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Community Supervision: Perspectives of Probation and Parole Officers and Supervisors on Key Supervision Approaches and Policy Changes

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Community Supervision: Perspectives of Probation and Parole Officers and Supervisors
on Key Supervision Approaches and Policy Changes

by

Asianna Nelson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Criminology and Criminal Justice

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Abstract

This study explores the differences across community supervision approaches in Oregon and how the implementation of state policies has influenced this field. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) *How do POs and supervisors define their approach to community supervision?* 2) *How have POs and supervisors experienced shifts in state policy?* Fourteen line staff and supervisors from seven Oregon probation and parole agencies were interviewed to answer these research questions. The findings suggest that most agencies are using evidence-based practices and implementing state policies. However, variation exists across the represented agencies in the experiences and perceptions of probation and parole officers and supervisors. This variation impacts policy fidelity, which can negatively affect client recidivism and success. Implications of this project are discussed.

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Introduction

As of January 2023, the Oregon Department of Corrections reported that 20,415 adults were under supervision across the state (Oregon Department of Corrections, 2023). From 2004 to 2019, Oregon's average three year rearrest rate was approximately 50% (Statistical Analysis Center, n.d.). This is a remarkably high rearrest rate, suggesting that changes may be necessary within this field. Oregon has started to shift away from traditional community supervision to an emphasis on evidence-based practices (EBPs). The research on EBPs concludes that these programs and practices can effectively reduce recidivism (MacKenzie, 2000). State policies implemented to guide this transition include the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), Ballot Measure 110, and Senate Bill 1510. Therefore, there is a push for Oregon probation and parole agencies to do "what works" based on the evidence. These policies have changed how probation and parole agencies operate in Oregon. Based on the prevalence of adults under community supervision in Oregon and the high recidivism rates, researchers and policymakers need to identify which approaches to community supervision are used. Therefore, this study explores how community supervision characteristics and state policy impacts vary across seven probation and parole agencies in Oregon.

Literature Review

Over time, the approach to probation and parole has shifted from rehabilitative, punitive, and evidence-informed. Prior to the 1970s, probation and parole officers (POs) were largely responsible for resource referrals (Robinson et al., 2012). In this casework era, POs were expected to carry out most of the interventions clients needed. However, in 1974, Martinson reviewed the existing literature on rehabilitation efforts. He concluded that the rehabilitation efforts in place (including educational/vocational training, cognitive behavioral therapy, probation and parole, and group counseling) essentially did not affect recidivism (Martinson, 1974). Martinson's 1974 paper was a primary contributor to the "nothing works" movement in probation and parole in the US. As a result, policy changes reflected a 'get tough' ideology reinforcing a harsher law enforcement approach to probation and parole (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001; Taxman, 2008; Robinson et al., 2012; Feeley & Simon, 1992).

Under this 'get tough' ideology, the law enforcement approach was control-oriented and often referred to as the "trail 'em, nail 'em, and jail 'em" (TNJ) approach. Under this punishment-oriented technique, officers emphasize surveillance and enforcement (Vera Institute of Justice, 2013). This typically occurs when officers do not have time to accurately assess offender behaviors and needs. Suppose an offender displays behavior that the officer considers concerning. In that case, the officer will often issue a violation rather than an intervention based on the belief that incapacitation is the quickest way to maintain community safety.

An example of this type of supervision approach is the swift, certain, and fair approach to sanctioning offenders that violate their conditions. In 2004, Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) focused on delivering swift and short sanctions when offenders violated conditions. This program was considered effective and reduced participant recidivism (Lattimore et al., 2016). However, when the model was applied more recently to other counties in the U.S., there were no differences in recidivism rates of HOPE participants and probation-as-usual (PAU) participants (Lattimore et al., 2016). This study utilized rigorous methodology and is more recent, suggesting that a punishment-oriented approach does not effectively reduce recidivism among offenders.

Furthermore, the University of Maryland assessed what works, what does not, what is promising, and what is unknown about crime prevention program effects on recidivism. MacKenzie (2000) reported that programs utilizing specific deterrence, vague and disorganized counseling, and increased control and surveillance in the community were ineffective at reducing recidivism. In support of these findings, a study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2012) reported that programs that did not focus on treatment (e.g., TNJ-based) generally did not result in a decline in recidivism rates. These findings provide further support for the limited success of this punitive and control-oriented approach.

As a challenge to the "nothing works" movement, Andrews et al. (1990) conducted a meta-analysis examining program's effects on recidivism in 80 studies. The researchers examined the effects of rehabilitative treatment services, criminal sanctions

without rehabilitative services, and services less consistent with rehabilitation principles. On average, they found that using appropriate rehabilitative treatment programs reduced recidivism by roughly 50%. These treatment programs were more effective than criminal sanctions and inconsistent treatment services. This meta-analysis concluded that rehabilitation efforts can work, and policy should re-emphasize its importance with respect to the criminal justice system.

Two concepts that emerged from the re-emphasis on rehabilitative efforts include the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model and Core Correctional Practices (CCPs). Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge created the RNR model in 1990. This rehabilitative model aims to improve community supervision effectiveness (Viglione, 2019; Bonta et al., 2008; Taxman, 2008). The risk principle focuses on using a risk assessment tool to match services to the level of risk assigned to the client. Less focus should be placed on clients with lower risks, while more focus and services should be emphasized for higher-risk clients (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005; Viglione & Taxman, 2018). The needs principle emphasizes the importance of addressing the client's criminogenic needs related to criminal behavior. Criminogenic needs include antisocial personality patterns, pro-criminal attitudes, social support for crime, substance abuse, family and marital relationships, school and work, and prosocial recreational activities (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Lastly, the responsivity principle comprises two approaches: general and specific responsivity. These elements provide direction on treating a client based on their learning styles (e.g., general responsivity) and incorporating an intersectional approach (e.g., specific responsivity) depending on the specific individual's characteristics and needs.

Therefore, POs need to engage in community partnerships to address each of the RNR principles.

POs act as street-level boundary spanners, working with other agencies and service providers to assist their clients (Lutze, 2014). Improved criminal justice and community partnerships will likely enhance positive client behavior change due to improved access to treatment and resources. Another concept that has emerged during this rehabilitative shift is the humanistic perspective. In this perspective, the client on supervision becomes the primary focus of the probation and parole officer (Schafer, 2013). Through a humanistic approach, reintegration becomes more likely because the officer is better equipped to address the client's needs and challenges. Core correctional practices also aid in the reintegration process. The five dimensions of core correctional practices aimed at reducing recidivism are the quality of staff-client relationships, problem-solving, effective use of authority, use of community resources, and anticriminal reinforcement and modeling (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). These dimensions are believed to aid in positive behavior changes among offenders on supervision. The effectiveness of RNR practices and CCP use have been widely studied, and the results appear promising, especially compared to the TNJ approach to probation and parole.

Research on officers trained in CCPs and RNR practices indicates that clients under the supervision of trained officers have lower recidivism rates than untrained officers and that the officers use these skills more than untrained officers (Blasko et al., 2022; Bonta et al., 2011; Chadwick et al., 2015; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Smith et al. (2012) evaluated the implementation of an evidence-based training program, Effective

Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS), in a probation and parole agency. EPICS trains POs to focus on criminogenic needs, use cognitive-behavioral techniques with client interactions, and focus on higher-risk offenders. Six POs attended a four-day EPICS training, and four POs attended a brief training on CCPs (e.g., control group). Although there were no differences in identifying pro-criminal thoughts or beliefs, trained officers used CCPs more consistently and focused on criminogenic needs more than untrained officers (Smith et al., 2012). An earlier study conducted in the 1990s found similar outcomes. Trotter (1996) assessed how prosocial, empathetic, and problem-solving approaches affected one-year and four-year recidivism rates among supervision clients in New Zealand. For PO participants, 104 POs attended a five-day training on the three approaches, 105 attended the initial day, and 157 did not attend the training. Client data were reviewed through PO file notes. Researchers concluded that using prosocial techniques resulted in a 23% one-year recidivism rate compared to a 47% rate for untrained officers. Furthermore, they found a 49% versus 73% four-year recidivism rate for clients belonging to trained and untrained officers, respectively (Trotter, 1996). Similarly, Bourgon & Gutierrez (2012) found that trained officers used cognitive techniques in more interactions than untrained officers. These studies suggest that CCP and RNR-based approaches are effective.

Despite this empirical evidence, research has shown barriers to agency implementation and fidelity of RNR and CCP-based approaches (Viglione, 2019; Bourgon & Gutierrez, 2012; Bonta et al., 2008; Viglione & Taxman, 2018; Viglione et al., 2015). Without additional training, research has suggested that POs are not using

these approaches and skills enough. Bourgon & Gutierrez (2012) explored the effects of an RNR-based training program on PO skills use. They found POs that did not receive training (but did receive training on CCPs) utilized cognitive techniques in 1% of their interactions with clients and addressed pro-criminal attitudes approximately 5% of the time. In contrast, trained POs significantly improved their use of cognitive techniques (39%) and discussion of pro-criminal attitudes (42%). Thus, demonstrating additional training can improve PO use of RNR principles and CCPs. One reason for the lack of adherence to these models may result from staff perceptions and attitudes. A recent study investigating community supervision officer attitudes toward an RNR-based model identified staff concerns related to agency planning, beliefs they already possessed the necessary skills, and concerns about staff abilities to use the model appropriately (Gleicher, 2020). Awareness of potential barriers to implementation and fidelity is necessary when considering Oregon's recent policy changes. Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy theory supports this notion. Essentially, front-line workers work directly with the clients that policies may seek to impact while also having the power to use discretion in their decision to implement such policies accurately (Maynard-Moody & Portillo, 2011). If staff are unable or unwilling to follow new policies and EBPs, the effectiveness of supervision will likely be impacted.

To determine how agencies can reduce barriers to implementation, it is essential to consider implementation strategies and the management styles of supervisors. A study conducted in 2018 found that staff with higher levels of organizational commitment were more likely to use EBP referrals than staff with lower levels (Viglione et al., 2018). Staff

with higher commitment and loyalty were more likely to implement EBPs at an individual level. Furthermore, community-based organizations that understood EBPs, were accredited, connected with resources, and had a leadership team with a background in human services were more likely to use EBPs (Friedmann et al., 2007). Burrell (2014) suggests that effective management depends on the organizational and structural approaches the management uses more than a specific program. Specifically, Burrell highlighted that high-performance organizations often have a clear mission, are results-oriented, work to empower and motivate staff, and are flexible. If this is applied to community corrections, agencies with these characteristics may use more effective practices and skills with their clients.

Current study

Considering the research suggesting that RNR-based approaches to community supervision are effective, it is crucial to determine how the State of Oregon approaches probation and parole. An additional avenue to consider is how PO and supervision perceptions of state-level policies are influencing agency approaches. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) *How do POs and supervisors define their approach to community supervision?* 2) *How have POs and supervisors experienced shifts in state policy?*

Methodology

Design

Former research on this topic was limited, resulting in this study's use of an exploratory qualitative design to answer the proposed research questions. Connections to literature were made, when possible, to create codes and develop interview questions. Observed themes were developed from the participant's responses themselves. An exploratory design provided insight into how PO and supervisor perceptions interacted with characteristics of the job and policies. A subject matter expert on Oregon community supervision was consulted for guidance with the project. Their informational insight was coupled with one- and three-year rearrest rates reported by the Criminal Justice Commission's recidivism dashboards for Oregon's 36 counties. The dashboards were used to explore data for cohorts one and two from 2004 to 2019 to identify eight counties. Analyzing the recidivism dashboards ensured that the eight counties showed differences in recidivism rates and the number in each cohort was large enough (e.g., over 50 individuals on supervision). With over 50 people under supervision, recidivism rates were relatively stable compared to an agency with fewer individuals on supervision. It is important to note that this set of agencies does not represent the state. Instead, this is an exploratory study aimed at identifying different characteristics of community supervision across Oregon agencies.

