Incarceration and Re-entry for Provincial Prisoners: Is there Hope?

By

Kelsie N Zerebeski

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Criminal Justice degree.

Department of Criminal Justice Master of Arts in Criminal Justice
The University of Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
April 2023

Abstract

This thesis explores the impacts of hope on the experience of incarceration and re-entry into the community and how ex-prisoners make sense of and foster hope in their lives. This research was conducted through qualitative interviews with nine participants in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Qualitative interviews discerned four main themes emerging: the overall experience of provincial incarceration and the positive and negative aspects of that experience, the process of re-entry and the barriers that ex-prisoners face in that process, the motivations to change and begin desisting from crime and finally, the way in which ex-prisoners feelings of hope impacted their experiences throughout this process. Amongst the key findings is, the participants who lacked the feeling of hope during their imprisonment generally felt more disoriented during their re-entry in the community. Next, although prisons are painful and negative spaces, they can also offer an opportunity for reinvention (Crewe and Ievins, 2020). As such, many of the participants in this research found various ways to "reinvent" themselves post-imprisonment. In alignment with procedural justice literature, this research found that when prisoners had positive interactions with correctional officers, it profoundly impacted their feelings of hope. As such, the participants who had procedurally just interactions described feeling more hopeful in their prison sentence and later re-entry into the community. This research also found that although these ex-prisoners had shorter sentences, they still felt various strains in their process of re-entry. The most predominant way that the participants navigated their re-entry into the community and further desistance from crime was by distancing or "knifing off" old peers (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Despite having difficulty interpreting hope, after thought and reflection, each participant made sense of the term by attributing it to a more positive future.

Keywords: *Hope, Imprisonment, Re-entry, Desistance, Ex-prisoner, Strains, Reinvention.*

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

A large body of knowledge that remains unstudied concerns the ex-inmate provincial population in places such as the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, the study site of this research. Many individuals who are incarcerated in Saskatchewan receive short sentences in the provincial correctional system; these sentences average between one and three months long (Statistics Canada, 2022). This thesis explores the role that hope plays in former offenders' lives while they were incarcerated, as well as during their process of re-entering the community. Hope plays an important role in the thinking process that allows the mind to work toward both creating and achieving goals. As such, when offenders feel a lack of hope for the future, they are also less committed to following institutional rules (Piquero, 2016; Abderhalden et al., 2020). Conversely, when offenders have higher levels of hope, they tend to use pro-social coping mechanisms which lowers their levels of psychological distress from incarceration (Wai-Ming Mak et al., 2021). Therefore, this research is imperative in exploring how hope plays a role in offenders' lives both when they experience short term disruption as a result of incarceration as well as during their re-entry into the community.

Snyder and colleagues (2000) explored the cognitive emotional state of hope and the role it plays in preventing problems and enhancing positive actions. They found that hope provided both motivation and helped to create pathways for prisoners to achieve goals (Snyder et al., 2000). Snyder et al.'s (1991) cognitive theory of hope is the most commonly accepted theory of hope and will therefore be used throughout the research. This research seeks to apply Snyder and colleagues' hope theory to explore the dichotomy of hope and the role it plays in prisoners experiences of incarceration. This research will explore how ex-prisoners talk about and experience hope while incarcerated and during their re-entry, including how conceptions of hope may have shaped their prison experiences in potentially more positive ways. Further, this

research will explore the role of hope in prisoner re-entry, analyzing the concept of hope and the ways it impacts the prisoner's re-entry in the community. In the current literature there has been no application of hope theory in the context of Canadian provincial corrections. By interviewing formerly incarcerated people who are recently released from Saskatchewan provincial corrections, this research will expand our understanding of the role of hope in short-term incarceration and re-entry in the community.

This research will focus on the strains of incarceration but also the possibly more positive or reinventive experiences of punishment, and their impact on re-entry. An emerging body of literature indicates that in addition to producing various pains and harms, some prisoners share more positive accounts of their imprisonment that challenge traditional conceptions of incarceration (Crewe & Ievins, 2020; Johnson-Listwan et al., 2013; Ugelvik, 2021). Although the harms of prison are still evident, this literature suggests that there can be positive change during this time as well. Crewe and Ievins (2020) found that prisons can act as a reinventive institution, whereby positive, internal change for the prisoner can occur. Crewe and Ievins (2020) found that among various different groups of offenders, change occurred during their prison time and they were no longer the same as their pre-prison selves. For example, within their subgroup of participants that struggled with addiction, prison time allowed for them to stabilize their mental and physical health and as such, these participants were also able to work on their relationships with their family members (Crewe & Ievins, 2020). Thus, these participants used their time in prison to reinvent their identity and be released with a new outlook.

Hope is an important factor to consider throughout the stages of incarceration through to re-entry. It is imperative to consider the ways in which Snyder et al. (2000) hope theory and goal achievement intersect with the social construct of prisons and prisoners. That is, hopeful thinking

may direct prisoners away from negativity and towards positivity which may limit some of the negative impacts of prison (Wai-Ming Mak et al., 2021). This thesis will subsequently explore the literature on hope, strain, incarceration and re-entry. I will explain the methodology used in this thesis, the sampling strategies that were utilized and the interview questions that were asked. Next, the data analysis section explores the four main themes found in this research which are, the experience of incarceration, the process of re-entry into the community, participants motivations to make a change and finally, the way in which hope impacted the entirety of the process. Finally, this thesis will end with a discussion of the findings and conclusion, including some limitations of this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hope Theory

2.1.1 What is Hope?

There are two major theoretical constructs of hope in the literature: hope based on individual cognition and hope based on individual emotion (Snyder et al., 2002). The focus in this thesis is on the cognitive construct. In cognitive theory, hope is a motivating emotional state that is based on individual agency and motivation to meet one's goals (Snyder, 2002). "Hope is defined as the process of thinking about one's goals, along with the motivation to move toward (agency) and achieve (pathways) those goals" (Snyder, 1995 p.355). This definition is clear, concrete and widely accepted across the realms of positive psychology. However, many people find it difficult to put hope to work. Goals that are too vague do not lead to any sense of motivation nor are they helpful in feeling a sense of achievement (Snyder, 1995). Conversely, individuals that have goals that are visualizable and fully describable to themselves and others are considered high-hope individuals (Snyder, 1995).

Generally, individuals must have a concurrent determination and ability to meet their goals in order to foster high levels of hope. Snyder (2002) outlines that hope is more than just an emotion; rather it plays a large role in the thinking process of goal attainment. He argues that emotions are the result of individual perceptions of their likely success at goal attainment. So, when people believe that they can achieve their goals, this will foster more positive emotions. Therefore, hope is more than an emotion, it is a key part in the cognitive thinking process for goal attainment. Snyder et al. (2000) note that higher thoughts of hope within the mind will lead to more successful goal-oriented outcomes. Conversely, when individuals have low levels of hope, they experience unsuccessful goal pursuits and a diminished sense of self-esteem and well-

being. Consequently, Snyder and his colleagues conclude that it is the perception of the lack of progress towards goals that causes a reduction in well-being. Thus, in cognitive hope theory, hope is a fundamental component of the motivating and discouraging factors affecting perceptions of goal attainment. Cognitive hope theory places a high importance on the role of hope in the larger thinking process and presents goal pursuit as the driving force behind cognitive emotional states (p.252).

2.1.2 Hope and Motivation

Within the prison and desistance literature the concept of hope is often portrayed as something that (ex)prisoners either do or do not have (Laursen, 2022). However, when the concept is examined as binary, it disregards the complexity of hope (Laursen, 2022). As such, hope must be viewed on a continuum. Hope often does not arise from specific opportunities but it is rather a search for meaning and anchors to hold onto in the exploration of a new reality (Laursen, 2022). Thus, by understanding the concept of hope as open-ended supports the analysis of people's capacities to both endure suffering and imagine a better future (Laursen, 2022). When applying this to the prison context, short-term prisoners' ability to be hopeful is viewed as radical because it is fostered through conditions of suffering (Laursen, 2022).

Applying hope to the prison context necessitates a shifting from a focus on prisoners' deficits to embracing a more strengths-based positive approach. Hope can have a positive influence on offenders and propel them toward success. In contrast, when offenders have low levels of hope, they are at a much greater risk to reoffend post incarceration (Martin & Stermac, 2010). Scholars have found that when offenders feel less hope for the future, their cognitive emotional state is associated with the maintenance of negative offending behaviours (Martin & Stermac, 2010; Moulden & Marshall, 2005). In congruence with Snyder's (2002) hope theory,

offenders with low motivation tend to struggle with believing that change is possible and thus they are less likely to become goal oriented and more motivated to return to their previous lifestyles of engaging in crime. Moreover, a lack of control in life can lead to a sense of helplessness and further inability to identify the pathways present to achieve goals (Moulden & Marshall, 2005). Martin & Stermac (2010) found that when offenders possessed the feeling of hope, it worked as a protective factor that resulted in less risk. When offenders have hope and optimism for the future, they become more focused on achieving their goals because they believe their goals are realistic and attainable.

In relation to attainable goals, oftentimes, education is the link to attaining those goals and thus having a positive impact on hope (Boulainne & Meunier, 1986). Prisoners who attend educational programs while they are incarcerated are less likely to return to prison after their release (Vacca, 2004). Some prisoners express that they are more inclined to participate in programming and education when they see clear opportunities on how it improves their capabilities for success after release (Vacca, 2004). As such, the prisoners who participate in the education and programming have a better chance of employment than the prisoners who do not participate (Vacca, 2004). Much of the success is directly related to the gained literacy skills as they function as a necessary facet of daily life (Vacca, 2004). In addition to education, ex-prisoners often find hope and positive self-change through doing peer work and peer mentoring (Nixon, 2020). Ex-prisoners often find a new meaning and new conception of life through doing peer work whereby offending behaviours become incompatible with their new self (Nixon, 2020). Through both the experience of education and peer mentoring prisoners gain knowledge and many even find that they change as a person. In these contexts they tend to feel

accomplished in successfully completing a task which increased their image of the self and has

positive impacts on their hope for their futures (Boulainne & Meunier, 1986; Nixon, 2020).

Ex-prisoners hopes and motivations can act as tuning points in their lives. Carlsson

(2013) outlines that many ex-prisoners' motivations to change can be portrayed through a

personal change of wanting to "be a man". The idea of "being a man" is classified by performing

normative masculine roles such as being a provider and head of the family (Carlsson, 2013).

Carlsson (2013) found that the desire to "be a man" can also play a key role in desisting from

crime. One reason some ex-prisoners find the motivation to desist from crime is through their

role of being a father (Prior & Farough, 2021; Sandberg et al., 2022). For this population, they

reflect on their criminal activity and how it not only impacts their role as a father but also

impacts their children's lives (Prior & Farough, 2021). Moreover, fatherhood can provide a sense

of normalcy during a time of disruption such as imprisonment (Sandberg et al., 2022). Involved

fatherhood can connect prisoners to mainstream society and be used as a means of motivation

and hope when they want to be seen as "normal" men (Sandberg et al., 2022). As such, the idea

of being a good or involved father can provide both hope and motivation to transition into a pro-

social life (Carlsson, 2013; Prior & Farough, 2021; Sandberg et al., 2022).

Having hope may then increase the likelihood of a prisoner succeeding upon release. In

terms of lowering levels of recidivism and increasing pro-social reintegration back into society, it

is important to consider an individual's cognitive mental state while they are incarcerated, along

with social support systems in the community. Social support systems are extremely important

for ex-prisoners as they can provide pro-social coping mechanisms and mitigate the strains that

are experienced during incarceration and re-entry (Chouhy et al., 2020). Some of the strains can

be mitigated through instrumental family support mechanisms such as financial support or

housing in re-entry (Mowen et al., 2019). Instrumental familial support can result in the

provision of more necessities, and this promotes more pro-social outcomes for ex-prisoners

(Mowen et al., 2019). Increasing an individual sense of hope while incarcerated will lead to more

positive, goal-oriented behaviours and, combining it with community support systems, can lead

to a greater likelihood of goal achievement (Chouhy et al., 2020; Dekhtyar et al., 2012; Snyder et

al., 2002).

In the context of ex-prisoners who struggle with addiction, hope has been found to be one

necessary component to a successful recovery process (Jason et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2018).

Accordingly, environments that foster hope and have a positive outlook on goals are more

effective in treating substance use disorders (Gutierrez et al., 2020; Jason et al., 2016; Stevens et

al., 2018). Moreover, it is imperative that individuals in recovery have context specific

perceptions of hope, this fosters a space for them to imagine their futures that include some

resilience (Stevens et al., 2014). The context specific hope and resilience reinforce the

individual's ability to make pro-social goals and carry them out (Stevens et al., 2014).

When prisoners are able to achieve their plans for success, they are less likely to return to

the prison system. Conversely, when prisoners are incarcerated and lack the feeling of hope for

the future or possess what is referred to as "futurelessness" they are more prone to engage in

misconduct and offending behaviours (Abderhalden, et al., 2020). Abderhalden et al. (2020)

analyzed the relationship between prisoners' perceived levels of hope for the future or lack

thereof and how it related to their commitment to follow institutional rules while incarcerated.

They found that prisoners who held feelings of futurelessness were also less committed to

following the rules within the institution, which was consistent for both male and female

offenders. In controlled analysis, Abderhalden et al. (2020) found that feelings of futurelessness

had the highest association with rejecting institutional rules. Thus, when offenders feel hopeless

for the future while they are incarcerated, they are much more likely to engage in misconduct

within the institution. This is an important finding because the presence or absence of prisoners'

hope for the future can have an impact on the overall effectiveness of correctional institutions.

2.2 Prison and Its Strains

2.2.1 The Problem of Prison Regimes

Prisons have multiple goals, including rehabilitation. Arguably the most common

conception of prisons, however, is centered around the notion of security and their function to

house dangerous, law-breaking individuals to ensure a safer community. This image of prisons is

not surprising given their visual presentation of high walls and fences, barbed wire, large watch

towers for correctional officers, security cameras and restricted access (Frois, 2016; Morris &

Worrall, 2014). From the outside, prisons are the epitome of security, however, the inside tells a

different story. Prisoners often experience a lack of security. Consider that the inside of prisons

are often characterized by large groups of potentially dangerous individuals, forced into long

term cohabitation in limited space (Camp & Gaes, 2005; Frois, 2016). For many prisoners who

reside in the general population areas, the limited space and lack of privacy can have detrimental

effects on their experience within the prison walls. Similarly, prisoners who have their own cells

are usually housed in a higher security level area but still face day to day insecurity within the

institution (Camp & Gaes, 2005; Frois, 2016; Ross, 2007). The lack of security within the

institutions can greatly impact offenders' experience of incarceration and lead them to focus

more on survival than rehabilitation (Ricciardelli, 2014).

In institutions where physical altercations are normal, prisoners must engage in violence

or risk future victimization (Ricciardelli, 2015). Living in prison tends to be classified under

tensions of aggression and violence, where a perceived toughness is the key to survival

(Ricciardelli, 2015). Displays of hypermasculinity and brute force are encouraged and even

necessary to cope with imprisonment (Ricciardelli, 2015). The loss or failure in an altercation or

even refusing to engage in the fight may result in the prisoner earning a devalued masculine

identity (Ricciardelli, 2015). Thus, resulting in not only a low status in the jail but being a target

for violence and being taken advantage of in the future. In addition to having a strong masculine

identity, Ricciardelli (2014) found that within the "inmate code" men must engage in physical

altercations and violence while they are incarcerated. In accordance with the "inmate code" the

incarcerated men understand that violence is their only option if they want to avoid victimization

and theft while in custody (Ricciardelli, 2014). Ricciardelli (2014) posits that many incarcerated

men adopt the "inmate code" because of a sense of threat, risk or lack of safety they feel within

the formal institution. Thus, incarcerated men must adhere to the informal rules of the "inmate

code" as a way to create a sense of safety and reduce the risk of victimization (Ricciardelli,

2014).

In addition to a lack of security and the threat of violence, prisons can be punitive and

again, this can be a focus that detracts from the potential for rehabilitation. The prison system is

a punishment in the form of the loss of freedom for people who break the law. However,

retributive forms of punishment tend to be prominent within many institutions (Schaefer, 2017).

Prison conditions are oftentimes both physically and mentally harsh, with issues of overcrowding

and verbal abuse, and this is justified by the commonly shared notion that being imprisoned will

deter an individual from reoffending. Schaefer (2017), however, argues that harsher prison

conditions equate to increases in reoffending, as individuals who are incarcerated in these

circumstances are more likely to be reconvicted with short relapse periods. Along with the issue

of reoffending, there is evidence that suggests that incarceration can lead to an increase in

criminal behaviour. Several studies have shown that offenders given custody were more likely to

reoffend compared to equivalent groups with similar charges and histories who received a

community disposition (Joliffe & Haddeman, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2017).

Simply being incarcerated leads to many issues within the institution that are difficult to

guard against. Schaefer (2017) outlines how being incarcerated severs community ties and

relationships. Being in custody leads to structural barriers that interfere with re-establishing

positive relationships outside of the institutions and reintegration. These barriers include the

discrimination from being an offender and a criminal record which acts as a barrier to many jobs

in the community (Travis, 2002). Offenders also face the lack of continued relationships with

friends and family members while they are within the institutions (Durnescu, 2019).

2.2.2 Prison and Its Pains

Generally, society views punishment in terms of deterrence whereby having harsh prison

environments will deter individuals from committing crimes and returning to prison (Johnson-

Listwan, et et al., 2013). In this perspective, the prison experience itself is functional and meant

to be painful enough to ensure individuals both 'pay' for their crimes and desist from

reoffending. Sykes (1958) in his seminal work found that prison was a painful experience but

that it actually promoted deviant behaviour and oppositional culture (Johnson-Listwan et al,

2013). Thus, harsh prison environments and experiences can lead to more negative outcomes

(Johnson-Listwan et al, 2013). Sykes (1958) outlines five major pains of imprisonment that

cause individuals to feel various strains on their wellbeing while incarcerated, but the three key

pains I will focus on are the loss of liberty, the deprivation of autonomy and deprivation of

security.

The loss of liberty can be understood as the basic loss of freedom due to being incarcerated and the adjustments it takes an individual to become institutionalized. The loss of autonomy is understood as the complete loss of individual choice within the institution, including being told when to wake up in the morning or having to follow incomprehensible rules. Finally, there is the deprivation of security. Within many institutions there are living units where individuals do not get any privacy or a safe space to have personal belongings amongst the other offenders.

The lack of autonomy is one of the inherent pains of prison that is unavoidable. Sykes (1958) argues that the loss of autonomy is detrimental to prisoners because it reduces them to a state of child-like helplessness. That is, when prisoners cannot exercise personal choices or have to ask for everything, like children, it can have larger impacts on them. Conversely, when prisoners have a perceived sense of personal decision making, they are more satisfied with their autonomy and in turn, have a higher quality of life (Van Der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017). As prisoners spend most of their time doing daytime activities, the perceived autonomy in making choices based on their daytime activities leads to a higher quality of life (Van Der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017). It has been found that practicing rituals while in prison serve as a coping mechanism for penal regulations and help prisoners to feel a sense of control and agency in their lives (Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). Some of the common rituals that are practiced in every institution include activities such as working out, drawing, or reading, each being a way to perform agency which encourages coping (Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). When these rituals are practiced, it promotes a sense of re-establishing control in the prisoners' lives (Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). Further, these rituals show that regardless of the institution or security classification prisoners are in, they find ways to cope and adapt to their situation (Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). So, having little to no autonomy in prison can lead to invoking childhood trauma (Sykes,

1958). But having perceived autonomy and decision-making powers can lead to satisfaction with autonomy and a higher quality of life (Van Der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017).

Sykes (1958) argues that these strains are inevitable consequences of simply being incarcerated, however, they can have detrimental effects on individuals' wellbeing. Johnson-Listwan et al (2013) argue that strains entail situations that are physically and psychologically distressing to individuals which tend to result in negative emotional states. Crime can be a response to strain as it can create situations to escape from experiencing strain such as selling drugs to alleviate the strain of poverty (Johnson-Listwan et al, 2013). Crime such as drug use can also alleviate the negative emotions associated with experiencing strain which consequently suggests that experiencing strain actually increases crime and criminogenic behaviour (Johnson-Listwan et al, 2013). Thus, making prison environments harsh and creating strain has adverse effects on desistance from crime and promotes negative emotional states for offenders.

2.2.3 Mental Health and Negative Emotions

It is important to consider the mental health of offenders and the relationship between imprisonment and how that might engender negative emotions. Walker et al. (2014) found that upon admission into jail individuals experienced an increase in depression and anxiety. When the offenders perceived that there were not adequate services available to them to meet their mental health needs, their symptoms worsened (Walker et al., 2014). Inadequate mental health services are a particular issue in overpopulated institutions (Mackenzie & Amirault, 2021). The combination of incarceration and overpopulation within institutions can trigger mental health struggles. The mental health of offenders is a concern for the public because a lack of mental health care while incarcerated is shown to increase their rates of recidivism (Mackenzie & Amirault, 2021). Similarly, Johnson-Listwan et al., (2013) found that individuals with prior

histories of violence and those who have been diagnosed with mental disorders are more likely to be arrested than their counterparts who do not possess these struggles. Thus, it is imperative to pay attention to individuals in conflict with the law who also possess mental health struggles as it puts them at a higher risk to reoffend.

Incarceration causes disruption in people's lives as it forces them to live in a restricted environment and separates individuals from their support systems. Overall, the prison environment is constituted by limited privacy and a high authoritarian regime, which increases a risk of trauma related symptoms and feelings of hopelessness (Wai-Ming Mak et al., 2021). Mental states are found to be very fluid (Wai-Ming Mak et al., 2021). During cognitive processing, individuals place a higher priority on information that aligns with their current emotional state (Wai-Ming Mak et al., 2021). Thus, individuals with lower levels of hope tend to address stressful situations with coping strategies such as disengaging or avoiding problems. The authors concluded that having a cognitive state of being hopeful has a large potential to act as a general protective factor against psychological distress while incarcerated (Wai-Ming Mak et al, 2021).

Lowering the pains that individuals feel while they are incarcerated can have a very positive effect on the individual both while they are incarcerated and when they are released back into the community, an important consideration and focus of my study. In a longitudinal study, Dekhtyar et al. (2012) found that among individuals in a transitional program, hopefulness was related to a lowered risk of reoffending. In surveying their sample, Dekhtyar et al. (2012) used a Likert-type survey based on hope. When individuals' scores of hopefulness increased by one unit, they were 10% less likely to be incarcerated in the next year. They applied cognitive hope theory by Snyder et al. (2000) and found that when incarcerated individuals have increasing

levels of hope, they feel like their pro-social goals are more achievable. Thus, hope enhances

more pro-social, law-abiding behaviour upon release from the institution. In the same study,

Dekhtyar et al. (2012) found that when individual's levels of agency increased by one unit, they

were 24% less likely to reoffend in the next year. Considering that one of the pains of

imprisonment outlined by Sykes (1958) is the deprivation of autonomy, these statistics suggest

that there is a positive outcome for incarcerated individuals when they perceive themselves to

have more autonomy.

2.3 Prisons and the Potential for Hope

2.3.1 Prisons as Reinventive Institutions

Prisons tend to be presented as places where security and control are paramount and that

many negative experiences await people who are incarcerated. There are other, more optimistic

views of prisons and their rehabilitative purpose. Desistance is a process whereby individuals

who have a history of perpetual offending, end the cycle of offending and begin to live prosocial

law-abiding lives (Serin & Lloyd, 2009; Ugelvik, 2021). In this process, individuals use the cycle

of incarceration to work on habilitating themselves to be successful in society. The desistance

process is often viewed as nonlinear because there are many external factors that affect offenders'

successful desistance (Serin & Lloyd, 2009). Desistance happens immediately after the offender

has committed their last crime and it is viewed as part of a larger process of change (Serin &

Lloyd, 2009). As mentioned earlier, there are two competing notions of prison institutions, the

first being the widely held ideology of prison being a place for control and further punishment

aside from the actual prison sentences (Johnson-Listwan et al, 2013; Schaefer, 2017). A deeper

analysis of prisons focuses on not only the harms of incarceration but the positive impact that the

institution can also have. It is the notion that prison can also be a rehabilitative institution where

positive change is encouraged while also being a place of pain for prisoners (Bucerius et al,

2021; Ugelvik, 2021). In the Canadian context the mission statement for the federal correctional

system is that "the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), as part of the criminal justice system

and respecting the rule of law, contributes to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting

offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane

control" (Government of Canada, 2012). The mission for the correctional services of Canada is a

mix between being a place for security yet also encouragement for rehabilitation.

The decision to desist from crime can happen inside during incarceration as well as

outside after release and while integrating into the community. Prison is a temporary living

arrangement, however, the emotional and physical impacts it has on prisoners can often shape

their experience of re-entry (Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). As discussed, prisons are often

portrayed as being a very negative experience for individuals that often leads to their reoffending

rather than being rehabilitated (Johnson-Listwan et al 2013; Mackenzie & Amirault, 2021;

Schaefer, 2017; Sykes, 1958; Walker et al; 2014). However, there are circumstances where

prison can be a constructive experience for individuals, where self-actualization and eventual

desistance can occur (Crewe & Ievins, 2020). Correctional institutions often house societies'

most vulnerable populations and for some, being incarcerated provides a more positive and

stable environment than what they experienced in the community (Bucerius et al., 2021). In

their study on women's experience of incarceration, Bucerius and her colleagues found that many

believed prison to be a "temporary refuge" from their lives in the community. Their experience

of incarceration temporarily muted the immediate stressors in their lives and provided them with

a stable environment where they could take time to reflect on their decisions and create goals for

their future (Bucerius et al., 2021). In this context, prison provided a space where these women

could focus on becoming better versions of themselves and they were able to become hopeful for

the future (Bucerius et al., 2021, p.531). As such, having hope is the start of the cognitive

process to create goals for the future and further create pathways to achieve those goals (Snyder

et al, 2002). Therefore, incarceration is what allowed these women to become hopeful for their

futures.

      Prison, among the many negative aspects, can act as a space where deep reflection can

occur for many individuals (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). Moreover, prison not only can be a

space for self-reflection but also a space where prisoners can "get clean" from substance misuse

and practice patience and calmness (Crewe & Levins, 2020; Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). Maier

and Ricciardelli (2021) found that individuals can benefit from being incarcerated. These

benefits include learning inner strength, finding new interpretations of their lived experiences

and creating a more hopeful life path for themselves. Again, this does not mean that prison is a

positive space. Rather, it can act as a space where among the negative things, positive

transformations can also occur. Maier & Ricciardelli (2021) argue that the penal system can act

as a space that temporarily provides a buffer from various life stressors which allows prisoners to

transform into their new self. Moreover, prisons can provide the space, time and resources that

many prisoners may need to not only foster but hold on to their new self (Maier & Ricciardelli,

2021).

