me about your fears, you know let's talk about that stuff."

Finally, Thomas admits that all POs are not perfect and that many of them are flawed. He believes because of this it is important to allow his client time to express how contact with these types of POs affects them and asks for their input on how he can be different.

POs are not infallible, so I allow the client to share that. I ask them, "What do you think would have been more helpful?", "How could our relationship be more beneficial to you?" So, they can make some suggestions as to what might help them better. So, I say "Hey I'm sorry you had that experience with that last person I am hoping to avoid that this time, what can I do that you think would be helpful? How could I be a better PO, a better fit for you?"

Open dialogue acknowledging client's difficulties, invitation of the client to share both their experience and suggest solutions, and expression of his desire to be a better PO is an example of client focused collaborative problem solving done with the purpose of maintaining legitimacy.

Distancing "Self" from Tools of Supervision

As stated above, the tools with which POs have to complete their jobs can potentially be seen as a barrier to developing the kind of relationship they deem ideal. Data suggests that POs choosing to either change or divert from the results of the risk-needs assessment as the second most common way (6 out of 15) that POs distance themselves from supervision.

Some POs report having a client-first philosophy when doing their jobs. For them, this client-first focus comes into conflict with the assessment tool they are asked to use, which in large part categorizes the client and sets the agenda for the development of the treatment plan. Rebecca prides herself in her client first approach. She cites her past experience as a licensed therapist as justification and thus as the reason she prioritizes her client's agenda over the results of the assessment. Interestingly, Rebecca cites her philosophy of client-first as the reason he has to act. She says,

> We're also supposed to weigh certain criminological factors higher than others. Like you have your big four and then you have the next four. Your goals are supposed to be weighted to the big four, [but] sometimes the [clients] needs are in the next four. So, I guess my personal view on that is, also a licensed therapist, my focus is on the client and what benefits them so I have to change the order of those then explain myself the best as I can to the people that are looking at it.

Similarly, Amber talks about how she makes the decision to divert away from the risk assessment results and focus on what the client says they need. She says,

> We have all of these risk-assessments and tools that we use that spit out
> like, oh your needs are here here here and your risk areas are there there
> there. Sometimes they line up, but just asking is how I would establish
> those because I will often not go with what the risk assessment says and
> instead go with what [the client] telling me matters most to [them].

Still other POs view their ability to assess the situation their client is as enough of an authority to divert away from the assessment results. Kathleen feels as if sometimes the order of the results from the assessment do not map onto her client's needs correctly. At this point she will make the decision switch the order of emphasis based on her own assessment of need. She says,

> It's hard because the LS/CMI has different sections. There are things like
> "companions" is one of them...The struggle that I have with a lot of
> clients is they don't trust anybody. They have never had good solid
> relationships and that's really a struggle. So, having that be the top need
> is great, but there are a lot of other things that are more important than
> finding this person some friends. Like let's work on other stuff in their life
> that is more important like their attitudes, their thinking, or their belief
> system before making friends.

Abby believes that allowing her clients to be a part of the decision-making

process in creating an agenda facilitates buy-in from her clients. She also feels as if her

client will be more open to her ideas if they are allowed to try their own plan first. She

says,

> So I try to get their buy-in because ultimately they won't do something if
> they don't want to do it, but I think it helps them to see if you give them
> choices and give them the opportunity to try something their way first it
> makes it easier to then try your way. then they see you're right, [they]
> tried it [their] way and it didn't work out so good.

Findings suggest that POs who have previous experience or training as a

therapist or social worker can find conflict between their "client first" approach and use

of the evidence-based tools on supervision. Furthermore, POs are shown to lean on

their expertise as POs over the results of the risk-needs assessment to determine the

best course of action for their clients. Also, POs believe it is best practice to include their

client in decision making in creating the agenda. This includes allowing the client to

create their own plan initially with the agreement that if that does not work then they

would then go with the POs idea of how things should go.

Distancing "Self" from CJS

Making the distinction between themselves and other parts of the CJS is the

third most common (4 out of 15) way that POs distance themselves. Stephanie tells a

story about empathizing with her client who does not feel as if the parole board has the

legitimacy to dictate his life. She decides to use therapist self-disclosure techniques in

order to explain how she also has to navigate forces she has little control over and with

which she may not agree with. She says,

> I actually tell my clients that all the time because I may not be in their
> specific position but all of us have a boss, we all have a manager, we may
> have parents, or we may have grandparents. It's kind of a part of life
> (chuckle) where people are telling you to do things that you may not
> agree with. So, how you let that affect your life is the difference between
> whether it's easier for you or more difficult and challenging on yourself.

Likewise, Connie acknowledges that she is a part of the system but makes it clear

her role is different. She says, "I have a lot of conversation around that, yes I understand

I am a part of the system, but I am not the system and that is not my role." Finally, when

attempting to explain to his clients the kind of discretion he has, John makes it clear to

his clients that although he works for the court and the conditions are court ordered he

recognizes they do not always meet the client's needs. He uses the discretion that he

has as an enticement to his clients to open up and participate in supervision. He says,

> I explain to them that the conditions are court ordered, but they are not
> necessarily reflective of what that person's needs are. So, we have to
> balance that. I'm an agent of the court, I have to follow through with
> what the court ordered, I have some flexibility within that, but that only
> comes from them participating in the process.