Once the set of agencies was identified, the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling to conduct semi-structured interviews. Emails describing participation expectations and the project's goals were sent to supervisors at each agency. Each of the

eight agencies agreed to participate in the study. The contacted supervisors agreed to participate themselves. If they could not, they provided contact information for a supervisor that would. POs were either selected by their supervisor or volunteered. Participants consented to the researcher recording their interviews for transcribing purposes. Thirteen of the 14 interviews were conducted using Zoom technology. One interview was conducted using Microsoft Teams and was recorded on a voice memos app due to a Zoom technology issue.

A set of open-ended interview questions were developed for this study's two groups of participants. POs and supervisors were asked questions that were modified to closely address their specific roles. The PO interview contained 15 questions, and the supervisor interview included 14 (See Appendices A & B). Both sets of interview questions addressed the first and second research question of this study. Interview questions answering the first research question were based on literature that discusses common approaches to community supervision. This included questions exploring participant perceptions of risk-needs assessment tools, case planning, technical violations, community partnerships, organizational culture, and treatment services. Interview questions exploring the second research question were based on recent Oregon policies that have impacted community supervision's operation. These questions discussed the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Ballot Measure 110, and Senate Bill 1510. Each interview ended with a check-in to see if the interviewer missed any important information. Overall, interviews ranged from 43 to 70 minutes.

Setting

Oregon is somewhat of a microcosmic depiction of the US in many ways when it comes to community supervision. As with many states, there is an array of rural and urban counties, but unlike most states, Oregon's counties operate much like different states in miniature. These counties are governed independently when it comes to supervision as per the 1995 Senate Bill 1145 and the 1997 Community Corrections Partnership Act. Senate Bill 1145 required counties to assume responsibility for community supervision and create a Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) that prioritizes criminal justice policy and planning among important public safety partners (Criminal Justice Commission, n.d.). The Community Corrections Partnership Act was created based on the belief that local control would have an enhanced ability to oversee individuals on community supervision effectively. Participating counties would receive funding from the General Fund statewide through this partnership. If counties do not participate in the partnership, supervision is reverted to the Oregon Department of Corrections (Oregon State Legislature, 2021). Based on Oregon's local control structure, community corrections agencies operate under local sheriff's departments, as independent agencies, and under the Oregon Department of Corrections. Therefore, studying different agencies to understand how supervision characteristics differ across jurisdictions is important. In addition, it is also necessary to consider how criminal justice policies can impact these agencies.

Recent policy shifts in Oregon represent an emphasis on evidence-based practices. In 2013, Oregon passed House Bill 3194, which created the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI). The primary goals of JRI are to reduce recidivism rates and

prison use in Oregon (Criminal Justice Commission, 2023). Through JRI, Oregon counties receive funding for treatment, services, and other interventions related to community supervision. Another core concept of JRI is to reinvest in implementing evidence-based practices. With Oregon investing over 15 million in this program, it is vital to determine what community corrections agencies are doing with these funds and if it is effective. A recent examination of the effects of JRI spending and usage across 36 Oregon counties suggests that major differences in use impact offenders' recidivism rates (Campbell, et al., 2022). Due to these recent policy shifts, research is needed to explore their implementation and perceived impacts.

Based on Oregon adopting evidence-based practices, it is essential to understand how well the state can implement them. A study conducted in 2019 explored the capacity of ten community corrections agencies in Oregon to implement evidence-based practices (Salisbury et al., 2018). Overall, Oregon's capacity was ranked as "basic," with room for improvement (p.32). Some of Oregon's strengths included the operationalization of initiatives, sufficient training, funding for initiatives, proactive facilitation, and an overall culture supportive of EBPs. However, a ranking of basic suggests there are areas that Oregon can improve on to reduce recidivism rates. In addition to considering Oregon's implementation capacity, it is also essential to consider how more recent policies have impacted staff and how they view the implementation process.

More recently, Oregon implemented Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalizes personal possession of most illicit controlled substances (State of Oregon, 2020). Larger possession amounts are reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor, and smaller possession

amounts are reduced to a violation. This measure also attempts to enhance treatment and provides grants to existing agencies. These grants fund Addiction Recovery Centers that conduct assessments and provide treatment services to individuals in need. If a person is cited for a violation, they have the option to complete an assessment at an Addiction Recovery Center in replacement of a fine. In addition to M110, Senate Bill 1510 further impacted Oregon's community supervision approach. This bill allowed courts to remove General Condition Two (Not use or possess controlled substances except pursuant to a medical prescription) for probationers. In response, the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision removed the condition for parolees (Oregon State Legislature, 2022). However, the courts and Board can add this as a special condition for clients that demonstrate substance use problems. Due to the former nature of community supervision (e.g., control-oriented/TNJ), these policy changes have likely impacted how supervisors and POs approach their jobs.

Another important aspect related to Oregon's approach to community supervision is risk assessments and case management. Oregon Department of Corrections Rule 291-078-0026 asserts that the Public Safety Checklist (PSC) must be administered for each individual under supervision. This tool places individuals into groups based on their likelihood of recidivating (low, medium, or high). Suppose a client is grouped into a medium or high-risk group. In that case, POs are required to complete a Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessment or a Women's Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA), depending on the sex of the client (Oregon Secretary of State Administrative Rules, 2022). These risk-needs assessments (RNAs) identify criminogenic

domains most relevant to the client's needs. The criminogenic domains include criminal history, education and employment, family and marital, leisure and recreation, companions, alcohol and drug problems, pro-criminal attitude and orientation, and antisocial patterns (Oregon Secretary of State Administrative Rules, 2022). Once the RNA is completed, staff are expected to create an individualized case plan based on the client's identified individualized needs and risks. Case planning should be a collaborative process between the PO and client that prioritizes goals based on the identified risks, creates desired outcomes for the identified goals, and is reviewed and updated based on offender behaviors.

Sample

A total of seven Oregon probation and parole agencies were interviewed and included for analysis, resulting in 14 interviews. Table 2 provides a breakdown of participant characteristics and overall agency characteristics. The researcher interviewed at least one probation and parole officer (PO) and one supervisor from six of the seven agencies. One agency was unable to provide a PO participant but included an interview with a supervisor. Furthermore, one agency included two interviews with POs and one with a supervisor. An eighth agency was contacted initially, and interviews were set up. However, due to time constraints, this agency was not included in the interview process.

Most participants identified as White (92.9%) and male (64.3%). Five male participants and two female participants were supervisors. At the PO level, the sample was similar, with four male participants and three female participants. The average years

of experience in probation and parole were 12.2, ranging from one year to thirty-plus years.

Table 1. Oregon probation and parole agencies represented and sample characteristics

	Agencies Represented	Supervisor	Parole/Probation Officer
Urban/Metro	5	5	6
Rural/Non-Metro	2	2	1
Total	7	7	7

Note: Supervisor positions include deputy director, director, lieutenant, sergeant, manager, and supervisor. Urban/Metro label is from the US Census.

Codes

A total of six codes were created to answer the project's first research question, "*How do POs and supervisors define their approach to community supervision?*" and two codes were designed to answer the second research question, "*How have POs and supervisors experienced shifts in state policy?*" The eight codes used were Case Plan, Violations, Partnerships, Philosophy, Treatment, Risk-Needs Assessment, Organizational Culture, and Policy Change. Table 2 below provides the definitions for each code used during the coding process.

Research question 1

Six codes were created to answer the research question: case plan, violations, partnerships, philosophy, treatment, and risk-needs assessment. These codes were developed based on key community supervision approach factors highlighted in Burrell's (2012) and Lutze's (2014) work.

Each of the six factors highlighted above can vary across jurisdictions. Burrell (2012) highlighted that more aggressive monitoring and enforcing conditions result in

more violations and sanctions, which is not effective. Therefore, exploring how an agency approaches or employs sanctions and interventions in response to violations may indicate their overall philosophy or mission (e.g., focused on monitoring risk more than needs and responsivity factors). Lutze (2014) highlighted three overarching philosophies within community supervision: law enforcement, social work, and a fluid approach. The fluid approach to community supervision is considered the most effective and is comprised of both law enforcement and social work aspects. This approach also incorporates the five core correctional practices; effective use of authority, role modeling and reinforcement, concrete problem solving, active use of community resources, and relationship quality (Burrell, 2012). The code philosophy in this project measured participants' philosophies and approaches to the job, including what they found most important.

Risk-needs assessment tools are becoming increasingly prevalent in community supervision in Oregon. These tools can be used to identify clients' individual needs and develop a tailored case plan specific to that individual. Lutze (2014) suggested that the presence of using these tools is associated with an increase in tools provided for clients. With more tools available, it could be inferred that client success would improve. Treatment is one tool related to community supervision and addressing client needs. Some jurisdictions may approach treatment as clients attending and complying with their conditions. In contrast, others may work with the client on responsivity needs surrounding treatment (e.g., providing in-house treatment, treatment groups, etc.). Burrell (2012) and Lutze (2014) highlighted that evidence-based practices such as cognitive

behavioral therapy are valuable tools for client treatment. For clients to receive treatment, POs must be able to build and engage in community partnerships.

Lutze (2014) suggests that street-level boundary spanners can result in improved and effective community supervision work. Burrell (2012) also believes effective community partnerships can improve community supervision. This concept of street-level boundary spanners was measured in this project as partnerships. This measured the perceived success or efficacy of the agency's interactions and relationships with their partners within criminal justice agencies and treatment and resource providers.

Research question 2

Policy changes and organizational culture were measured to explore how community supervision approaches have shifted over time. When policies change, the agency's organizational structure will be impacted, thus influencing culture. If an agency prioritizes RNR approaches and evidence-based practices in light of recent policy shifts, the staff's feelings and perceptions of support may be mixed. A more positively perceived organizational culture may result in more motivated staff and increased teamwork. Burrell (2012) discussed the importance of including staff in enhancing organizational culpability. Improving organizational culture by including staff in decision-making can improve the agency's performance. The measure of organizational culture explored staff perceptions of support from supervisors, office relationships and dynamics, staff-client relationships, and what is most important to the agency.

Recently, there have been efforts to change community supervision to focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment and incapacitation. This shift in policy may be difficult for staff that were previously working under a TNJ-oriented approach. The policies inquired about in this project were Ballot Measure 110, Senate Bill 1510, and House Bill 3194. These two measures were also based on information from Lutze's (2014) and Burrell's (2012) work. To explore the perceived impacts of these policy changes of line officers and supervisors, participants were asked to describe how and if the policies impacted their work. Responses regarding these policies and overall shift with community supervision were coded as a policy change.