      Prison can be a very hostile environment as many offenders are in life changing situations

that are highly stressful, however, positive change is still both expected and encouraged. In a

study done on ex-prisoners' and their motivation for positive self-change, Maier and Ricciardelli

(2021) found that when describing their lives prior to incarceration, participants involved in the

study disclosed negative identity traits linked to feelings of regret and a low sense of self-worth.

Similarly, when the offenders described their pre-prison selves, their lives were characterized by

instant gratification without thinking about their future selves (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). In

these circumstances, incarceration allowed the participants to both reflect on how they became

involved in the criminal justice system as well as think about their futures and the goals they

wanted to achieve (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). It is imperative to examine how offenders'

experiences of incarceration, be it positive or negative, might impact their reintegration into the

community. As outlined by Maier and Ricciardelli (2021) re-entry literature must examine "the

ways prisoners make sense of, and process the impacts of their imprisonment on their self and

persona" (p.12). By doing so, it unpacks how offenders begin to think about changing their

lifestyles and the beginning stages of hope for the future. For individuals to be successful in

desistance, the cycle of crime needs to be broken and the sole act of deciding to change is

oftentimes, not enough (Ugelvik, 2021). For change to happen, concrete goals must be

established. Moreover, the starting process to change requires the presence of hope which then

leads to goal oriented thinking for the future (Snyder, 2000).

2.3.2 Procedural Justice and Trust

While there is an emphasis on punishment in Canadian corrections, another

important goal of prisons is to rehabilitate prisoners. Another underestimated but important

feature of institutional life are relationships with staff, particularly correctional officers. The

working relationship between correctional staff and offenders can be understood through a

procedural justice lens. Procedural justice is a process whereby authority figures who make

decisions on behalf of prisoners do it in a neutral way that ensures the prisoner feels that they are

treated fairly and respectfully (Beijersbergen, et al., 2015; Bierie, 2012; Kennealy, et al., 2012;

Skeem, et al., 2007; Taxman & Gordon, 2009). When officers are empathetic to the situations of

offenders and allow them to be part of decision-making processes, the offender feels more of a duty to comply and follow the rules (Beijersbergen et al., 2015; Kennealy et al., 2012). Relationships are important to life within the institution, making it crucial to understand what constitutes constructive relations. Furthermore, it is also imperative to understand how such relationships, positive or negative, impact the offenders' outlook and hope for their future.

A belief in the legitimacy of prison regimes is based on the prisoners' perception that correctional officers are trustworthy, fair and acting in their best interest (Meško & Hacin, 2017). Empirical studies show that procedurally just behaviours utilized by correctional officers elicit respectful behaviour from offenders and increase their compliance in the institution (Liebling et al. 2010). Campbell et al. (2020) found that higher levels in perceptions of correctional officers' fairness was the strongest predictor of prisoners' increased willingness to cooperate. Beijersbergen et al. (2015) found that offenders who felt they were treated fairly and respectfully by correctional officers were less likely to get reconvicted within 18 months post release.

The employment of procedurally just relationships must be initiated by correctional officers, as they are the power holders in the dynamic relationship with offenders. In all circumstances within the institution, offenders must comply with the orders of correctional officers. However, by using practices of procedural justice, eliciting compliance is much easier. Kennealy et al. (2012) explain that the most effective correctional officers establish a high-quality relationship with offenders through the application of procedurally just behaviours such as mutual respect, empathy and by valuing the offender's personal autonomy.

As Sykes (1958) suggests, prisoners must deal with feelings of childlike helplessness, due to institutional restrictions, which often leave them with feelings of no control or autonomy. In turn, this leads to feelings that they may have little to no control over their future. Procedurally

just treatment can create a space for an offender's personal autonomy, limited though it is, to be

valued which subsequently can mitigate that pain of imprisonment. Although offenders will

always have to follow rules within institutions, their childlike helplessness can be mitigated

when the offenders feel as though they are being treated fairly (Skeem et al., 2007). At the core

of correctional practices, officers need to ensure that they act in a manner that is respectful to the

people they are dealing with. By doing this, they justify their informal power and ensure their

authoritative position within the institution (Liebling et al., 2010).

The process of change consists of both thinking and doing steps, it requires hope and

individual readiness for change as well as physical action in making change occur. However,

change can also be more than just an individual process and require many outlets of support.

Liebling et al. (2019) found that when offenders talk about hope and their motivation for change,

it is also motivated by feelings of support and encouragement from institutional staff. In their

study, they found that when the correctional staff emphasized the practice of procedural justice,

the offenders were more committed to positive self-change.

An important part of desistance for offenders begins during incarceration through the

notion of trust. Ugelvik (2021) found that success for offenders is oftentimes linked to trust, that

is, when prisoners feel as though they have fostered a trusting relationship with correctional

officers, they are more motivated for personal growth. The foundation of a trusting relationship

fosters rehabilitation through motivating offenders to engage in positive growth and taking

responsibility for the situation they find themselves in (Ugelvik, 2021). However, there is

deception within this context as well, where correctional officers must distinguish between

genuine actions and actions that are meant to deceive them. Nonetheless, trust is crucial in the

process of incarceration when it comes to prisoner experience both within the system, as well as

the beginning of the desistance process. Ugelvik (2021) finds that the experience of being trusted can lead individuals to feel hope for their futures upon release. The experience of trust aids in offenders feeling like they are being treated fairly and humanely, which is what leads to the feeling of hope (Ugelvik, 2021). Therefore, procedural justice, trust and the feeling of hope are all correlated in the long-term desistance process and success for offenders.

2.4 The Re-entry Process

2.4.1 Re-entry for Prisoners

For many prisoners, re-entry does not mean a return to a "normal" or pre-prison life. Research has well documented the challenges tied to the re-entry process. For example, Durnescu (2019) notes that many former prisoners "experience pains of release such as stigma, temptation, or lack of employment" (pg.3). The reintegration process for former prisoners is oftentimes extremely difficult as a result of the disruptions and harms tied to imprisonment. For example, they face issues with finding employment, housing or face rejections for schooling as a result of having a criminal record (Durnescu, 2019). Having a criminal record can act as a "snowball" by creating larger issues (Travis, 2002). For example, without a job it is extremely difficult to obtain adequate housing and as a result many former prisoners are left to their own devices in their reintegration process. It is difficult to obtain an adequate job without education, more specifically, without a grade 12 education or its equivalent.

Transitioning from incarceration to re-entry can be a very overwhelming situation and can even lead ex-prisoners who are optimistic about their future to feel overwhelmed (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011). When ex-prisoners begin to face the more practical barriers of re-entry such as housing and employment, it may lead them to become overwhelmed and crave substances (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011). Re-entry tends to be overwhelming for ex-prisoners due to the

financial burden placed on them (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). This includes, but is not limited to

things like drug tests for employment, restitution, half-way home fees and child support costs

(Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). As the strains of re-entry continue to add up, it can make the ex-prisoner

feel so overwhelmed that to them it seems more rational to revert back to their criminal lifestyle,

such as selling drugs to generate income (Link & Roman, 2017; Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

Reverting to their past criminal lifestyle can also be a result of the continual punishment ex-

prisoners face in society.

While prison is an overt form of punishment, punishment does not necessarily stop after a

prisoner is released (Travis, 2002). This continuation of punishment in re-entry tends to be very

covert in society; it acts as a form of "invisible punishment" (Travis, 2002). Some forms of

invisible punishment include the issue of criminal record checks in employment, social housing

or the ability to obtain an education (Travis, 2002). As a result of things like criminal record

checks, ex-prisoners are further limited and punished in society because they do not have access

to the same things that people without a criminal record have access to (Travis, 2002). Thus, ex-

prisoners' punishment for their past crimes continues after prison through to their re-entry in

society.

Successful re-entry and desistance from crime can be impacted by external factors such

as the offender's age. Blumstein and Cohen (1987) suggest that during the late teen years and

throughout their 20's, offenders are most likely to persistently engage in crime. This is congruent

with the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (where some of my sample pool is drawn from) inmate

population where the majority of offenders (78%) are between the ages of 18-39 years old

(Personal Communication, Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, February 8th,

2022). This is also a critical time in cognitive development and can be largely attributed to

maturation (Piquero et al., 2001). The most populated age group in the Saskatoon Correctional

Centre is offenders between the age of 30-39, however the numbers drop drastically as the age

group rises after 39 years old (Personal Communication, Ministry of Corrections, Policing and

Public Safety, February 8th, 2022). As individuals age, they tend to cease engaging in criminal

activity, this generally happens between 30-40 years old (Blumstein & Cohen, 1987). The

cessation of crime can be attributed to physical burnout from the criminal lifestyle and the

changing of life circumstances that normally happen in adulthood (Piquero et al. 2001).

Offenders who continue to engage in crime and criminal activities after the age of 40 are

significantly more likely to be repeat offenders and less likely to desist from crime (Blumstein &

Cohen, 1987). However, the population of older offenders remains relatively low.

Another issue in the re-entry process for many offenders is the lack of social supports in

the community. Social support systems foster the opportunity to build emotional attachments and

ties to the community that may counter the isolating effects of incarceration (Breese et al., 2000).

Further, the emotional benefits of social support systems provide the former offender with the

intimacy and trust necessary to provide support through times of desolation (Breese et al., 2000).

However, it is important to also consider what happens when ex-offenders are surrounded by

anti-social friends and family. Breese and colleagues (2000) suggest that former offenders being

completely supported by friends and family in the re-entry process is not the best option.

Depending on social support systems can lead to problems including conflict and stress, as the

former offender is going through a higher stress time that they may have problems working

through (Breese et al., 2000). So, when the social support systems are not equipped to fully

handle such a stressful time, it can cause more harm to the former offender than good.

2.4.2 The Role of Motivation and Hope in Re-entry

The strategies for successful re-entry in the community is often viewed as a period of transition where offenders can both progress and regress with the ultimate goal being success. In this context, the term success is relative to the individual striving toward or experiencing it. Oftentimes, when referring to progression and regression in re-entry it is also linked to the offender's internal motivation and their capacity for control (Serin & Lloyd, 2009). Offenders with greater levels of motivation are more likely to adjust their strategy after a period of regression or a lapse, rather than fully giving up (Serin & Lloyd, 2009). This is important in the context of provincial corrections whereby the offenders are often serving shorter sentences and subsequently incarcerated more frequently. As noted by Ugelvik (2021) repeat offenders are often stuck in a cycle of crime with frequent periods of incarceration. These offenders often serve more short-term sentences and are associated with a higher risk of reincarceration (Ugelvik, 2021). Therefore, to prevent relapse and encourage success it is important to consider each ex-prisoner's self-perceptions of successful reintegration. Each ex-prisoner's perceptions of success and cognitive capacity for change are important targets for intervention strategies to ensure success outside of the institution (Serin & Lloyd, 2009).

In many existing re-entry programs for ex-prisoners, how prison personnel address the inevitable societal barriers prisoners face is through utilizing a strengths-based approach (Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014). Using a strengths-based approach takes the focus away from the unfavourable structural barriers and places more importance on offender talent. This approach forces the offender to trust in themselves which consequently leads them to a path of identifying goals and trusting their ability to achieve the set goals (Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014). In addition, having a successful reintegration into society not only relies on the strength-based approach but

also the prisoner's motivation and readiness to make the necessary changes in their lifestyle

(Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014). Moreover, as previously mentioned, re-entry is seen to be a

process with key elements being the ability for offenders to stay motivated and have the strength

and resilience to continue to put in effort when they regress (Hong, Lewis & Choi,

2014). Therefore, hope plays a key role in ex-prisoners' motivation and resilience to persevere

throughout their re-entry process. Hong, Lewis and Choi (2014) argue that hope plays an

important role in noncognitive transformation, and it is key to successful reintegration. That is, in

a process to empower ex-offenders, in a society where they tend to be ostracised, emphasis must

be put on hope in terms of employment (Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014). In contexts where these

needs are met, the authors argue that ex-prisoners will have success in reintegration as well as be

socially accepted back into society (Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014).

2.4.3 Desistance in Re-entry

There are many conflicting definitions of desistance as many suggest that desistance is

not just one single event (Williams & Schaefer, 2021). For the uniformity of this research

desistance is understood as a de-escalation in the frequency and seriousness of criminal

behaviour (Laub & Sampson, 2001). In this definition desistance is viewed more on a continuum

whereby it is not limited to a complete termination of all offending (Laub & Sampson, 2001).

Desistance has been theorized by Giordano et al. (2002) as a cognitive shift that happens which

is an important part of the desistance process. Within this process there is an emphasis on

cognitive and identity transformations whereby former prisoners reflect on their own role in their

transformation (Giordano et al., 2002). Moreover, the Giordano et al. (2002) theory of desistance

focuses heavily on individual agency in the desistance process and as such has more conceptual

flexibility. Giordano and colleagues' (2002) theory of desistance highlights individuals who

change their life direction in the absence of traditional support systems and resources, like a

spouse or steady employment.

It is important to note that internal motivations to desist are often hindered by structural

barriers (Williams & Schaefer, 2021). Thus, ex-prisoners must have sufficient agency to act on

and persevere in their desistance (Williams & Schaefer, 2021). That is, changes in the life course

(see also Laub & Sampson, 2001) present an opportunity for change during these circumstances

ex-prisoners must also be intentional and take action to continue on a pro-social route (Williams

& Schaefer, 2021). Kay and Monaghan (2019) conducted a study on the social identity model of

transition which showcases desistance and recovery as a process. In their study Kay and

Monaghan (2019) found that there are a few main components to recovery and desistance. First,

the ex-offender must have discontent and wish to transition from their labelled identity (Kay &

Monaghan, 2019). The initial motivation to change allows the ex-offender to distance themselves

from their past social networks and anti-social behaviours (Kay & Monaghan, 2019). However,

this stage does not yet foster space for a stable recovery or desistance focused social identity

(Kay & Monaghan, 2019).

It is also important to consider the ex-prisoners who struggle with addiction during their

re-entry. Colman and Vander Laenen (2012) found that this population moves through the stages

of change from their past and labelled identity the same way as their non-addicted counterparts

do. However, for this group, the most important stage was not only their motivations to change

but also the opportunities for them to foster change (Colman & Vander Laenen, 2012). Colman

and Vander Laenen (2012) found that drug using ex-prisoners are more realistic about their

desistance and recovery process as they take into account both the possibility of relapse and

societal rejection thus impacting their opportunities for change. As such, Bahr et al., (2010)

found that it is imperative for ex-prisoners who struggle with addiction to gain employment as they re-enter society. Having steady employment leads ex-prisoners to have a routine that occupies much of their time, which in turn leaves little time for anti-social peers and potential relapse (Bahr et al., 2010). Moreover, ex-prisoners who struggle with substance misuse are on high alert for situations or people from their criminal past that will tempt them to start using again (Colman & Vander Laenen, 2012). In accordance, Bowman and Mowen (2017) note that there is a positive relationship between criminal peers and substance misuse, where individuals with criminogenic peers report higher levels of substance misuse over time. Conversely, individuals who have higher levels of positive family support report lower levels of substance abuse across time (Bowman & Mowen, 2017). In their study Bowman and Mowen (2017) also found that criminal peers weaken the link between family support and the prevention of criminal recidivism. As such, it is extremely important for ex-prisoners' sobriety and desistance from crime to be cognizant of their peer groups.

Many ex-prisoners emphasize the support of their family members and community members in their journey of desistance (Vignansky et al., 2018). Although support is important, many ex-prisoners also stress that it is more important for their desistance, to cut off former friends and surroundings that led to criminal activity (Vignansky et al., 2018). However, they also express how lonely and difficult it is to re-enter normative society without the support of friends or family (Vignansky et al., 2018). Embedded within the social ties of family members, friendships and desisting from crime is the issue of gang membership. Some individuals who are in conflict with the law also find themselves involved in gangs and as such, the unstructured activities or anti-social peers may be what led them to be involved in the criminal justice system (Sweeten et al., 2013). As gang membership also may be linked to family members and social

ties, it is important to note the significant loss of identity ex-prisoners may feel when they leave

the gang to desist from crime (Sweeten et al., 2013). In addition, Sweeten et al. (2013) note that

in the re-entry and desistance process it is extremely important to not only de-identify with the

gang but also be fully removed from the gang lifestyle. By reducing ties with gang members

individuals have more of an opportunity to foster pro-social relationships and modify their use of

time on new activities, which inevitably results in the eventual de-identification as a gang

member (Sweeten et al., 2013). Thus, the process of desistance in re-entry is impacted by the

social support networks of ex-prisoners' friends and family.

In this chapter, I have highlighted the role of hope as a very influential role in offenders'

thinking process. The literature suggests that individuals who have more prominent feelings of

hope are more likely to have motivation for goal attainment and further success in their future

(Snyder et a., 2000). However, the literature has also shown the many barriers that ex-prisoners

must face during their re-entry into the community. This research will analyze the role that hope

plays for offenders while they were experiencing incarceration and what that also means for their

re-entry journey. Although prisoners may leave the institution feeling hopeful for their future, the

reality of re-entering society may be a struggle that is not anticipated for many ex-prisoners.

There are larger issues in ex-prisoners' daily lives in society that impede their successful

integration into the community. These struggles range from daily temptation, whether it be from

substances or their criminogenic peers, to finding adequate housing and jobs with their new

criminal records (Durnescu, 2019).

The ultimate goal for ex-offenders is successful reintegration into society. As previously

mentioned, the term success in this context is relative to the individual. Thus, a means of

successful reintegration into society is generally characterized by positive, pro-social behaviour

in the community and desisting from crime. However, there is no threshold for success and as such, success can be characterized by a lessening of offending behaviour and not a full cassation. By utilizing strengths-based approaches, it fosters more motivation to be successful and set goals for the future so that offenders can have a successful reintegration into the community (Hong, Lewis & Choi, 2014). Hope is important throughout the stages of incarceration through to reintegration and it will encourage offenders to desist from crime and lead pro-social lives as they strive to achieve their goals. This research encourages former offenders to reflect on their incarceration and analyze how their conceptions and feelings of hope had an impact on that experience. Furthermore, this research explores the role of hope in former offenders' experience of re-entry into the community. This research will investigate prisoners experience of incarceration, the barriers to re-entry, the motivations behind their desistance and how hope has impacted their overall experience.

3.Methodology

3.1 Overview

This thesis research will examine offenders' conceptions of hope for the future and the impact of prison experiences on adjustment after a period of provincial incarceration. Further, this research analyzes how offenders' hope or lack thereof may have impacted their goals for the future including ways they experience re-entry and envision desistance. The study highlights the role of hope in the prisoner transitional period of both re-entry and desistance from crime. Other research that combines hope with incarceration oftentimes focuses on long-term and life-sentences, where these offenders have little chance of experiencing a life outside of the institution (Johnson & McGunigall-Smith, 2008; Leigey & Ryder, 2015; Wright, Hulley &

Crewe, 2022). This research differs in that it seeks to explore how hope plays a role for offenders with their sentences being two years or less.

3.1.2 Study Site – Provincial Corrections in Saskatchewan

In Canada, provincial correctional sentences are those that are less than two years in duration. Therefore, the offenders in provincial custody are often serving short sentences. In 2014-2015 the median range of time spent in custody for all offences was 30 days (Department of Justice Canada, 2017). Furthermore, 81% of all custodial sentences in 2014-2015 were 6 months or less (Department of Justice Canada, 2017). Probation was the most commonly imposed adult sentence with an average length of 365 days (Department of Justice Canada, 2017). Considering these statistics and the short amount of time many offenders spend in custody, it is important to consider how provincial custody sentences impact offenders' mental resilience as well as the further implications that being incarcerated has on their successful reintegration into society.

In 2017-2018 Saskatchewan had the highest rate of incarcerated adults among the Canadian provinces (Clermont et al., 2019). Saskatchewan was also a leading province in the over-incarceration of Indigenous adults. In 2017-2018 Indigenous people represented 16% of the population in Saskatchewan but Indigenous males represented 73% of the admissions into adult male custody facilities (Clermont et al., 2019). In 2019-2020, Saskatchewan had 3, 534 males sentenced and admitted to custody (Statistics Canada, 2022). In the same year, 89% of those males were sentenced to less than 24 months which means it is a sentence that would be served in a provincial correctional centre (Statistics Canada, 2022). The most common length of sentences in 2019-2020 were between one and three months and had 966 of the 3,534 males serving them (Statistics Canada, 2022). Much of the research conducted on Canadian prisons and

parole/re-entry concerns federal serving inmates (Weinrath, 2016), but there is a substantial

number of people in provincial institutions like in Saskatchewan serving sentences less than two

years. Thus, this research adds to the literature as it explores the effects of shorter-term prison

strain and disruption on former offenders' re-entry into the community.

3.1.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical constructs that guide this research are Snyder's hope theory, Agnew's strain

theory and Tyler's procedural justice construct. Broadly, Wright, Hulley and Crewe (2022) note

that hope plays a significant role in motivation that influences prison-based desistance.

Therefore, this research explores the way in which former prisoners understand and apply hope

both during their incarceration and again during their re-entry into the community. This research

also highlights the re-entry process in terms of hope and explores ex-prisoners' ideas of

individual goals and relative success in desisting from reinvolvement with the justice system.

As previously mentioned in the literature review, Snyder et al. (2000) has two constructs

of hope, and this thesis is guided by the cognitive construct. In the cognitive theory, hope is a

motivating emotional state that is based on individual agency and the motivation to meet their set

goals (Snyder et al., 2000). Although Snyder (2002) mentions that hope is part of an emotional

state, he argues that it is however, more than just an emotion. That is, he argues that hope plays a

larger role in individuals' thinking process for goal attainment (Snyder, 2002). Moreover, in the

cognitive theory, using the construct of hope is necessary to understand both the motivating and

discouraging factors that impact goal attainment (Snyder et al., 2000).

Agnew (2001) outlines that strain is often experienced by everyone, to different degrees

of severity, but what matters most is how each individual person deals with the strain. Johnson-

Listwan et al. (2013) applied strain theory and found that offenders who are particularly fearful

of the prison environment, have negative interactions with other offenders and engage in violence while incarcerated. The individuals in this study were also found to be at a higher likelihood to be reincarcerated. Thus, individuals' feelings of hope or lack thereof have a significant impact on the prison experience and re-entry success.

This research will combine both Snyder's hope theory and Agnew's strain theory to explore how strain impacts the participants' feelings of hope in general and hope in their re-entry into the community. Thus, the purpose of combining Snyder and Agnew's theories is to examine the various strains that each participant experiences and further explore how each individual deals with that strain and how that impacts their aspirations and goal-oriented action during re-entry. This research will also consider the notion of prison as a reinventive institution, and how prisoners might have used their time in custody to change themselves (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021).

Finally, this research uses the procedural justice theory (Beijersbergen, Dirkzwager & Nieuwbeerta, 2015; Bierie, 2012) as a potential form of strain to explore how the participants felt they were treated by staff and how they made sense of the impact of their relationship on their experience of incarceration. Furthermore, the relationship between procedural justice and hope is also explored in terms of the offender's reintegration process. This research will explore the impacts prisoner perceptions of procedural justice has on hope, participants goal setting and integration back into the community.

3.2 Research Questions

1. How do former offenders make sense of and envision the term hope when applying it to their lives?

2. How does the feeling of hope or lack thereof, during incarceration, impact the former

prisoner's re-entry in the community? How have strains, opportunities for "reinvention" and

procedurally just or unjust relations impacted former offenders' feeling of hope?

3. Beyond considerations of hope, how has the former offender dealt with the strains resulting

from being incarcerated, during re-entry? Has there been an opportunity for "reinvention" upon

re-entering the community, or how does the former prisoner otherwise navigate their re-entry?

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

This research takes a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory takes a conceptual

approach that is designed for theory building (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Glaser & Strauss,

1967; Khan, 2014). In essence, grounded theory is a systematic method for conducting research

that has an impact on the way in which the researcher collects the data and it provides a method

for analyzing the data (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). This means that the analytic focus for the

researcher arises during the beginning stages of the research process (Charmaz & Thornberg,

2021). This differs from other methods as it allows the researcher to discover and explore the

data rather than having a preconceived focus prior to entering the research process (Charmaz &

Thornberg, 2021). Grounded theory was first developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 and they

began by explaining the methods they used to construct their qualitative study (Glaser & Strauss,

1967, p.22). Glaser and Strauss introduced a new strategy of collecting data and analyzing it

simultaneously (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This strategy then became the pinnacle of grounded

theory and has been adopted worldwide throughout studies of qualitative inquiry (Charmaz &

Thornberg, 2021).

Grounded theory is mainly focused on beginning the research with focusing on the raw

data, theories and patterns then emerge from the data (Khan, 2014; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

This research will subsequently analyze the collected data and find patterns and themes that emerge from the data. More specifically, this research will subsequently follow a constructivist grounded theory methodology that explores human realities based on perspective (Charmaz, 2005; Khan, 2014). Constructivist grounded theory has the goal of constructing an image of reality based on experience, knowledge and truth (Khan, 2014). But what sets it apart from grounded theory is that the goal is to portray an image of reality rather than seeking to explain the reality (Khan, 2014). Therefore, the constructivist grounded theory approach pays close attention to the empirical realities and attempts to keep the integrity of the reality (Charmaz, 2005). This directly applies to the subsequent research because it will further explore an image of individuals' hopefulness in relation to incarceration. Moreover, this research will produce knowledge on the reality of individuals experience post incarceration and the cognitive emotions that are fostered from it. This research portrays an image of reality which may not be the reality for other offenders in different institutions across Canada.

Constructivist grounded theory not only portrays the participant's reality, but it seeks to represent knowledge on the studied life (Charmaz, 2005). However, as researchers utilizing constructivist grounded theory methodology, it is important that we also locate ourselves within the reality that we are researching (Charmaz, 2005). It is important to note that as researchers, we cannot be completely impartial in grounded theory. So, we create a narrative for research in grounded theory, but it is based on the researcher's context, worldviews and experience (Charmaz, 2005). Therefore, grounded theory methodologies are influenced by the specific researcher's interests, research contexts and even the relationship they have to their participants (Charmaz, 2005). Grounded theory then works on the premise that the conceptual categories

arise from the researcher's interpretation of the data rather than being pulled directly from data without looking beyond what is said (Charmaz, 2005).