Overall, this section helps us better understand the different personal

philosophies held and strategies used by POs in order to distance themselves from past

negative experiences and thus maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their clients. Similar to

the last section, findings suggest that these philosophies are personally held and

strategies are personally developed by the POs themselves. Furthermore, POs

distancing themselves from the perceived rigidity of the assessment results suggests the

possibility that many of these decisions are being made by the POs in spite of the

formalized expectations.

Navigating Jail/Sanction Decisions

It is well documented the dual-roles that POs must navigate while doing their

jobs in community supervision. In order to do this effectively they must find a balance

between the helper and authority aspects of their job. Data suggests that most POs (14

out of 15) see giving sanctions and potentially jail time to their clients as a precarious

situation that requires certain care in order to preserve the relationship they have

created. This section highlights the three strategies POs use to handle jail/sanction

decisions in a way that effectively preserves their identity standard of a PO whose true

desire is to be a positive part of the clients change process. These three strategies are:

(1) POs setting up an exchange of honesty and participation for possible lenience in

punishment; (2) POs being transparent about expectations and decision making

surrounding jail time; and (3) POs making it clear to their clients that arresting them is

not what they personally want but instead a reaction to the clients actions.

Exchange of Honesty and Participation for Possible Lenience

POs in this study understand that long-term behavior change is a process that can potentially take years. Throughout the interviews they comment on the fact that this may not actually occur during the client's supervision cycle. Instead of expecting their clients to make leaps of progress from month-to-month, POs report setting up smaller goals for their clients to achieve. Violations are a part of the supervision process and one that POs must navigate carefully in order to maintain the legitimacy they have earned through the rapport building process. POs widely report not wanting to be seen as an authoritarian, which data suggest is a major factor in them setting up an exchange with their clients. Either at the beginning of the relationship or soon after a minor violation, many POs (8 out of 15) report entering into an exchange of honesty and participation for possible lenience.

As stated above, many POs use the initial meeting time as an opportunity to establish the exchange. Courtney believes that the initial meeting is important to establish expectations surrounding sanctions and potential jail time. She lets her clients know that her philosophy is that if they are honest by letting her know what is going on in their lives, violations do not necessarily mean jail time. In order to emphasize her position, she gives the example of receiving a call from someone in the community (police or resident) and says that if this is the first time she has heard about something then it is a problem. Instead her position is, "If I know what's going on with you that will drive my decision of what to do at that time." Connie also uses this same example of

receiving a phone call in the middle of the night about her clients. She is explicit about

the consequences of not being open and honest:

> I always tell them I want you to be as open and honest as possible about
> any relationships you are in with them because if I get a phone call from
> anyone in the public, from a victim from a person, that you're doing x, y,
> and z and I have no idea what it's about because you haven't told me, I
> obviously have to react to whatever I am hearing from them.

Still other POs feel strongly about not putting their clients in jail for drug

relapses. They report feeling as if that practice is a thing of the past, citing modern

supervision as having a better understanding of addiction as a process that they want to

support and not punish. Alexandra feels this way and sets up the exchange by having

the act of holding her client's accountable as an afterthought to the positive aspects of a

working relationship. Even when discussing accountability, it is expressed to be in the

best interest of the client:

> If you come in here and you tell me that you "used", my first inclination is
> going to be to talk about this and why did this happen? It's not going to
> be, "sorry you've got to go to jail now". So, it is problem-solving, it is
> support, it is teaching, and it is also holding accountable as well. Because
> I tell new clients, "While I am here for you, I still have to hold you
> accountable but that is for your benefit.

Similarly, Abby admits that she did not always do this, but that now her goal when dealing with drug use violations is maintaining a relationship throughout the process:

> I actually make it clear to clients when I first am meeting with them that I'm not going to arrest them if they admit that they relapsed or used because I want to encourage honesty and openness. If I'm saying, "Hey be honest did you use today?" And then say, "okay I'm going to take you to jail", that is not conducive to an open relationship.

Matt uses direct communication with his clients when discussing sanctions and jail time. He establishes the parameters of the exchange by letting them know there are certain things he needs in order to be able to work through potential difficulties. He does not guarantee them a favorable result but lets them know their best chance at one is through this exchange:

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> I tell them that my main expectations are showing up when they are supposed to and be honest with me, try the programming and the interventions that we do together, and make an effort to address the things that are causing them to make bad choices. And I tell my clients if we do these three things then we're going to work through stuff but I don't promise anything.

This section suggests that POs in this study leverage potential leniency in minor violations in order to get their clients to do other things they know to be critical to their success as a PO, honesty and participation. This exchange is seen as a way to be firm, not guaranteeing a favorable result, but fair, emphasizing their goal is to work with the client and providing a pathway to freedom even when the client missteps.

Transparency About Expectations and Decision Making with Jail

Similar, but not quite, to the previous section on POs distancing themselves, many POs (8 out of 15) in this study choose to be open and honest about their expectations about what will send their clients to jail and also when their client has a warrant out for their arrest. For many POs they do not believe it is effective to "sneak attack" their clients with warrants. Because of this they make it clear to their clients that they can call in and ask if they have a warrant. Amber does not want to deceive her clients and instead has the goal of hopefully being able to build a bond in the midst of a jail sanction:

> I am not going to sneak attack you. If you have a warrant call me and ask
> if you have a warrant so you don't come in and end up being
> surprised...I'm just not into duping people, I'm not into manipulating.