Table 2. Community Supervision approach codes

Code	Definition
Case Plan	Discusses the importance, and use of case planning, or the lack of case planning Discusses tools used to develop case plans (e.g., risk needs assessment tools)
Violations	Mentions technical violations Mentions response to technical violations (e.g., jail sanctions, verbal reprimands, revocation, work crew, community service, etc.) Mediating factors discuss concerning sanctions and interventions (e.g., client honesty, client stage of change, client behaviors, client supervision status)
Partnerships	Community partnerships (e.g., treatment providers, homeless shelters, and other service providers) Criminal justice agency partnerships (e.g., law enforcement, the courts, district attorney's office, jail) Mentions the importance or status of partnerships (e.g., if it is satisfactory, well-integrated)
Philosophy	A personal mission and approach to the job For POs: perceptions of manager's mission independent of agency mission Factors that are deemed essential to approach their job (e.g., transparency, rapport) Statements referring to the participant's beliefs, excluding the agency's overall mission/beliefs
Treatment	Mentions client referral to treatment providers Barriers and challenges with treatment access and services Discusses the importance or lack of importance of treatment for clients
Risk-Needs Assessment	Mentions the use of Risk-Needs Assessment tools (e.g., LS/CMI, WRNA, PSC, Static, Stable, & Acute) Discusses criminogenic domains and needs Mentions the importance and relevance of the assessments to their work
Organizational Culture	Attitudes, beliefs, and values of the agency as a whole (e.g., how the agency approaches community supervision) Perceptions of staff support from supervisors/supervisor support for staff Perceptions of staff-staff interactions and staff-client interactions
Policy Change	Discusses a shift from the older, punitive approach to community supervision to present approaches (e.g., TNJ vs. RNR) Mentions ballot measure 110: effects of it on their approach to the job & community Mentions senate bill 1510: effects of the policy on their approach to the job & community Mentions JRI: what they have used it for, if they're using more evidence-based practices, the effects of it on their approach to the job & community

Analytical Plan

Each semi-structured interview was recorded through Zoom software before being transcribed verbatim by hand. Each transcript was uploaded into ATLAS.ti 23 to conduct a series of coding cycles. First, the researcher read a few transcripts and noted

potential patterns. Then, the researcher created seven preliminary codes based on the literature. The transcripts were reviewed, and preliminary codes were applied to relevant whole sentences. Codes also overlapped with one another. Overlapping was allowed because several key characteristics of community supervision intersect (e.g., risk-needs assessment tools, case planning, and technical violations). By overlaying the codes, important patterns may emerge that demonstrate different ways characteristics interact. A second cycle of coding was completed to ensure that the preliminary seven codes were representative of the data and relevant to the literature. An eighth code, Case Plan, was created during this second cycle. This was because the case planning process differs from risk-needs assessment tools and should be represented as a separate code. Once the eighth code was created, the researcher coded the interviews a second and final time. After coding, the researcher analyzed the data to answer the research questions. Data were reviewed using a cross-tabulation to demonstrate the frequency of codes across POs and supervisors. Examples from each code were selected for inclusion in the results section.

Results

To gain insight into potential differences, participant responses were grouped into four groups: POs, supervisors, urban, and rural. A cross-tabulation of each of these groups and the eight codes were created. Table 3 below provides further detail on the frequency of categories being discussed in interviews for POs and supervisors. POs discussed case plans (64.1%), violations (62.5%), and partnerships (59.5%) the most out of all codes. This makes sense when considering the responsibilities of POs to create and develop case plans, handle technical violations, and maintain community partnerships to provide clients with treatment and resources. Supervisors discussed policy change (50%), treatment (44.5%), and risk-needs assessments (43.1%) the most. Based on their role as supervisors, they will likely have more job duties related to implementing policies. Additionally, they are responsible for managing staff reactions to such policies, prioritizing treatment access and resources for clients, and ensuring that staff utilizes risk-needs assessments appropriately based on State expectations. Although there were fewer rural participants in this study, it is still important to consider the potential variation compared to urban agencies.

Rural participants discussed treatment (22.0%), policy change (17.7%), and philosophy and organizational culture (12.8%) the most of the eight codes (See Table Four below). Participants from rural agencies discussed risk-needs assessments, violations, and partnerships the least. In comparison, policy change (19.3%), treatment (16.5%), and organizational culture (14.0%) were discussed by urban participants the most. These findings suggest that urban and rural agencies may focus on similar

approaches overall, with rural agencies emphasizing their philosophy in addition to their organizational culture. It is essential to note that the rural group comprised three participants compared to eleven urban participants. This difference in group size may influence the frequencies of each code being discussed. Despite this, these patterns still provide interesting takeaways from the data.

Table 3. Frequency of row percent occurrences of supervision approach factors

Community Supervision approach factors	Row frequency total	POs (n = 7)	Supervisors (n = 7)
Case Plan	78	64.1%	35.9%
Philosophy	65	58.5%	41.5%
Partnerships	42	59.5%	40.4%
Risk-Needs Assessment	51	56.9%	43.1%
Treatment	105	55.7%	44.3%
Violations	56	62.5%	37.5%
Policy Change	116	50.0%	50.0%
Organizational Culture	81	59.3%	40.7%

Table 4. Frequency of row percent occurrences of supervision approach factors by county type

Community Supervision approach factors	Row frequency total	Urban (codes = 466)	Rural (codes =141)
Case Plan	78	13.3%	10.6%
Philosophy	65	10.9%	12.8%
Partnerships	42	6.9%	8.5%
Risk-Needs Assessment	51	9.0%	7.8%
Treatment	105	16.5%	22.0%
Violations	56	10.1%	7.8%
Policy Change	116	19.3%	17.7%
Organizational Culture	81	14.0%	12.8%

Community Supervision Approach Factors

Risk needs assessment tools and case planning

One priority pushed by the state of Oregon is the use of risk-needs assessment tools in the construction of case plans. The risk-needs assessment (RNA) tools used in Oregon are the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) and the Women's Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA). There are four generations of RNAs. The first generation was developed solely based on clinical judgment, the second focused on static risks (e.g., criminal history), the third incorporated static and dynamic (e.g., employment) risks, and the fourth incorporated responsivity components aligned with the RNR model (Hamilton et al., 2016). The LS/CMI is a fourth-generation tool designed to help with case management and planning by incorporating responsivity components. This tool is not modified by jurisdiction. Both risk-needs assessment tools are used in Oregon for clients who received a medium or high-risk level from the Public Safety Checklist (PSC, a purely static tool). These assessments identify the criminogenic domains and needs of the client. Participants were asked if they used risk-needs assessment tools for every case and if they could tailor case plans based on individual needs identified from the RNAs. Four broad themes emerged from the responses: a focus on higher-risk criminogenic domains, case planning is an informed decision-making process, following through with case plans can be difficult, and it is a time-consuming process. One participant explained they try to focus on the higher-risk domains identified by the LS/CMI to result in change after learning some of the lower domains were less helpful in changing client behaviors:

Yes, and we really try to - through the LS/CMI- we really try to focus on those pro-criminal attitudes and antisocial patterns. Those are the two main drivers. POs would really like to focus on companions because it feels like it's low-hanging fruit. But when you really start trying to get into how do you actually change behavior around

companions without changing pro-criminal attitudes or antisocial patterns, it's not as easy as it sounds. So, when we really first started doing case planning, POs were like, "Companions, I'm targeting companions." SMART goals looked like, "Go make three prosocial friends." How does someone who's using [substances] and unhoused and really criminal in their thinking, how do they make three prosocial friends? And then they're like, "Oh, this isn't as easy as it seems." So, we tend to focus most of our LS / CMI on pro-criminal attitudes and antisocial patterns just because those are the primary drivers. We don't change those things; we don't change what [the clients] think or how they think it's gonna be somewhat pointless to really focus on employment. So, if we're saying go get a job, well, they might go get a job, but they're not going to keep the job. We've not really created any behavior change- Supervisor 6 (F, 28 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Another participant highlighted decision-making processes were more informed through the use of risk assessment tools. These tools are designed to improve professional judgment in addressing client criminogenic risks and needs. Some participant responses appear to reflect this primary purpose, which practitioners must be aware of. Suppose probation and parole officers and supervisors are utilizing the tools in the ways they are intended. In that case, the client interventions and outcomes will be a result of more informed decisions rather than clinical judgments:

Even core correctional practices with assistance and motivational interviewing and the importance of building rapport and getting buy-in and using the assessments, which are also evidence-based, to inform case planning and referrals we are making. Whereas I think before, you'd see somebody that you knew had a drug problem, so you just refer them to drug and alcohol treatment. It wasn't necessarily because you did an assessment, and that assessment determined that they needed to have drug and alcohol treatment. It was because the individual PO saw the person and believed that's what they needed and then referred them. - PO 3 (F, 15+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Some believe completing the case plan and assessment themselves is the bare minimum, but actually carrying the plan out can be challenging. This PO's response reflected Taxman's (2014) concept of stabilizers, which refers to an individual's strengths. In

terms of case planning, it is crucial to identify and address such stabilizers or destabilizers to achieve sustainable and long-term change:

It is an option. I think that's bare minimum, though, and there's a lot more that goes into case planning. I mean, you can do an assessment. You can identify criminogenic domains. But I think there is more that needs to be done, like identifiers and reinforcers. Bare minimum, getting a SMART goal down is feasible, but when it comes to actually following through is where it becomes a bit more difficult because the other things take more time; it's not just auto-scored for you. - PO 6 (M, three years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

The time the assessments take may be overwhelming. A study exploring an agency's use of a fourth-generation RNA found that POs utilized it often but did not connect the results to their case-planning process (Viglione et al., 2015). POs explained they did not understand the applicability and background of the tool, did not trust the results, and felt the tool did not align with community supervision priorities to protect the community. Viglione et al.'s (2015) study suggests that there can be a disconnect between completing RNAs and case planning, despite policy expectations. Several participant responses in the present study reflected the challenges with the length of the LS/CMI and WRNA. A supervisor explained that while they are time-consuming, their agency still connects the results to their case planning process:

I would like to say yes. I certainly hope so. We have a lot of assessments, and I rolled my eyes because it feels like every time I turn around, there's another one. But it's good in a lot of respects because it helps us kind of narrow down what we need to do. However, it can be a little overwhelming because, certainly, for our general caseloads, the PSC takes very little time; it's really computer generated. The LS/CMI is certainly an interview; it takes up more time, I believe. The WRNA, the women's risk needs assessment, takes even longer than the LS/CMI. But it's pretty straightforward, so that's good. And then from that, they build a case plan, and that's in the case management system OMS [Offender Management System]... So yes. We certainly utilize those. They drive what we do because we've built our case plan from those assessments and the information that we receive when doing them. - Supervisor 5 (F, 35+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro).

Like Viglione et al.'s (2015) findings, one PO suggested that their agency has adopted these tools slowly. Their response reflects the difficulty surrounding the assessment and their attempts to make the case planning process more manageable. Despite this, some clients do not have case plans at the moment, regardless of state policy requirements:

I told you we had not been evidence-based. As it came out, we just kinda stayed old school. Nobody did case plans; nobody logged into OMS [Offender Management System], and now it's becoming not optional. Frankly, I think we should've all been forced to do it a long time ago; certainly, myself included. Because if you had forced me to do it and audited me- my performance honestly and openly said, "Dude, you know these things are coming, you're not doing them." Then I would've done them because I'm not; my reviews are extraordinary. They always are. But honestly, I don't think they always should be. I think that there are overt, [Supervisor] just keeps it positive and- don't look at the downsides, so now it's like- oh, not everybody on my caseload has case plans right now, guaranteed. Some of them do, but as I try really hard to embrace it, my goal is to make them as easy as possible and still actually have some meaning. - PO 2 (M, 16 years in criminal justice, rural)

Based on these responses, most agencies in the sample are using risk-needs assessment tools for the cases they need to, consistent with the RNR model. They can tailor case planning based on the individual's needs identified by the LS/CMI and WRNA to work toward client behavior change. Some agencies may use the risk assessment results to focus on different areas. For example, some prioritize antisocial patterns and pro-criminal thinking, while others focus on treatment. Most agencies are completing case plans for their clients. However, these case plans and assessments can be time-consuming, and the number of assessments can be overwhelming. Staff members may struggle to understand the importance of these tools in addition to effectively adhering to them and how they are intended to be used. Although challenging, RNAs and case planning are evidence-based practices that can reduce recidivism. Even with these tools, recidivism or technical

violations can occur, but they may happen less frequently if a client's needs and risks are being addressed.