This research is a qualitative study that focuses on individual stories and contexts and therefore grounded theory is the most fitting method to follow. It guides the research to follow a systematic approach of inquiring while also accounting for the integration of experience and social condition in the community (Charmaz, 2005). I have chosen to utilize a grounded theory methodology because each individual that has participated in this research has unique experiences and some feel different than others depending on their individual contexts. Grounded theory is often utilized for portraying the situations of individuals who tend to be denied a public voice in society (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). As such, I have chosen this approach to ensure that all experiences are thoroughly considered and portrayed for their individuality and uniqueness. Utilizing grounded theory allowed me as the researcher to keep the integrity of each of the participants stories without trying to manipulate them in any way for them to fit into preconceived theories. However, it is important to note how my own background and experiences influence my engagement with research participants and interpretation of data.

3.3.1 Situating the Researcher

The motivation behind this research emerged from personal experience. While I was completing my undergraduate degree at the University of Saskatchewan, I also volunteered as a tutor at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. I have always been interested in research involving corrections and volunteering at the correctional centre gave me access to see a new perspective in corrections. As a volunteer, I had a very neutral position. I was not a threat to the correctional officers or the inmates. Both the correctional officers and the inmates provided me with different

insights during this time because I was neutral and impartial to both parties. After this experience, I became even more interested in pursuing research in corrections.

The more I familiarized myself with what my research would need to entail for a masters thesis, I quickly realized that research in prisons was not going to be attainable for me. I found that gaining access to carceral sites such as the Saskatoon Correctional Centre was going to be nearly impossible to do as an outside researcher (Umamaheswar, 2014; Watson & Van Der Meulen, 2019). From this point, I had to change my idea for my thesis to exclude the correctional centre, however I still had interest in understanding carceral sites.

For just over a year, I was working part-time as a correctional officer in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. I completed the three-month induction training program to be a correctional officer in the spring, just after I completed my course work for my masters program. Throughout the training program to become a correctional officer, there was a large emphasis on rehabilitation and the completion of casework to aid in the reintegration process for inmates. Moreover, a large portion of the training was specifically on how to assess inmates' risks, address their needs based on their risks and provide appropriate interventions while they are incarcerated. In the training process, one of the strategies for casework is to elicit motivational change for the inmates. This is where I began the idea of assessing hope in my thesis and how that impacts the re-entry process for former inmates.

As discussed between my supervisors and I, we collectively decided that I was no longer going to be working at the correctional centre during my data collection process. This was to ensure that I do not have to have any conflict of interest in my role as a researcher with current or former inmates. This also helped me to realign my worldview and be outside of the corrections lens. I had always thought prior to beginning data collection that I would be able to remain

neutral and dive into my role as a researcher rather than my role as a correctional officer. However, as previously mentioned it is important that I account for my context and prior experiences to locate myself within the subsequent research (Charmaz, 2005). The entire process for creating the idea, design and research questions were born out of my past experience. These experiences have allowed the research to have different strengths that it would not have had if I didn't have my experience as a correctional officer.

I did not tell any of my participants that I was previously a correctional officer and the gatekeeper I used to recruit participants did not know either. I did not want to have the participants become wary or question the motivation behind the research. Again, from my past experience I knew that many current and former offenders were distrustful of the government and social structures surrounding the government. Thus, I did not want them to think that this research had any ties to the government or its structures with me being a former correctional officer. I believe that because I did not tell them this information, they were more inclined to be open and honest with me about their experiences, especially with correctional officers while they were incarcerated.

A few of the participants in the subsequent research had very negative things to say about their experience with correctional officers. The very negative and distrustful answers I received in their interviews did not shock me or influence the interview from my end at all. I knew my role in those moments was as a researcher and nothing else, however, as a result of working in that context I also know the realities of things that happen there. During some of their negative recounts of violence or verbal abuse, I was able to resonate and find validity in their answers because I witnessed things like that happening while I was on the job.

3.3.2 Ethics

This research was approved by the University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) at the University of Winnipeg. This research is approved under the identification number 17760. Considering the current climate of the COVID 19 pandemic, ZOOM or telephone interviews appeared to be the most realistic option for the research. Information regarding this research was given during a phone call before the participant agreed to participate and I fully explained that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the research at any point. After each participant understood their role and their rights within the research, we set a time and date for the interview to take place. I went through the consent form with each participant and made sure they understood what their information was going to be used for and how it was going to be safely stored. The last part I went through in the consent form was the section explaining pseudonyms. First I explained what they are and explained that they will be used in place of their names, so, this research will not be produced with any identifying information in it. Each participant then chose a pseudonym for themselves and shortly after I began recording the interview. Consent was granted by subjects orally over the phone prior to the interview commencing. At the end of the interview, after I stopped the recording, I asked if the participant had any questions or concerns and reiterated that they will be able to contact me through email or telephone. I explained to the participant that if they had negative feelings related to my research, I outlined that I would provide them with contact information for support systems within the community that can address their needs.

I have also consulted with an organization called the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). As a result of many offenders in Saskatchewan being of Indigenous ancestry it is important for my research to be informed by STC. As previously mentioned, Indigenous people represent 16% of

the population in Saskatchewan but Indigenous males represent 73% of the admissions into adult

male custody facilities (Clermont et al., 2019). Thus, STC helped me with my interview guide to

ensure that it was culturally appropriate. They also provided me with a few questions that

focused on the Indigenous experience of incarceration to create a larger picture of the realities of

incarceration in Saskatchewan.

3.4 Interview Questions

A number of questions arise from the chapter 2 literature review and my research

questions. Below are the questions used in my interview guide as approved by the University of

Winnipeg's ethics committee. The full interview guide can be viewed in appendix A, at the end

of the document. These questions were used to navigate the interviews with the participants.

Questions numbered 7, 8, 11 and 13 were questions that were generated by the board members of

STC to create a larger picture of the Indigenous experience of incarceration.

1. How do you define hope? What are specific ways that you feel hopeful about your
   future?

2. What are some of your goals or aspirations for the future?

3. What was your experience of incarceration like? Do you feel like it had a positive or
   negative impact on you?

4. Did having hope change your experience of incarceration? How did being incarcerated
   affect your aspirations and hope for the future?

5. What were specific examples of negative experiences while in prison? What things about
   being in prison did you dislike?

6. Were there any positive experiences? Things about prison that you thought might have
   helped you avoid trouble in future, or helped prepare you for release?

7. Was health care and mental health care available when requested? How long was the wait?

8. While you were incarcerated was there opportunity for traditional teachings and culture for example, through ceremonies, way of life, traditional parenting, arts and crafts?

9. How did you get along with staff? Do you feel most treated you fairly? What impact, if any, did the staff have on how you felt day to day?

10. What impact, if any, did your relationship with staff have upon your feelings of hope when you were released?

11. Were there any Indigenous correctional officers? Were you or would you be more comfortable with an Indigenous correctional officer, why or why not?

12. Upon being released from prison what were some of the goals you wanted to achieve in the community? Do you think there were some barriers to achieving these goals?

13. As an Indigenous person who has experienced incarceration, what is lacking in the correctional facility that could have better prepared you to re-enter the community?

14. In your experience this far of reintegrating into the community, have you achieved any of the goals you set out for yourself while you were incarcerated?

15. Based on your experience of re-entry so far, how do you feel about your future? What are the strategies you have found that help you to desist from engaging in crime?

16. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about? Are there any other questions that you feel I should have asked you?

3.5 Sample and Sampling Strategy

The sampling process took a vastly different approach than I expected in the beginning. Initially I had been in contact with the John Howard Society in Saskatoon and they had agreed to

support my research and help me recruit members. My contact agreed to disseminate my

recruitment poster online to the participants of the various programs at John Howard Society.

Online dissemination was necessary because the John Howard Society in Saskatoon had not yet

resumed in person programming because of the COVID19 pandemic. The poster that was

disseminated (see appendix B) has all the information about the study and it has my UWinnipeg

email to contact me about participating, along with the contact information for the University of

Winnipeg research and ethics board. Following a few weeks of silence from the John Howard

Society and potential participants, I reached out to the Society again.

   Being a researcher in a pandemic, I knew that it was going to be hard to get prompt

responses from others through email. So, I went to a secondary plan. As previously mentioned, I

had an agreed partnership with an organization called STC. My initial plan was to be in

partnership with STC for consultation on Indigenous relations and matters in my research.

However, I had been emailing back and forth with them and they had made me aware that they

also run justice programs through their organization and they had just recently resumed in person

programs. So, I reached out to my contact at STC and asked if they would disseminate my

posters and help me to recruit participants. They graciously agreed to help me recruit

participants. I went and dropped off posters at their office in Saskatoon for them to hand out

during their in-person programs. A few more weeks passed by and again I didn't hear back from

any potential participants. I began to panic a little bit as time was passing and I was not getting

anywhere with my research. I contacted STC again and they were willing to work with me and

let me do a two-minute information session with their program coordinators, however they had

events over the following few weeks so I wouldn't be able to do that for another month or so.

With no participants, I had no research, so I needed to think of a third strategy for interviewing.

I contacted my supervisors Dr. Weinrath and Dr. Maier to see if they had any ideas to help me find participants. They gave me a couple of strategies to try out, one being to stand outside of STC or John Howard Society or any area where there might be justice programs and hand out posters in person to anyone entering the buildings.

I kept brainstorming on how I could make my research happen and how to really get the word out there. Being a 20 something young researcher I thought about using social media to my advantage. I was scrolling my social media accounts thinking about a way to utilize it for my research when I came across an individual I thought might be able to help me. This person utilizes social media to be an advocate and share their story of being stuck in a cycle of incarceration. I reached out to this person through a private message and shared with them what my research was about and the stipulations I had for the people wanting to participate. This person responded and said that they were very interested in my research and was more than willing to help. So, I went and had a meeting with this person to lay out all the details and what I needed from them. I had given this person a temporary number that they could give to other people to contact me at. By the next day I had three participants wanting to take part in my research. Once the interviews were done with these participants, I had asked them to pass along my number to anyone that they know who would be eligible and be interested in sharing their stories with me. From that point the snowball sampling spread rapidly. I had all nine of my participants interviewed in the span of a week and a half.

The social media method worked well for this research. Participants were very willing and eager to participate in my research. The participants who contacted me already had a sense of trust because they were referred to me from one of their friends or someone they saw as a trusted source. In this sense, my initial contact from social media acted as a gatekeeper whereby

they facilitated the beginning of the research process (Peticca-Harris et al, 2016). The gatekeeper

in this research really helped me to gain access to a population that was seemingly hard to reach

(Umamaheswar, 2014; Watson & van der Meulen, 2019). In accordance with access, as the

researcher, it was also much easier to establish trust and rapport with the participants since the

gatekeeper already had that trusting relationship built with the people they referred to me

(Peticca-Harris et al, 2016). Moreover, this occurred with all participants as each of them were

referred to me from friends of theirs.

Research was conducted through qualitative interviews in Saskatoon with recently

released prisoners from the Saskatchewan provincial correctional system. I had chosen to

interview only male former prisoners because the provincial correctional centre in Saskatoon is a

male only facility and that is where I anticipated that most of my participants will have been

released from. Upon conducting the research, most of the participants had spent time in multiple

different facilities but their last incarceration and subsequent release was from the Saskatoon

Provincial correctional centre. One participant outlined that their release was from the Prince

Albert Correctional centre and one participant outlined that their release was from the Regina

Correctional centre. Furthermore, for the purpose of uniformity I wanted to focus on the male

experience of incarceration and their hope for the future. Females potentially have a vastly

different experience and very different life stressors which may impact their levels of hope and

goals in a different way (e.g. Comack, 2018; Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2003; Leverentz, 2020).

The recruitment poster outlined that all participants must be males who have spent time

in any of the adult correctional facilities across Saskatchewan. Thus, all participants were over

the age of 18. The poster also outlined that the participants had to have been released and in the

community for a minimum of three months. The final sample of participants in this study was

nine, self-identified males. All nine participants outlined that their ethnic background was of

Indigenous ancestry. All nine participants had spent time in the various provincial correctional

centres across Saskatchewan. All nine participants had been released into the community for

varying amounts of time, the shortest being around three months and the longest being about

seven years.

During the demographic section of the interview, all participants self-identified as males.

During the recruitment process, it was outlined that the selected participants had to have spent

time in the any of the "male" facilities across Saskatchewan. However, as per section 313 in the

Saskatchewan provincial policy (Executive Director: Custody Services, 2016) it is outlined that

all Saskatchewan provincial correctional centres adhere to individuals using their self-identified

gender when it is being determined which centre they are to be placed in. During my time as a

correctional officer in the Saskatoon Correctional centre, section 313 was actively practiced and

there were transgender individuals within the centre. The research was open to any transgender

individuals who had spent time in the Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford or Regina

Correctional centers across Saskatchewan, however, none of the participants self-identified as

transgender.

All interviews were conducted through a telephone call on my cell phone and recorded on

my macbook. For long term security I used a temporary cell phone number which all participants

had the option of calling or texting me at. I also offered a $40 honourarium to all participants in

respect of their time spent on my interview. The participants received their $40 at the end of each

interview and had the option of receiving it through cash or e-transfer. Most participants were

located in various parts of the province and chose the option of e-transfer. At the end of the

interview I received their email and sent the e-transfer to their given email. Upon confirmation

that they received their honourarium the email address that the participant had given me was

destroyed.

3.5.1 Analysis

Transcription occurred using a platform called Trint. I utilized the University of

Winnipeg, criminal justice department's licensed account to access Trint and input all of the

audio files for transcription. Once initial transcriptions were done and all transcribed files were

edited, I chose to use the software called NVIVO for coding to occur. The transcribed data was

coded for thematic trends across all interview participants. The coding process was a very

important one in this research as it was the tool that was used to turn the raw qualitative data into

a larger story that was trustworthy (Skjott-Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Moreover, the validity

and trustworthiness of the story was important for the constructivist grounded theory approach

(Khan, 2014) that this research is rooted in. As mentioned earlier and outlined by Charmaz

(2003) constructivist grounded theory distinguishes between the real and the truth without

attempting to seek one truth. Further, the human realities that are portrayed in this research, are

done so through my perspective as the sole researcher. So, as a result of my previous role as a

correctional officer, my participants and I shared the image of the reality of being in prison,

albeit from opposite ends. Thus, my experience helped me to distinguish between the true and

the real of the collected data. As outlined by Skjott-Linneberg & Korsgaard (2019) the

beginning of the coding process is important because it is where the codes are created as a means

of broadly understanding the participants and their perspectives. As such, through the

development of these codes the researcher begins to understand the participants in a deeper way

and understand their views and actions through that of their perspectives (Skjott-Linneberg &

Korsgaard, 2019).

Primary coding for the subsequent research began through a process where I made a list of very broad common ideas that occurred throughout the nine interviews. Following that, I went into NVIVO and ran a word frequency query to see what the most commonly used words were across all interviews and then determined what aligned with the broad themes that I had in my list. From that point I made a list of broad themes and went through each interview and coded them for the thematic trends (Elliot, 2018). The next step was a process of secondary coding where I went into each of the primary codes separately and paid specific attention to the language being used and the emerging secondary patterns embedded in the primary theme (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). As the research process began to develop the secondary coding process allowed the basic descriptive codes to be turned into a more theoretical sample that could be analyzed for more specific connections (Elliot, 2018; Skjott-Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Thus began the larger analysis and discussion for this thesis.

3.5.2 Importance of the Research

This research seeks to highlight former prisoners levels of hope after incarceration in a provincial correctional system because of the shorter custody sentence periods. In Canada, provincial correctional systems house offenders who are serving sentences of two years less a day (Government of Canada, 2021). As a result of the shorter sentences offenders may not have access to programming to meet their criminogenic needs or address their risks. Furthermore, as a result of the shorter sentences offenders may also have less opportunities for support in transitioning back into the community. Therefore, my research seeks to understand if this has an impact on their levels of hope and if so, how. Interview questions for the participants focused on the ex-prisoners' hopes for their future in the community and if they have outlined goals for themselves. The interviews also focused on highlighting the ex-prisoners' outlook on

rehabilitation and their future for desisting from crime (Liebling, 1999). The interviews were

coded for thematic trends of optimistic and pessimistic outlooks on participants' futures and how

that impacts their goals. The purpose of interviewing recently released prisoners is to analyse if

the experience of incarceration impacts former prisoners' hopes for the future. This research will

then examine whether the presence or absence of hope played a role in the offender's experience

of re-entry into the community. In general, I chose the qualitative method of interviewing

participants because it is important for the study, to understand the way that the participants

articulate their thoughts and feelings in times of tribulation such as incarceration. It was also

important to do qualitative interviews so that I could understand how participants made sense of

and conceptualized the term hope and applied it to their life and contexts.

     Throughout this research the language that is used to describe prisons or prisoners could

be viewed as stigmatizing. However, the choice of language that was used was carefully thought

out. There is much debate in prison scholarship about the use of person first language (Cox,

2020). One argument is that using terms such "offender", "ex-offender" or "inmate" can be

stigmatizing as it labels individuals and makes it harder for them to break away from the labels

in society (Cox, 2020). However, others argue that utilizing stigmatized terms can be

empowering by allowing the (ex)prisoners to reclaim the terms and resist being labelled (Cox,

2020). When the term "offender" is used throughout this research it is used to capture the

participants subject position accurately (Cox, 2020). That is, "offender" is used during the time

that the participant is describing their experience of incarceration. As the researcher, I chose to

mirror the language that the participants used in the interviews. The participants often described

themselves or their situations using terms such as "inmate" "criminal" or even "gangster". By

adopting the terms that were used by the participants in this research, I was able to create a clear

picture of their circumstances and attach meaning to the way they described their experiences.

Although some may consider the language I used to be stigmatizing, I believe it was an

important aspect in fully capturing the participants experiences of incarceration and re-entry.

4. Findings: The Experience of Incarceration

This chapter will explore the participants' experience of provincial incarceration.

Throughout the chapter the more negative aspects of prison are explored, such as violence that

can be present and gangs in prison. I will look at the participants' interactions with prison staff,

focusing on the relationships between prisoners and correctional officers and the many ways that

these relationships can be both negative and positive. Positive impacts from prison education and

programming from the perspective of the participants will be outlined. I will also analyze the

way in which the COVID19 pandemic affected the participants who were incarcerated during the

pandemic. Finally, this chapter explores how prison gave participants a chance to reflect on their

lives.

4.1 The Threat of Violence

Prisoners live within formal institutions, and coercive controls are set out by the prison

administration to discourage misconduct, such as the use of force or administrative segregation

(Ricciardelli & Sit, 2016). Some studies have shown that high levels of control and security can

limit prisoners' autonomy within the institution which, in turn, may increase stress and result in

heightened risk for prisoner misconduct (e.g., Ricciardelli & Memarpour, 2016). For many

prisoners, however, engaging in institutional misconduct can serve a productive function because

it gives them the feeling of enhanced control and autonomy over their circumstances which in

turn can help them cope, mentally and emotionally, with their time in prison (Ricciardelli &

Memarpour, 2016).

Participants in my research provided rich narratives of their perceptions and experiences

of life in prison. Reflecting on his first stint in provincial, Trent (25) explained:

Trent*: You know, my first time in a provincial correctional centre was in Saskatoon. And*

when I was in there my first time, I was just minding my own business, sitting on the phone,

and this guy was eating his food at the table, and I see this other guy walking up behind him

guy didn't know and smacked him out of nowhere. And ever since then, I knew not to trust

anyone in jail.

Trent described being in shock at the time of the incident because of the unpredictability of

the situation, watching another prisoner get hit when he was not expecting it. This experience

made Trent realize how dangerous prison is and how violence can happen quickly. Following

that event, Trent felt he could not trust anyone in prison, no matter how friendly they seemed to

be. Trent explained not feeling safe inside the prison walls. Instead, Trent felt like the only way

he could control his own safety was by not trusting others and keeping to himself. During his

entire incarceration, Trent tended to be on high alert with high levels of fear for his safety. He

recalls a time where he was put in a violent situation.

Trent: *One of my negative experiences was when I was in my cell, and this guy comes in with*

um like a 12, I believe it was a 12 or a ten-inch blade. Homemade blade. Out of nowhere and

he was trying to cut me up because he wanted me off the unit.

Trent believes this violent situation happened simply because someone else did not want him

living on the unit so they could make space for a new person to take Trent's place. Trent's

violent altercation was life threatening and shows the severity of some situations that occur while

incarcerated. In further conversation Trent explains "You got to protect yourself, you know? I don't like violence. I don't like negativity, it's just not my vibe. But if we have to defend ourselves, we got to defend ourselves." Trent further expresses that he does not like the violence that occurs, however, he was willing to do whatever it takes to protect himself from the violence.

Similarly, Birdie also felt deep fear for his safety as he watched many acts of violence occur within the institution.

Birdie: *Well just, that's tough I think, you know, seeing the amount of pain that was inflicted on other people. Like well from the jumping's to the stabbings and I've seen all that. I've seen peoples heads, peoples faces ballooned right up. And that really had a super negative effect on everybody, you know.*

Birdie is explaining how the perpetuation of violence in prison had a profound effect on him. Birdie expresses that the physical wounds he seen inflicted on others not only had a negative effect on him but everyone around him as well. The negative effect that Birdie is alluding to is the insecurity that other prisoners feel within the institution. Birdie expressed that the negative tension he experienced when he was incarcerated was a result of the aggression and violence. Although Birdie observed extreme forms of violence, he could not allow himself to be affected by the brute force and trauma he saw inflicted on others. If he showed he was impacted by this, he would be viewed as weak and thus become the target for future victimization. Thus, being forced to keep his emotional traumas internal, Birdie had to portray a tough, hypermasculine self during his incarceration which he expresses had an extremely negative effect on him. Birdie explains his negative experiences as being "enhanced" by the stress of the violence.

Birdie: *Well, the experiences that I had weren't great. you know, it's just struggle after struggle, and I honestly used to refer to being incarcerated as being put in the underworld,*

you know what I mean. So, it's a whole different world in there, it's just different like,

everything so enhanced like all the negativity is super enhanced.

Further, Birdie explains that many of his experiences in jail were understood to him as one "struggle" after another. The "struggles" Birdie is referring to is the threat of violence. Moreover, as Birdie also refers to his experience of incarceration as "being put in the underworld" I believe Birdie is trying to depict the way that prison can be experienced as an insecure space. The insecurity can be experienced physically by being housed with potentially violent and dangerous criminals and the subsequent violence that occurs within the prison walls. The insecurity can also be experienced mentally as Birdie outlines that he feels like the negative emotions that prisoners feel during incarceration are "enhanced". Thus, as prisoners feel heightened levels of negative emotions and are surrounded by violence, their experience becomes fraught with insecurity.

Critically, for both Trent and Birdie, the (threat of) violence shaped their overall experience of incarceration. Trent and Birdie both had high levels of stress as they were always on alert for their safety. As a result of their higher stress levels, Trent and Birdie's hope for their future was also impacted. Trent and Birdie were concerned about their safety each day which diminished their feelings of hope. They were not as focused on their goals for their future or accomplishing their goals which had an impact on their hope. Trent explains that while incarcerated, menial things become "escalated" and turn into violent situations.

Trent: *It just escalates, you know, there's a fight every day. I even fought a guy over a*

piece of toast. You know, and the system is messed up. Mentally it impacted me, you

know, going in and out of jail makes you stupid and it keeps your guard up. It makes you

stupid because you make stupid decisions. You think you're hard, you know, you get out,

think you're all Mr. tough guy, you know. But in the end, it's all back on you.

Trent recalls that he fought someone over a piece of toast, so a situation that was not a major event turned into a violent situation because of the way that prisoners' emotions are enhanced. Further Trent outlines that he feels like the system is so "messed up" that it mentally impacted him. Trent expressed that prison made him keep his "guard up" and he consequently made "stupid decisions". Trent was more focused on being the "tough guy" to avoid being victimized during incarceration and as a result of that he feels he made "stupid decisions". However, Trent reflects that in the end, his "tough guy" ruse was not the way he needed to act to break his cycle of incarceration when he was released. For Trent and Birdie, staying safe and avoiding violence and victimization was at the forefront of their daily lives.

Moreover, as Birdie had a similar violent experience as Trent while he was incarcerated, the threat of violence impacted his hope for the future.

Birdie: *During the beginning it was like all hope was gone I didn't care, you know, nothing really mattered to me and in there, and you know, I didn't have to face reality, you know, so towards the end I forced myself to face that reality, you know.*

Birdie describes how his hope was gone and he did not care. Birdie described being incarcerated as residing in an "underworld" and because he was living in the "underworld" he further expresses that he did not have to face reality. Thus, for Birdie, the violence and harsh realities of the pains of imprisonment acted as an alternate reality for him. Because these experiences were not 'normal' he did not have to "face reality" during his incarceration. As a result, Birdie also lacked hope during his incarceration, and it was not until Birdie forced himself to face the pains of imprisonment that he became hopeful.

During incarceration, many men act with exaggerated aggression, toughness and hypermasculinity (Ricciardelli, 2015). Acting this way is necessary to exert dominance, maintain status, and protect their belongings (Ricciardelli, 2015; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). This hypermasculinity encourages traditional idealizations of manliness and those who succeed in this presentation of the self, exert their dominance and power over others who cannot achieve this representation of the self (Ricciardelli, 2015). My findings echo existing research regarding the need to display toughness and a masculine persona. In addition, my data show how being "ruthless" (Billy), while necessary for survival, can create strain among prisoners, impacting their sense of self and persona.

> Billy: *I didn't like who I was becoming. You know, I was becoming ruthless, you know, just playing that routine, that role of something I wasn't. You know, it made my time a little easier among these hard criminals, these hard gangsters that don't know any better or any other way.*

Billy expresses that he had to portray himself as a hypermasculine man while he was incarcerated. Billy outlines that the act that he was putting on of exaggerated aggression and toughness was becoming a routine for him while he was incarcerated. Billy understands that he was playing the hypermasculine role during his incarceration and this role is not who he is in terms of his true self. However, Billy notes that acting hypermasculine and overly aggressive made his time easier among the more experienced offenders. Billy denotes that he is not the same as the "hard criminals" and his image was a ruse for others, but it was not his true self. Billy expresses that the "hard criminals" and "hard gangsters" do not know any better or do not know any other way. Violence manifested their true selves. However, Billy refuses to associate with this subgroup and considers himself different from them. He outlines that being forced to

act hypermasculine and ruthless had an extremely adverse impact on him. Billy also expresses

that being forced to be ruthless and perpetuate violence was one of the most negative experiences

he had while he was incarcerated. Billy was caught in a difficult situation because he was forced

to perpetuate violence and act like someone he is not, in order to reduce the risk of his own

victimization in the future. So, although Billy did not like the person he was becoming, he had to

continue the ruse for his own safety during incarceration.