Other POs choose to use honesty around warrants as an opportunity to turn themselves into an advocate for the client. Jessica understands the barrier that exists for her clients being honest with her and encourages it by reciprocating it. She actually

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tries to use her honesty about their warrant as an opportunity to show her clients that

turning themselves in has a reward, and that the reward is her willingness to advocate

for the client when the time comes for them to be sanctioned:

> Like for instance I have someone who has been on abscond for the
> longest time and they call to negotiate not going to jail, "Can you just lift
> the warrant?", I said, "No I can't, if you show up to the office yes I will
> have to take you into custody. But I can also tell the judge that you called
> me and you're trying to get back on track you just got scared.

Finally, POs report that it is important their expectations be clearly understood

so that their clients understand why they are being sanctioned and that they agree with

that reasoning. Jacob believes it is important that his clients understand why they are

going to jail and boasts that all of his clients would agree with his decisions. He says,

"When I take folks to jail, you'll never get a person, usually, that will disagree with my

sanction or [say] "I didn't know." Furthermore, Thomas makes it clear in the interview

that he is no easy PO but that it is important that his clients see him as a decent person

who is trying to help them. He tries to maintain these sentiments when dealing with

sanctions and jail time:

> I'm telling you that I've been pretty strict. I'm not one of the easy-going
> guys. I always tell them that there is a consequence in advance so if you
> do X this is what you can expect. Yet, they also know that I want them to
> do well, that I'm willing to work with them. So, at any given time if you're

struggling, I'll help you. And I don't think I'm over-the-top when it comes

to the consequences but they're firm and they're fair. I have never had

people come back and say, "hey you're just trying to lock me up" or

things like that because I think in the end, they know that I want to help

them. And once the sanction is over, I don't ever bring it back up again,

we move forward.

These findings illuminate the ways that POs navigate a potentially damaging

moment in their relationship, the issuing of a warrant or decision to arrest a client. Not

"sneak attacking" their clients allow POs to role model honesty and open

communication even around difficult situations. While, rewarding the client's own

honesty by advocating for them in front of the judge repositions the PO on the client's

side directly after arrest. Finally, being explicit with their expectations and fair enough

that their clients agree with their sanctions are all strategies used with the purpose of

balancing their dual-roles.

Jail/Sanctions Not What PO Wants Personally

The third most commonly used strategy (6 out of 15) to navigate jails and

sanctions is the PO reminding their clients that arresting them is not what the PO wants.

They do this in a variety of ways, but the overall theme is that POs want jail and sanction

decisions to be viewed as reactions to the clients' behavior, not as a personal desire.

Matt says, "I make things clear, sometimes I have to intervene in ways I don't like to but

that's not my objective [or] what I'm trying to do." Kathleen speaks to the worst-case

scenario when arresting a client. She mentions how difficult it is when they do not

agree with the sanction because of the damage it does to the working relationship she wants with her clients. In order to navigate this, Kathleen tries to explain why she recommended the sanction and then makes it clear this path is not what she wants. She sees these scenarios to be so troublesome because of how difficult it makes working with clients again and reinforces the fact that working with the client in the future is truly where her heart lies:

> Sometimes they are under arrest for things and it's like they don't understand why or they don't get it. I try to explain, "This is why you are put in jail and why I recommend this amount of days, and it's nothing personal it's because of your actions." [Arresting them] kind of puts up walls and being able to work with them afterwards is really difficult. [So I am] trying to work back to a place that is, "I am holding you accountable for this, and even though you don't agree that is what you did, hopefully we can still work together."

Similarly, for Alexandra it is very important for her clients to understand that if she takes them to jail, it is something she had to do in reaction to their behavior:

> Sometimes that means holding them accountable, and most of the time the clients understand that if they are going to jail it's because of a decision that they made. I try and convey that to them in the beginning, "I want to help you and sometimes that means holding you accountable and it's not my favorite thing to do but sometimes it just has to happen."

John frames this strategy as putting the power back into the client's hand. He does this by positioning himself as an impersonal actor when it comes to punishment. He only reacts to what the client does; if they do nothing wrong he cannot take them to jail even if he wanted to:

> I'm a huge fan of providing a belief in the individual across from me that they actually hold all of the power and that I literally can do nothing if they are doing all of the things that would benefit them. So, it's not a power dynamic communication style that I employ. Even when I have to discuss violations or anything of that nature, I tend to try and reflect that it's a response on my part opposed to something that I'm seeking out.

Overall, these findings point to the way POs frame their discretionary decisions when it comes to arresting their clients. Data suggests that the factors most important to POs are: (1) Jail or punishment is not something they personally like or want; (2) Jail or punishment is done only in reaction to the client's actions and in these moments the PO has no other options. It is important that these two aspects go together because without them the PO runs the risk of contradicting themselves if they have ever told their clients that they want to help and support them. And it is unlikely that a client will view going to jail as supportive.

Labeled

Data suggests that the not being labeled by their PO is a significant concern for many clients (11 out of 15) on supervision. Clients in this study express many different variations of being self-conscious about the fact that they do not always do what they are supposed to do, commit crimes, hurt people they love, gotten pregnant at an early age, etc. When you combine the shame that the clients express about these behaviors combined with their status as felon or on probation/post-prison that they now carry with them, yields a group of people that are potentially sensitive to this collection of negative deeds and labels. Every client in this study expressed a desire to do better in their lives and move forward beyond the people who they were and the things that they have done in the past. Due to the chronic nature of addiction and the cycle of criminality that typically accompanies this, attempting to become a responsible, accountable, honest, and sober member of society may be a new identity standard for clients. When a client feels labeled, this may represent a rejection of the new identity standard and an affirmation of the old identity standard. Paradoxically, this may lead to them returning to the old identity as a more comfortable, even if self-destructive, identity. On the other

hand, data suggests some clients (5 out of 15) had their POs confront and counter this feeling of being labeled. This section highlights first the negative impact of clients feeling labeled and then reveals positive experiences of clients where this fear was addressed effectively.