Approach to technical violations

When clients are convicted and sentenced to probation or post-prison supervision, they are expected to follow a set of guidelines or conditions of release or in lieu of custody. If a client violates one of their conditions, this is considered a technical violation, generally a non-criminal event. Although the State of Oregon does have a sanctioning grid, there is still some discretion regarding decisions surrounding technical violations. This discretion emerges through the sanctioning grid in addition to the participant's values. Some may be more likely to prioritize accountability through harsher sanctions, such as jail. This approach aligns closely with the older, punitive-oriented/TNJ approach to community supervision:

As an agency, I try not to micromanage that [technical violations]. And I definitely allow my POs to; they're the ones that are intimately involved with these people and know the case ins and outs. So, I very much do let that individual PO make those decisions. Our office is very much more one; I think probably in the state, we hold people more accountable. We don't really let violations slide, and we probably do use jail as a sanction more than some other agencies in the state. Accountability is a big piece for us. I mean, the state has a sanctioning grid that we have to follow based on behavior level and risk levels based on assessments. And that is all followed as we have to by the Oregon Administrative Rules and everything like that. - Supervisor 3 (M, 16+ years in criminal justice, rural).

For other agencies, sanction type can depend on client behavior, repeated violations, or violation type. Honesty, prosocial commitments, and factors such as repeated violations can influence PO sanctioning decisions:

There's two types of goals. You've got a proximal, and you got a distal. A proximal is an easy goal to reach. Anybody can do it no matter where they're at. Even the most

ingrained drug addict can tell you the truth. So, we punish harder for those that are easy goals to obtain, but you don't do them versus distal. Distal goals are further down. So, if a drug addict, he can't just quit, say, "Okay, I'm not gonna use drugs anymore." It doesn't work like that. Especially with some fentanyl and heroin, there's a strong addiction to it, and there's a physical addiction to it along with mental. So, if they screw up on that, we tend to punish them a lot less because that takes time to get to that goal. - PO 4 (M, 30+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

So, one of the things that we don't jail on a whole lot right now is drug use, right? Measure 110 has essentially made drugs very permissible. Very low consequences for drug use; technically, still illegal, but low consequences... And so technically, within policy, within data, a PO would be okay, I suppose, if every time they gave a verbal reprimand... One of my values is that at a certain point, you know, yeah, the state's philosophy and the laws are pointing in a certain direction. But at a certain point, those low-level interventions aren't effective, and this person is a risk to the community. And so, if I'm looking at a PO who is addressing these behaviors and doing what they can; eventually, they're at a point where maybe we need to disrupt the behavior via incarceration. Then I'm okay with that... Because the behavior is not improving and it's consistent, and there are no consequences, then I feel like we have to raise the consequences to make it a less appealing behavior.- Supervisor 4 (M, 17 + years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Yeah, so we have a continuum that we can use, whether it be non-custodial interventions all the way to custodial. I think it's on a case-by-case person. It depends on this person and where they're at with their stage of change, where they're at with their current case plan, and their involvement in, I wanna say a constructive lifestyle. If they have a job, then that's something I wouldn't want to use a custodial intervention on because the job is one of the only prosocial things that they have right now, so I want them to keep that. It depends on the case, and really depending on their life, you can kind of use an array of different sanctions.- PO 6 (M, three years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

I always give a second chance unless it's unwanted victim contact. Even then, I've given second chances. But the honesty is a big piece there. I tell everybody up front at intake, "You lie to me; you're out. PO 4 (M, 30+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

A common response to technical violations was to use graduated sanctions. The approach to graduated sanctions in recent times relies on structured, gradual responses to client noncompliance with supervision conditions (Taxman et al., 1999). Furthermore, the type of sanction enforced depends on the number of violations (e.g., whether it is a client's

first violation) and the severity of the violation, among other elements. Participant responses aligned with this approach to sanctions and interventions, starting from the lower-level sanctions on the sanctioning guidelines grid:

So, standard approach that I take in my practice as being a PO is I'm starting with effective disapproval, "Joe, I see that you have used controlled substances. You have the condition on your supervision saying not to use or possess controlled substances except pursuant to a prescription. And I'm going to offer you outpatient treatment or a day of work crew for that violation. And then we do; we get to if you continue to engage in that behavior, how is that going to work out for you?" Then you generate some negative outcomes; then we shift focus to how can we make changes around that to keep that from continuing to happen. Followed by, "If you did that, how would that work out for you?" And then I ask them if they can make that commitment, and then we get to the notice of rights¹ and review that notice of rights. They either agree or they disagree to that sanction. And then I let them know this is now of the past, it's resolved, let's move forward. - PO 1 (M, 21 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Well, we do a fair amount of work crew. What I would say is we- I would like to think- that we don't jump right to jail. That we try lots of different options. Whether that's, "We're gonna send you to some cognitive restructuring classes, or alcohol and drug classes, or we're gonna have you come into our office more often until we can get you to a little more compliance frame of mind." Maybe it's seeking out more stable housing or appropriate housing. We certainly do cognitive workbooks and things like that within our own offices. So, POs work on that with people. We do case planning along with those assessments. And so, we don't typically start right at jail, but it does depend on the actions of the people on supervision. - Supervisor 5 (F, 35+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Two common themes with technical violations across this sample appear to be a more punitive approach compared to a graduated sanctioning approach. A more punitive approach may utilize jail as a sanction sooner and more often than a gradual, incremental approach. It was also important to many participants that the client's behavior and status in supervision were considered. Honesty, low-level violations, and client status (e.g.,

¹ A Notice of Rights notifies probationers and parolees of their rights to a violation hearing before the Court or the supervisory authority. This form includes a description of the sanction that will be imposed if the offender chooses to waive their rights to a violation hearing.

employment) may factor in sanction decisions for POs and supervisors based on their values. These findings suggest that personal values can influence a person's discretion.

Personal Philosophy

A person's mission will influence the way that they approach their career. To determine how personal missions and philosophies vary, participants were asked about their philosophy toward community supervision, how they approached the job, and what is most important to them. Most participants said they believed that people could change if provided with the support and tools they need. Participants also highlighted the importance of community safety. Furthermore, participants discussed participating in a fluid role, embracing a humanistic perspective, and utilizing evidence-based practices. Lutze (2014) calls attention to a fluid role in which POs combine social work, law enforcement, and case broker components. Research has demonstrated support for the effectiveness of this balanced approach. Some participants connected their philosophy to the way they identify in their work by taking a fluid or balanced approach:

So really, I really think the concept of equating us a bit more to a coaching model better aligns with this like, "I'm either law enforcement or I'm a social worker" because you don't have one hat and then another hat. This is a fluid role where you may go from having to arrest someone and place them in jail, but how you conduct yourself in that and how you treat that individual, you still take a trauma-informed approach. You have to look at the why behind their behaviors, you have to understand the research which is driving their criminogenic behaviors. Like, what are those needs that are causing these things to happen? You can't just look at this profession from a reactive lens. You really have to look at it from a proactive lens, which means understanding why people do what they do and then working with them to create the change so they don't continue to do what they do. And sometimes, that also requires that we place people in jail. Sometimes that means we revoke probation to prison, but that's not our goal to revoke people to prison. Our goal is to create behavior change so that we don't have to revoke people to prison. - Supervisor 6 (F, 28 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

I believe in the balanced approach, and I think that most would. I don't believe in enforcement over programs or any of that. I think you have to have everything. The further I've gone in my career, the more I view as essential. Supports put in place for people that we supervise, uh, [like] the housing. I view that as essential. Mentoring, I view that as essential. Alcohol and drug, and- uh, domestic violence treatment, all of that stuff, essential. Anything we can help the involved individual succeed; we try to do it. And I view that as essential. But I also believe in public safety as the number one thing that we're required to do. We have more information than our public safety partners about the people that we deal with. So we know what we need to do with them. So, again, my whole career, I've believed in the balanced approach. If someone's really wanting the opportunity to change, a lot of them don't have the support in place in their family structure or who they associate with to help them. It's on us. We're the one discipline in public safety that is required to try to help somebody reform and also enforce. The kind of cliché is we wear two hats, counselor and police officer, and that's true. And we can do them any one instance. And my philosophy is about right in the middle. Between public safety and support for offender rehabilitation. - Supervisor 2 (M, 30 years in criminal justice, rural)

Some POs also discussed the importance of treating a client as a person first. Many participants explained that in the past, this was often not prioritized in probation and parole agencies. They explained that when agencies were operating under the “trail ‘em, nail ‘em, and jail ‘em” approach, staff would call clients names, speak negatively about their process, and treat them with disrespect. However, there has been a shift in this over time. Participants highlight the struggles that clients have faced before being placed on supervision and that now the goal is to work with them to succeed:

You know I treat them as people, as human beings first. We call them clients here in [county], not necessarily offenders. And they're a client second. And I kind of approach it as they did some crime. They got caught, they got in trouble, they probably went to jail, they definitely went to court. They got convicted. They might have gone to jail again. And now they're in my office. So, we're at the end of that really negative experience that they brought upon themselves. So, I don't need to continue that negative experience throughout probation. I think now I, we kinda start fresh that day or start, maybe not fresh, but we start there and work as a team going forward to help them succeed through their probationary period. - PO 7 (F, 16 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Another concept that was considered essential for a few participants was to approach community supervision from an evidence-based perspective:

My philosophy is we should do what research tells us works. When I started, research did not guide my decision-making in really any way. I used my discretion as I saw fit to impose consequences on individuals that were under my supervision. And what drove my decisions was really made my own feelings, my own sense of justice, what I thought this individual deserved or needed at that time. And I would say there's always gonna be some level of officer discretion. And that's not necessarily a bad thing... But the way that I had used it in the past, it was terribly inconsistent and did not result in real change, which is the purpose of our profession. We're not, as a community corrections staff, we're not here to simply be the enforcement pawn of the court. Or the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision. We're here to change the course of people's lives so that they exit the justice system and never return. That's our purpose. And using research to guide our decision-making is where we need to be. And that research has been out for decades.
- Supervisor 7 (M, 18 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

It appears that PO and supervisor's philosophies have shifted over the years to reflect current shifts in policy generally. For example, Supervisor Seven's philosophy to follow the research aligns closely with the State's push toward using evidence-based practices such as RNAs and case planning. By focusing on what is considered effective, staff will be more likely to ultimately achieve this goal of people exiting the justice system and moving forward with their lives. Another characteristic of successful community corrections is effective and integrated collaboration with other criminal justice agencies and treatment/resource organizations.