4.2 Gangs in Prison

Gangs within the prison system are broadly understood as a criminally oriented entity

with the goal of controlling the prison environment (Beare & Hogg, 2013). Often, this is

achieved through intimidation and violence of both rival gangs and individuals who are not

involved in any gangs (Beare & Hogg, 2013; Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008). Thus, many

people choose to join a gang for the sense of protection (Beare & Hogg, 2013; Grekul &

LaBoucane-Benson, 2008). Similarly, participants in this study talked about the relationship

between gang membership and safety/protection.

> Trent: *I guess like I'm a current gang member, you know, I'm not proud of it. But this was*
> *the only way to survive in jail.*

Trent is outlining how he made the decision to join a gang for the protection that it gave

him while he was in prison. Gang membership for Trent is a direct result of the violence within

the prison and his need to survive the violence. As individuals feel a need for protection within

the prison walls, that oftentimes leads them to join a gang. Grekul and LaBoucane-Benson

(2008) and Weinrath (2016) outline that gangs in correctional facilities in the prairie provinces

stand out for their extensive and excessive use of violence.

Gyver: *I pretty much just scheduled up on routine, my workouts, my meals, my diets.*

Every time I went to prison as a gang member you pretty much just train to get ready for

war. And that's pretty much what I got used to.

Gyver expressed how his role in the gang, while he was in prison, was to perpetuate

violence. The way he outlines it as "getting ready for war" directly portrays the instability and

insecurity within the walls of the prison. Both Trent and Gyver expressed in opposite ways how

they prioritized and focused on ways to survive in prison. Ricciardelli (2014) notes that, when

individuals feel a lack of security within the prison system, it leads them to focus more on

survival than changing their criminal patterns.

Conversely, Gyver also expresses the institutional consequences of being a gang member

in the past. Gyver believes that the prison system was indirectly punishing because although he is

not an active gang member, his record in prison details that he is a current gang member.

Gyver: *You know when you do all this fucking work to change your life and you just get*

fucking flagged as a gang member, it gave me that false hope for any type of change. And

I tried to explain to them that I haven't been part of any gang for like 12 years now. and I

was like why can't I get into any programs? I'm sentenced.

In Gyver's circumstance he was beginning to feel frustrated because he could not flee the

consequence of being a past gang member. Gyver was feeling that he was being treated

differently and unfairly because of being marked as a gang member in the correctional facility.

Gyver explains that he came to this conclusion through his lack of access to programming.

Specific gang units (one gang confined to a unit) tend to be a higher security level than the non-

gang units, so they have fewer options for programming. Gyver explained his desire for

participating in correctional programming; however, he could not get into these programs which

in turn diminished his feeling of hope. Gyver's whole prison experience was defined by his

status as a gang member and how it affected his treatment in the correctional facility. All of the

participants I interviewed who indicated that that they were gang members while incarcerated

expressed that they were treated differently, like Maurice who recounted:

> Maurice: *Well, because I was a gang member, I was labeled, and I was targeted and it*
>
> *felt like everything I did was being watched. And so that was uncomfortable. I was being*
>
> *like I said, I got accused of calling a hit on a guy, which I didn't do. So, I had to go to the*
>
> *hole. I spent my birthday in the hole that year and I got into some fights in there as well.*
>
> *And when you're a gang member in jail, that's a mandatory thing that you want to be in*
>
> *that gang, and you want to be protected by that gang on that range. You want to stay on*
>
> *that range, you got to throw down and you got to fight when it's time. So, I did that. I seen*
>
> *guys get beat up by the guards. I seen you know, people get really seriously hurt, I've*
>
> *seen jaws broken, teeth knocked out, really bad stuff. So, these, like, traumatize you and*
>
> *you have nightmares. It's a really bad situation to be in and when you're a gangster in*
>
> *jail, it magnifies everything. Ten times as worse.*

Maurice outlines that because he was labelled as a gang member during his incarceration,

he was subjected to higher measures of security. Consequently, Maurice felt that he was

punished for something that was not his fault. It was easy to place blame on him because he is a

gang member. Maurice also expressed that he was not a model offender, that he was in a gang,

and he did get into some altercations but because of these factors, he felt like he became a

scapegoat, a person to blame. Maurice's experience of being an incarcerated gang member is

complex as he was attempting to balance the various risks of being in prison. Maurice outlines

the risks that he faced from the institution as being "labeled" and "targeted" for being a gang

member. Maurice also experienced the risk of violence from the correctional officers as he

expressed there were instances of prisoners being "beat up by the guards". Finally, Maurice also

outlines the risks in prison if you do not join a gang as they provide protection. Maurice

expresses that he witnessed harsh forms of violence that traumatized him. So, Maurice outlines

how complex the situation of being a gang member in prison truly is. Being in a gang required

Maurice to "fight when it's time" and perpetuate violence. But conversely, Maurice outlines that

being in the gang also offered him protection. So, Maurice was forced to incite violence in order

to also feel protected.

The complexities of Maurice's situation suggests that there is no perfect way of living

through incarceration. Similarly, Maier and Ricciardelli (2019) found that prisoners experience

competing threats within the prison and must respond to them on an on-going basis. Prisoners

have to re-negotiate their protection strategies in order to maintain some type of safety in an

overall unsafe environment (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2019). Similarly, Eric states "I was, I was in a

gang, and we like, I did a lot of stuff in jail. I was mostly locked up like in segregation." In

congruence with both Maurice and Eric's experiences, Ruddell and Gottschall (2011) outline that

there are negative consequences of being labeled as a gang member during incarceration. Some

of these consequences include increased surveillance and a higher security classification which

also means access to fewer programs and services in the prison system (Ruddell & Gottschall,

2011).

4.3 Navigating Interactions with Correctional Officers

According to Sykes (1958), autonomy is one of the pains of imprisonment. Sykes (1958)

argues that the deprivation of autonomy is inherent to the prison experience. Many prisoners

experience the deprivation of autonomy through the loss of the ability to make basic choices in

their daily lives such as when and what food to eat, when to wake up and go to sleep, and when

and how to move within the confines of the prison. The loss of autonomy is detrimental to

prisoners because it reduces them to a state of child-like helplessness (Sykes, 1958). What this

does, however, is make prisoners highly dependent on correctional officers for permission to do

things or to obtain simple items (Weinrath, 2016). Consistent with this, Birdie's experience of

incarceration invoked a sense of childlike helplessness as he had to ask permission to receive the

basic necessities for day-to-day hygiene.

> Birdie: *Well, for example in Saskatoon you have like that toothbrush, toothpaste and maybe*
>
> *even some toilet paper. You have to ask the staff for that stuff. You know cause, it's not like*
>
> *we can just go to the store and get it. No, you have to ask the staff for it and depending on*
>
> *how that staff is feeling that day, like they will give it to you but are they going to give it to*
>
> *you with some attitude or not, you know what I mean? So, it all depends on their feelings,*
>
> *honestly.*

Birdie is expressing his frustration for the lack of autonomy he had while incarcerated. Birdie

explains how he had to ask for the basic life necessities such as a toothbrush, tooth paste and

toilet paper. The act of having to ask for toiletries made Birdie feel a childlike sense of

helplessness. Although these are items that are needed for basic life tasks, Birdie explains how

he feared conflict might result from asking for these basic items. Birdie's situation exemplifies

how prisoners feel the pains of imprisonment on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, Birdie because he

lacked autonomy, felt higher levels of stress and tension in his interactions with the correctional

officers. Birdie found that because of these problems he had trouble navigating a working

relationship with them. Birdie outlines that managing this relationship on top of his lack of

autonomy, was one of the biggest challenges he faced while incarcerated. These interactions had

a profound impact on his experience because they were daily interactions, so it was an added level of stress on an everyday basis.

The dyadic relationship between prisoners and correctional officers is very complex and can be hard to navigate for both parties. When there is conflict and authoritarian leadership it leads to a lack of trust, and issues over power and control (Skeem et al., 2007). As outlined by Pablo, "I just ignored them, cause you know guards always win." Pablo is explaining that he felt the authoritarianism from the correctional officers, and he felt that that there was no point in questioning their authority because the correctional officers have the power to always gain or force compliance. Thus, the correctional officers' excessive toughness and authoritarianism led to Pablo feeling a lack of trust within the prison. Pablo expressed that his strategy for navigating his relationships with the correctional officers was to "respect those boundaries, treat them how I wanted to be treated". So, Pablo used his lack of trust as a protection mechanism so that he could avoid conflict with the correctional officers.

Because offenders have complex needs it is important that correctional officers afford offenders respect and dignity and try to act in nonauthoritarian ways (Skeem et al., 2007). Trent describes a time where he did not feel like he was treated with respect by a correctional officer.

> Trent: *At first, I didn't believe I was going to break the cycle because when I was in there, I still got into a fight with a few correctional officers because, you know, correctional officers are the ones that make us the assholes we are. You know, they, they're the ones that are allowed to do anything because they got the badge. You know, I mean, like just, correctional officers in Saskatchewan and all jails there is all corruption. you know. Like they're the ones that make you stay in jail. They are the ones that make you lose hope*

because before I got released two years ago, that correctional officer said "oh I'll see you

back in a month" And I was like I aint fucking coming back buddy.

Trent expresses how initially he did not have hope, questioning his ability to "break the

cycle" of incarceration. Trent explains that he has spent most of his life in and out of

incarceration. Trent also relates that he was serving a youth sentence that was so long he had to

finish it in the adult provincial correctional centre. Trent expresses "I turned 18 and I went

straight to provincial." So, Trent (25), has been in and out of provincial corrections, serving

various sentences since he turned 18 years old. Trent further explains that he understands why he

was stuck in the "cycle" of incarceration.

Trent: *Once you're into the system, you're in a system, and it's up to you to make that*

choice to get out of it. Like me, I thought ugh the government, the government. I kept

blaming the government, but it's me.

It was not until Trent took accountability for his actions that he felt he was able to change

the trajectory of his life and "break the cycle" of incarceration. However, Trent also explains that

his negative encounters with the correctional officers did not make it easy for him to have hope

to "break the cycle" of incarceration. So, he attributes his lack of hope, in part, to his

relationships with the correctional officers. Trent outlines that he believes that the correctional

officers are responsible for creating the hostile environment to which he was subjected. Trent

denotes the fact that correctional officers have a large amount of authority over the prisoners, and

he feels like they tend to overexert that power and act in authoritarian ways. Trent still felt a loss

of hope at the time he was released because of the comments that a correctional officer made to

him. In that situation Trent did not feel respected and felt like the correctional officer did not

want to see him become successful in his re-entry. Trent used the hurtful comments as a driving

force and motivation to succeed in the community and break his cycle of incarceration.

4.4 Meaningful Relationship with Correctional Officers

Prisons are a restricted space, and correctional officers have the important task of

maintaining a balance between care and control (Ricciardelli & Perry, 2016). Correctional

officers must maintain the security and control of the institution when they are interacting with

prisoners while also creating a trusting working relationship with the prisoners (Ricciardelli &

Perry, 2016). The role of correctional officers' in institutions is arguably one of the most

important aspects for success on all levels. The correctional officers long term exchanges with

offenders are influential in facilitating positive relationship building (Schaefer, 2017).

Birdie recalls a period of time where he did not have visitors and no support system to

talk on the phone with while he was incarcerated, a period where he had to rely more directly on

the support of correctional staff.

Birdie: *Well, there was a time where I wasn't talking to anyone on the phone. You know what*

I mean, so I wasn't able to actually have that family support or even that friendship. I wasn't

able to have that over the phone with anybody and then staff coming in and you know the

ones that went out of their way when I was feeling like that. And that really helps man, it

really did you know. I honestly believe they did that, when they knew I was going through a

tough time. They would definitely go out of their way just to say "hi", "how's your day been?"

Some of them make small talk that would help, some of them like really get into it, you know

what I mean? So, I think that's why it helps.

Birdie outlines that he did not feel like he had a support system from either his family or his

friends. However, during this time Birdie expresses that he felt like the correctional officers

stepped up to make him feel supported. For Birdie, it was the small ways that the correctional officers reached out to him that made him feel humanized and comforted. Birdie expresses that some correctional officers would engage in small talk with him and some would dive deeper into his emotional states but whether it was a small or large these gestures all made Birdie feel acknowledged and validated. The way that each of the correctional officers communicated with Birdie during this time helped Birdie stay mentally healthy. Moreover, the correctional officers created a positive working relationship with Birdie and a foundation of trust, so Birdie felt comfortable confiding in some of them. The working relationship that the correctional officers fostered with Birdie was integral for his growth and rehabilitation while he was incarcerated.

Eric outlines that there were correctional staff that helped him out and made him feel supported. For Eric, feeling supported by the correctional officers gave him hope and made him feel like he was capable of changing his trajectory in life.

Eric: *Yes, there was some staff that helped me out a lot. They would print out the numbers and places where I can go and get help.*

Eric outlines that this was a very positive experience he had while he was incarcerated. Eric felt like some of the correctional officers really went above and beyond for him so that he could have access to the services he needed when he was released. He expresses that the correctional officers printed telephone numbers for him and researched different community organizations that he could access to get help upon his release. He was unaware of some of these support systems in the community and because the correctional officers gave him the resources he needed, Eric felt more prepared to re-enter the community. Eric feels supported and explains that "Most of them are pretty easy to talk to. They were, most of them were fair and yeah, they were pretty easy to talk to you and communicate with." Eric felt that he could go to the correctional

officers, and they would help him when he asked and treat him fairly in the encounter. Eric experienced procedural justice from the correctional officers as he felt that they always acted in a fair manner when he confided in them. Thus, the correctional officers played a vital role in Eric's hope for his future. Due to their help, he felt as though he was prepared to be successful as he was now aware of the organizations that could help him. Eric believes that the correctional officers that helped him find the resources he needed, put him on the correct path to be successful in his re-entry and desistance from crime.

Correctional officers are the front-line staff that have the most contact with prisoners on a daily basis. As such, correctional officers are more likely to diffuse mental health problems than any mental health specific staff (Dvoskin & Spiers, 2004). Thus, the role of the correctional officer is extremely important in responding to and resolving mental health crises when they occur (Dvoskin & Spiers, 2004). During their daily interactions with prisoners, correctional officers can have profound effects on intervening on mental health issues by simply talking with the prisoner.

> Pablo: *Oh, yes. Some of them talk to you like your friends and stuff and when one of them took me to do my dental work. I talked to one of the guards and I just opened up to him and I just cried and stuff. I don't know, just the way he talked, he was giving me like a vibe like my grandpa. I don't know, he almost seemed like my grandpa to me, almost looked like him too. He seemed worried about me and when he took me out of there we were talking and he was like "is everything alright". Like, he knew something was wrong with me. So, I did that because of the vibes he gave me. It's all about respect for me.*

Pablo recalls a situation he had with a correctional officer that profoundly impacted his mental health while he was incarcerated. Pablo expresses that some of the correctional officers

would talk to him like they are friends and that is something that he valued. Pablo expresses that

he was struggling with his mental health and when the correctional officer took Pablo to his

dental appointment, Pablo opened up to the correctional officer about his mental health. For the

correctional officer, taking Pablo to the dentist in the institution is a normal daily task and

because the correctional officer engaged in conversation with Pablo, he felt like it was a safe

space to open up about his mental health struggles. Pablo expresses that the correctional officer

talked calmly and openly with him and it made him feel a sense of familiarity, the correctional

officer reminded Pablo of his grandfather whom he was very fond of. Pablo felt like the

correctional officer cared for him and was worried about his mental health. So, when the

correctional officer simply asked him if everything was alright, Pablo felt comforted and safe

enough to express that he was not okay. Pablo further explains that he felt respected by the

correctional officer and this aided in his decision to be honest with them about his mental health.

In this circumstance, the correctional officer had a profound impact on Pablo's mental health by

allowing him to open up and be heard. As a result of this, the correctional officer may have

resolved a potential mental health crisis before it occurred. The correctional officer was doing

their job as a front-line professional in an effective way that created a safter space for Pablo and

aided in the safety of the overall institution. Pablo recalls this to be one of the more positive

experiences he had while he was incarcerated because there was a level of mutual respect.

4.5 Education

Prisoners choose to participate in educational programming since it helps to prepare them

for their release and it is a positive experience where they acquire useful knowledge and skills

(Boulainne & Meunier, 1986). Jimmy believes that the educational programs he received in

prison accounted for the way he changed as a person.

Jimmy: *Like, the courses that they had in there. It is pretty good, it kind of made me think about how I should maybe change my life around and stuff.*

Jimmy expresses that the programs forced him to think differently than before and think about how he should change his life around and make different decisions. So, not only did Jimmy gain knowledge from attending the educational programs, but he also acquired a more positive outlook on his life and his future moving forward.

There are many different forms of transformations that can happen as a result of bridging the gap between higher education and prisons (Gray et al., 2019). In describing the "Learning Together" program in Britain, Gray et al. (2019) outline some of the individual transformations students in formal universities who attended prison-based classes have had. The act of bringing higher education into correctional institutions bridges the gap between the prison and the community, and as such it can elicit a wider societal responsibility and acceptance for prisoner rehabilitation and re-entry (Gray et al., 2019). For both the students from the community and the students in prison, the educational partnership can provide an enriching experience, break down societal barriers and change the way that they view themselves and their wider society (Gray et al., 2019). Birdie recalls a time when he was incarcerated and there was a program that was offered in partnership with the university.

Birdie: *And I got to write a book for my daughter. The university students that were there, they really helped me like figure out how to really go about it and, you know, I tried to write stories on pieces of paper. But they really like, I would show them, they would read it over, and then they would just help me make, you know, into more of a story, you know, it was actually pretty amazing. I was like, must've been like a three-month course or*

something. Where they came in once a week I remember. But that was like the positive

experience that I definitely had in the correctional.

Birdie recalls a three-month program where university students would come in once a week and help him with his creative writing. Birdie remembers this program with extreme fondness as he created a story for his daughter in this program. Birdie expresses that he would create the stories for the book on his own and the university students would help him flesh out and make sense of his writing. Birdie recalls this experience to be amazing, not only did he learn new writing and literacy skills but he also created a gift that he was proud to give to his daughter. This program was an enriching experience for Birdie, it gave him a new sense of self-confidence and it made him see a new version of himself that was not a prisoner. Birdie views himself as a student who is capable of creating and achieving things and a father who cares deeply for his daughter. Thus, this program elicited a huge change for Birdie which allowed him to see himself in a positive way and see some of his prison experience as beneficial. Birdie expresses that this was the best experience that he had while he was in prison.

4.6 COVID19

Many provinces in Canada mandated quarantines for varying reasons and amounts of time. But generally, quarantine mandates were a result of travel and testing positive for COVID19. It has been found that quarantines are associated with significant mental health consequences (Daly et al., 2021). Specifically, Daly et al. (2021) found that people who had to quarantine during the pandemic reported psychological effects such as fear, anger, loneliness and despair. Other negative mental health effects that resulted from quarantining are higher rates of depression and anxiety (Daly et al., 2021). Thus, the COVID19 pandemic had a huge impact on many people in various ways that negatively affect their wellbeing.

The entirety of this research has been impacted by the COVID19 pandemic because all data collection and analysis was conducted during the pandemic. Some of the participants were also impacted by the COVID19 pandemic during their time of incarceration. During the COVID19 pandemic prisons across Saskatchewan were impacted by the pandemic and the associated ongoing policy changes. While working at Saskatchewan Correctional Centre during the pandemic, I learned that the provincial custodial facilities across Saskatchewan were often declared as 'outbreak sites' of the pandemic. This is a direct result of the large amount of people inside the jails including staff and inmates, with little room to follow social distancing. Further, just as the COVID19 pandemic impacted general society and the public's mental health, it also had a profound effect on individuals who were incarcerated during this time (Johnson et al., 2021).

Three of the nine participants in this research had experienced incarceration during the pandemic in Saskatchewan. The three participants outlined that it made their experience harder than it would have been prior to the COVID19 pandemic. One of the more significant reasons it made incarceration more difficult was because research participants were denied or had limited access to Indigenous cultural and religious resources normally provided in Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

Billy: *Because of covid there was no sweats. I couldn't even attend the church or nothing, but they allowed us to smudge every night.*

In Billy's case, because of the pandemic he did not have access to outside resources for culture or religion. This is profoundly impactful on individuals who are incarcerated because they often turn to culture and religion for a sense of belonging, hope and a support system (Vignansky et al., 2018). Without having access to such resources, it makes their time of

incarceration more bleak and has a negative emotional impact. In discussion with Gyver about

access to cultural resources he said that he also had no access to outside support systems in his

culture, stating that "No. because of Covid you know they didn't allow people in and out. it

actually made prison, prison." What Gyver outlines is that the effects of the COVID19 pandemic

made correctional institutions feel like the harsh, stark, dramatized prisons that we tend to see on

television. He is expressing that the general view of prison is that it is supposed to be a harsh,

desolate time in one's life where one spends all their time alone, locked in their cell. Both Billy

and Gyver expressed that the COVID19 pandemic was challenging to experience while

incarcerated because it further removed them from their cultural supports.

The COVID19 pandemic brought many people in society to a place where they became

distrustful of the government and health officials (Usher et al., 2020). This was largely in part,

due to the ever-changing rules that had to be followed in society as uncertainty increased feelings

of fear (Usher et al., 2020). This also led to a top-down effect where although this was happening

in general society, it was also happening within the provincial jail systems. The general public in

society received the changing public health orders directly from the government and health

officials through various media outlets. This meant that the general public could direct their

distrust and anger back towards the government and health officials. This was not the case for

offenders who were in the correctional centre during that time.

The changing rules and regulations that they had to follow within the correctional centre

were direct orders from the correctional officers. This impacted the way that some offenders

viewed the correctional officers and thus they directed their contempt and distrust toward them.

Jimmy: *Correctional officers, I guess, were pretty rude and racist towards us. They had COVID in there and stuff and they didn't give us the right cleaning supplies they just kept it locked up. They let us out for an hour and we just had to shower and stuff so.*

Jimmy is expressing that he feels like it was the correctional officers' fault for both bringing COVID19 into the jail and making the harsh rules resulting from the pandemic, just to make it harder for the incarcerated offenders. Similarly, Gyver states that "I was getting pretty pissed off. They only let me out of my cell really for like 20 minutes just to shower." Both Jimmy and Gyver are directing their confusion and anger over the pandemic and all of the rules that come with it, towards the correctional officers.

Gyver also outlined his extreme distrust for correctional officers because he feels that they did not know what to do during COVID19.

Gyver: *My last bit I did, I ended up getting sick a little bit and they fuckin bunked me up with a guy that was already looking pretty sick. And they asked why I feel like I should be treated differently? Because that motherfucker is sick. and then we tested right? And my roommate tested negative and then I tested positive. Right there they, uh didn't know what to do with covid.*

Gyver is expressing that the correctional officers failed him and that he only became infected with COVID19 because they put him in a cell with someone who was already infected. The anger and blame that Gyver is placing on correctional officers is straining both his trust in correctional officers as well as the larger correctional system.

The COVID19 pandemic had a profound effect on the correctional system and all people within it, including both correctional officers and offenders. As such, it created more anger and distrust from the standpoint of the prisoners. The COVID19 pandemic was a difficult experience

for Canadians everywhere and took an emotional toll, including for those in correctional

facilities. Conflicts between correctional officers and prisoners are discussed further below.

4.7 A Time to Self-Reflect

In their study Crewe and Levins (2020) found that identity formation was reinforced

through social relations within the correctional institution rather than change and identity

formation being imposed by the prison. These identity changes suggest that prisons can be a site

for moral action and a space where prisoners can rediscover or reinvent themselves (Crewe &

Levins, 2020).

> Eric: *It taught me a lot of patience and kept me from drinking my life away, I guess. I did*
>
> *a lot of programing in there, too, as well.*

Eric explains that his ability to change his behaviour and identity came from both formal

and informal sources within the institution. Informally, Eric feels like being in prison taught him

to have a lot of patience and it forced him to cease his alcohol misuse. Being surrounded by

many people, all day, every day, Eric was forced to learn to have patience which is something he

believes later helped him in his re-entry into society. Eric also expressed that the formal

programs within the institution helped him to change his identity while he was in prison. Eric

further described how he took the anger management program in prison and learned to use many

tools that he was able to take with him upon release. Eric's identity change was largely

contingent on the acknowledgement that before his incarceration, he had anger management

issues. This self-awareness led him to successfully focus on anger control, anger prevention and

self-control while incarcerated. His subsequent change did also result in having a positive impact

on his offending behaviour as he can be more patient in situations instead of resorting to

violence.

It is important to note that while Crewe and Ievins (2020) argue that prison can be a space where there is identity transformation, changes do not necessarily equate to the cessation of criminal activity moving forward. Crewe and Ievins (2020) argue that there can be a transformation of the self in a subjectively positive way without having any relation to the desistance of crime. Like Eric, Billy also experienced an identity change while he was in prison, however, his identity change did not have any relation to possible desistance from crime.

> Billy: *You know, it helped me grow in a way to, you know, where I could recognize who is real and who is not. Especially like out of everyone that I was in contact with or interaction with, you know?*

Billy is outlining that prison helped him grow mentally and emotionally and it helped him recognize the people in his life who truly cared for him and his wellbeing. Billy expresses that all of his interactions in prison fostered a space where he could learn to judge other people's character and motives better. Billy feels like his experience in prison and his subsequent identity change allowed him to become more intuitive, where he does not allow himself to be taken advantage of. Billy's identity change allows him to foster more meaningful relationships in the community and he is thankful for the positive impact it has had on him. For Billy, his change had nothing to do with crime or desistance, prison simply fostered a space for him to learn and change in a good way.

Similar to Billy, Maurice expresses that although prison was very hard on him, there were many positive things among the negatives.

> Maurice: *It was hard. It was definitely hard. It was good because I was isolated from people on the streets. I wasn't using drugs or alcohol. I was able to think about my life. And you know what brought me to that point and what I want to change if given another*

chance. And then I came through all that and I got out and the charges got dropped and

everything and it was a really humbling experience because I really expected to go to the

penitentiary for the rest of my life. I was mentally preparing for that. And so, when the

charges got dropped and I got out of jail, I was, you know, very grateful and all those

experiences I went through in jail I, I have no ill will towards them. I just felt like those

experiences were a part of my journey and part of my process. There were many

negatives in that experience and there was many positives in that experience as well. And

it's hard to say what the positives are when we're in it. It's not until we come out the other

side and we reflect, and say hey, that was actually a positive thing.