Negative

Lacey exemplifies this self-consciousness when she is asked about whether she feels she is labeled by her PO. Lacey is a white woman in her early twenties who has been on supervision since she was sixteen years old. She explains that she does feel labeled but admits that it may be due to her own insecurities. The following quote shows her uncertainty around this feeling. She knows that she is feeling a certain negative gaze and is unsure whether the source is herself or those around her. She says,

> She just sees me as like another drug addict mom. A young drug addict mom who used to dance, fucked off school and is going to go work at Subway or something... and that's probably just my insecurities, but I don't know with my PO I just think she just sees me as, I don't know, a fuck up.

Clients also report feeling labeled by just being on supervision. When asked if she feels labeled, Denise, a mixed raced woman who has been on supervision for two years, says, "I mean we're all labeled I feel like if you're on probation." Isabel is a Latina

woman in her early twenties who has been on supervision for two years. Isabel feels a

similar label coming from people in general because of her status of being on

supervision. She believes that being on supervision carries with it various negative

connotations to the general public:

> The word "probation" [makes it seem] like you're this person that can't
>
> agree with the laws can't get anything right or do anything. And you have
>
> a felony on your record so you can't get a job. It's just the word
>
> "probation." People look at that you have been in the justice system, in
>
> prison, or you've been the jail because you made bad decisions. But
>
> everybody makes bad decisions I don't think it should be labeled because
>
> of a word. But yes definitely.

Similarly, Austin feels as if most POs label people under supervision in general.

Austin is a young white man who has been on supervision for four years. When asked

what his ideal PO would be, he describes someone who communicates with and treats

him like an "actual person not a piece of paper. That actually views me as a human not

just a criminal." However, this ideal does not seem very attainable for Austin due to the

way he believes that POs view their clients in general. When asked whether he had ever

felt labeled he says, "I feel like in her eyes we are just criminal, we are just junkies, we

are just addicts, we are just thieves, and we are the bottom tier of society in most PO's

eyes." This response suggests that Austin feels this way about all POs, not just his own

PO, and is an example of the stigma that clients can place on POs as a coping

mechanism to how they feel they are being labeled. It is important to acknowledge that this feeling is based, at least partially, in bad experiences he has had on supervision. He tells a story of a time his PO came into the treatment center and did not even recognize his face when he introduced himself. He explains his reaction as being amazed because he had just talked to her on the phone, but she had no idea who he was. Austin's story is a perfect example of how clients can be torn about how they feel about supervision and their PO. He is thankful to his PO for helping him get into treatment because he wants change in his life. However, when his PO does not recognize who he is, it triggers his feeling that POs don't see their clients as actual people but instead as criminal, thieves.

Donte talks about feeling labeled by many different aspects of supervision. Having been on supervision since 2003, he is very aware of how he has been categorized by the tools of supervision. Donte has had an almost twenty-year battle with crack-cocaine which has had him trapped for years in a cycle of go to jail, get out, not report to his PO, get a warrant, go back to jail. For these reasons his file is an especially sensitive topic for Donte because it represents everything bad that he has done. This quote shows how this process can make him feel as if who he is as a person can get lost in the way that his past actions are labeled by the system:

Because you come in is not who you are, but you come in as a criminality score level, you come in at the rating of your assessment. There is nothing personable about this relationship that's all what they see on file.

[PO says] "Hey I was just reading your file" that does not explain who I am.

When asked to expand on what the impact of the PO telling him "I was just reading your file" has on the relationship he says,

It sets the tone of the relationship and how they automatically think about you based on your file and what they see with similar files. If I'm absconding and I am an absconder but on a personal level I am who I am [a person] who just has a bad drug problem.

Data suggests that even when a client has a good relationship with their own PO, they can feel labeled by other POs in the department. Jonathan, a young white man who has been on supervision for four years, raved about how incredible his relationship was with his PO but tells a story about when he was arrested while his PO was not in the office. In West County there is an "officer of the day" who handles the cases of POs who are not in that day. When asked whether he had felt labeled, Jonathan talks about his experience being arrested by the officer of the day.

I mean as a drug addict yes. When I got my only PV (probation violation) the officer of the day had to arrest me, and I guess I was so used to compassion from [my PO]. I was dirty, but I don't know man it was just the way I was treated made me feel labeled. Like I was a junkie drug

addict homeless criminal. I wasn't resistant, it just seemed a little

unnecessary.

Finally, most of the clients under supervision have had multiple instances and

levels of contact with the criminal justice system. One key feature of these contacts is

the way that people are processed within these institutions. Because of this treatment

within the criminal justice system some clients under supervision are triggered by being

treated in a similar way upon release. The clients describe this particular label as feeling

like they were being treated "like a number."