Community Partnerships

In community supervision, collaboration with other agencies is necessary. Lutze (2014) conceptualizes POs as street-level boundary spanners that work to form connections and partnerships with other agencies to create client change. Probation and parole agencies may partner with community organizations, such as treatment providers

and homeless shelters. They may also develop partnerships with other criminal justice agencies, such as the court, district attorney's office, jails, and local law enforcement. All participants said that they have community partnerships in place. Consistent with the concept of street-level boundary spanners, participants cited these partnerships as necessary to achieve client success and reduce recidivism. However, the perceptions of those community partnerships were mixed:

We work very closely with the DAs [District Attorney's] office on prosecution, writing recommendations for clients; we have [a] program which is an alternative to incarceration where they're being placed on downward departure, which is essentially a last chance. We work very closely with everybody at the courts, including public defenders working with our clients. We also have direct connections with patrol. We'll often do what we call reengagement sweeps which is people that we know are on warrant; we'll try and go to their house or their last known address based on a bunch of things, just try to get them re-engaged in supervision. And we partner with [city] police department, [county] sheriff's office, to do that. We work very closely with law enforcement; we get law enforcement calls at night sometimes. It's not like an everyday thing...The jails are often not holding people, and sometimes people need to be held for community safety reasons. So, they'll call us for a detainer, and based on the community safety reason, and also if they're in compliance with their supervision, we'll place detainees down. We work very closely with treatment providers, trying to get clients connected. We work with families. We work with DHS. We have our own building that has [a service provider], which is pretty awesome. - PO 6 (M, three years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Well, like we were talking about with [county] behavioral health, we have partnerships with them. And we're trying to grow that partnership. We're working with one individual over there, specifically working on MoU, Memo of Understanding, and trying to see if there's some creative things, we can do to improve service accessibility for the mental health client. So, it's in its infant stages. Now, we've always had good relationships with them, but now we're trying to tackle barriers. Which is you know; I think that's a good thing. Obviously, we work with our local law enforcement agencies. District attorney's office, courts, victims assistance, we co-partner with a number of treatment providers because we do have some good subsidy housing options. So yeah, we work pretty closely with a number of agencies. Our POs are pretty well-versed at getting folks what they need." - Supervisor 4 (M, 17+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

In contrast, some participants felt that their agency's partnerships could be improved.

There are struggles with communication, treatment, and collaboration:

I do think there could be more collaboration with police, DAs office, and courts, the judges specifically. I think we experienced that more when I had [a prison diversion program] because a lot of that stuff was trying to identify people that were being charged with drug or property crimes that could have been given a downward departure. And intentionally giving them the downward departure if there were children involved so the kids were not being displaced. And so, a lot of that would have taken more effort pre-sentence to try to work out some of those nuances. And so, I experienced that, I think, more with [the prison diversion program] but I do think overall that we could do a better job on collaborating with community partners in general. And I think that even goes to training with other law enforcement agencies, like cross-training. Or scenario-based training with them. Like when we're out dealing with somebody in the community or when they're out dealing with somebody in the community so that when our roles overlap where there could be more collaboration even on how things are handled in that capacity. So, so, I do think, I think we have decent working relationships... DAs office seems like it has quite a bit of turnover. That makes it hard at times, but they're pretty good usually if we call and have questions or need to staff something. And we can do that. So, in that, I mean, there are some counties I think that have way worse working relationships with community partners, and I think we have pretty good, but I think that there could be some improvement on that. - PO 3 (F, 15 + years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

We got partnerships with like local treatment agencies that are pretty open and work pretty well. They respond back to us with progress reports. As far as our local jail, I would say we're not really well integrated. Everyone seems to kind of be working their own angle on this, even though we're working with all of the same individuals. I would like to see that more integrated. I'd like to see some of, like, if we put a client in custody that is kind of at the end of their probation and they have a prison term that's gonna be imposed at this time that they would actually hold them in jail, and not just release them with a court date. Because the client knows they're going to go to prison, so that just makes it all more risky, I guess. But the jail just looks at it. They have other priorities. They have staffing issues. They have bed issues. They have all those things. So, it can feel like there's not a lot of teamwork going on. But I would like to see that improved." - PO 7 (F, 16 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

One participant suggested that their partnerships are simply not working when it comes to criminal justice agencies. This can result in additional challenges in providing client access to resources they may need to be successful if communication is limited:

Are the different elements of our criminal justice system working together in a, with a common purpose and a common goal? No. There are silos that keep every part of the criminal justice system apart from each other. There's information that's readily available to me. I can get police reports. I can talk to people and get information. There's just a total lack of utility in a bunch of that. I don't get contacted by law enforcement when they make contact with my clients out in the field, and they're behaving badly very often. I'm not being contacted all the time. - PO 1 (M, 21 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Every participant emphasized the importance of community partnerships in their interviews. However, their ability to be a street-level boundary spanner depended on other organizations' willingness to work with the participants and their agencies. Some participants reported being satisfied with their partnerships, while others felt frustrated at the lack of communication and collaboration. This suggests that there is variation in community partnerships among the agencies in this study. Based on participant responses, effective and well-integrated partnerships appear essential to the PO's ability to provide clients with the necessary resources. As a result, agencies with less active community partners may experience additional barriers to achieving effective client change. One such avenue that could be impacted is treatment services for clients.

Treatment Services

Based on the RNR model, a core element of successful supervision completion is a treatment program that effectively addresses the client's identified criminogenic risks and needs (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Participants were asked about the process of getting clients to treatment, if they have treatment in-house, and any barriers to treatment that may exist. Some treatment interventions supported by research include cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT), sex offender treatment programs, therapeutic communities, drug courts, and mental health courts (Lutze, 2014). All agencies emphasized the

importance of treatment for clients on supervision. Many participants cited CBT programs, drug courts, and mental health services as common treatment resources available to clients. Some agencies reported using in-house treatment or groups, but most did not at the moment. One of the most predominant challenges with treatment was resource availability, such as a lack of detox beds across the state. Additionally, client motivation and insurance challenges were highlighted. At the organizational level, a supervisor suggested that POs are unable to know if the treatment providers are providing treatment that is based on evidence:

And in [county], we don't have a whole lot of treatment options because it's just a smaller county. But let's just put it this way. Ideally, we would be referring them into a program that would focus almost solely on motivation, or the PO would be case planning around increasing motivation. Before they went into a [specific cognitive program] but like I said, if someone was, you know, they were vacillating between contemplative and precontemplative, which is a very common thing. They may come in today and their precontemplative, and they come in the next day, and they're contemplative because of some event that took place between point A and point B...Yeah. So, the last "R" [responsivity] of RNR would be the biggest concern. And those are things that are hopefully identified, although they can be harder to identify because some of them are spoken or understood, and some of them come up over time...So, those responsivity issues or responsivity concerns are mostly; I would say, if not almost wholly, client-driven. And a lot of them revolve around motivation. So, that's why we really want to be careful when we're making referrals to treatment agencies for someone who's precontemplative because we're just making a referral for someone that's gonna show up. Although we're required by court, we're going to make it anyway. We would hope that treatment agency had some sort of ability to address levels of motivation. And whether they can do that or not really isn't necessarily is something we would know or not. Although we can ask, it's kind of; I wouldn't say it's unknown, but it kind of is.-
Supervisor 1 (M, 20+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

POs and supervisors also discussed the importance of their role in assisting clients in accessing treatment. They need to be able to help motivate their client to attend treatment in brief intervals because that is all the time they may have:

Fentanyl is heroin on steroids, and the detox from that is so violent and painful. That even if they want- they come in, and their head's in the right spot, they really are motivated, but they are so hooked, and there's nothing I can do. That anything quick, and who wants, "Yeah, I'm gonna get off heroin or fentanyl or meth" But eh, in about two weeks or so, whoever says that they live in a world of immediate gratification. I get my window. Sometimes it's only 5 minutes long. And I can't just snap my fingers and say, "Okay, here's what you're going to do, report to here. They're going to help you get through this stuff. Then we're gonna talk about treatment and stuff." And I can't do it, and you wanna talk barrier, that's a barrier. They're working on it. [Treatment provider] is, I think they're gonna have two detox beds or whatever. Where they're helping, but otherwise, we have to ship them over to [town], and then there's a waiting list and the follow through to transportation. - PO 2 (M, 26 years in criminal justice, rural)

One supervisor would like to eventually implement in-house mental health services to assist in improving client access to assessment and treatment. They also suggested that in-house treatment can reduce some of the barriers seen by other treatment providers:

That, my goal is to eventually have in-house mental health services at least. And then, hopefully, down the road, have in-house substance abuse treatment. Just for the sheer fact that I think it's much easier, communication is much easier. Because a lot of times we have, we run into problems with treatment providers only wanting to cover treatment services that are covered by OHP [Oregon Health Plan]². Sometimes there needs to be more, but they kinda hit their maximum level where if it's something that's being funded out of my budget, I don't really care if insurance reimburses us for it. If it's treatment that the person needs, and it's just offered. So that's kind of ultimately what I'd like to do. But at this point, we don't have that. - Supervisor 3 (M, 16+ years in criminal justice, rural)

Based on participant responses, the agencies in this study do prioritize treatment for their clients. Furthermore, this appears to be an essential characteristic for both POs and supervisors. Some agencies may lead their own CBT groups, network with external providers, or have counselors available in the office. While most participants believed the treatment was based on evidence, some participants called attention to the fact that they could not know if the providers were adhering to program fidelity. Other challenges with treatment included client motivation, insurance, and transportation to treatment services.

² The Oregon Health Plan (OHP) provides access to health care coverage for low-income individuals in Oregon.

The emphasis on treatment and responsibility supports the notion that community supervision has shifted away from a risk-oriented approach to embrace the components of the RNR model equally. This shift in community supervision impacts individual POs, the agency as a whole, and its culture.