Maurice argues that prison allowed for a space where he was isolated from his anti-social

peers, it forced him to stop using drugs and alcohol and because of that, he was finally able to

think clearly about his life and his future. So, for Maurice prison temporarily muted the stressors

in his life so he could think about his future and what his life is going to look like moving

forward. Maurice was facing a murder charge which for him meant potentially a long prison

sentence ahead of him. While Maurice was on remand, he was given the time to think about what

he wanted his life to look like if he was given another chance and he thought about aspects of his

life that he would change, moving forward. Maurice was mentally prepared to spend the rest of

his life in prison, his hope was at a low point, so when he was released from prison, he believed

he had to view this as his second chance and make big changes in his life. When Maurice reflects

on his prison experience now, he views it as a very positive thing in his life and he expresses that

he is grateful for his experience. Maurice also expresses that while he was incarcerated, he did

not see many of the positive changes in his identity and did not view prison as a beneficial

experience. However, years later, when Maurice reflects, he understands the favourable impact

that prison had on him. As Maurice has been desisting from crime for years, since his release, when he looks back, he can attribute the pro-social aspects of his life now to the experience he had while he was incarcerated. So, throughout his incarceration he went through a space of identity change and has held onto his new identity in his re-entry and years of desistance in the community.

This section has outlined the various experiences that each participant had during their incarceration. Some of the participants had more negative experiences and others had some positive experiences. However, most of the participants expressed that both negative and positive experiences can be present, even simultaneously. Like in Maurice's case where the negative aspects turned into positives after some reflection and time had passed. One aspect that stays unique to the participants in this research is the way in which the COVID19 pandemic impacted their experience of incarceration. All of the participants who were incarcerated during the COVID19 pandemic had also been incarcerated before the pandemic. They expressed how challenging it was for them to navigate both being incarcerated and suffer the greater loss of freedoms due to the pandemic. The next section will explore the participant's experience of re-entry in the community. All of the participants outline various challenges they faced within their re-entry process and how they navigated these challenges in the community.

5. Analysing the Re-entry Process

This chapter begins with the analysis of participants who felt very overwhelmed in the beginning of their re-entry process. Participants describe being overwhelmed with the logistics behind re-entering the community, such as finding housing and employment or gaining access to resources in the community. This chapter will also discuss how difficult it was for some participants to return to a disadvantaged neighbourhood where many of their family and friends

reside. Further, this chapter will discuss the challenges of being surrounded by crime but having to desist from engaging in crime. Participants also outline the heavy financial burden that is placed on them as they re-enter the community and how this impacts various aspects of their lives. This chapter will also examine many of the ways in which ex-offenders are disadvantaged in society after they are released from prison. This chapter will delve into some of the ways that the participants feel like they are further punished in the community because of their incarceration. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of how hard it is for ex-offenders to distance themselves from criminogenic family and friends. Some participants discuss how isolating it is to return to the community and not have the emotional or physical support of family and friends.

5.1 Overwhelmed

Upon release many ex-prisoners initially feel optimistic about their future but this is followed by practical barriers and feeling overwhelmed by the pressure of re-entry (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011). This often results in the avoidance of managing their barriers to re-entry, trouble managing emotions and eventual substance relapse in some cases (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011). Oftentimes there is also no re-entry programming or training at the end of the sentences, leaving many individuals unsure on how to proceed (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

> Eric: *So, it was really hard for me. So, I didn't, I breached and went back to jail and finished my time there. And there was nothing left like after you finish your time, there's no help for you. You have to go out and do it all on your own, so they don't help very much in the correctional now. It was just the cycle that I was caught in that I couldn't get out of. And I tried a few times to try to get help, to seek all these places, but it was like*

too much for me. It was new to me. So, I couldn't do those new things like because I was

like I don't know, I just wasn't used to, I was just too used to the old lifestyle.

Eric is explaining how he became overwhelmed almost immediately, which led him to breach on his conditional release and finish his sentence back in the correctional centre. Eric expresses that after finishing his sentence and being fully released from custody it was the same overwhelming feeling but this time, there was no correctional centre to go back to. In this circumstance, going back to the correctional centre meant going back to a safe space for Eric. Being released into the community, he had no idea what to do or where to begin, so he became extremely overwhelmed and went back to what he knew best, his criminal lifestyle. Eric explains how he felt caught in a cycle of living a criminal lifestyle and every time he wanted to make a change it became overwhelming for him. Eric expresses that he didn't know where to look or who to call to get help in changing his life, he was left trying to figure it out completely on his own because the correctional centre does not have any programming or anything set up to assist individuals in re-entering society. Thus, Eric found comfort in his old lifestyle of criminality and continued on that path for longer than he wanted to. Similarly, Birdie also struggled with finding resources upon his re-entry into the community.

Birdie: *Uh, just knowing, knowing where to look, I still struggle with that and knowing*

where to look and not having that sense of knowing where to start looking where to live.

Or the jobs where you can like be in the grocery store. Like, it's tough. I think it's all my

anxiety. Like, that kind of blocks me from trying to reach out more and more, you know? I

think just the anxiety that I have that stops me (and I don't know why), doing a lot of

things that I know I should be doing.

Birdie felt very overwhelmed when he was released because he did not know where to look or what to do. Birdie voices that he felt lost and did not know where to begin. Sometimes he feels as though he still does not know where to look or begin and he has been out of prison for years. He expresses that he felt lost in all the practical aspects of life, that he did not know where to start looking for a house to live or where to look to find a legitimate job, like working in the grocery store. Most of what Birdie knows about employment comes from illegitimate sources and criminal means as a source. Birdie articulates that he feels anxious and he believes that is what stops him from reaching out more. Thus, with being overwhelmed from being released into the community with no practical supports and having anxiety, it stops him from taking the prosocial steps he knows that he should be taking. In this context, it also inhibits Birdie from being prosocial in the community because he does not know how to do that, it does not come natural or easy for him. Consequently, like Eric, it was simpler for Birdie to go back to his old criminal lifestyle.

Billy shares a situation where he initially felt hopeful about his release because he reached out to his boss from his previous employment, prior to release and he agreed to give him his job back when he was released into the community. But that excitement and optimism quickly turned into feeling overwhelmed because of all of the logistics that came with getting his job back.

> Billy: *I am a heavy equipment operator. I reached out to my old boss while I was in jail*
> *and he had given me a job upon release. But I was overwhelmed with all the things I had*
> *to come up with, like the money to get there, a clean drug test, paying for the drug test,*
> *the training I needed to be there, all the tickets, the safety tickets to actually be hired*
> *back. And it just didn't fall through. I had the job. I just had to get there. It was hard, you*

know, it wasn't easy to re-enter society. And I got overwhelmed almost immediately. I got back in the drugs, got back to my lifestyle of being you know, the petty drunk that I was. And just using, you know, getting back into the old ways. And you're trying turn it around.

Billy expresses that it became overwhelming trying to figure out his financial situation prior to starting the job. Billy had to figure out a way to get there which inevitably costs money, he had to provide clean drug tests which also costs money and then he also had to renew his various safety tickets that had expired during his incarceration, which also costs money. So, Billy's feeling of being overwhelmed did not come from not knowing where to start but rather how to pay for everything once he did get started. Billy articulates the practicalities that many ex-prisoners face as they re-enter society and the job force and the overwhelming monetary burden that is placed on people who may not be in an ideal financial situation. Thus, like Eric and Birdie, Billy expresses that for him too, it was easier to revert back to his old criminal lifestyle. All three participants express that re-entering into society, for various practical reasons, became too overwhelming and for them it made the most sense to get back into their criminal lifestyle. All three had intentions of changing their lives around when they were released from prison. They wanted to change their lives and no longer be stuck in the cycle of criminality. But the unfortunate reality for them was that barriers upon re-entry were too overwhelming and pro-social lifestyles in the community seemed unachievable.

5.2 Surviving the Neighbourhood

It is important to consider the issue of ex-offenders returning to their support networks in highly disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Travis & Petersilia, 2001). The return to a disadvantaged neighbourhood upon release can act as a barrier to re-entry (Travis & Petersilia, 2001). Many ex-

prisoners end up living in neighbourhoods that have a high proportion of residents who are also

stuck in a cycle of being in and out of prison. They know that they live in problematic

neighbourhoods but do not have the financial means and mobility to change locations (Clear et

al., 2001). High numbers of ex-prisoners returning to already disadvantaged neighbourhoods

leads the neighbourhood to become even more unstable, less socially cohesive and crime prone

(Clear et al., 2001). As a consequence, many residents in these neighborhoods struggle with the

issue of not developing an individual pro-social personal identity (Clear et al., 2001). That is,

dealing with the challenge of being in a space with high criminal activity and drug use while

attempting to disengage from such activity. As such, it puts a strain on ex-offenders' re-entry and

desistance from crime when crime is all around them.

> Gyver: *Well, because I was living in the projects, so there's always drugs around. There's*
>
> *drugs, there's gangs, there's like people that still have problems with me. Walking to*
>
> *work, making sure I don't get shot, stabbed up or done in. Being able to live I guess,*
>
> *without going back to my drug habits. It's making sure I'm getting up for work or else it's*
>
> *back in the gutter and I'm back in prison.*

Gyver describes his living situation after he was released from prison and the effect it had

on his process of re-entry. His support network lives in what he describes as "the projects". The

projects embody a marginalized inner-city neighbourhood rife with households of extremely low

socio-economic status and families that are involved with the criminal justice system. Gyver

describes how hard it was to return to this neighbourhood after being released from prison. He

wanted to focus on getting up for work and ensuring that he had steady employment. Gyver

knew that in his case, if he failed to keep his employment he would return to a path of criminality

and end up incarcerated once again. However, being in a community that has many social

problems made it extremely hard for him to desist from crime. Gyver explains he was trying to

be pro-social and walk to work every day, but he always had to look over his shoulder and

ensure that he was safe. He expresses that now he is more stable in his re-entry in the community

and he no longer has to worry about simply staying safe on a day to day basis. Gyver further

proclaims "All these things that I took for granted. Because I was too busy trying to fucking

survive day to day." Gyver's harrowing words about simply trying to survive day to day echo the

reality for many ex-offenders in their re-entry process. Making pro-social choices in the

community is extremely challenging because there are many burdens of simply trying to survive

day to day.

5.3 Managing Money or Lack of It

One of the many barriers to re-entry is the financial burden that ex-prisoners face upon

their release. Ortiz & Jackey (2019) note that many ex-prisoners report being in debt within the

first two weeks of their release. These debts begin to accumulate the day they are released from

prison and serve as a large barrier to re-entering the community (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). The

financial stress not only leads to being overwhelmed in re-entry but may also promote future

criminality for financial means (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

As ex-offenders who are parents enter the work force there is oftentimes a heavy strain of

a high child support burden, which may drive ex-prisoners away from legitimate work (Link &

Roman, 2017). This can become a large issue for the individuals who have debt prior to

incarceration as well as those whose debts continue to accrue during incarceration. Ex-prisoners

are also not eligible to apply for any financial assistance such as welfare until after they are

released from prison and may have a substantial wait before being approved. Moreover, this can

be troublesome for individuals who are in need of financial assistance in order to find housing

and provide the basic necessities for themselves upon release. Consequently, these financial

burdens have a huge impact on ex-offender's re-entry and desistance in the community.

> Mikey: *It's definitely a big barrier for me because I like I owe a lot of money to maybe*
>
> *the government or SGI, but also child, child maintenance like you know. So, my debt is*
>
> *definitely a barrier holding me back from doing a lot of things I would like to do on my*
>
> *own, you know?*

Mikey expresses that one of the largest barriers for his re-entry process was his debt. He

outlines how he owes money to the government for insurance related costs but also child support

costs that he has accrued. He describes how these debts are holding him back from having more

success in his process of re-entry. Mikey indicates that as a result of these debts he has an

extremely poor credit rating and this has made it extremely difficult for him to find stable

housing. Mikey expresses that when he applies for low income and government assisted housing

he is denied not only because of his criminal record but also because of his bad credit from his

debts. Mikey's situation contributes to his instability because he cannot find a stable and

affordable place to live. Thus, Mikey's criminal past and poor financial situation act as a large

barrier in his re-entry into the community.

5.4 (In)visible Punishment

The marginalization that ex-offenders experience after incarceration is not something that

quickly comes to mind when thinking of barriers to re-entry. Travis (2002) notes that not all

punishments are as visible as prisons. Among the many, one far reaching invisible punishment in

society is a criminal record (Travis, 2002). Possessing a criminal record not only limits potential

job opportunities but can impact eligibility for public housing, welfare benefits, the ability to

obtain an education and the overall mobility for access to various social services. Thus, Travis

(2002) argues that criminal records in their form of invisible punishment place barriers on successful rehabilitation and re-entry in society and instead are retributive forms of punishment and convey further societal condemnation of ex-offenders.

> Trent: *In the system, like once you're in the correctional, you know, you're practically signing your life away. Through adulthood, you're a criminal, you got a criminal record. No one's going to look at you the same, you know? I had a lot of people who don't look at me the same because I've been in jail.*

Trent's sentiment echoes Travis' (2002) work on invisible punishment whereby Trent feels completely marginalized in society because of his criminal record. Trent's belief that being in the correctional centre is like signing your life away, brings to light the way in which former offenders are subsequently treated in society. Trent reflects on his adulthood and how he is permanently marked as a criminal in society because of his past criminal record. Trent will never be separated from his criminal past and although he is desisting from crime now, his past criminal record is something that he will always have to carry with him. Trent feels as though people look at him differently and treat him differently because he has a criminal past. So, for Trent, his criminal record is not actually an invisible punishment, it is very overt and something he has to live with every day in his journey of re-entry. Maurice, like Trent felt the lasting effects of his criminal past within his re-entry in society.

> Maurice: *People pay attention when you say that, you know, that holds credibility. And I can tell people, Google my name. You can see and I remember the day when I got out of jail, I was so ashamed about my name because of this murder charge. And I Googled it. It was the first thing on my name and I was feeling embarrassed and ashamed and I wanted to change my name. But after I went through like another year and recovery and getting*

better and then I said, hey, this is actually a plus, I can use this for my benefit. And

there's not a lot of ex-gang member, public speakers out there who have a murder charge

who are doing great.

Maurice had a more controversial charge on his criminal record and during his

incarceration it was a highly publicized case in the community. Consequently, news media

reported on the case and so Maurice's name and criminal charge are very easily accessed on the

internet. Fortunately for Maurice, his charges were dropped, and he was found not guilty of the

crime. Although Maurice did not have that charge on his official criminal record, the internet and

news sources acted as an unofficial criminal record. This made Maurice initially feel ashamed of

his name and how easy it was for others to see his unofficial criminal record. This had effects as

far as making Maurice want to change his name so that he could get away from the invisible

forms of punishment and to start a new life separate from his criminal past. He views his

experience as a positive one because he was able to work around the barriers in the labour

market to find a job that he was not only passionate about but also allows him to use his criminal

past to his advantage.

Gyver: *I guess, getting triggered. I never understood how people's reactions were*

towards me. Cause of all my tattoos and my choice of words. I don't know, I always look

mad but that's my mother's look.

Gyver conveys that he tends to be stigmatized and marginalized in society because of his

tattoos and the way he speaks. His tattoos act as a criminal record for him and since they are

visible to everyone he comes into contact with, he feels the negative effect from them. Gyver

acknowledges that people react differently towards him in society and he speculates that maybe

it's because he looks mean sometimes but part of it, undoubtedly are his tattoos. Thus, Gyver's

criminal record not only appears on paper, but it is displayed on his skin and through the way he talks, affecting his everyday life. Gyver's visible tattoos on his skin, makes him feel judged and further punished by society. Gyver could not understand why he was facing marginalization and stigmatization in society until he realized that his criminal past was overtly on his skin. So, similar to others, Gyver has a criminal record and faces barriers in re-entry, but because of his tattoos and manner of speech he also faces barriers directly in his daily interactions.

5.5 Distancing from Friends and Family

Earlier I discussed the difficulty for ex-prisoners of having to live in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Similar to that barrier, one of the most detrimental challenges to re-entry can be the lack of pro-social supports for ex-offenders. Oftentimes when the formal system does not provide adequate resocialization with re-entry, the former offender is forced to depend on the resources of their social system (Breese et al., 2000). Simply put, family and peers often communicate and foster various values, norms and models of accepted behaviour in society (Breese et al., 2000). Maurice outlines that getting approved to be around his family while he was on probation, after being released was a challenge for him.

Maurice: *Connecting with my family was. It was hard to be approved by the probation officer first. So that was the only obstacle. But that started coming around and it was just the time thing. So, I was staying out of trouble for a little while and every two weeks, signing in every week, and then to signing in every two weeks then to signing in once a month type of deal.*

Maurice's family was his main support system, so he needed them during his re-entry process. However, his family was not a pro-social support system and likely to cause criminal behaviour. So, although Maurice needed to depend on his family, he also needed to go through

an approval process which made his re-entry process more difficult. Maurice was facing a moral dilemma because he needed his family both as a physical and emotional support system in his re-entry process but that was not necessarily the best option for him. Maurice was going through a high stress time and needed the support of his family. However, as a result of Maurice's family members being criminogenic, being fully supported by them had a high chance of causing more conflict and stress for him, which is why his probation officer was hesitant on approving this support plan.

Another major challenge of re-entry, especially during a pandemic, is the issue of social isolation and loneliness. Durnescu (2019) discusses the issue of social isolation for ex-prisoners that is an inevitable facet of the re-entry process. Loneliness and social isolation are arguably felt by most ex-prisoners in various ways as they re-enter society (Durnescu, 2019). Further, loneliness and social isolation are oftentimes the result of other pains of re-entry such as stigmatization or a lack of support (Durnescu, 2019). Thus, when ex-prisoners experience stigma or a lack of support in the community, it will likely lead to the feeling of loneliness (Durnescu, 2019). Pro-social friendships can act as a positive resource in the re-entry process and anti-social friendships are more likely to lead to compromising situations where ex-offenders are tempted to return to their past lifestyle (Bahr et al., 2010). Pablo expresses the challenge of loneliness he faced as he re-entered the community.

> Pablo: *I don't know. It's just more like I never wanted to be alone. It was so hard when I got out of jail, but I'm still getting used to it now. And that was one big thing, every day, I was always around people because I used to sell drugs. And that's one thing I wanted, I gave up on that lifestyle to focus on something better for myself and have something else to run to instead of all these, all these drugs and money. It's nothing to me, I just never*

liked it, just everybody around me. I think I'm a people pleaser. I felt like I was obligated

to help them, like I wasn't helping myself, I wasn't happy either.

Pablo did not want to be alone, and this was something that was very new to him as he was always surrounded by people both prior to and during incarceration. So, as Pablo began his journey in re-entry, he was forced to isolate himself from his past anti-social friendships. He knew that if he went back to those friendships, it would lead him back to his past lifestyle. Pablo expresses that he wanted better for himself coming out of prison. Pablo also articulates that he felt that he was pleasing others when he was selling drugs prior to incarceration and felt obligated to help others. This could mean pleasing the drug user by supplying the drugs as well as pleasing his friends and family from the monetary gain from selling the drugs. Pablo ultimately knew that this choice was not helping him or making him happy, so he knew this was something he had to change. However, distancing from some of his lifelong friends was very a very difficult decision. Consequently, Pablo was forced to deal with the loneliness he was experiencing in order to continue to be successful on his journey of re-entry.

5.6 Desistance and Avoiding Old Peers

Recall that akin to re-entry, desistance is a long-term process that is not necessarily linear. Desistance is a process where the abstinence or shift away from crime is maintained throughout the life course (Williams & Schaefer, 2021). Thus, it is important to consider the ways individual and societal factors initiate and support ongoing desistance from crime. Williams and Schaefer (2021) concluded that the decision to desist from crime is not enough to reduce the likelihood of exposure to criminogenic opportunities and environments if there are no action-driven goals behind ex-prisoner motivations. As such, ex-offenders must change their behaviours to achieve and maintain the desired desistance (Williams & Schaefer, 2021).

Furthermore, Colman and Vander Laenen (2012) posit that drug using offenders have a higher chance of developing a long-lasting criminal career that is rooted in their substance misuse. Many of the ex-offenders who use drugs consider their past criminal behaviour negative and want to become themselves again and show their new identity in society (Colman & Vander Laenen, 2012). For this population, their motivation for change and desistance are rooted in relationships and wanting more for their family life (Colman & Vander Laenen, 2012). Consequently, ex-prisoners who formerly used drugs must remain fully alert to potential situations where they may encounter drugs (Colman & Vander Laenen, 2012). Pablo expresses that his main strategy for desistance was to avoid people from his past who put him into possible criminogenic situations.

> Pablo: *Stay away from the toxic people. Staying away from drugs and staying away from bad money. I went broke, I watched everybody just run away from me, that was such an amazing thing.*

Pablo outlines that aside from staying away from anti-social peers, his desistance process includes staying away from drugs and money associated with drugs. When he gave up that lifestyle and no longer had steady income from selling drugs, the people he thought were his friends were no longer around for him. Pablo reflects on that being a positive thing for him because it allowed him to see who truly had his best interest in mind. Similar to Pablo, Mikey's main strategy for desistance is also to avoid his anti-social peers from his criminal past. A way that Mikey avoids his past negative peers is to occupy most of his time with work.

> Mikey: *Just keeping busy with work. I avoid people that I know are not going to be good people in my life. So, I if I've dealt with them before, I met them in the past and I know they have done drugs or were doing drugs before or, or engaging in criminal lifestyle,*

you know what I mean? Like, I don't want to be around them, I avoid them as much as I

can. Like, I'll say, hi, how are you doing? But I won't say let's hang out later or

something. I don't want to hang out with somebody who's going to put me back into my

old steps, you know.

Mikey echo's Vignansky and colleagues (2018) study whereby the only way that he can

desist from crime is by completely cutting himself off from past surroundings and friends in

order to stay on his pro-social path. Moreover, Mikey and Pablo both avoid any situation that

may put them in contact with people from their past. Mikey has a contingency plan that in the

event he encounters an anti-social peer from his past, he remains cordial and keeps the

conversation minimal so as to avoid any potential risk of relapse or criminality. Mikey has his

goal of desistance at the forefront of his mind at all times and expresses that he does not want to

be around anyone that may cause him to lose sight of his goal. So, although completely avoiding

past friendships is tough for both Mikey and Pablo, their sobriety and desistance is the utmost

important thing for them and they will do whatever it takes to stay on the pro-social path they are

on.

It poses no surprise that gang membership constitutes a higher risk lifestyle that also

increases the likelihood of arrest, incarceration and violent victimization (Sweeten et al., 2013).

However, it is important to consider the effects of transitioning out of gangs. Sweeten et al.

(2013) argue that gang embeddedness matters just as much as gang membership itself. If an

individual does not fully remove themselves from the gang, they tend to be surrounded by anti-

social peers, continue to engage in the unstructured activities and thus still become victimized

(Sweeten et al., 2013). The group process of gangs tends to promote criminal behaviour and to

decrease criminogenic components of gang embeddedness requires reducing the ties with gang-

members and modifying free time (Sweeten et al., 2013). Maurice, like Sweeten et al. (2013)

explains the importance of fully removing oneself from the gang.

> Maurice: *And a common mistake that people think is that just because they leave the*
> *gang, that they're good. But a lot of guys leave the gang, but they're still involved in the*
> *lifestyle of the drugs and alcohol and crime and everything. And I knew I didn't want to*
> *do that. So, I moved cities and I changed my environment and the people that were*
> *around me.*

Maurice expresses that it is important to remove yourself from the lifestyle involving

substance use and crime. Maurice explains how he knew fully removing himself from his gang

was not going to be possible if he continued to live in Saskatoon. So, Maurice made the tough

decision to move to a new city and surround himself with pro-social peers and activities. For

Maurice it was an ultimatum that if he did not leave and start fresh then he was going to continue

to hang around with the gang and thus be stuck in his previous cycle of incarceration. Maurice

used this as his main strategy for desistance where he had to gain physical distance between his

anti-social peers to refrain from his previous lifestyle.

5.7 No Support System

Re-entering into society after a period of incarceration can be a very stressful and

uncertain time, especially when individuals are not released into a network of support.

Saskatchewan provincial corrections does not have any formal support programming for ex-

offenders re-entering into the community. Billy is expressing that he lacked a support system

during his re-entry into the community.

Billy: *It was hard to get on welfare, to get a job, you know, to get money, so I can kind of*

live. I had all these aspirations to be better or whatever. But the opportunity didn't

present itself immediately as easy as it should have, I guess.

One of Billy's main concerns was his financial situation and the fact that it was extremely

hard for him to get on welfare because applying for that can only take place once an individual is

officially released from custody. So, finding the correct resources to take the steps to apply was

challenging for Billy while he was in the community because he did not have the mobility or

financial means to get all the resources he needed to apply. Furthermore, Billy expressed his

desire for a 'normal' life of stable employment and income. Billy used the word normal to

express that he wants a life of stability, he does not believe that his life and circumstances are

normal but wishes for it to become stable. Billy felt like he had a hard time re-entering the

community because there were no programs for him to utilize for support and so the

opportunities were not readily available to him. Billy expressed his goals and aspirations for his

future in the community but felt that these became a challenge to achieve because he did not

know where to start. Without the support networks in the community Billy felt like he was lost in

his re-entry and did not know where to begin to seek out opportunities to foster a stable lifestyle.

As discussed above, there is a huge need for social support in the community when ex-

offenders are in their re-entry process. But what is equally important is the need for moral

support in the re-entry process and the large role that family and peers have in re-entry and

further desistance. Boman and Mowen (2017) found that individuals who report having criminal

peers also tend to have greater levels of substance misuse over time. Criminal peers have also

shown to have a greater negative impact on post release recidivism and substance misuse

(Boman & Mowen, 2017). So, the role of anti-social peers is arguably the most important factor

to protect against as they have a more negative impact on re-entry and desistance. Eric is asserting that he thinks his friends have a negative influence on him and are arguably the biggest challenge he has faced in his re-entry process.

> Eric: *My friends was the main one. They thought I was just a bitch and thinking I was giving up on doing whatever they were doing. Right when I got back from treatment, a few of my friends wanted me to go out and drink and celebrate. I was like I'm not going to celebrate by drinking when I just got out of treatment.*

Eric discloses a situation where his friends felt as though he was betraying them by choosing a different lifestyle. Eric explains that his anti-social peers looked down on him for wanting to make different choices and as such they were unsupportive of the new path he was wanting to take. Eric explains that his friends wanted to go out drinking immediately after he got out of treatment for his substance misuse problems. Eric felt betrayed and discouraged because people he considered genuine friends, did not support his desire for a healthier lifestyle. Eric had no moral support from his friends in the community as they were not supportive of his pro-social choices in his re-entry process. This made Eric go through a sense of crisis because without his friends supporting his goals, it was hard for him to turn his back on his friends and continue to pursue his goals. Eric's friends made it seem like being successful after treatment and staying away from substances was the wrong choice, which made Eric feel isolated in his re-entry process. Eric's situation echoes Boman and Mowen's (2017) arguments on how important it is to have pro-social peers in the re-entry process since criminal peers have a negative impact on recidivism and are thus a risk factor for re-incarceration.