Tiffany, a white woman recently released from prison who is in an intensive

supervision program, talks about going through a lot of work while she was recently in

prison on herself. She talked about having to do much of this work in spite of the

treatment she received while inside. She says that the staff in prison "100%" made her

feel like a number which she saw as invalidating the amount of work she was putting in

to change. Likewise, Tonya, a mixed-race woman who has been on supervision for

seventeen years, speaks of an experience she had with a PO in the past who would push

his agenda on her. Throughout the interview Tonya spoke very confidently about how

much experience she had with supervision and her ability to both know what she

needed to succeed and what POs were there to help her and who were authoritarians.

She explains her reaction to encountering the authoritarian types. She says,

...some of them, their expectation was that I was going to do things their

way and there was no happy medium there is no compromise because to

them that's what all I was I was a statistic and I was a number. And I was

like oh here's a statistic for you I won't be here (laughing).

Overall, these data suggest there are various ways that clients feel labeled. Data

shows the way that many clients feel as if their status of being on supervision is enough

to be labeled by their PO, other POs, and the general public. Still other clients report

that the process of being on supervision for an extended period of time can make them

sensitive to the way they are ranked and categorized by the tools of supervision. The

assessment score, criminality risk level, and the file all potentially represent a past that

the client will never escape from. Finally, these data highlight the way that contact with

the CJS can cause people to feel the specific label of "a number." Each one of these

negative labels may represent a rejection of the new identity standard the client is

trying to adopt of prosocial member of society.

Positive

Clients report positive reactions when their POs address their past indiscretions

on supervision during their initial visit. Tiffany describes the feeling that results from

having a PO who is not judgmental about her past. When describing her ideal PO she

says,

Is someone who wants to see you succeed, who sees and understands

that the person that I am is not the person that I was when I did those

things. These are the things I have done; however, this is what I'm doing

now. It's difficult to progress when someone just sees you as that dirty

rotten lawbreaker. It is someone who yes, they are in a supervisory role,

but at the same time has hope for their caseload.

POs who make it clear that although they see that the client may have struggled

in the past that they want to start the relationship with a clean slate give the client a

chance to move forward instead of feeling stuck in the past. Tonya's PO let her know

that even though she had an extensive history, their relationship was going to be based

on what she did now:

> She just pretty much told me, "I see that you have an extensive
>
> background, but I'm not going to try and base the relationship that we
>
> hopefully are going to have now, I don't want your pass to be a part of
>
> your future."

Likewise, Daryl, a young white man who has been on supervision for two years,

talks about relapsing and then receiving a new PO. She acknowledged the progress he

had made since the relapse and let him know what was most important to her is his

behavior from that point forward:

> I lost someone who is really close to me, so I think she kind of took that
>
> into consideration and by that time I was already back on track a little bit
>
> I had three or four weeks clean. She basically was like, that happened in

the past were going to move past that and whatever happens with me is not all that she cares about but whatever happens with her is what she cares about the most.

When asked whether she trusted her PO, Denise answers that she does. When explaining the moment, she began to trust her PO, she tells a story of a time when she was released from jail and met her PO for the first time. Denise was informed that her PO had not read her file yet and that instead wanted to hear her story from her first:

One time I got out, went to see her, and she said, "I have not looked at your file yet to see what your crime was, what your story is, or what your paperwork says. I'm just going to ask you". And I just gave her a summary of what happened. This is who I am, and this is what I'm about.

Finally, Greg admits that the process of being on supervision can make him sometimes feel like just another number. When speaking about what he appreciates about his PO he mentions her communication style. He reports that the way she takes the time to look him in the eyes and really listen when he speaks allows him to feel as if she sees and acknowledges who he is:

I think I appreciate it more because sometimes when you come in and you feel like you're just another person, another number that is going through the system. I feel like some people can get to the point that they are not even looking at you... makes you not even want to say anything.

When somebody takes the time to actually look at you and listen to what
you have to say I feel like it's like a relationship [with] somebody that
cares about what you're doing that makes a clear it's not just about
money that's good.

These findings suggest a number of strategies which may be effective ways of

countering the feeling of being labeled. As reported in the section above, this feeling

does not have to come directly from the PO but can be a preconceived notion. POs who

acknowledge and address this feeling successfully may earn their clients trust or be able

to be seen as a helper as a result. Client-reported effective strategies include

acknowledging that the client is not the same person today as they were in the past,

starting the new PO-client relationship with a clean slate moving forward, not reading

client files before meeting them allowing them to tell their own stories, and eye contact

and listening when communicating with a client.

Grouped

As mentioned above, many of the PO tools categorize clients in ways that can be

problematic. Returning to the assessment as an example, theoretically the information

serves as a guide to assist POs with creating a supervision plan individual to each client.

While literature and practice often espouse the idea behind creating individualized

supervision plans using mutually agreed upon goals, this is not how the experience is

reported by many of the clients in this study. Many clients (7 out of 15) repeatedly

express frustration with the feeling of being grouped together with other people on

supervision who either have similar crimes or risk-level. One of the main mechanisms

causing this is resource allocation. On the other hand, many clients (6 out of 15) report

strategies their POs use that allow them to feel as if they are recognized an individual

with individual needs that must be met. This section first highlights the how clients

feeling grouped can negatively affect them, and then pivots to show the positive results

clients report effectively addressing this feeling.