Community Supervision Shifts

Organizational culture

Organizational culture varies across the seven agencies in this study. Most participants said they felt staff interacted positively and professionally with one another. This may be important, as a positive work environment can improve the organization's effectiveness (Burrell, 2012). Several participants who reported more years of experience in criminal justice explained that the organizational culture had shifted over time. A common theme among participants was the existence of two cultures operating simultaneously within an organization. While some participants indicated they felt satisfied with their agency's organizational culture, others did not believe supervisors supported staff enough. For example, a PO identified challenges between supervisors and staff when it comes to staff creativity and perceived support:

So, if somebody needed a bike, if somebody needed clothing, they are supportive of people thinking outside the box for that. I think it's just more structurally within the organization itself. It probably would be said, "Okay yeah, thank you." But then nothing would be followed through. So, yeah, I think just organizationally like that... I would say that the majority of POs right now don't necessarily feel supported in their own interests and ideas.- PO 3 (F, 15+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Some participants explained that their agency was moving away from a more punitive-oriented culture:

But as far as a management philosophy, and even statewide really, we're moving more towards interventions and trying to not just throw people in jail. When I first started, everything was jail. Jail, jail, jail. Come in with bad breath, jail. And the sanctioning grid was so much higher. You're trying to change their behavior overall. Because if you do this, you're saving a bunch of other future problems. So, that's really our push right now, is to do more of that and less of the thumping of the head and throwing them in jail. - PO 4 (M, 22 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

One supervisor explained that there are two cultures within their organization. This can sometimes be challenging, especially with the implementation of new practices and shifts to a new way of working in community supervision:

I think that we are, as the profession shifted, we have two different cultures operating within our department. We have the culture that I came into. So, we have some of our senior staff who are very much missing the old ways, right? They're like, "Ugh, I have to do all of this case planning stuff." So that culture still exists. It's smaller and smaller and smaller, and there's less and less of that stuff because many have slowly transitioned into like, "Oh, so I have a different role here." Some of them, if you gave them the chance, like, you can go back to revoking everyone to prison, they'd be like, "Yes!" We've also hired a ton of new people in the last five years, eight years. That we have hired with a different model. And so, we're hiring people that are innovative, people that want to be coaches, people that want to do skill building and skill practice. People that want to seek solutions, and so we essentially have two different generations and two different cultures that are existing simultaneously. Sometimes they bleed over; sometimes, there is pushback and resistance from one group or from the other group. So, it's a constant trying to like manage morale, right? - Supervisor 6 (F, 28 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Similarly, a PO from the same agency explained that this new culture focuses on treating clients with more respect:

Um, I think with our culture the way it's going, I think people, the number one difference used to be they weren't treated the same, but everybody is starting to realize that people are people. So, I think just listening more—obviously, with our coworkers, we listen. It's a skill that, as a PO, you have to have is the ability to listen. I think we all do a good job of listening, connecting, and then helping each other out. And I think it's starting to become that way as a PO with their clients. I don't want to say everybody does, but you know we've got some of the older guys here that still like to do the job the older way. So, I think there's definitely a shift in culture, you know, treating your clients like humans. That sounds bad, obviously, because we don't want to dehumanize them as they're on supervision, but that's how it seemed like it used to be. But with today's age, it seems like

everybody's a bit more open-minded and willing to listen and kinda have that responsivity factor. Whereas they probably didn't use to as much. - PO 6 (M, three years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Perspectives on organizational culture vary between POs and supervisors. POs appeared to be more focused on feelings of support from their supervisors, staff-client interactions, and how their role as a PO has changed. In comparison, supervisors may focus more on implementing new practices, improving positive and professional staff relationships, and aligning hiring practices with their goals regarding organizational culture. An overall theme discussed by both groups was that community supervision's culture has shifted from a punitive approach to a more evidence-based approach consistent with changes in policies at the state level.

Policy changes at the state-level

Shift from punitive to rehabilitative. In the 1990s, the “what works” movement started to gain traction in replacement of the “nothing works” movement (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001). This movement re-emphasized the necessity of using scientific research and evidence to inform criminal justice policy decisions. Participants explained that previously, criminal justice policy emphasized increased condition enforcement, monitoring risk, and harsh sanctions. Now, there is more emphasis on evidence-based practices, core correctional practices, case planning, and risk assessment:

When I started, a downward departure was just a chance to put somebody in prison and especially from coming from being a cop. I was a fairly touchy-feely cop. I guess you'd say a little more. But I still liked putting people in jail. And man, I got a downward departure. I'm like, "Oh, I'm gonna bust them." Now we bend over backwards again and again. If somebody goes to prison on that, they have earned it five times over. So, it's just more lenient more working with people, yes. - PO 2 (M, 16 years in criminal justice, rural)

Definitely, there's been a huge change over the past decade of planning our action and our main role. Yeah, a huge change in culture, you know you see it a lot because the job is much different than it used to be. We've got young people like you and I that are starting to get into the job, and we know what to expect, whereas them, everything is changed. The job used to be a lot easier took a lot less brain power, I like to say, and a lot less empathy. So, even just my time now, we had this [evidence-based practice] training recently. - PO 6 (M, three years in criminal justice, urban/metro).

I started in 2002, and back then, there was no such thing as case plans, there was no such thing as the Oregon case management system, there was no such thing as-I mean, computers looked different back then. They were just big boxes. And we really just tried to catch people doing stuff. That was the point of what we did. And now we still investigate. Once we have evidence that violations have occurred, we still try and follow through on those things, but at the same time, we're also case planning around behavior. And the PO is, in a lot of ways, sort of become the change agent. In a lot of ways because that case plan with the use of the LS/CMI is so comprehensive. So we know where almost all of the risk is at. And that's through the use of the LS/CMI, the ODARA [Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment], the WRNA, and the Static/Stable and Acute. I mean, you name it, we can assess it. And as long as we're doing those assessments to fidelity and scoring them appropriately based off of the manual, we can pretty much tell you where the dysfunction is at. And start to build a case plan around that. - Supervisor 1 (M, 20+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

However, some agencies may not fully embrace the idea of a more rehabilitative and evidence-based approach to community supervision. Consistent with Viglione et al.'s (2015) work, some community supervision staff may not trust these newer tools:

Um, it seems to be almost county by county. Where the eastern part of the state and maybe here too a little bit, well, I don't know, it's hard to say, is maybe not as sold on a lot of the criminal justice theory that's being trained on and pushed upon. Where I think other counties have bought into that more, and good or bad, again, I don't know. So I definitely see that there's been a switch in mindset, you know, for some places, and others have been a bit more resistant. - Supervisor 4 (M, 17+ years of experience, urban/metro)

One participant explained that there has been a shift in the way community supervision operates, but they would like to see it shift back to public safety:

Yeah, I mean definitely. There has definitely been a shift. And I think that the pendulum will probably swing back a little bit towards public safety. I think that probably needs to happen. But yeah, when we first started, it was surveillance, it was curfews and frequent

contacts, and we weren't assessing need. And that is all we would do. And there weren't a ton of resources. There was always drug and alcohol to a limited degree, but not the programs that you have now. And you know, going back to being evidence-based, there's been a big shift in how we do our jobs and the philosophy of probation. - PO 5 (F, 30 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Overall, the participants in this study provided their lived experiences of this shift from the “nothing works” movement to embracing “what works.” The “what works” era has also resulted in subsequent policy changes in Oregon.

Justice Reinvestment Act. Participants were asked about their use of Justice Reinvestment (JRI) funding. Each agency represented in this project receives JRI funding. However, the knowledge surrounding the agency’s use of JRI funding varied. POs tended to have less understanding of their agency’s use of JRI as compared to their respective supervisors. Some common uses for JRI included funding specialized PO caseloads, evidence-based programs, and other interventions agencies would otherwise be unable to use. Although less common, some participants did express skepticism toward the outcomes of JRI and if it is accomplishing what it is supposed to. One supervisor explained they apply their JRI funding to PO caseloads and specialty courts:

I have our justice reinvestment unit that includes our veteran's treatment court, our adult recovery court, our [diversion] program. And then our [diversion] program, which is our- they take individuals who have prison eligible sentences, they call them downward departures meaning the judge has departed from a prison sentence in a downward fashion, meaning I'm gonna give them community supervision. So, our officers, those are our smallest caseloads, they're capped at 30, and those individuals work very, very closely with those folks in an attempt to divert them from the prison system. - Supervisor 7 (M, 17 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Other agencies use JRI funding to pay for programs and resources they would otherwise not have access to. These programs can provide further tools to aid in their client's success:

We use JRI to kind of be able to pay for the things that OHP won't pay for. To pay for the things that community partners won't pay for. To build in those extra supports. So, we rely on JRI to be able to do the things that otherwise we wouldn't be doing. It would be kind of a step backwards for us because we would be kind of going back to the days of POs having to be resource brokers. Because we wouldn't have some of these embedded partnerships, and some of the cognitive behavioral stuff just wouldn't be there. So, we'd be like, "Go to SUD treatment, go here, go there." So that's really filled in a lot of the holes for us that other funding won't fill in. - Supervisor 6 (F, 28 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

In contrast, a supervisor explained they felt as though the process surrounding JRI and funding was not transparent, which is connected to Viglione et al.'s (2015) article regarding a lack of trust or understanding of evidence-based practices (EBPs). A lack of transparency can result in skepticism if the policy is achieving the goals that are set, which can then impact the use of EBPs:

There's also some things with JRI that didn't feel transparent, I would say, for lack of better words. And I think that's because, you know, the people who, the brain, the thinking tank that came up with the philosophy of JRI, definitely wants to make sure that they have favorable outcomes. So, I think that's caused some issues, too. - Supervisor 4 (M, 17+ years in criminal justice, urban/metro).

Some variation is present across the agencies represented in this project. While every agency is currently using JRI funding, the beliefs surrounding this policy and uses of the funding differ. Most seem to favor this policy because it allows for additional resources for clients and can lower caseload sizes for specialized caseloads, which provides POs with more time for their clients compared to a general caseload. However, not every participant was as supportive of this policy. If POs and supervisors do not feel confident in a policy or practice's ability to reduce recidivism, they may not maintain fidelity, as supported by Viglione et al. (2015). Since JRI, Oregon has passed additional policies that could impact the perspectives of criminal justice actors such as probation and parole officers and supervisors.

Ballot Measure 110 and Senate Bill 1510. Substance use has been a priority for community supervision for years. Until recently, the use and possession of illicit controlled substances were prohibited under General Condition 2 for clients under supervision. However, Senate Bill 1510 rewrote the general conditions of supervision. It changed this condition to be a special condition that a judge or releasing authority can add to the client's supervision. In addition to this policy, Oregon recently passed Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalized personal possession of illicit controlled substances up to a certain quantity. Participants were asked how these policies have impacted supervision. Most of the responses showed a clear divide in perceptions of these policies. Some believed that this type of approach to substance abuse could work because substance abuse has remained a problem despite the previous laws and supervision conditions in place. A few participants expressed disappointment after initial feelings of hope or support for these policies. However, most participants felt that these policies negatively impacted factors related to their jobs (e.g., substance use, public safety, etc.):

There's just a push in Oregon to keep people from going to jail, even probation, prison, um, and then, of course, the legalization for the most part- it's not legal, but the decriminalization of drugs has affected our numbers on street crimes. Um, it just seems different. I mean, good grief, we'll get drug dealers that have a significant amount of drugs, and they'll get treated like they had a bowl full of weed. So, it just, um, it's different than it used to be...It's a changing time, so how we deal with it much more leaning on your motivational stuff, trying to make them see what's in it for you, how you can have a better life—trying to make them choose as opposed to force. Some people that works well, but I also, ... wasn't that long ago I got a thank you call from a guy who's been sober four years, he runs NA [Narcotics Anonymous] meetings here now, back with his family. Cool. But he always tells me, "If you hadn't thrown me in jail or revoked me, I'd never be here." And even my people, I still have not had one of them tell me they think that legalizing drugs is a good idea. Isn't that kind of ironic? They're strung out, and they will tell me, "Well, what are you thinking?" And I'm like, "Hey, that wasn't me." And the no jail, they will tell me again and again even though they don't want to go to

jail, they're like, "It's what I need. You know that." It always kind of puzzles me that we got here. - PO 2, (M, 26 years in criminal justice, rural)

I mean, it has been difficult for us. And I think for me personally it was, it's kind of offensive. Because we had a mechanism in place to decriminalize drug use with conditional discharges, and then the public comes along and votes this in [M110]. And we were doing kind of that hard work. We were referring people to treatment, and we were supporting people through recovery, and we were trying to get them clean and sober and in clean and sober housing and medically assisted treatment. And then now we're faced with having Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalizes almost everything, and police agencies are not writing citations for some of that. I mean, some of them are, but some are not. They don't report, there isn't a warrant issued, and so clients are getting two different messages. That it is legal, and then we're trying to convince them that that's not prosocial and that there's just so many consequences to the drug use. So that, yeah, it's been super difficult, and I'm hoping that legislature will look at that and repeal it or, you know, do something different. I think it's been a horrible social experiment. - PO 5 (F, 30 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