The participant's narratives in this section speak to how difficult it is to re-enter the community after a period of incarceration. All of the participants highlight how complex it was

to re-start their lives after a period of incarceration. Some of the participants were extremely

overwhelmed when returning to the community because they had no routine to follow, no steady

employment upon release or struggled financially. Each of the participant's narratives

encapsulate the various barriers they faced when they re-entered the community. Many of the

barriers the participants face are oftentimes overlooked in society, such as the issue of a criminal

record and how that impacts their eligibility for social support systems. The next section will

analyse many of the ways in which the participants have faced their re-entry barriers. The next

section will also discuss many of the motivating factors that the participants outline that led them

to make a substantial change in their lives.

6. Analysing the Motivations to Change

This chapter will offer further analysis of participants' motivations for change. The

chapter begins by showing how participants simply got bored or became sick of their previously

'high-risk' lifestyle. Further, my findings highlight the critical role of having children as a prime

motivator for change. Many of the participants aspired to be a good father and role model to their

children, pushing them to adopt a more 'pro-social' lifestyle. The desire to provide a life for their

children that they did not have was another push factor away from crime. Further, this chapter

will analyse how some participants find peace in understanding their past traumas and how that

subsequently led them to their addictions. Some participants found that going to treatment was

their biggest motivator to change and begin their journey of desistance. The chapter concludes

with the analysis of support systems and how feeling supported led many of the participants to

want to make a change in their lives. Some participants' support systems were their family

members and others found support in community organizations. Nonetheless, many of the

participants express how transformative it was for them to have a good support system on their journey of desistance.

6.1 'Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired'

When asked why they decided to make the change in their lives, Birdie and Eric both mention being "sick" of the lifestyle. Birdie explains that he has done "12 years inside prison, including youth and adult sentences." The change for Birdie was brought on by a moment of reflection outlined below.

> Birdie: *I was just not wanting to spend the rest of my life in jail and that's where I was going, so when I got to that stage where it was like, you're either going to do this for the rest of your life. Or you're going to get out and change your life, you know what I mean?*

The change in Birdie's life is centered around the final decision of not wanting to continue his revolving door of incarceration. Birdie outlines that he "forced" himself to "face the reality" that his entire life was going to be spent in prison if he did not do something different. So, towards the end of his last prison sentence he expressed, "I really applied myself to do things." Thus, Birdie began making the changes he needed to begin a new lifestyle.

> Birdie: *Man, I was sick of being sad and depressed. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired you know what I mean? And it was just everything in that lifestyle got played out and I was like, you know what, I want to change. I want to do something different. So, I pushed myself to do that.*

Birdie expresses that he became figuratively and literally sick of his old lifestyle. Birdie's old "lifestyle" was classified by gang membership and a harsh cycle of being in and out of prison, followed by a life revolving around drug and alcohol misuse. Birdie was tired of how his substance use made him physically sick. He was tired of how feeling depressed took a toll on his

mental health. As the narrative evinces, Birdie no longer finds value in his old lifestyle, he

desired change. He highlights how it was *him* who pushed to make that change; in essence, he

wanted to change and hold himself accountable to follow through. Part of this change included

distancing himself from his anti-social peers. Birdie found a new identity in rejecting his old

identity. When he thinks about the way that "sick and tired" felt, he stays motivated to desist so

he no longer feels that way moving forward.

Laub and Sampson's (2001) life course approach provides a useful lens through which to

understand Birdie's internal and external change. While "turning points" are routinely a catalyst

for desistance, Laub and Sampson (2001) suggest desistance can take place in the absence of

"turning points" or life events. In the life course, some people may "age out" of crime or 'drift

away' from crime, while others may just decide that they no longer want to continue offending

and thus, begin their desistance journey (Laub & Sampson, 2001). In the interview excerpt that

follows Eric explains that his motivations for desistance were initiated as part of his life course.

> Eric: *I think it's because it's I don't know, it's growing, really. It's just, you know, you like*
>
> *get bored of something and you just don't do it no more. That's all it is, that's how it is for*
>
> *me plus like a lot of just getting sick of lifestyle like, I just wanted to be around for my*
>
> *son.*

Eric was 35 at the time of the interview and explained that he just simply 'grew up' and

no longer wanted to live a lifestyle characterized by crime and gang activity. Eric explains he

had been in a gang during the period in his life when he was stuck in the cycle of incarceration.

Like Birdie, Eric expresses that he became bored with his criminal lifestyle and decided that he

no longer wanted to live that way. Eric was also sick of his old lifestyle and no longer had the

energy to continue. The old "lifestyle" he refers to is characterized by gang and criminal activity.

He expresses that initially desistance was tough for him because of "the area I was staying in and the friends that I had." Every time Eric would get out of prison, he would hang out with his old friends and he would do "the same old thing" of engaging in criminal activity. In addition to his criminogenic peers, Eric also expressed that he struggled with addiction and every time he tried to go to treatment, his friends thought he was a "bitch" and that he was "giving up." Thus, he succumbed to the peer pressure and continued his criminogenic lifestyle.

For Eric, there was no big life event that made him want to desist but rather just age and maturation. Eric explains that he has been incarcerated from youth until he was about 30 years old. During that period of his life, he expressed that "I kind of thought I was just going to be a repeat offender type of thing, in and out, in and out." When talking about why Eric thought he was going to be a repeat offender, he explained that "it felt like I was just stuck in a cycle, constantly just doing the wrong thing all the time."

In addition to maturation, Eric decided that he wanted to be a present father in his son's life and that was not something that was possible in his previous lifestyle. Eric explains that he also became motivated to change because he wanted to be a good role model for his son and nephew. He states that "I needed to like smarten up for them. Because they're starting to fall into the same lifestyle as me." Thus, Eric decided to make a lifestyle change and move into the process of desistance and continue on his new pro-social life course.

6.2 Children as Motivation

Carlsson (2013) notes that oftentimes desistance is embodied by age-old norms of what it means to "be a man" and successfully do masculinity as male ex-offenders begin to age and mature. Transforming from a life of criminality to "being a man" can be a key part in desisting from crime (Carlsson, 2013). For some ex-offenders, their goal is to be a pro-social member of

society by performing normative masculine roles such as having steady employment, relationships and family formation (Carlsson, 2013). As Carlsson (2013) suggests, Billie expresses the desire for normative masculine roles, such as being a father and a provider for his family. Billy expresses that his experience of being incarcerated has made him want to lead a more pro-social life. When Billy reflects on his time in prison, he expresses that it wasted many good years of his life and set him back in many ways.

> Billy: *Well, the mere thought of "I'm going back to jail" absolutely revolts me to do anything silly. I mean it is a waste of time and a setback and I can't afford the time behind bars anymore, I got my son. You know and I got my future, my future is very important to me and my future is that I don't want to be in jail anymore, I don't want to live that life anymore.*

Billy explains that he cannot afford to go back to jail both financially and in his personal life. He cannot afford to face the setbacks, challenges and overall "wasted" time, that come along with incarceration, so he uses that as motivation to desist. Billy also expresses that he has custody of his son and as such, his son and the idea of being a good father is motivation for Billy to continue to desist. Billy cannot be there to raise his son if he is incarcerated, so he will do anything to avoid the possibility of being in conflict with the law. Billy thinks about his future as a father, as a provider and as a role model for his son and expresses that his future is the most important thing to him.

The experience of fatherhood and providing for their children for some ex-offenders can be viewed as a turning point or a way of "making good" where they had previously been unwilling or unable to do so (Prior & Farough, 2021; Maruna, 2001). Trent reflects on how his

past choices have affected his children. He reveals that he has made a promise to his children that he will not continue to live a life where he is stuck in a cycle of being incarcerated.

>Trent: *You know, I promised my kids I'm not going to live this life. My kids don't need to see their dad in and out of jail. They need a father figure, you know? My daughter only has me and my son only has me, my son's mother passed away when I was incarcerated. And my daughter's mother is living her best life while I'm out here, trying my best to support her.*

Trent realizes that his children do not need to see their father going in and out of jail and being inconsistent in their lives. Trent also expresses that he feels like his kids deserve a father figure in their lives and that he has to step into the normative role of being a provider for his children (see also Carlsson, 2013). Trent is the only parent and role model in his children's lives and he plans to be a positive role model for them. Trent takes his parenting role seriously and wants the best outcome for his children. He does not want them to live the same lifestyle he did or come into conflict with the law like he did. Trent uses his children and his role as sole provider as motivation to continue to desist from crime.

There are many reasons for the initiation of the desistance process for ex-offenders. Carlsson (2013) posits that for some ex-offenders their desistance is initiated from trying to live up to the normative role of being an adult man in society. This can be achieved by being seen as a role model, whereby one must follow certain guidelines of acceptable behaviour (Carlsson, 2013). This normative task must be performed or the former offender runs the risk of losing the privileges of being a role model and father figure (Carlsson, 2013). The expression of fatherhood as a caring provider can be viewed as a projection of normalcy whereby fatherhood offers a sense of dignity (Sandberg et al., 2022).

Involved fatherhood can be used as a means to connect ex-offenders to mainstream society and can be used as a resource when they want to feel and be viewed as 'normal' fathers (Sandberg et al., 2022). This offers an explanation on why fatherhood and the involved ideals of fatherhood are so prevalent in ex-offender's narratives of change (Sandberg et al., 2022). Gyver outlines that he is lucky to get to 35 years old because he has lived a more high-risk lifestyle for the majority of his life. Now that he is in his process of desistance, he works hard to provide for his children and be a positive role model in their lives.

> Gyver: *I'm lucky to get to 35 years old haha. I guess you could say I work hard so my kids could see that they have a father that works hard not one that sits on his ass. I show them that I do like getting up and going to work every day, it's more than just a routine, it's a positive way to look at life. It's more than what you see in poverty.*

Gyver explains that he works hard and sets a good example for his kids. He tries to be a positive role model and wants his kids to see his work ethic so that they too can learn to have a good work ethic. Gyver expresses that he grew up in "the projects and there was always drugs and gangs around." As Gyver grew up in poverty, he did not witness much of the normative work culture in society. Rather, he witnessed more of the criminogenic work cultures involving gangs and drugs. As such, Gyver uses his past as motivation and wants to give his children all that he did not have. Gyver stresses the importance of looking at life in a positive way and the desire to show his children that he truly enjoys getting up and going to work every day. For Gyver, work is more than just a routine or a way to provide for his family. He views it as a positive learning lesson for his children. He wants them to see all the hard work that he does for the sake of being a good father figure. Thus, Gyver's motivation in his desistance process is

rooted in wanting to be a good role model for his children so that they can have a better life than

he did.

6.3 Understanding Trauma and Addiction

Birdie has had multiple failed attempts of going to drug treatment centres, however, his

last experience at treatment was his most successful one. This could be, in part, because he had a

clear goal going into treatment. Birdie not only achieved his goal but was sober and in recovery

at the time of the interview.

> Birdie: *I think up until this last time the goal was that I want to go to treatment and figure*
>
> *out, what I used to say is to figure out what was making me tick. But then as I went on*
>
> *and learned more and more about addiction, you know. I went to treatment a few times*
>
> *since I've been out and this last time, I went to treatment I really wanted to figure out why*
>
> *I turned to drugs. So, you know, those were the goals that I had set out for myself.*

Birdie is explaining how his substance use related to past trauma. Birdie expresses that

his ultimate goal was to understand what made him initially turn to substances. He outlines how

the last time he went to treatment, he was set on figuring out *why* he turned to drugs in the first

place and what continues to keep him in this cycle of addiction. Birdie's experience of going to

treatment fostered a space where he was able to fully understand and heal from his past traumas.

Moving forward, Birdie uses this as a strategy for desistance, where staying sober motivates him

to continue on his path of desistance. By staying sober, Birdie also stays away from his past

peers who both struggle with substance misuse and engage in criminal activity, which, in turn,

helps Birdie to refrain from drugs himself.

Similarly, Billy outlines that his journey to getting treatment for his addictions started

while he was incarcerated. Billy articulates that his process included learning more about his

addiction, how it has affected him and strategies he can use moving forward. At the time of the interview he was sober and on his journey of recovery.

> Billy: *That was a really big help. To go through that process of learning more about my addiction and what I can do with my addiction You know, the ball really got rolling in jail for me. It's hard to believe that but it did. But there is some negative thoughts about I don't have a job. You know, I don't have this. I'm probably just going to slip back into my old ways. Yeah. There's no big absolute affirmation that things were going to be alright after I got out of jail.*

Billy expresses that initially he was not confident that he was going to be successful in treatment. He had thoughts of self-doubt because he didn't have a job and he thought about all of the things that he did not have in life. This made Billy worried about falling back into his old lifestyle when he was released from prison. Billy expresses that there was no big affirmation for him that this time was going to be different than any other time he attempted to get sober in the past. However, he decided to do his best to stay sober. Billy explains that having a greater understanding of his addiction is what helped him stay sober. Moreover, Billy's greater understanding of himself and his past helped him on his journey of desistance. Billy understands what initially led him to his criminal lifestyle and because of that, he uses it to his advantage to desist from crime as he moves forward in life. When Billy went into treatment, he was fortunate to come out sober, with a new pro-social lifestyle where he desists from substances and criminal activity.

6.4 Support Systems

Social support systems are an important component for the major turning points that ex-offenders face in their desistance process, where these social bonds create a supportive and

caring relationship for the ex-offender to lean on in times of uncertainty (Chouhy et al., 2020).

Social support systems can protect individuals from suffering strains and promotes various pro-

social ways of coping when stressful events occur (Chouhy et al., 2020). As such, social supports

are a crucial element for supporting ex-offenders during their re-entry process and may mitigate

the effects of the many stressors they encounter upon their release (Chouhy et al., 2020). Social

support systems can be anything from programs to people, that have a positive impact on an ex-

offender's process of desisting from crime.

Gyver explains his most impactful social support system was his younger brother. It was

his younger brother who provided material support when he was released by giving him a place

to call home. He also explains that his younger brother provided emotional support and taught

him the value in working hard in pro-social ways to earn an income. The support of Gyver's

younger brother was the driving force behind his desistance, without that social support system,

the success he has had would not have been possible.

> Gyver: *Well, my late baby brother was actually my biggest support. He is the one I tell*
>
> *people about when I am doing all my work in the community. He gave me a place to go*
>
> *call home and he helped me stay on task when it comes to going to work. When I self-*
>
> *reflect, I do everything I'm supposed to do in honour of my little brother, after him*
>
> *passing away in January, really fucked me up. I do everything like I push and push for*
>
> *success because that's what he really wanted me to do.*

Many of the participants mention throughout the interviews that a program called STR8

UP has been a huge social support for them, both in prison and in the community. STR8 UP is a

social support system in Saskatchewan that delivers various programs and supports to individuals

who are affiliated with gangs, engaged in high-risk lifestyles and are likely to re-offend without

intervention (Akca et al., 2020). STR8 UP offers various Indigenous specific programs as well as

mentorship programs and workshops within the community (Akca et al., 2020). STR8 UP is a

positive social system in the community for ex-offenders who want to exit gang life, engage in

education and employment opportunities and ultimately reduce negative contacts within the

criminal justice system (Akca et al., 2020). Mikey explains that his biggest social support system

is the STR8 UP program as he did not have the support of his family or peers during his re-entry

process.

> Mikey: *Uh the people where I was staying at STR8 UP program is definitely a big help*
>
> *because they push you to go to AA, they help you get there, they help you go to work, you*
>
> *know, like they're very supportive. There's only three of them in the building and they*
>
> *take turns throughout the day, you know what I mean? So, you only see one at a time*
>
> *throughout the day, and they don't work all at the same time. So, like, each one gives you*
>
> *a different support. So, it helps out good, you know?*

Mikey expressed that the members of the STR8 UP program not only pushed him to

attend AA meetings but also facilitated his transportation to get there. They also helped Mikey

with transportation to his job and he felt extremely supported by them. Mikey had both physical

and mental support from the members of STR8 UP in his process of desistance and felt like he

could rely on them for whatever he needed during that time. Mikey noted that there are various

team members throughout the day at STR8 UP and each team member supported him in a

different way, so Mikey felt like he was fully supported in all aspects of his life. Mikey's social

support system by STR8 UP helped reduce his offending behaviour and put him on a successful

path of desistance. Mikey was both physically and emotionally supported by STR8 UP and he

expresses that he is extremely grateful to have the entirety of his support system in one entity.

With the support of STR8 UP Mikey has continued to desist from criminal activity and find a new social identity and friendships with their other members.

Laced throughout participants' narratives is the recognition that each of them ultimately found something that motivated them to make a substantial change in their life. Each participant found something important enough to them to transform their life, whether it was for their family members or their own health and wellbeing. Each participant is on a unique journey of desistance with the commonality of wanting to make positive changes for themselves and/or their families. The next section will analyse the role of hope in participants' lives. The chapter will work through how the feeling of hope has impacted both participants' experience of incarceration as well as their re-entry into the community.

7. Analysing Hope

This chapter begins by analysing how participants made sense of the term hope. The participants were asked what the term hope meant to them and how they would describe or make sense of the term hope. The answers to this question varied from not knowing how to describe it, to attributing hope to the achievement of a better life in the future. Many of the participants can recall a time during their incarceration where they felt hopeless and had nothing to look forward to. Throughout their addictions, recovery and desistance process many of the participants had regained the feeling of hope for their future. Some of the participants found hope in their journey of recovery and sobriety while others found hope through their various support networks. Further into the chapter, I show how hope affected participant's everyday lives. Some participants reflect on how having hope allows them to achieve their daily goals and others reflect on how their lack of hope impacted them so much so that they used it as a motivation to make a change, making them more hopeful. This chapter will end with an analysis of how some participants found solace

in their hope for the future. These participants explain how they found balance and healing through their sense of hope for their futures.

7.1 Making Sense of Hope

When asked how they define the word hope or what it means to them, many of the participants had different answers. When Jimmy was asked about hope, he said "Um I don't even know about that right now. Like, I'm not sure." Generally, throughout the interview, Jimmy was not very hopeful for his immediate or long-term future. Thus, when he was asked what hope means to him, he did not even know where to begin because that is a feeling that he did not possess. Jimmy also struggled to define goals or look forward to things in his future. Without having any clear goals, Jimmy consequently did not have much hope for himself.

Conversely, Birdie clearly describes hope and relates it to both his struggles and successes. Birdie attributes hope to also being resilient throughout the challenges in life knowing that there will be a better future.

Birdie: *Hope. Well, the way I see it. You know, it's something that usually stays for, you know, the future that that's to be, anywhere from your battles, the struggles to success and, you know, there's hope. There's hope in all the situations. There's hope that you can overcome them and there's hope that you can succeed in anything that you believe in.*

Similarly, Billy makes sense of the term hope and uses it as a moral compass. Billy believes that faith follows in succession to hope, so not only do you have to believe in a better future, but you also must have faith that you are deserving, and you will achieve that future.

Billy*: I guess kind of like a genuine belief of better things you know? Kind of like that. Kind of followed by faith and things like that. Hope falls into something along those lines.*

Birdie and Billy both define hope in terms of having a better future and being positive

and optimistic about the future. Although neither Birdie nor Billy have concise goals laid out in

their definition of hope, they are both hopeful individuals. They both describe hope on more of a

spiritual level than a goal-oriented level.

Gyver and Trent attribute feelings of hope with a better future much like Birdie and Billy,

but Gyver and Trent also mention their children. Gyver and Trent both use their children as

sources of hope and wanting more for their kids.

> Gyver: *How do I define hope? Having the strength to wake up every day and deal with*
> *society. Being able to play with my kids without anything holding me back. Being able to*
> *walk around freely without having to look over my shoulders.*

Gyver describes hope in terms of having strength and not having anything holding him

back in what he wants to achieve. Gyver describes that he wants to be a present father in his

kids' lives and live a free life without having to worry about anything happening to him. As

mentioned earlier, Gyver was a gang member, so his notion of "being able to walk around

freely" is also related to general safety. Gyver's hope is rooted in the idea that he wants his

family to be safe while they are in the community and to achieve that he must have strength and

hope.

Trent similarly describes hope in wanting more for his kids and wanting them to have the

things that he lacked in his childhood.

> Trent: *Hope, like defining hope. Worrying about my future? I just know hope, how do I*
> *put it? I got hope for a better future. I hope my kids have a better future than what I have*
> *and don't go through the stuff I did. I don't know how to explain it right now like my mind*
> *is just, I'm not good at expressing myself.*

Not only does Trent want better for his children but he also wants a better life for himself moving forward. In both circumstances Gyver and Trent are envisioning a hopeful future where they build a healthy family unit.

The participants in this study did not attribute their feelings of hope to specific goal attainment. That is, for many of the participants, having and attaining goals was not the central piece to feeling a sense of hope for their futures. Many of the participants attributed their feelings of hope to their aspirations of wanting better and wanting more for themselves without having specific and direct goals. Vignansky et al. (2018) note that a central component of being a hopeful individual is that they must have expectations for a better future. Given that many of the participants expressed that they want a bright future for themselves and their family, they can be viewed as hopeful individuals even though they are not necessarily in a goal attainment stage. Gyver and Trent's aspirations for their future can be seen as radical hope (Laursen, 2022). Their hope is radical because it is fraught with normality during a time in their life where hope has grown through conditions of suffering (Laursen, 2022). Their hopes and general goals of normalcy and conventional lives have emerged from disorder.

7.2 Hopeless and Helpless

Individuals may not always be hopeful or motivated, however, hope is more of a continuum than a permanent state. Snyder (1991) outlines that emotions are an inevitable function in the analysis of desired goals. Thus, when individuals attribute negative emotions or barriers to their desired goals, the individual becomes frustrated and defeated (Snyder, 1991). As such, when the perceived pathway to the desired goal is blocked the individual then loses their sense of hope in their goal achievement (Snyder, 2000). Moreover, when the individual feels

discouraged when faced with the barrier in their goal achievement, they may either give up on that goal entirely or give up on the pro-social pathway to achieve it (Moulden & Marshall, 2005).

This sentiment is echoed in Jimmy's experience. Jimmy explained that he was recently released from prison, only about 3 months prior. When asked about hope and how he feels about his future Jimmy stated "as of right now, not too great, but I do plan on trying to change my life around." Jimmy is displaying negative emotions which may be inhibiting his thought process in his goal achievement. When further asked about his future, Jimmy stated "I'm not too sure about that right now. Hmm right now I'm just thinking I need to get a job. And I need to get clean from drugs and alcohol." Jimmy is unsure about his future because he has yet to achieve any of the goals he has set for himself. During a prior incarceration and release from prison, Jimmy explains that "I planned on staying sober and trying to raise my kids and stuff but then things didn't go my way at one point, once I got out." Thus, Jimmy's past experience of not achieving his goals is inhibiting his current situation. Jimmy is focusing on the negative impact of not achieving his previous goals and returning to prison. However, Jimmy can see that his addiction is the inhibitor for achieving his immediate goals. But Jimmy also does not know where to begin with getting treatment for his addiction because he does not have any form of identification as he "lost them while under the influence of drugs." Jimmy also does not know where to begin with getting new identification because he does not possess his birth certificate. So, Jimmy feels stuck and does not know where to begin to start achieving some of his goals of staying sober and attaining a job. At the time of the interview, Jimmy was feeling hopeless in his immediate future and wasn't sure whether he would be successful in his reintegration in the community.

Hope is also a motivator behind behaviour, including the behaviour in relation to criminal activity (Moulden & Marshall, 2005). Therefore, when someone in conflict with the law lacks

hope in their ability to meet their goals in a pro-social way, they are more likely to then turn to criminal strategies as an alternate pathway (Moulden & Marshall, 2005). A lack of control in individuals' lives is often times congruent with the failure to both identify pathways to achieving goals and see possible change for their future (Moulden & Marshall, 2005). As such the result is the feeling of hopelessness and helplessness which can both be detrimental to those who have had previous conflict with the law.

Eric is outlining that although he served various sentences in provincial incarceration, just being incarcerated made him lose hope. Eric's experience is not unique as many of the participants in this research described their experiences of the revolving door of being incarcerated over and over also made them lose hope.

> Eric: *When I first started going to jail I had hope. And then once I started going in and out of jail, you know, in the correctional youth centre and then (adult) correctional. I kind of lost hope there because I kind of thought I was just going to be a repeat offender type of thing. In and out, in and out. But yeah, I, I haven't been to jail for five years now, maybe six years.*

Although provincial sentences are less than two years, the feeling of hopelessness is still prominent because of the revolving door of release and more incarceration that many individuals get stuck in. During his incarceration Eric did not see pro-social pathways to achieving his goals. Eric hence turned to criminal strategies as a pathway to meet his goals which consequently led to his revolving door of being in and out of prison. Conversely, Eric is able to reflect back to that time period in his life and understand where his hopelessness came from. Since Eric has not been to prison in the last five or six years it is evident that he was able change his thinking patterns and explore pro-social ways of achieving his goals and as such, he is no longer feeling hopeless.

As emotions play a large part in the feeling of hope, it relates to the larger argument of optimism and pessimism. In congruence with hopelessness, pessimism also results in feeling a lack of control in life, thus having lower levels of self-esteem (Scheier & Carver 1985). Pessimism is also related to depression, perceived stress, social anxiety and loneliness (Scheier & Carver 1985).

Mikey is expressing his pessimistic outlook on his future during the initial part of his incarceration. Mikey articulates his feelings of loneliness and depression resulting from his imprisonment. However, those feelings are not solely because of the incarceration but also because of the pessimism he held about his future.

> Mikey: *I didn't really look forward to anything when I was locked up. You know what I mean? Because I didn't know what I had when I came out. Every time I was incarcerated, everybody on the outs kind of never thought about you, it's almost like you're dead, you're gone. Nobody thinks about you. They take all your stuff. So you come out with completely nothing unless you got a supportive partner that's there for you. You end up buying everything new. You start off with nothing, right? And I would say that's for probably 90% of the boys in there. So definitely becomes hopeless because of all of that shit that goes on out here.*

Mikey feels that he was forgotten about while he was incarcerated which led to depression. Having no support system, Mikey did not have hope for his future and felt like he had to restart his life from the ground up once he was released from prison. Mikey also explains that he thinks that many other people who are incarcerated feel that way as well.