Negative

Providing referrals for housing and various programming are two major

resources that POs use to help their clients become successful, prosocial members of

society. POs advocating on the clients to gain knowledge of and access to resources is an

effective tool for developing good rapport. However, the way POs distribute these

resources can leave clients' feeling grouped together with other clients in a way that

makes them feel less individualized. Donte speaks about being frustrated by the way

that housing resources are allocated. He expresses his desire to receive help that is

catered to his circumstance individually and does not want to be sent to the same place

they send everyone because that may not be the best place for him. In fact, sending him

to live downtown can potentially be seen as the PO setting him up for failure:

> Just help me be successful in what I need not just on the basis of parole
> and probation... I am an individual person help me like you said. If I need
> help getting out of downtown don't put me downtown... but they have
> so many clients, they want a one glove fits all type [of situation]. But if
> you're going to help me help me. Don't just say you're going to help me
> and then just give me to the wolves.

Likewise, clients report being frustrated with being asked to either repeat programming they have already completed or being put into classes they do not see being beneficial to their specific needs. Eve describes her ideal PO as someone who would not just put her in the same classes they put everyone else in because they may not be helpful with what her needs are. She says, "I feel like they throw us into the same kind of programs and classes, and I don't feel like they are all for everybody." Tonya expresses a similar frustration with the way the probation and parole groups people together. Due to her extensive experience on supervision she feels a better ability to create her own agenda and thus rejects the programming that probation prescribes for her. Tonya feels this way because she has completed many of the classes and programming so does not see the value in repeating them. Her position also suggests that over time clients can form a jaded opinion of evidence-based practices:

> ...I'm going to do things that I know are going to work for me and sometimes the stuff with parole and probation that doesn't work for me. And I tell her, "Listen your program is not going to work for me. I understand that these are the things that need to be done but these are the ways that I need to do them because your way does not work with what it is I'm trying to do to better my life. You want me to do a program that statistically is supposed to work this way. I am not statistic."

Data suggests that clients may project fears of being grouped onto a PO-client relationship that has not even begun yet. Greg, a young white man who has recently been released from prison, had not yet met his new PO during the time of the interview. Greg's crime involved stealing from his father and consequently has a no-contact order with his father. One of a POs main jobs is keeping victims of crimes safe, thus breaking a no-contact order with a victim is a serious violation. Greg expresses fear that his unique relationship with his father will not be taken into consideration and that he will not be given a chance to legally see or talk to him for 24 months. It is important to understand that Greg admits to having already been in contact with his father and has every intention of continuing to do so. He said he was going to come clean and tell his new PO about it in order to start the relationship off right. When asked if there was something his PO could say in the meeting which would change his mind he says,

> It would be in a certain situation with the "no contact" order. It would be
> for him to be like, "sorry but you can't have contact, you cannot do that
> for another 24 months." My parents aren't getting any younger just takes
> a second for somebody to pass away and you live the rest of your life
> wondering what you should have done. I know if the PO came off like
> that to where you can't talk to him or have to go by the book for 24
> months... I feel like that would shut me up instantly and I would never
> bring it up to him again ever.

Finally, Denise juxtaposes her experience on supervision with others she has seen. She is satisfied because she gets positive results from positive actions she takes.

However, she has seen others who have been on supervision and handling their business like she has but not getting the same results. She describes women she has seen who have been in the same programming for years with no progress. Even though she is not directly experiencing this, her insight offers us a view into how she would feel if she was:

> So, everything for me is good. [But] I just feel like when they see you progressing more and more everything should be happening. In my case it really is [but] I know some people that are on the same probation for the same amount of time they've done all these things [with no result]. So, I feel like there is no goal. What am I doing it for? Like the girls they are still in the same class they been in for three years.

Overall, these data suggest that clients report negative reactions to feeling as if their experience on supervision is not individualized to themselves, their circumstances, and/or their needs. The allocation of resources like housing and programming, while typically can be seen as a positive, can potentially lead to the feeling that the PO is just putting the client where everybody else goes. The result of this feeling is shown to range from irritation to actually feeling as if the PO is setting the client up for failure. Findings also show the ways that a client who is already in violation may project negativity upon a PO-client relationship before ever having met a PO. The result of unsuccessfully navigating the client's concerns may have the result of shutting down the client and damaging the relationship while not ending the behavior that is in violating.

Finally, findings afford insight on the negative psychological impact of being put into the same or similar programming for a long period of time.

Positive

The most commonly reported strategy is allowing the client to be a part of setting the agenda for supervision. Lacey feels when she is able to be a part of the decision-making process, it is a sign of mutual trust in the relationship. She tells a story of being in jail after a relapse and expressing to her PO that she wanted to change. Her PO acknowledging her new direction and supporting her plan for what was best for herself was a pivotal point in her perception of her PO:

> I just told her that I wanted something new by getting clean... and she
> gave me an ultimatum. So, I have this plan and all the support around me
> so I can do this. But by the time that I see her I need to have put in some
> type of footwork for that and if I haven't that she will come up with a
> plan for me. So, it was cool that she gave me the option of doing it my
> way before she just told me what I'm going to do.

Similarly, Tommy, a young white man who has been on supervision for eight years, reports that his success in supervision finally came from taking his power back in the relationship. He talks about being tired of having to be told what to do. When he was able to "handle his business", his PO began to allow him to dictate his own path. He reports the pivotal moment when his PO allowed him to dictate his own agenda and rewarded him for good behavior with the ability to travel out of state. This game-

changing moment made him realize that he could get what he wanted from his good

behavior and he did not need to lie anymore:

> I will go visit her and say, "yeah this is what I'm doing, and this is what's
> going on," she would be like, "okay fine." I felt like I had taken a power
> back away. Instead of them needing to tell me what to do I was telling
> them what I was doing and that seemed to reinforce the idea of okay I
> don't need to be dishonest about some little thing like going across the
> bridge (to another state).