In addition to challenges with getting people to treatment, the problem of client overdose was often referred to as significantly increasing since M110 and SB1510 passed:

This one did have a major effect on how we supervise people [Senate Bill 1510]. Senate Bill 1510 was a bill that a big portion of it limits what police officers can do out in the field. It also had a big effect in community corrections because it actually changed some of our general conditions. Prior to this, everybody on supervision in the State of Oregon had a condition that they were not allowed to use or possess controlled substances as a general rule of thumb. Since 1510, not everybody gets that condition. There has to be reasons put on either through the court, the Board of Parole, or prison. So, this one did have a giant effect on how we do business. Basically, we still collect UAs [urinalysis testing]. We still hold people accountable for that substance abuse if we start seeing that's an underlying cause of the problem. We're definitely requesting those conditions being put on through the courts or through the Board of Parole. We are seeing a giant increase of use of controlled substances. So, I've been in the law enforcement arena now for going on 16 and a half years, and I am just shocked by the sheer amount of drugs that we see now. Just, I mean, massive amounts of drugs coming in and out. Which is also taking a toll on POs personally because, I mean, we've in the last year had more people on supervision die from overdoses than I had in the first five years that I was here. So, I mean, we're having clients that are actually dying from overdoses. Which takes an effect on everybody. - Supervisor 3 (M, 16+ years in criminal justice, rural)

However, not all participants felt that Measure 110 was a damaging or ineffective policy. Instead, it is an alternative and new approach to a recurring issue. Some individuals, like this PO, believe that it can be a good thing to reduce the stigmatization of substance use:

Yeah, so I'm all for it. It reduced my caseload. It reduced number of POs that work in this office. I don't think that the war on drugs worked. And this is the way to remove the war on drugs, at least in the State of Oregon. I'm all for that. Stigmatizing people that use drugs with illegal convictions make no sense at all. [M110] makes a lot of sense to me. I don't think that I have the view as most of the people that I work with who would say that the sky is falling. In fact, I think it's a good thing. Legal intervention doesn't work to create change in terms of substance abuse disorders. Substance abuse treatment providers don't reduce people's use. People reduce their use. And they seek out places where they, if they want to make changes they, can make change. Period. And people use drugs. People have been altering their state of reality for a millennia. This is not new. Just the stigmatization of people who use substances really has gone through the roof. I don't see Ballot 110 as being bad at all. - PO 1 (M, 21 years in criminal justice, urban/metro)

Both POs and supervisors held strong opinions on this topic, with most expressing frustration with the current situation. A few participants supported these policies; however, they were the minority in this project's sample. These findings provided essential insight into community supervision staff perceptions of these recent policies.

Discussion

This study aimed to answer two research questions regarding probation and parole agencies in Oregon: 1) How do POs and supervisors define their approach to community supervision? and 2) How have POs and supervisors experienced shifts in state policy? Line staff and supervisors from seven Oregon probation and parole agencies were interviewed to answer these questions. Most participants explained that probation and parole had shifted to a less punitive approach over the years. Perceptions of the impacts of larger state-wide policies varied across participants. Furthermore, the results suggest that the critical differences in supervision approaches pertained to risk-needs assessment tools, case planning, sanctions, personal philosophy, community partnerships, and treatment.

Similar to past research (Viglione & Taxman, 2018; Viglione et al., 2015) on risk-needs assessment tools and case planning, some participants explained that they struggled to tailor case plans to individual needs. One participant stated that some of their clients did not have a case plan, despite the current policies. These difficulties appeared to occur in urban and rural counties in this study. Although some supervisors acknowledged the challenges associated with case planning and RNAs, they still emphasized the importance of tools. POs were more likely to highlight the challenges that the literature has also identified. Furthermore, the participants who expressed challenges often had experience in the field before these newer strategies. In this case, it may be challenging for people to unlearn or modify their approach to the job, especially when these more recent techniques are time-consuming and require further training. Additionally, this could be due to

improper training, the use of clinical judgments, or a lack of time. However, most participants explained that they could individually tailor case plans based on the results of the risk-needs assessment tool. Thus, demonstrating an overall adherence to the RNR model's emphasis on utilizing a tool to inform case plans, which based on research, should reduce recidivism.

Participants' approaches to technical violations were based on discretion and the Oregon sanctioning guideline matrix. Practices reflected graduated sanctions, which are incremental responses to client noncompliance (Taxman et al., 1999). Many participants explained that they would start with the lower-level interventions on the Oregon sanctioning guideline matrix and work their way up while considering their client's behavior. If a client were to commit a severe violation, participants explained they would respond appropriately (e.g., jail sanctions). Personal values expressed by participants generally reflected their philosophy of community supervision. For example, those who valued honesty, respect, and empathy in deciding sanctions often cited the same values when describing their mission and values. Those that valued accountability and public safety also expressed that when asked about their mission. This intersection suggests that an individual's philosophy can shape how they approach factors such as technical violations and issuing sanctions. One supervisor explained they were more likely to rely on jail sanctions than others. A PO from a different agency stated they wished they could use jail more. These responses are more consistent with a TNJ or enforcement approach (Vera Institute of Justice, 2013). Although others did not express these sentiments, they often explained that they did work with individuals who shared these thoughts. This

suggests that while the overall structure of probation and parole is changing to align with RNR and CCPs, the approach to technical violations may be harsher depending on the supervisor and PO philosophy rather than the organization itself.

A commonly identified personal philosophy was that of a fluid or dual role. This is consistent with Lutze's (2014) discussion of the law enforcement, social worker, or fluid philosophies of community supervision. Most supervisors discussed the dual role as their identity explicitly. This dual role can create conflict for officers and supervisors due to community safety expectations and client rehabilitation. These goals often seem to be at odds with each other. Lutze (2014) explains this role conflict can result in fears of liability. POs will likely face the consequences if they utilize an EBP with their client, who later reoffends. At the same time, if they use a harsher, more risk-centered approach, the client's needs will not fully be addressed or treated. Based on several participants identifying with this concept of a dual role, it is likely that they may face such role conflict as well. This fear of liability may also explain why some participants were more likely to use harsher approaches to technical violations. If the public expects public safety, then POs and supervisors may strive to achieve that to avoid potential scrutiny for using a newer method, such as an EBP. A focus on public safety is more reflective of past approaches to supervision based on the emphasis on managing and minimizing risk through methods of surveillance, incapacitation, and condition enforcement (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001; Taxman, 2008; Robinson et al., 2012; Feeley & Simon, 1992).

In contrast, a dual role may emphasize the importance of public safety by using prevention tools and resources, such as RNAs, case planning, and treatment, to address

clients' criminogenic needs. In consideration of POs, many participants emphasized the importance of maintaining respectful, transparent, and professional client relationships to help clients succeed. Supervisors were more likely to discuss their overarching role in the field (e.g., dual role). At the same time, POs were more likely to focus on their relationships with their clients and exacting positive behavior change. These findings suggest that personal philosophies and perspectives across the sample vary from a more public safety emphasis to a dual role to a more humanistic, client-centered approach. Such philosophies could impact whether participants embrace the role of a street-level boundary spanner in working with other service providers and stakeholders.

Community partnerships existed across all seven agencies. However, the perspectives on these partnerships were mixed. Lutze (2014) and Burrell (2012) emphasize the importance of probation and parole agencies working with other agencies and organizations to result in effective supervision as street-level boundary spanners. Most participants stated they would like to see some improvements in their partnerships but were satisfied overall. Some participants identified challenges and wanted a more integrated approach to partnerships. A few commonly mentioned areas for improvement included communication, joint training with law enforcement, and more partnerships. POs and supervisors may face challenges communicating with partners about their client's needs. Furthermore, some participants noted that they might not be notified by other criminal justice actors, such as local law enforcement when contact is made with their clients. One participant explained that some partners viewed their agency negatively, making collaboration and information access extremely difficult. Some

participants cited COVID-19 as a reason for decreased quality of their community partnerships. Others, often belonging to smaller agencies, explained a lack of resources within their jurisdiction. It appears that all participants want to be street-level boundary spanners. However, their ability to do so depends on the agency they work for. Some agencies have good working relationships with their partners, while others do not. One of the most prominent community partnerships in probation and parole is with treatment providers.

Each participant emphasized the importance of treatment in client success, consistent with the RNR model. However, the treatment approaches varied (e.g., in-house treatment, PO groups, referrals). Several participants explained that their treatment providers were using evidence-based practices to address client needs, while others said they could not be sure if providers were maintaining fidelity. Some participants felt that treatment in its current state was ineffective, and clients needed more resources. Most participants highlighted the limited number of treatment service providers available within their jurisdiction. One supervisor connected the limited treatment providers and their agency's ability to receive grant funding. Supervisor Three explained that because they wanted their clients to obtain the necessary treatment, they would send them to other jurisdictions. Because of this, Supervisor Three did not have many "successful" cases to highlight as examples when applying for grants because the cases had to be transferred to other counties. This finding suggests that if an agency does not have the available resources, the supervisor's ability to fund and implement further resources could be

strained. At the line officer level, POs are responsible for motivating clients to attend treatment if it is identified as an area of need.

Furthermore, POs are primarily considered responsible for client success and client recidivism. Andrews et al. (1990) found that appropriate rehabilitative treatment programs can reduce recidivism by approximately 50%. If the client's criminogenic needs are not being met or addressed effectively, this could inhibit the reduction in recidivism that evidence-based treatment programs have been found to produce. Thus, resulting in an ongoing cycle of the PO working with the client to motivate them to attend treatment, to treatment not having the desired impacts on the client, to client recidivism. Therefore, appropriate treatment programs that maintain fidelity and are available to agencies are essential to both POs and supervisors. An emphasis on treatment for client success can be connected to the shift in an agency's organizational culture and values.

In terms of organizational culture, participants mostly reported a positive and healthy workplace environment. Some participants noted the existence of two cultures existing at once, which contributed to difficulties. These two cultures represented Lutze's (2014) discussion of different philosophies within community supervision. Participants explained that one culture reflected TNJ ideologies and expressed frustration with newer policies. These individuals preferred the job when it was more risk and control oriented. The second culture reflected the ideology of a fluid or balanced approach that is more accepting of RNR, EBPs, and CCPs. One culture may be more likely to feel satisfied depending on the supervisor's philosophies. For instance, Supervisors Two, Three, and Five promoted more public safety and accountability overall. Therefore, the first culture

may be more likely to feel supported than others belonging to this second culture. In support of this idea, participants from rural and urban agencies suggested that staff did not feel supported by their supervisors. Although some received support to pursue creative ventures related to their clients, they were not involved in the agency's overall decision-making processes. As Burrell (2012) emphasized, organizational culture is essential for agency effectiveness. For supervisors, it appears important to manage the tensions between the two cultures to promote an effective and balanced approach that most staff support. Furthermore, this balanced approach must reflect the State's current policies and practices.

All agencies in this study reported using JRI funding to implement and utilize EBPs. Perceptions of training availability were mixed. Some participants felt they had ample training opportunities, while others felt the training provided little direction on accurately using these new EBPs. This difference in perceptions could be a result of differences in personal philosophies. For instance, participants that prefer to focus on accountability and public safety may be less inclined to want to spend time on new policies that seem to take away from that.