7.3 Finding Hope

Hope has been shown to have a positive benefit on many avenues of substance abuse recovery (Gutierrez et al., 2020). Stevens et al. (2018) found that the role of hope was significant, along with a sense of community in people's recovery process. The authors also found that within their recovery process from their addictions, with the increasing levels of hope, their participants also had an increased satisfaction with their overall quality of life. Thus, the role of hope plays a vital function in the recovery process from addiction and further distance from substance misuse. Billy expresses that because he is sober from his addictions, he understands his life in a new way.

> Billy: *Well, I recently took a new meaning from life as a recovering addict, actually. Nine months sober. I've been to treatment, and I have a really great job. It's a great treatment, I've had great success there, that's where I am currently employed. It's just in security right now. I intend to try to go to school. I believe this is what I'm leaning towards. Right now, I'm a single parent and I'm raising my son, he is in elementary school.*

Billy is able to be more optimistic and look forward to his future because he is no longer struggling with his addictions. Billy displays that he does have hope for his future because he is outlining his goals of going to school and having success in being a single parent to his son. Within Billy's journey of recovery, he sets small goals, like each month of sobriety, which allows him to feel success in his life. These goals foster a sense of hope and play a large role in Billy's recovery process.

 For many individuals, to sustain their process of recovery, they must also maintain the motivation to stay sober (Jason et al., 2016). Thus, hope is key factor in the motivation for individuals to stay sober. Jason and colleagues (2016) found that the role of hope was

significantly related to their participant's commitment in their recovery process. When

individuals feel a greater sense of hope in their personal life and context, they are more

committed to their recovery and tend to feel a higher sense of achievement (Jason et al., 2016).

Birdie is expressing how he has found hope within himself, he used his treatment and

recovery programs as a source of support to lean on. In turn, the support from the programs have

given him strength to confront his past and learn from his own mistakes. Birdie has used his

sense of hope as a means to keep working on his healing journey.

Birdie: *I'm giving myself hope, giving myself, you know, the strength because it's like I'm*

a recovering addict and alcoholic. When I go to meetings I'm able to get a little more off

my chest like NA meetings, AA meetings, you know, or when I do presentations. So, I just

keep I keep chipping away at my past and making it more bearable, to have more hope

for my future. So, I don't have to keep dealing with what I've been dealing with and just

ignoring it. And, you know, now I'm dealing with it.

Birdie outlines how this process is finally allowing him to have hope for his future and

see brighter days ahead. Birdie is expressing a sense of hope in his personal context as he

describes that he is proud of his success in his recovery. As a result of his personal hopefulness,

it fosters a higher level of commitment to his recovery because if he gave up on his recovery, he

would be giving up on himself since he internalizes his recovery process.

Some participants found hope in other people, like the correctional staff or their families.

The support systems around them gave them hope that they could break the cycle. As mentioned

earlier, procedural justice is utilized by correctional officers to elicit respectful behaviour from

offenders and increase their compliance in the institution. The fair and respectful treatment of

procedural justice elicits feelings of support and further hope for prisoners (Beijersbergen et al.,

2015). Ugelvik (2021) finds that the experience of being trusted can lead prisoners to experience hope for their futures upon release. The experience of trust aids in offenders feeling like they are being treated fairly and humanely which is what leads to the feeling of hope (Ugelvik, 2021).

In the following interview excerpt, Trent describes when he felt humanized by the correctional officers.

Trent: *There was a few good staff in there that talked to me. They told me I'm a good person/ You're a good person. You don't belong in jail is what that staff said.*

The correctional officers emphasized Trent's humanity by telling him is a good person who ended up in a bad situation. Further, Trent explains that a correctional officer had hope for him to be released from prison and not return. As a result of the correctional officer instilling hope in Trent, he felt more hopeful for himself as well.

Trent: *Well, at first, I was in there I was trying to act hard, I was trying to act, who I am on the streets. A staff member told me, you're not that person. He said, you're acting like someone you're not. And he had hope, he had hope in me, he said you'll have hope once you get out of here, don't come back this ain't a place for anyone.*

Interactions like these made Trent feel like he was truly a good person on the inside, and he had just made a poor decision, however, that decision does not need to define his life moving forward. As a result of the working relationships that Trent had with the correctional officers, it made him feel supported moving forward. This moral support led to his feelings of hope for his future.

Family visits and support in prison can lead to prisoners feeling strengthened and empowered during their incarceration (Vignansky et al., 2018). The support from their family also leads prisoners to have a sense of hope and they may express a desire to repay their families

for the support by reforming as they move forward in their future (Vignansky et al., 2018). Next Gyver describes how when he was incarcerated, his family played a huge role in his hopefulness with regular contact.

> Gyver: *They called me every week to see how I was doing and just having that was like a good sense of hope, knowing that I have someone to visit when I get released. Cause so many times I got out of jail and I had to fuckin walk from the correctional back to the hood.*

Gyver recalls a time when his family did not support him while he was incarcerated which made him feel lonely because not only did he not have any one to talk to but it also made him unsure of what his life was going to look like when he was released. Being able to talk to his family gave Gyver a sense of normalcy and made him feel connected because he knew that his family was still thinking about him while he was gone. Gyver then became hopeful because he knew he had people who cared for him and wanted to support him when he was released.

When incarcerated individuals are genuinely connected to their families, there are more opportunities for the individuals to envision a more meaningful life and future for themselves due to these important social supports (Vignansky et al., 2018). Instrumental family support is categorized as the more logistical support like housing or transportation (Mowen et al., 2019). Instrumental family support is shown to have positive effects on desistance as it provides former prisoners with the ties they need to desist (Mowen et al., 2019). When Gyver knew his family was going to support him instrumentally, by ensuring he has a ride home when he was released and regularly calling him when he was incarcerated, this gave him a sense of support. For Gyver, this sense of support led him to feel hopeful for his future because he knew that he no longer had

to re-enter the community on his own. Alternatively put, Gyver's family motivated him to have feelings of hope for his future.

7.4 Hope as a Motivator

Snyder (1995) argues that it is important to have achievable goals since it helps individuals to create goals that are concrete. That is not to say that high hope individuals cannot have large goals, but they also need smaller sub goals to feel a sense of hope and satisfaction when the smaller goals are met in pursuit of the larger goal (Snyder, 1995). Those who set and achieve these goals understand that they are capable of choosing a meaningful path and thus tend to live a more fulfilled life (Vignansky et al., 2018). Mikey is expressing that his ultimate goal is to stay out of prison. For Mikey to achieve his goal of staying out of prison, he understands that he needs to stay sober and continue to be employed.

> Mikey: *So far all I got is my sobriety on my belt. I've got a job. I've been going to AA once a week, you know. So, I feel like I'm taking these little steps and it is giving me hope for the future that I'm going to stay out of prison.*

Mikey's goals of remaining abstinent and working help him to feel a sense of achievement on a daily basis and for that he stays hopeful he will stay out of prison. Mikey mentions taking little steps which accounts for his smaller sub goals that leave him having satisfaction, knowing that he is on the right track for achieving his larger goal. Mikey is proud of how far he has come since being incarcerated and feels a sense of purpose and that is why he continuously takes the smaller steps in life.

Conversely, Birdie explains that looking back at the more negative moments of his past and being incarcerated is what gave him motivation to change.

Birdie: *Since I was 14, I have done maybe 12 years inside. That includes youth and adult and so it was like how I created that hope? I was just not wanting to spend the rest of my life in jail. That's where I was going so at the point when I got to that stage where it was like, you're either going to do this for the rest of your life. Or you're going to get out and change your life, you know what I mean?*

After reflecting on his past Birdie concludes that he has spent much of his life incarcerated in the various institutions, so he gave himself an ultimatum. Birdie understands that he could not continue to live the life he was living, or the consequence would be the continual revolving door of incarceration. Birdie had an ultimatum for himself that either he had to be okay with spending his future being incarcerated or he had to make big changes. Birdie expresses that having this deep reflection gave him the motivation which turned into hope for his future. Birdie decided to change the trajectory of his life and fostered hope by creating new pro-social goals for which to strive.

In addiction recovery it is important for individuals to find hope in their lives and be able to maintain hope for their future because it is crucial for goal setting (Stevens et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is important that individuals in recovery have a context-specific perception of hope (Stevens et al., 2014). The context-specific role of hope allows for individuals to set future predictions for themselves that generally include an aspect of resilience (Stevens et al., 2014). As such, hope and resilience both enhance the ability to make pro-social goals and carry them out. It also enhances a positive view on oneself and the confidence in the individual's strengths and abilities to achieve their desired goals (Stevens et al., 2014). Ongoing emotional ties to individual goals lead to long term sustained attention and motivation to achieve the goal (Snyder, 2002).

In the excerpt that follows, Billy explains that the entire idea of hope is what initially gave him the will to get sober. Once he had a small glimpse into what it was like to be sober, it made him have more motivation to continue on the journey of sobriety, although it was not an easy one.

> Billy: *Yes, I do. Well, first of all, it helped me get sober and really have a taste of sobriety. And, you know, trying to be sober in that place is a whole different experience, like it was no cakewalk, you know? But I still had hope that my goals and aspirations were to get my kids back and be doing better in life. And now I'm finally doing that, like, a year or so later. I'm doing a lot better. I got a handle and grip on things you know, but in the end, the light was really dimmed in there, because, a lot of my peers there, they had no hope. From what I gather like they didn't plan for the future like I did, my glass was always half full.*

Billy expresses that he began his journey of sobriety in prison and it was extremely hard for him but he relied on his motivations and hopes to get him through it. Billy's context-specific hope to get his kids back and do better in life fostered a sense of resilience for him to stay sober while he was in prison. His resilience on this journey helped him work towards his goal of getting his kids back once he was back into the community. Additionally, Billy's emotional ties to his goal of getting his kids back was a driving force behind not only his resilience but his later goal achievement. Although Billy also expressed that for a period of time, his hope was becoming dimmed, he persevered on his journey and it led him to his goal achievement. Billy identifies a lack of goals among many of his peers as a cause for their persistent hopelessness. Billy felt that because he remained hopeful and optimistic, even in times of high stress, he continued to plan and make goals for his future which is what he attributes his success to.

7.5 Healing through Hope

Healing can be achieved through the feeling of hope as it fosters a space to achieve meaningful goals (Vignansky et al., 2018). Meaningful goals provide purpose and account for a sense of fulfillment in life (Vignansky et al., 2018). For some, the idea of peer work and peer mentoring can be a way to not only build identity but act as a means for positive change (Nixon, 2020). The idea of peer work is a transformative process whereby ex-offenders can become role models for people in prison or the community. Peer workers are essentially experts by experience where they use personal narratives of desistance to inspire and foster a sense of hope in others (Nixon, 2020). As such, peer work has been shown to have positive reciprocal effects for both the peer mentor and the mentee since it supports strategies of initial and continual desistance (Nixon, 2020).

Maurice outlines the way in which he acts as a peer mentor in the community. When Maurice reflects on his past, he expresses gratitude for the experiences he has had in life. Although his past experiences have not had the most positive effect on him, when he looks back he does not feel as though any of those negative experiences were a waste.

> Maurice: *I feel great about my future moving forward. I'm turning 40 years old here right away. My party years are done, my gang life is done, but it was not a waste. I am able to utilize those experiences in a healthy way by giving back, being a mentor, being a guide and being an inspiration and providing hope for those who are currently struggling with some of those same realities that I was fortunate enough to make it out of and survive.*

Maurice is extremely proud of his journey and how far he has made it in life. In Maurice's experience of being a peer mentor, he believes that his troubled past allows him to be an inspiration for others who may be struggling. Maurice's situation of being a peer mentor has a

positive reciprocal effect for both Maurice and his mentees. Maurice finds satisfaction in his role as a mentor and it helps him to remain hopeful for his future as he finds meaning and purpose in this role of giving back to the community. His mentees also become inspired through hearing his story and utilizing Maurice as a guide for change in their lives. As such, Maurice and his mentee's have meaningful interactions that foster a space for goal achievement and fulfilment in life.

Like Maurice, Gyver developed new meaning in his life whereby he is more willing to help those who are struggling. Although Gyver is not formally a peer mentor, he expresses how he is a more positive person in the community and he is always willing to help.

Gyver: *I feel pretty good. I'm being a pretty good example for my kids. People in the community are telling me I'm a more positive person to talk to now. I'm more approachable and I'm more helpful towards a fellow man and if I see a person struggling, I will gladly give them a hand.*

Gyver's transformation evolved from wanting to set a good example for his kids and be a positive, pro-social source for them to be around. By helping individuals to clarify their values and foster a sense of connection and belonging it reduces their likelihood of relapsing into old habits (Gutierrez et al., 2020). In Gyver's process of desistance, he has found hope and optimism in being a positive role model. Gyver values a sense of being a good person which then allows him to form a connection with his children since he is a role model for them. In turn, Gyver's optimism extends into the community where he feels a connection to want to help others who are struggling. Both Gyver and Maurice find satisfaction and hope for their futures, in their new roles as positive role models in the community. Thus, resulting in both Gyver and Maurice's success in desisting from their criminal past.

This chapter has analysed the various ways that the participants made sense of hope in general and applied it to the context of their lives. Many of the participants reflect on a time in their life that they did not have hope for their futures. This is due in part to the cycle of incarceration that many of the participants had been stuck in for years. Although the participants were imprisoned with a provincial sentence of less than 2 years, because they were stuck in the revolving door of incarceration, they had spent many years of their lives in prison. Further the participants talked about the various ways in which they found hope and used it as a means to heal on their journey of recovery and re-entry in the community. Next, I will discuss my research questions and findings in the data. Further, I will discuss my data in relation to other scholars work.

8. Discussion

8.1 Addressing Research Questions

The research findings link and expand the previous work cited in the literature review, particularly with respect to the four main themes examined in this research. These themes include, the overall experience of provincial incarceration and the positive and negative aspects of that experience, the process of re-entry and the barriers that ex-prisoners face in that process, the motivations to change and begin desisting from crime and finally, the way in which ex-prisoner's feelings of hope impacted their experiences throughout this process. This research was guided by three main research questions. How does the feeling of hope or lack thereof, during incarceration, impact the former prisoner's re-entry in the community? How have strains, opportunities for "reinvention" and procedurally just or unjust relations impacted former offenders feeling of hope? Beyond considerations of hope, how has the former offender dealt

with the strains resulting from being incarcerated, during re-entry? Has there been an opportunity for "reinvention" upon re-entering the community, or how does the former prisoner otherwise navigate their re-entry? How do former offenders make sense of and envision the term hope when applying it to their lives?

Many of the participants in this study reported feeling hopeless at some point during their imprisonment. The feeling of hope is best explained to be on a continuum whereby some days the participants could feel more hopeless than others. However, many of the participants who lacked the feeling of hope during their incarceration generally felt more lost in their re-entry. Consistent with what Snyder and his colleagues (2000) articulate about hope theory, they found it difficult to identify goals and pursue them when they left prison without hope, and this led to lower self-esteem and well-being. One participant outlined how he felt hopeless because he was stuck in a cycle of imprisonment and did not feel like he could be successful in his re-entry. As such, this participants hopelessness led him to continue his criminogenic lifestyle and consequently be stuck in a revolving door of imprisonment. For two of the other participants who outlined they felt hopeless during their imprisonment, it led them to feel a lack of control in their lives and in their re-entry process. One of the participants outlined how he felt like he was forgotten about by his peers and thus had to rebuild his life starting with nothing. Thus, when the participants were hopeless during their imprisonment and subsequently released still feeling hopeless, they did not have goals or anything to look forward to in their re-entry. These participants were not successful in desisting during their re-entry and would continue the revolving door of incarceration. It was not until the participants had a different mindset and motivation to change upon release that they report being more successful in their re-entry and desistance. While there is a link between hopelessness and recidivism, it is also important to note

that hopelessness is one factor among the many strains that participants experienced in their re-entry process. As such, many of these strains combined, including hopelessness shaped the participants trajectories that led to eventual re-offending, in their re-entry. My findings are consistent with work by Martin & Stermac (2010) and Dekhtyar et al., (2012), who found lack of hope led to more reoffence.

Generally, the strains, opportunities for reinvention and procedurally just and unjust relationships had both negative and positive impacts on the participants feeling of hope. Many of the participants express that although some of these things initially had a negative impact on them, when they forced themselves to reflect on their harsh realities it motivated the participants to make a change in their lives and made them feel hopeful to move forward. Specifically in terms of the strains, the participants expressed that some of the strains of imprisonment had an initial negative impact on them, but they turned it into a positive outlook. When the participants were ready and had the motivation to make a change in their lives, they would oftentimes use the general strain of being in prison as motivation to do something different. Initially, some of the participants outlined that being in prison and facing the strain of violence made them feel hopeless but once they reflected on their situation or did not like the person they were becoming, they used that as motivation to change. Another participant reflected on the fact that he spent about 12 years of his life inside prison and used that realization as motivation to make a change and have different goals moving forward. Thus, although the prison strain and pains of imprisonment literature (Listwan et al., 2013; Ricciardelli, 2014; Schaefer, 2017; Sykes, 1958) show the deleterious impacts of incarceration, my study unearthed that individuals can use negative experiences to motivate themselves. Despite this finding, it is difficult to support a painful prison environment, because I found other, more positive features of institutional life that

supported inmate change. For prisoners not so motivated, research suggests harsher prisons increase their likelihood of reoffence (Listwan et al., 2013).

Some researchers say that despite the many pains associated with them prisons can be a place for reinvention (Crewe and Ievins, 2020). The participants who "reinvented" themselves post imprisonment have outlined that it has made them feel extremely hopeful for their future. That is, some of the participants describe being "reinvented" through going to treatment and beginning their journey of recovery. As suggested by Bucerius et al. (2021) most participants found an institutional setting that allowed them a chance to reflect and provided a platform for change. As such, these participants achieved their goal of facing their addiction which makes them not only feel successful but have hope for their future that they can continue to achieve the goals they set their minds to. Other participants who "reinvented" themselves through doing peer work in the community express that they also feel more hopeful for their futures. For these participants, by doing peer work they utilize their past, negative experience to have a positive impact on others. This work makes them feel hopeful because they are utilizing their past negative experience to their advantage and doing good for their communities. These participants express that they feel they are making a positive impact in their communities, and they are striving to make a difference, which makes them feel hopeful for their futures. Like Ricciardelli and Maier, I found that most participants at some point used their incarceration time to reflect on their pre-prison selves and set goals to change.

Procedural justice has been found to improve prisoner perceptions of correctional officers, improve their compliance and reduce reoffence (Beijersbergen et al., 2015; Mesko & Hasin, 2017; Leibling et al., 2010; Weinrath, 2016). Like other researchers I found that correctional officer behaviour stirred strong feelings amongst my respondents. The procedurally

just and unjust interactions that the participants had with correctional officers impacted them

both positively and negatively. One participant outlined a negative interaction he had with a

correctional officer where the officer teased that he would be back in prison a few weeks after

his release. However, the participant used their negative comment as motivation to change and

prove the correctional officer wrong. Generally, the participants would try not to let the negative

interactions with correctional officers impact their feelings of hope. Alternatively, when the

participants had positive interactions with the correctional officers, it greatly impacted their

feelings of hope. One participant expressed that his positive interactions made him feel

humanized which aided in his mental resilience during his imprisonment. Another participant

expressed that a correctional officer made him feel safe enough to open up about his mental

health struggles. This positive interaction made the participant feel respected and heard which

positively impacted his mental health. So, although the participants outlined that they tried to

disregard the negative interactions and not let them have a big impact on them; the positive

interactions had a profound impact. The participants who experienced procedurally just

interactions with correctional officers described feeling much more hopeful in their

imprisonment and re-entry. As others also found, correctional officers had a big impact on the

emotions of prisoners they worked with, profoundly affecting their prison experience, and hopes

on release (Mesko & Hasin, 2017; Leibling et al., 2019; Weinrath, 2016).

     Like Durnescu (2019) I found that there were pains of re-entry for offenders returning to

the community, even for my sample of provincial inmates who serve shorter sentences. Just

being in prison and having one's life disrupted is a barrier to re-entry. For many of the

participants the strains resulting from their incarceration greatly impacted them during their re-

entry into the community. Some participants expressed how hard it was to navigate the financial

burden that resulted from being incarcerated. One participant outlined that the financial burden

for him was too great and as a result, he went back to his past criminal lifestyle. Similarly, for

another participant the financial burden placed on him impacted his opportunities to find stable

housing in his re-entry. He believed that his poor financial position directly impacts his process

of re-entering the community. Both participants have been considerably impacted by the

financial strain of incarceration, to a point where it has made them struggle and regress in their

re-entry process.

There are two predominant ways that the participants in this study have "reinvented"

themselves within their re-entry into the community. First, some of the participants felt that they

have "reinvented" themselves through going to addiction treatment and beginning their process

of recovery. One participant expressed that after going to treatment for his addictions, he

understood his life in a new way which made him feel like a new person, with new goals moving

into his future. Similarly, another also found new meaning through his process of recovery from

his addiction. He expressed that within his recovery he continuously confronts his past which

allows him to be more optimistic about who he is internally and what he expects from his future.

Additionally, he also mentioned that he finds purpose when he does presentations on his past,

which leads into the second way participants felt that they have "reinvented" themselves in their

re-entry process. Some participants have found "reinvention" in their re-entry process through

doing peer work and peer mentoring, which has been commented on favourably in the literature

(Nixon, 2020). Some participants have found new meaning in their past and new direction for

their futures through doing peer work. Two participants both do peer work and peer mentoring

whereby they give presentations to various organizations in the community ranging from

university students to people who find themselves in the same situation of being stuck in a cycle

of incarceration. This peer work allows them to utilize their past circumstances as a way to give back to the community and inspire others to see that positive change is possible. Thus, these two mentors are "reinvented" in their re-entry through their new roles, similar to the positive effects of purpose and responsibility Nixon (2020) found for peer mentors in his study.

Other participants have navigated their re-entry into the community in a different way. The most predominant way that the participants navigated their re-entry and further desistance from crime is through distancing or "knifing off" old peers (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Seven out of the nine participants mentioned how important it was for their desistance, to stay away from the peers they had prior to their incarceration. One participant mentions how he gave up on his old lifestyle that led him to prison and consequently his criminogenic peers no longer wanted to be in his life. Similarly, another recalls how his friends felt like he was betraying them by going to treatment and desisting from crime. In response, he felt betrayed by his friends who were unsupportive of his new pro-social life choices. Conversely for another participant, he knew immediately in his re-entry that he would have to avoid people from his past. As such, his experience echo's previous research whereby the only way he can desist from crime is by completely cutting himself off from all ties to his anti-social past (e.g., Laub & Sampson, 2001; Vignansky et al., 2018). Most of the participants found that the only way that they can both navigate their re-entry and desist from crime was to either cut ties or consequently lose their friendships from their past lifestyles.

When asked how they defined the term hope, many of the participants had troubles conceptualizing both what the term means and further what the term means to them. Many of the participants had mixed answers in regards to how they make sense of the term hope. Generally, after some thought and discussion, the participants all made sense of the term hope by attributing

it to a positive future. A participant that was most recently released from prison (three months prior to the interview) had troubles making sense of the term hope because he did not have that feeling. He had troubles applying hope to his future and struggled to set or envision goals for his future. Conversely, another participant had been out of prison for about three years prior to the interview and did not have troubles defining or envisioning hope in his life because he had hope and was on track to achieving his goals. Thus, ex-prisoners can make sense of and envision the term hope in their lives when they have been in the community for a longer period and had some success. That is, the ex-prisoners who have achieved some goals in their process of desistance feel more hopeful and can imagine their futures in a positive way.

The participants envisioned the term hope in two different ways when applying it to their lives. Half of the participants attributed hope to making goals for their future and looking ahead and wanting more for themselves. So, for these participants when they apply hope to their lives, they attribute having hope to goal setting and then have faith that they can achieve their goals. Moreover, when these participants envision hope, they also envision their future and have hope and faith that they will achieve their goals. Conversely, the other half of the participants envisioned the term hope and applied it to their lives when they were reflecting on how far they have come. These participants envisioned hope by reflecting on all that they have accomplished since being released from prison. When these participants reflected on their past, they saw hope as a driving force for all they have accomplished already and all that they will accomplish in the future.

8.2 Key Findings
8.2.1 The Experience of Incarceration

Correctional officer's characteristics are positively related to the way prisoners perceive their treatment in prison, as noted by Beijersbergen and her colleagues (2013). They found that

when correctional officers have a more positive attitude towards rehabilitation it creates a more positive relationship between prisoners and correctional officers. Correctional officers that have a more positive attitude towards rehabilitation are more likely to support prisoners who are trying to change their lives around (Beijersbergen et al., 2013). One participant in this thesis noted how influential it was to have correctional officers print out numbers and resources he can reach out to for help in the community. The correctional officers in this circumstance had a positive attitude towards rehabilitation and were willing to help the participant in his pursuit of changing his life around. In this circumstance, the participant felt more prepared to enter the community after his release, thus feeling more secure and hopeful in his future. Correctional officers are a very important component in the transitional process for prisoners (Schaefer, 2017). As noted in this research and others (Brooks-Holliday et al., 2012) prisoners are unaware of various support systems in the community and thus, unprepared for their re-entry. Thus, it is imperative that correctional officers provide re-entry assistance by engaging prisoners in their own re-entry planning and providing guidance to prepare them for their release (Schaefer, 2017).

Prisoners have the best opportunity for growth and development when correctional officers and prisoners establish open and trusting relationships (Ricciardelli & Perry, 2016). The communication skills of correctional officers are a necessary component for creating positive working relationships with prisoners (Liebling et al., 2010; Ricciardelli & Perry, 2016; Ugelvik, 2021). One of the more important themes to emerge from this research is the experience of incarceration and the role that correctional officers had in the emotional states of participants. As mentioned earlier, although the participants explained that they tried not to let any correctional officers negative emotional states affect them, they found unjust relations painful. The aspect of procedural justice and positive impacts that correctional officers had on participants was

profound. Many of the participants note the ways in which they were able to grow and develop when the correctional officers fostered a positive working relationship with them. Specifically, one participant noted how he was able to grow in his mental health journey when a correctional officer fostered a safe space for him. Another participant noted how he grew and developed as a person when a correctional officer acted as a support system for him. These positive interactions had profound emotional impacts on the participants which helped them to feel more positive and hopeful for their future.