Lacey explains how she can sometimes sit down with her PO and the

conversation feels as if it is a generic conversation the PO has with everyone she sits

down with. When asked what kind of communication she prefers, she says, "I enjoy

conversations that are personable that I don't feel are the same as just everyone else so

I think of the try to understand you and the way that you think."

Finally, Jonathan talks about his PO going against his desire to be put on a

Suboxone or Methadone program to deal with his heroin habit. He describes feeling

"pissed" at the time he was told no, but that later he realized that his PO had his best

interests in mind. He cites his POs reasoning as being what allowed him to come to this

realization:

> The reason for him drawing the line in the sand was from experience with
> other clients and where they were. And he just felt like I really need to
> give treatment and twelve-step program an actual honest try. And he had

been pushing the grief and loss because he knew about my dad's suicide

which is what kicked off my addiction and everything. So, he pushed that,

I did not push back, and it worked.

These findings highlight different client reported strategies that effectively

recognized them as individuals with individual needs and led to positive results.

Specifically, although a client may choose to participate in a program with many other

people on supervision, allowing them to be a part of that decision is shown to effectively

counter the feeling of being placed in the same class as everyone else. Furthermore,

clients report being sensitive to generic conversations they feel as if their POs have with

all of their clients. Instead, clients report wanting to feel as if the conversations they are

having are unique to them calling these "personable" conversations. Also, POs using

their expertise as POs or knowledge about a situation is shown to be an effective way to

disagree with a client and may lead to the client eventually appreciating that the PO had

the client's best interests in mind.

DISCUSSION

This is a qualitative study using 30 semi-structured interviews of both POs and clients under supervision with the expressed intent of adding to the understanding of how these groups conceive of an ideal relationship with each other. Due to the collection of primary data this study not only advances our understand of "what" is happening but also "why" it is being done. The research design is also one that collects and analyzes data from both PO and client within the same project to emphasize the importance of including both perspectives when attempting to better understand the relationship between the two. Findings show that both groups have similar needs and desires to be recognized as human beings. For the POs, they use this recognition as a human as a tool to close the inherent power dynamic that marks all PO-client relationships. For the clients, preconceived fears of being either grouped with other clients with similar crimes or being labeled by their past actions drive their desire to be seen as individuals and the people they are today instead of who they were in the past. Overall, findings show that identity verification is a driving force in the PO-client relationship for both PO and client, where strong working relationships are more likely when verification is successful.

Ideal Relationship

The focus that POs in the study have on rapport as being a critical part of effectively doing their job aligns with previous studies on therapeutic alliance (Hersoug et al., 2001; Greenson, 1965; Bordin, 1978) and community supervision (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Andrews & Bonta, 2010b, 2011). POs communication style is found to also be in line with previous studies which point to POs effective communication as creating perceptions of trustworthiness and being less authoritative and punitive but supportive instead (Morash et al., 2018). Overall, this study's sample includes POs that generally prefer to take on more of a social worker type of role with a helping rather punitive approach (Gregory, 2010; Farkas, 1999; Hemmens & Stohr, 2000; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1992). Still, POs acknowledge that holding their clients accountable is an important part of the behavior change process and thus report wanting to find balance between their roles as social workers and law enforcement (Skeem et al. 2007).

While there is much less research that has been done from the perspective of the clients, findings in this study align with much the extant literature. Client reports confirm the effectiveness of many of the CCPs including effective use of authority, appropriate modeling and reinforcement of attitudes, effective use of community resources, and quality of interpersonal resources (Haas & Spence, 2017). Clients report preferring communication that is not authoritative (Leibrich, 1994; Cornnachione et al., 2016). Furthermore, findings show that clients see fairness, honesty, and trust as being important factors in a healthy PO-client relationship (Kennealy et al., 2012). Finally, this study's findings align with previous studies that point to mutually agreed upon goals as

being correlated and predictive of probationer's perceptions of overall helpfulness of probation (Delude et al., 2012). This study's sample was not allowed to be matched one-for-one PO to client findings cannot be mapped directly onto PO findings to determine where the common areas are and the breaks in lines of communication. Besides a general increase in the value placed on probationer perceptions of their experience while under supervision, future research should take on projects that are able to match PO and client in order to better tell whether the intended relationship is a reality and which factors allow or prevent it from happening.

Identity Verification

PO findings confirm previous research on therapists who bring both who they are as people and their professional training into the therapist-client relationship (Ross et al. 2008). While this is understood in the psychotherapy literature, there has been limited focus on its impact on the PO-client relationship (Welsh, 2018). The POs in this study value being an active part of their client's behavior change and understand their ability to balance both care and control aspects of their jobs. While previous studies have determined that successful PO-client relationship rely on the balance of the care and control aspects (Skeem et al., 2003; Paparozi & Gendreau, 2005; Kennealy et al, 2012), this study is one of the few which collects primary data with the purpose of documenting specific strategies POs use to reach this balance. There has also been very little focus on POs desire to avoid the authoritarian label. This study confirms previous studies which have shown POs make decisions to go against the recommendations made by the risk-need assessment tools citing their own professional experience being

more reliable or their own "client first" supervision style (Viglione et al., 2015; Luong & Wormith, 2011; Miller & Maloney, 2013).