In contrast, participants who value evidence-based practices as a prevention source may be more likely to perceive the training as effective and important. Consistent with Salisbury et al. (2019), it appears that Oregon agencies lacked internal policy alignment and systems to support the implementation of new practices. This was mainly present in the discussion of Ballot Measure 110 and Senate Bill 1510. Most perceptions of these policy changes were negative. Some participants felt the policy changes were

occurring too quickly, without time to consider the effect on agencies or the community. Others suggested that the policy changes were a failure that took away accountability components of supervision. However, a few participants believed that these policies could be favorable. These perspectives could be tied to the idea of the tempered radical and street-level bureaucracy theory (Kras et al., 2021; Maynard, Moody, and Portillo, 2011). From this lens, front-line employees are largely responsible for enacting policy changes. If they do not agree with policies or do not find them effective, they may diverge from implementation and fidelity. Although participants did not explicitly state they were diverging from policies, many expressed the wish to undo these policies while stating that it was their job to follow the laws.

Overall, the findings from this exploratory study provide a rich and deeper insight into the approaches used by probation and parole agencies in Oregon. Probation and parole agencies appear to accept and implement newer policies and EBPs, with some variations. Understanding Oregon agencies' probation and parole components and approaches can help inform future research and policy needs.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this project. First, this purposeful sample was not representative of the State of Oregon. Participating agencies were not randomly selected and did not represent the state. The majority of the agencies in this study were more populous and classified by Census data as urban/metro. Two of the seven agencies were classified as rural. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small with just fourteen participants from seven agencies overall. Due to the exploratory nature of this

study, this does not impact the findings from the project. Although the study's results cannot be generalized to the State of Oregon as a whole or the nation, it can still provide useful insight into patterns within the state. There seem to be few, if any, studies that explore this topic in depth within Oregon. Future research is needed to gain a more representative grasp of Oregon's approaches.

Another important limitation is the potential for self-selection and self-reporting biases. Some agencies specifically selected which POs and supervisors would be completing the interviews, resulting in bias if the selected individuals were expected to represent the agency more positively. If this were to occur, the project would not necessarily gain the most accurate depiction of how the agency operates. In regard to self-reporting bias, participants might have filtered their responses to questions about their agency and themselves to provide a response that may be viewed as "best" by the interviewer. This project asked questions about state-enforced policies and practices that agencies are expected to follow. If a participant were to report something else, their agency might be represented in an unfavorable manner. However, before the start of the interview, each participant was informed that any identifying information about them or their agency would be removed from the final report for this project. Furthermore, they were reassured that their colleagues would not be informed of their participation or what they chose to discuss in the interview. Despite this limitation, this study still produced 14 in-depth interviews with probation and parole staff across Oregon. Information from these interviews can be used to recognize differences across counties, which could impact factors such as recidivism.

Implications

This study explored how POs and supervisors characterize community supervision practices in Oregon and how state policies impact them. The findings from this study suggest that most of the agencies interviewed appear to be using approaches supported by the evidence. However, there are still inconsistencies across the agencies regarding implementation consistency. For example, some participants explained that they were adopting practices at a slower pace, whereas others have actively embraced these EBPs. Oregon could work to standardize processes such as case planning to address these inconsistencies. Supplemental training on RNR principles, CCPs, and other practices may be beneficial for agencies struggling to implement newer practices.

Implementing newer, time-consuming practices that can add to a person's workload can be challenging. Therefore, policymakers may need to consider current agency workloads when discussing further policy implementation processes. It is also important for practitioners and policymakers to remember they share the same goal: to reduce recidivism. If evidence-based research exists, it is essential for agencies to maintain fidelity after implementation. To accomplish this goal, both parties' responsibilities and needs must be recognized. Some areas of need identified explicitly by participants in this study included a need for detox beds for clients struggling with substance abuse and more treatment providers for sex offenders, domestic violence, and mental health. This appears to reflect the challenges participants face with implementing M110 and SB1510. More access to funding, perhaps through JRI, for treatment and resources may aid PO and supervisor buy-in to these policies. Furthermore, supervisors

should include their staff in the conversation surrounding policy implementation. Prioritizing staff acceptance of these policies is critical for policy effectiveness.

The current study fills a significant gap in the literature by exploring the perceptions of both POs and supervisors concerning community supervision and policy. Furthermore, it lends support to Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy. It appears that front-line workers in community supervision form attitudes and beliefs surrounding policies, which could impact their adherence. Without fidelity, the policies may lose the strength of their effects on recidivism and community supervision. Therefore, future research should continue to fill this gap by focusing on line workers and management. Without understanding how the street-level bureaucrat's interpretation of the policy impacts the implementation, the policy's success will be less prominent. This consideration is important for researchers and policymakers alike to improve the policy implementation process and reduce potential barriers.

Additionally, most research on probation and parole appears to be focused on the effectiveness of interventions and less on individual perceptions and attitudes. By conducting interviews, researchers may be better able to inform policymakers of what is currently feasible versus not. Researchers should also continue to explore the challenges that arise from EBP implementation, including program fidelity. If organizations cannot maintain program fidelity, the EBP loses its positive impact on recidivism, thus potentially minimizing effects on client success. Campbell et al.'s (2019) study discusses six steps researchers should take when evaluating evidence-based practices. First, the programs and practices must be operationalized and defined to sort programs. The next

three steps include determining if the results consistently demonstrate a reduction in recidivism, if the research sample matches the target population, and if the program implementation maintains fidelity across settings. Then, researchers can determine if the program is effective. Following this framework may be helpful for future researchers assessing evidence-based policy effectiveness and implementation. Lastly, participants suggested future research should explore how probation and parole agencies and officers handle officer wellbeing. Some concepts to focus on could include officer stress management, the organizational culture surrounding mental health and well-being, and challenges that arise in response to this stress. Based on participants in this study suggesting a focus on this topic, it seems likely that other participants and agencies may benefit from this type of study. This career can be incredibly stressful, which could lead to negative consequences for workers. Therefore, understanding ways to counter or prevent further stress and trauma successfully is essential. Furthermore, researching this topic could improve policy expectations and workloads for community supervision staff.

Takeaways

Despite the research limitations, this study contributes to the growing research on probation and parole in three important ways. First, it appears that personal philosophy and values held by POs and supervisors can impact the characteristics of community supervision approaches. It can contribute to how they use their discretion with clients, evidence-based practices, and other policies. Second, variation exists across each of the seven agencies within the study. Although most participants appeared to embrace RNR and CCPs in their work, some still supported harsher approaches emphasizing

accountability and public safety. Some prominent examples of this were using risk-needs assessments, case planning, and technical violations. Lastly, how POs and supervisors interpret state policies can have important implications for implementation. Their response to policies can determine their level of fidelity in carrying out and enforcing policies, which in turn can influence policy effectiveness in reducing recidivism. The findings suggest that the seven agencies within the study largely utilize evidence-based practices to supervise individuals and have shifted away from the older, punitive, “trail ‘em, nail ‘em, and jail ‘em approach.” However, there are still some challenges in place. This suggests that some probation and parole agencies in Oregon are following “what works” but now need further guidance in doing so effectively.

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Appendix A – Supervisor Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your official position? How many years have you been working in this position?
 - a. What is the average caseload size in your office? What caseload do you work on? Have you had experience in a different caseload? If so, for how many years?
 - b. Do you have previous experience with other positions within the criminal justice system?
2. How would you describe your race and gender?
3. Describe your daily experiences at work.
 - a. How would you describe a typical meeting with a client? What about initial meetings?
4. Can you describe your overarching philosophy on community supervision? How does this translate to or influence your agency's overall approach to community supervision?
 - a. How does this relate to the performance measures you use within the agency? Can you describe the performance measures you use to measure client outcomes and staff performance? (e.g., client attendance to meetings, treatment status, condition violations, employment, etc.; positive relationships with clients, proactive, motivated, directs clients to resources, utilizes EBP skills, etc.)
5. How often do you use the PSC or LSCMI in constructing your case planning and management strategies?
6. I know that case plans can be time-consuming. I was wondering if you can tailor planning based on the client's individual needs or is that not a feasible option based on your workload?
7. Do you offer treatment in-house? Do POs run groups at your agency?
 - a. Can you describe the treatment and services you offer at your agency? (if they answered yes/only ask if this was not clearly established in the original answer)
8. Are there any community resources that you and your agency try to refer clients to?
 - a. How would you describe the process of getting clients the help they need with treatment?
 - b. Are there any barriers? Why do you think they exist?
9. Do you have any partnerships with other agencies in your jurisdiction? If so, can you describe how they operate?
10. Are you familiar with what has been going on with the Justice Reinvestment Act (House Bill 3194) within your jurisdiction? Has there been any connection between community corrections and JRI specifically?
11. How would you describe your agency's organizational culture? For example, are staff encouraged and supported to pursue creative ventures they want to try, or are staff members encouraged to carry out their tasks in the same way as everyone else?

- a. What is valued/devalued? How do the staff interact with one another and their clients?
 - b. Are you/staff willing to try new interventions and trainings/skills?
12. Have you noticed a major difference in your work after the implementation of measure 110? Can you explain what is going on with measure 110 in your jurisdiction?
 13. Are there any areas of improvement within your agency that would improve your ability to do your job and improve client outcomes?
 14. Is there anything about how you approach your job that I missed, or anything that you believe that I should keep in mind as I continue with this project?

Appendix B – PO Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your official position? How many years have you been working in this position?
 - a. What is the average caseload size in your office? What caseload do you work on? Have you had experience in a different caseload? If so, for how many years?
 - b. Do you have previous experience with other positions within the criminal justice system?
2. How would you describe your race and gender?
3. Describe your daily experiences at work.
 - a. How would you describe a typical meeting with a client? What about initial meetings? What about condition violations and sanctions?
4. How would you describe your current approach to your career and clients? What is most important to you? How do you go about the job based on your personal mission?
5. How would you describe your manager's overarching philosophy on community supervision? How does that influence your work?
6. How often do you use the PSC or LSCMI in constructing your case planning and management strategies?
7. I know that case plans can be time-consuming. I was wondering if you can tailor planning based on the client's individual needs or is that not a feasible option based on your workload?
8. Do you offer treatment in-house? Do POs run groups at your agency?
 - a. Can you describe the treatment and services you offer at your agency? (if they answered yes/only ask if this was not clearly established in the original answer)
9. Are there any community resources that you and your agency try to refer clients to?
 - a. How would you describe the process of getting clients the help they need with treatment?
 - b. Are there any barriers? Why do you think they exist?
10. Do you have any partnerships with other agencies in your jurisdiction? If so, can you describe how they operate?
11. Can you describe any community supervision approach changes that you have noticed over the years that you have been a PO?
 - a. What types of strategies are you using? How do these differ from before? To what degree do you know if they are based on evidence?
12. How would you describe your agency's organizational culture? For example, are you encouraged and supported by your supervisors to pursue creative ventures you want to try, or are staff members encouraged to carry out their tasks in the same way as everyone else?
 - a. What is valued/devalued? How do the staff interact with one another and their clients?
 - b. Are you/staff willing to try new interventions and trainings/skills?
13. Have you noticed a major difference in your work after the implementation of measure 110? Can you explain what is going on with measure 110 in your

jurisdiction?

14. Are there any areas of improvement within your agency that would improve your ability to do your job and improve client outcomes?
15. Is there anything about how you approach your job that I missed, or anything that you believe that I should keep in mind as I continue with this project?