It is important to note that the introduction of one's self into relationship building is a decision that is made by POs with experience who believe that it is the most effective way to do their job. The purpose of this study is not to critic this practice as either good or bad, but to acknowledge its existence and begin to understand its impact on supervision results. Findings show that this process may have the effect of raising the stakes of identity verification in the PO-client relationship. In the case of the POs in this study, what this would mean is that it is possible that they are not only trying to verify their identity as "good" POs but also as "good" people. This desire to be seen as a "good" person may be why POs make the decision to not carry preconceived negative notions about their clients into their relationships, why they make it clear to their clients that they are not like the authoritarian POs they may have had in the past, why they explicitly tell their clients it is not their personal desire to arrest them, and why they choose not to use the evidence-based tools as prescribed.

For clients, this study highlights their parallel need for identity verification. The reality of supervision is that many of the people who are currently being supervised are not first-time offenders. Many of them have a patterned history of deviance which they are trying to change from in order to live pro-social lives. What this may mean is that their pro-social identity may be either a new identity or an old identity they have failed to verify in the past. Because of this, clients may be vulnerable to ditching this pro-social identity for their deviant one even if the deviant identity carries with it criminal

habits that end them in jail. Findings highlight the negative impact that POs can have if they do not acknowledge their clients as individuals by disregarding the experience they have on supervision, by the way they allocate resources, and that evidence-based tools can have the effect of labeling the clients in a way that hurts the relationship.

What is unique about this study is that it does not simply report the problem created by client's inability to verify their identity, but it also includes which strategies they report most effective in countering their fears. In regard to the fear of being grouped, clients report many strategies that resolved their negative feelings. These include being given a chance to dictate their own plan with the ultimatum that if it doesn't work the client will be willing to try the PO's ideas, communicating in a way that doesn't make the client feel that this is just a conversation their PO has with everyone, taking a collaborative approach to agenda setting with a give and take from both sides, allowing clients to earn autonomy from positive behavior, providing treatment when clients say they are ready to make a change, and in the case where the PO does firmly disagree with the client, using their expertise as a PO instead of their authority is most effective. Furthermore, when addressing the fear of being labeled the clients report that giving the client a clean slate at the start of a new relationship, making it clear to the client the POs desire to see them succeed in life, not reading the clients file before meeting them the first time and telling the client the client the reason why, acknowledging a clients progress shortly after a misstep to encourage them, and eye-contact when communicating coupled with active listening are all effective strategies.

Even though POs in this study pointed to different strategies they employ so as to not do their job as a PO by prejudging or labeling their clients it was not clear why they made this decision. Never did the POs mention that they had been told to take this position or directed that this was the best practice, so it seems likely that these are values that the POs hold themselves about how to treat people in general. While it is good that POs use these strategies to maintain balance within themselves, if they do not make their position clear to their client's they run the risk of their client maintaining the opinion that they are being judged. This is because findings which show the way that clients may be so self-conscious about their actions that they perceive people in general view them with a negative label. Because of this, POs who hold these views of not prejudging, categorizing, or labeling their clients should make that explicitly clear in the first meeting as a way to lower the guard and challenge the preconceived notions their client may be coming in with themselves.

Policy Implications

One of the limitations of this study is that the entire sample had similar views about using their authority. POs in this study report many strategies used that align with the Core Correctional Practices that guides the creation of the EPICS mode. Considering the finding that POs willingly ditch their training based on personally held values or philosophy differences, this leaves the question of what about the POs who view authority differently? If POs who are more "helper" types view effective relationship building as introducing themselves and being seen as more human, who is to say that "authoritarian" type POs don't view effective relationship building as being

firm and systematic when it comes to interactions and jail sanctions? Future research

needs to further investigate the claims made by this study on a sample of law

enforcement leaning POs so we can both verify the importance of identity verification

and better understand how law enforcement leaning PO find balance between their

dual-roles.

We know from previous studies that all types of POs are choosing to divert away

from using the evidence-based tools as prescribed. This study's findings about identity

verification as a driving force highlights that placing POs who are both social work

leaning and law enforcement leaning in the same training may not be the best practice

due to the different requirements to garner buy-in from each group. In other words,

while a PO with a therapist background who has a client first philosophy and a PO who

has been on the job 20 years and believes that the old punitive approach is the most

effective may both be making the same decision to divert away from the results of the

assessment they are doing so for very different reasons. In the future, community

supervision models such as EPICS should take seriously the contradictions between the

supervision philosophy and those of social work and therapist fields. This awareness

can then be used to resolve these differences in training and thus better garner buy-in

from POs with that kind of background. Future research needs to also better understand

the contradictions that exist for law enforcement leaning POs which cause them to not

use the evidence-based tools as prescribed so as to tailor the training to address them

and garner better buy-in from that group as well.

Overall, this study has highlighted the importance of human recognition within the PO-client relationship. This may seem intuitive, but often when studying relationships within the CJS what gets lost is the humanity of the individuals within the institutions, both working for and processed through. This study has expanded on our understanding about the importance of rapport. Findings show that rapport is the key element in the PO-client relationship that allows each party to verify their identities. Furthermore, in this revelation lies the understanding POs are not diverting away from the tools they are given due to lack of understanding, but they are diverting due to personally held values or occupational philosophies they feel are in conflict with the tools. All in all, this study shows the value of collecting primary data investigating PO-client relationship from both parties. Analysis of data from both perspectives is what lead to the conclusions of this study. It would have been impossible to make these connections by only taking one perspective at a time.

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