8.2.2 The Re-entry Process

One of the most important aspects to understand is that prisons are only temporary institutions where incapacitation occurs (Schaefer, 2017). So, it is important to acknowledge that all prisoners will return to the community, thus reintegration strategies must be enhanced (Schaefer, 2017). Although many offenders may be released with changes in their identity, they are often released to the same criminogenic environment that aided in their criminogenic trajectory (Schaefer, 2017). One of the important themes to emerge from the re-entry section is the way in which the participants social environments impacted their re-entry process. One participant noted how hard it was to return to what he referred to as "the projects". He expressed the ways in which returning to this environment put a strain on his re-entry and desistance process. Other participants expressed how hard it was for them to distance themselves from their friends and family members when they were released from prison. These participants expressed how they changed as individuals and wanted to fully exit the criminal justice system. However, when they were released, staying away from their past criminogenic environment also meant cutting ties with past friendships and family members. Thus, it is important to consider enhancing re-entry strategies during incarceration in attempt to lessen the strains of re-entry.

Crewe and Ievins (2020) contend that prisons can be places of reinvention. That is not to say that prisons are perfect and positive places, but there can be some positive aspects in prison. Crewe and Ievins (2020) found that there is a relationship between the way prisoners see themselves in prison and the way they view themselves before they were in prison. Accordingly, this research furthers Crewe and Ievins (2020) work whereby the participants in this research also found a new identity in their re-entry. So, in accordance with Crewe and Ievins (2020) the participants took note of who they were before prison, the shift that happened in prison and now the way in which they wish to situate themselves in society. One participant in particular notes how prison was a space that forced him to be isolated from his criminogenic lifestyle. In this space he wanted to reinvent himself and make a change, however, it was not until years after his incarceration that he was able to reflect on his past and realize not only how he reinvented himself but how his incarceration was a positive and integral part of his reinvention.

8.2.3 The Motivation to Change

Many of the participants expressed various life events that initiated their motivations to make a change in their lives. A few of the participants expressed that they were simply "sick" of the lifestyle they were living. For these participants there were no huge life events that made them want to begin living pro-socially. As such, psychological well-being and psychological maturation play a key part in explaining why individuals may choose to desist without having a pivotal life event happen (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Laub and Sampson (2001) also contend that the peak and decline of physical strength, energy, psychological drive and the need for stimulation in life correlates with the peak and decline of deviant behaviour. As individuals age into their thirties, their energy levels and need for stimulation begins to settle, thus correlating with more prosocial behaviours (Laub & Sampson, 2001). These participants mention being

simply tired and bored of living more high-risk lifestyles. In accordance with Laub and Sampson (2001), these participants were experiencing lower energy levels and a lower need for criminogenic stimulation as they were both aging into their thirties. With age and maturation playing a key role, these participants attribute their motivation to change with "growing up" and making new life choices.

There is a relationship between fatherhood and crime whereby ex-offenders think about their past criminal activity and how it relates to their role as a father (Prior & Farough, 2021). Some of the participants explained that their motivation to change was driven by the thought of being a good father and role model for their children. One of the participants expressed that being a good father and role model means getting up, going to work and maintaining a positive outlook on working. Prior and Farough (2021) note that the ability to be steadily employed can relate directly to the conception of oneself as a father who can successfully practice the role as a provider. Another participant noted that he wants to successfully practice his role as a father and take care of his children. He expressed that he does not want his children to see their father in and out of jail, instead he wants to be the father figure they need in their lives. Similarly, Prior and Farough (2021) found that ex-offenders thought significantly about the wellbeing of their children and express a desire to be a part of their children's lives. Ex-offender's narratives often highlight the centrality of fatherhood and express that caring for their children are their main concern moving forward (Prior & Farough, 2021). Likewise, the participants in this study who had children, also highlighted a desire to either be a good father or simply work towards being in their children's lives.

8.2.4 The Impact of hope

Hope is oftentimes framed in a way that either one has hope or is hopeless. However, that is not the case, hope can be viewed on a continuum whereby there may be days where there are higher levels of hope and days where there is a lot of hopelessness (Laursen, 2022). Thus, hope is an extremely complex phenomena to examine as it is a fluid concept. However, when hope is examined in an open-ended way it allows for the analysis of individuals as they search for meaning and the anchors that they hold onto in a time of despair (Laursen, 2022). All of the participants in this study expressed many of the trials and tribulations of both incarceration and re-entry into the community. However, each of the participants expressed how hope has played a role in their successes and failures. For many of the participants, their moments of hopelessness occurred mainly during their incarceration. When some of the participants reflect on their moments of hopelessness, they also lacked anchors such as support systems and had troubles finding meaning in their lives. In particular, one participant expresses how he felt forgotten about while he was in prison and had no support system when he was released. As a result, he felt hopeless for his future.

When the participants began to make changes in their lives, they also began to achieve goals they set out for themselves. For some of the participants, when they became sober from their addictions, that became the anchor they held onto for their futures. One participant noted that all he has achieved thus far is becoming sober, but that alone gives him hope that he can achieve other things in his future. Another participant expressed how challenging it was to beat his addiction but after he achieved sobriety, he knew he could achieve his other goals. Moreover, each participant that achieved one of their desired goals, generally used that achievement as their anchor to hold onto. That is, once the participants achieved a goal, it elicited the feeling of hope

for their future. So, in their times of hopelessness, they were able to refer to the fact that

achieving their goals and having hope is a possibility for them.

9. The Intersection of the Researcher and the Research

I think my past experience in the corrections system helped bolster the authenticity and

trustworthiness of my data. First, as will be shown below, the recruitment method and telephone

strategy for interviews left it that respondents could have pretended to be former prisoners to get

the honorarium. My knowledge of Saskatoon Correctional Centre helped me be confident my

respondents were truly former prisoners. Secondly, during interviews my own knowledge helped

facilitate interaction, and even gently correct interviewees if they started talking about federal

experience instead of provincial. In most of the interviews the participants used slang terms to

refer to things in or around the correctional centre such as "the bubble". From my experience as a

correctional officer, I know that the bubble refers to the office on the unit that is used by the

correctional officers, the bubble also carries some symbolic significance for many offenders in

the correctional centre. Again, this is something that I would not have fully understood without

my experience.

There were times that some of the participants had complained about correctional officers

locking the unit down for no reason and then outlining how that made them upset because it was

not fair. However, as a former correctional officer I used that lens and understood that generally

this is not the case. There may be many reasons why a unit would be locked down and that an

inmate would not be given the reason. For example if there were threats, drugs or weapons on

the unit, procedurally, the unit would need to be locked down but this information cannot

necessarily be shared with inmates. This is necessary to keep the safety of the institution and to

allow the prison staff time to investigate the issue appropriately. So, in this instance, when my

participants outlined that something was unfair I could empathize with their feelings and that strain of imprisonment, but understand the perceived procedural injustice as well, which is something I would not have been able to do without the experience as a correctional officer.

Generally, my experience as a correctional officer had a positive impact on the research. Between having a deeper understanding of the argot and empathizing with their experience within the walls of the correctional centre. To understanding the procedural limitations to things my participants may not have been privy to. I believe, as a researcher I was able to utilize my experience to my advantage without it having too large an impact on the research itself. My experience helped me in all the various aforementioned ways to ensure the collected data was rigorous and give it more authenticity. Yet, since I was not working as a correctional officer when I collected my data, I was able to remove myself from that role and just be a researcher. During the more negative parts of the interviews, I did not feel an allegiance to correctional officers or the need to defend them when some of the participants were sharing their negative experiences. I feel I was far enough removed from the world of corrections where it did not impact this research negatively. But I still retained experience in the world of corrections sufficient to understand things on a deeper level. Although I am impacted by my experiences which in turn impacts this research, I fully believe that my past work as a correctional officer helped this study.

9.1 Policy Contributions

This and other research studies show (e.g, Beijersbergen et al., 2013; Liebling et al., 2010; Ricciardelli & Perry, 2016; Ugelvik, 2021) the importance of procedural justice in prisons. I recommend more training for all prison staff, including nursing staff on the concept of procedural justice and the benefits of applying it in their daily interactions. I believe that with

more education and knowledge, it will help the prison staff see the long-term benefits of their

positive interactions. Giving more training on procedural justice or procedural fairness would

hopefully inspire more prison staff to try and foster procedurally just relationships with

prisoners. This thesis along with existing literature has shown that prisoners who feel they are

treated fairly are more likely to cooperate, trust the correctional officers and thus be more active

in their programming (Campbell et al., 2020; Liebling et al. 2010; Ugelvik, 2021). As such, with

more training and emphasis on procedural justice, I believe it would also have a positive impact

on prisoners' willingness to plan for their release and correctional officer's motivations to

complete casework.

        One of the takeaways from this research has been the issue of remanded prisoners not

having access to programming while they are incarcerated. From my experience as a correctional

officer, I understand some of the logistical issues for having programming for prisoners on

remand. The biggest argument behind not having programming for remanded prisoners is that

they are accused and not necessarily guilty of the crime. Further, remanded prisoners are not in

custody for a set amount of time and could be released on any of their court dates. However,

many of the participants in this research who served time on remand expressed that they wished

they had access to programming (see also Weinrath et al., 2019), and they feel like their time was

wasted, often referring to it as "dead time". The first recommendation for future policy is to

make programming available to prisoners who are on remand. This programming does not have

to be crime specific like some of the other programs and rather can focus on things like

substance misuse, creating healthy relationships or self-help techniques.

        In many of the interviews the participants expressed that they needed more help in their

re-entry as it was extremely overwhelming. Many expressed that the logistics behind housing,

finances or simply getting new identification cards were really challenging and they did not

know where to even begin to look for help. As such, I propose that a new program be offered in

provincial correctional centres to address things specific to re-entry. The proposed program can

instruct prisoners on where to look for affordable housing in the community and help fill out any

paperwork to go with it. This program would be centered around the various needs that the

prisoner has. For example each block in the program could focus on a different issue such as

finances or employment. Prisoners could attend each block that is relevant to whatever barrier

they need to address in their context of re-entry. The basis behind this program would be to help

prisoners re-enter the community before they are released so they are not released without a plan

or proper supports in place. This proposed program would greatly mitigate the effects of being

overwhelmed once prisoners are released from the institution and in the community.

      The final policy suggestion I have from this research, along with my personal experience

as a correctional officer is access to more mental health services in provincial correctional

centres. As hope is the theme of this research, it is very evident that provincial prisoners

inevitably experience moments of hopelessness and despair. However, there is limited access to

mental health services in the provincial correctional centres. As such, I suggest that part of the

yearly budget in provincial corrections be allocated strictly to mental health outreach. Moreover,

this could be achieved through employing at least two full time therapists to each provincial

correctional centre. I believe this would greatly benefit the prisoners in provincial correctional

centres since they could have more access to speak to a mental health professional. This access

could benefit prisoners both in the short and long-term because they could work through the

various strains that they are facing.

To operationalize some of the programming recommendations and the mental health recommendations it is important to also mention the usefulness of self-help techniques. Provincial prisons can encourage more self-help techniques such as journaling, providing self-study modules or books on self-reflection. By encouraging prisoners to self-reflect it can open a space for reinvention to occur. Providing prisoners with the materials and prompts to self-reflect and self-study, it can allow majority of prisoners to receive the benefits of programming without providing formal programming. Moreover, providing these materials can be a good option for prisoners in higher security units as they have less access to formal programming but have ample time to complete self-directed work. Finally, providing the proper materials for self-reflection can take up unwanted "dead time" and offer an opportunity for prisoners to reflect on their lives and circumstances. Not only does this promote an opportunity for reinvention but it may also strengthen the mental health of prisoners.

9.2 Research Contributions

This thesis contributes to the literature on the experience of provincial incarceration in Canada. More specifically, this thesis furthers the limited knowledge on provincial prisoners experience in custody and re-entry in the community (e.g. Balfour et al., 2018; Maier, 2021; Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021; Ricciardelli, 2014; Weinrath, 2016). As there is limited research on incarceration and re-entry in the prairie provinces of Canada, this research opens the door to exploring the intersection of prison and re-entry for Indigenous people. Furthermore, this research also makes a contribution in its use of social media as a means of recruitment. Using social media to our advantage as researchers can allow us to have access to larger populations that we may not have had access to by using the more formal methods of recruitment. Finally, this research contributed to the limited research on the COVID19 pandemic and how it has

impacted prisoners experience of prison (e.g Johnson et al., 2021). It is important to have more research and knowledge on the ways in which the COVID19 pandemic has impacted prisoners and made their experience more challenging.

I recommend future researchers to seek out the intersections of being an Indigenous person in Canada who has been to prison and how that may have impacted their re-entry process. The Indigenous focused questions in this research were mainly on the experience of incarceration. Unfortunately, my respondents provided no coherent themes to arise from those questions. I recommend that future investigators build on this research and ask questions about Indigenous identity and the experience of re-entering the community after prison. Moreover, I recommend a prospective study be conducted on Indigenous peoples experience of re-entering the community after a period of provincial incarceration. It would be worthwhile to explore more participants narratives who have been released within the last year and thus in the beginning of their re-entry process. I believe this would create a clearer picture of the strains of re-entry and ways in which the community can improve on mitigating these strains. Finally, future research should explore more fully the intersections of prison, intergenerational traumas, and the experiences of transgender and two-spirited people in the carceral system. Further, future research should explore how these intersections impact the way that society receives this population back into the community.

9.3 Limitations

The COVID19 pandemic impacted the sample size. The research was conducted via telephone interviews so there were times that the phone call would cut out and thus it impacted the interview. There were participants who did not have access to quiet and private places so there were background noises in the interviews. In addition to that, there were some participants

who had other people who could hear what they were saying, which potentially impacted how

they answered the interview questions. Furthermore, as the interviews were conducted over the

phone, the participants did not necessarily have the chance to immerse themselves in the

interview as there were many distractions in their backgrounds. During the recording process of

the interview, since it was recording a phone call, the recording device had trouble picking up on

the participant's voices which impacted the interview in the transcription process. Furthermore,

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the city where this research was conducted, has one provincial

correctional centre that houses men. Thus, it was challenging to gain access to this population

while in the community. It was also a challenge to simply find participants that were both

eligible and willing to participate in the research. In terms of general qualitative research, some

of the research questions depend on the participants to rely solely on their memories of

incarceration. Relying on memories of a potentially traumatic time in their lives could lead to

fallible recounts of their experience. However, as noted by Sandberg (2010) uncovering the truth

is not always important when doing research with marginalized groups. Whether the information

given is true or false the stories that are told reflect the complex nature of values, identity, culture

and communities which helps researchers understand these complexities deeper (Sandberg,

2010). Thus, the "truth" may not be the best measure of data that is relevant or interesting

(Sandberg, 2010).

A limitation of the overall research was that I was the sole researcher to look at the data

and code the data. Thus, all research is based on my interpretations of the data and there is no

intercoder reliability. Furthermore, as I was the sole researcher on this thesis, all of the codes,

themes and data analysis is based on my worldviews. I feel as though I was able to remove

myself far enough from the role as a correctional officer, that it did not impact my research. However, there may be some unconscious biases that I could not guard against.

10. Conclusion

This thesis has been centralized around four main themes which are the experience of incarceration, the experience of re-entry in the community, the motivations to make a change and how hope has impacted the whole process. This research has found that hope does have a huge impact on the entirety of the process of incarceration and re-entry. I found that the participants who lacked hope during their incarceration generally felt more lost during their experience of re-entering the community. Hopelessness appears to result from the cycle of incarceration, which research participants find themselves entrenched within. When these participants felt hopeless during their incarceration it generally carried over into their re-entry and thus, they did not make goals to work toward in their re-entry. However, the issue of hopelessness during incarceration can be challenged through staff use of procedurally just behaviours. This research found that when prisoners had positive interactions with correctional officers it made them feel more hopeful and capable of change. Moreover, the positive interactions with correctional officers also had a positive impact on prisoners mental health. When prisoners had positive interactions with correctional officers, they felt safe enough to open up about their mental health and the tribulations of life in prison. As such, these positive interactions were a crucial part of prisoners experience of incarceration which also impacted their hopes upon their release.

This research also found that although prison is a negative space and does have many negative impacts, it also offered the participants an opportunity for reinvention. The participants who described reinventing themselves were proud of the new versions of themselves and made them feel hopeful for their futures. Generally, the participants described reinventing themselves

in two ways. The first way the participants reinvented themselves was through going to treatment and working through their addictions. This allowed them to confront their past, understand themselves better and have a clear vision of what they want for their futures. The second way that the participants reinvented themselves was through doing peer work or giving back to the community. This allowed them to help others learn from their mistakes and show them that change is possible, which made the participants feel good about themselves and their own futures. Overall conceptualizing the term hope was a challenge for all of the participants, however, most of them came to the conclusion that it was linked to a positive future. This research found that the more time that had passed since the participants incarceration the easier it was for them to conceptualize the term hope. This could be a result of accomplishing goals and experiencing positive things during re-entry, so it is easier to be more optimistic about their future. The ex-prisoners who have achieved goals in their re-entry tended to feel more hopeful and can imagine a positive future for themselves. These findings are important because they portray that having hope throughout incarceration and re-entry generally leads to more successful outcomes. As such, this research shows the importance of procedural justice and instilling hope in prisoners while they are incarcerated, as it can have a positive impact on their experience of re-entry in the community. Moreover, the more positive and hopeful the ex-prisoners are in their re-entry, the more they work towards their goals and creating a better life for themselves. So, it is imperative that (ex)prisoners have a sense of hope for their future throughout their entire process of imprisonment and re-entry as it leads to more positive outcomes for their futures.

References

Abderhalden, F. P., Baker, T., and Gordon, J. A. (2020). Futurelessness, risk perceptions, and commitment to institutional rules among a sample of incarcerated men and women. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 64*(6-7), 591-608. doi:10.1177/0306624X19861052

Agnew, R. (2001). Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 38*(4), 319-361. doi:10.1177/0022427801038004001

Akca, D., Kerodal, A. G., & Jewell, L. M. (2020). STR8 UP: Description of Intervention Models, Literature Review, and Cost Analysis of Program Activities 2015-2019. Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Bahr, S., Harris, L., Fisher, J., and Armstrong, A. (2010). Successful re-entry: What differentiates successful and unsuccessful parolees? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 54*(5), 667-692. doi:10.1177/0306624X09342435

Balfour, G., Hannah-Moffat, K., and Turnbull, S. (2018). Planning for precarity? experiencing the carceral continuum of imprisonment and reentry. *After Imprisonment Studies in Law, Politics, and Society, 77*. 31-48. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1059-433720180000077002

Beare, M. E., & Hogg, C. (2013). Listening in… to gang culture. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *55*(3), 421-452. doi:10.3138/cjccj.2011-E-29

Beijersbergen, K. A., Dirkzwager, A. J. E., Eichelsheim, V. I., van der Laan, P. H., and Nieuwbeerta, P. (2013). Procedural justice and prisoners' mental health problems: A

longitudinal study. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health 24*(2), 100-112.

doi:10.1002/cbm.1881

Beijersbergen, K., Dirkzwager, A. and Nieuwbeerta, P. (2015). Reoffending after release: Does

procedural justice during imprisonment matter? *Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 43*(1).

63-82. doi:10.1177/0093854815609643

Bierie, D. (2012). Procedural justice and prison violence: Examining complaints among federal

inmates (2000-2007). *Psychology, Public Policy and Law.* 1-15. doi: 10.1037/a0028427

Blumstein, A., and Cohen, J. (1987). Characterizing criminal careers. *American Association for

the Advancement of Science, 237*(4818), 985-991. doi:10.1126/science.237.4818.985

Boulianne, R. G., & Meunier, C. (1986). Prison education: Effects of vocational education on

rehabilitation. *McGill Journal of Education/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de

McGill*, *21*(003). Retrieved from: https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/7679

Bowman, J., and Mowen, T. (2017). Social ties and re-entry: Building the ties that bind, breaking

the ties that don't. *Criminology and Public Policy 16*(3), 753-774. doi:10.1111/1745-

9133.12307

Breese, J., Ra'el, K., and Grant, K. (2000). No place like home: A qualitative investigation of

social support and its effects on recidivism. *Sociological Practice: A Journal of Clinical

and Applied Research 2*(1), 1-21. doi:10.1023/A:1010103821490

Brooks-Holliday, S., Heilbrun, K., & Fretz, R. (2012). Examining improvements in criminogenic

needs: The risk reduction potential of a structured re-entry program. *Behavioral Sciences

& the Law*, *30*(4), 431-447. doi:10.1002/bsl.2016

Bucerius, S., Haggerty, K. D., and Dunford, D. T. (2021). Prison as a temporary refuge:

    Amplifying the voices of women detained in prison. *British Journal of Criminology 61*,

    519-537. doi:10.1093/bjc/azaa073

Camp, S. and Gaes, G. (2005). Criminogenic effects of the prison environment on inmate

    behaviour: Some experimental evidence. *Crime and Deliquency 51*(3),

    doi:10.1177/0011128704271471

Campbell, C., Labrecque, R., Schaefer, R., Harvis, M., Zavita, K., Reddy, L., and Labrenche, K.

    (2020). Do perceptions of legitimacy and fairness matter in prison? Examining how

    procedural and distributive justice relate to misconduct. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour.*

    1-24. doi:o1gdr/.o/i/p:stht0.1177/0093854820916901

Carlsson, C. (2013). Masculinities, persistence, and desistance. *Criminology*, *51*(3), 661-693.

    doi:10.1111/1745-9125.12016

Charmaz, K. (2003). *Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods.* In N. K. Denzin,

    & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Strategies for qualitative inquiry (2nd ed., p. 249-291). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2005). *Grounded theory in the 21st century: applications for advancing social*

    justice studies. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna E. Lincoln (eds.), Handbook of

    Qualitative Research 3rd ed. (pp. 507-535). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K., & Thornberg, R. (2021). The pursuit of quality in grounded theory. *Qualitative*

    Research in Psychology,*18*(3), 305-327. doi:10.1080/14780887.2020.1780357

Chouhy, C., Cullen, F., and Lee, H. (2020). A social support theory of desistance. *Journal of*

    Developmental and Life-Course Criminology 6, 204-223. doi:10.1007/s40865-020-

    00146-4

Clear, T. R., Rose, D. R., & Ryder, J. A. (2001). Incarceration and the community: The problem of removing and returning offenders. *Crime & Delinquency*, *47*(3), 335-351. doi:10.1177/0011128701047003003

Clermont, Y., Azmi, Y., Conroy, S., Barr-Telford, L., Morency, J. D., and Martel, L. (2019). Future contacts with the criminal justice system in Saskatchewan: A Microsimulation study. *Statistics Canada.* Retrieved from: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00014-eng.htm

Crewe, B., and Ievins, A. (2020). The prison as a reinventive institution. *Theoretical Criminology*, *24*(4), 568–589. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480619841900

Colman, C., and Vander Laenen, F. (2012). Recovery came first: desistance versus recovery in the criminal careers of drug-using offenders. *The Scientific World Journal 2012*(2), 657-671. doi:10.1100/2012/657671

Comack, E. (2018). *Coming back to jail: women, trauma and criminalization.* Winnipeg, Canada. Fernwood Publishing.

Cox, A. (2020). The language of incarceration. *Incarceration*, *1*(1), 1-13. doi:10.1177/2632666320940859

Daly, Z., Slemon, A., Richardson, C. G., Salway, T., McAuliffe, C., Gadermann, A. M., and Jenkins, E. K. (2021). Associations between periods of COVID-19 quarantine and mental health in Canada. *Psychiatry Research*, *295*, 1-9.

Dekhtyar, M., Beasley, C. R., Jason, L. A., and Ferrari, J. R. (2012). Hope as a predictor of reincarceration among mutual-help recovery residents. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation 51*, 474-483. doi:10.1080/10509674.2012.71180

Department of Justice Canada. (2017). Just facts: Sentencing in Canada. *Research and Statistics*

      Division. Retrieved from:https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jf-pf/2017/docs/jan01.pdf

Durnescu, I. (2019). Pains of reentry revisited. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and*

      Comparative Criminology, 1-17.

      doi:i1.o0r.g1/107.171/0737/0636062642X4X1919882288573

Dvoskin, J. A., & Spiers, E. M. (2004). On the role of correctional officers in prison mental

      health. *Psychiatric quarterly*, *75*, 41-59. doi:10.1023/B:PSAQ.0000007560.09475.a0

Elliot, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative*

      Report 23(11), 2850–2861. doi:10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3560

Executive Director: Custody Services. (2016). Adult Custody Services Policy Manual Case

      Management 313. *Government of Saskatchewan.* Retrieved from:

      file:///Users/kelsiezerebeski/Downloads/313-

      %252BTransgender%252BOffenders%20(1).pdf

Frois, C. (2016). Close insecurity: Shifting conceptions of security in prison confinement. *Social*

      Anthropology 24(3), 309-323. doi: 10.1111/1469-8676.12299

Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., and Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime, and desistance:

      Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *American journal of sociology 107*(4), 990-

      1064. doi:10.1007/s00213-002-1159-2

Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative

      Research. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Government of Canada. (2012). Correctional Service Canada. *Our Mission.* Retrieved

      from:https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/about-us/index-eng.shtml

Government of Canada. (2021). How Sentences Are Imposed. Retrieved from:

https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/sentencing-peine/imposed-

imposees.html

Gray, N., Ward, J., & Fogarty, J. (2019). Transformative learning through university and prison

partnerships: Reflections from 'Learning Together'pedagogical practice. *Journal of

Prison Education and Reentry*, *6*(1), 7-24. doi:10.25771/jbrt-q510

Grekul, J., and LaBoucane-Benson, P. (2008). Aboriginal gangs and their (dis) placement:

Contextualizing recruitment, membership, and status. *Canadian Journal of Criminology

and Criminal Justice*, *50*(1), 59-82. doi:10.3138/cjccj.50.1.59

Gutierrez, D., Dorais, S., and Goshorn, J. (2020). Recovery as life transformation: Examining the

relationships between recovery, hope, and relapse. *Substance Use & Misuse 55*(12),

1949-1957. doi:10.1080/10826084.2020.1781181

Hedlund-de Witt, N. (2013). An overview and guide to qualitative data analysis for integral

researchers. *Integral Research Center*, *1*(75), 76-97. Retrieved

from:https://www.academia.edu/download/36027312/Hedlund-

de_Witt_IRC_Coding_Overview_V1.pdf.

Hong, P. Y., Lewis, D. and Choi, S. (2014). Employment hope and an empowerment pathway to

self-sufficiency among ex offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 53*, 317-333.

doi:10.1080/10509674.2014.922156

Jason, L., Stevens, E., and Light, J. (2016). The relationship of sense of community and trust to

hope. *Journal of community psychology 44*(3), 334-341. doi:10.1002/jcop.21771

Johnson-Listwan, S., Sullivan, C. J., Agnew, R., Cullen, F. T., and Colvin, M. (2013). The pains

of prison revisited: The impact of strain on inmate recidivism. *Justice Quarterly 30*(1),

144-168. doi:10.1080/07418825.2011.597772

Johnson, L., Gutridge, K., Parkes, J., Roy, A., and Plugge, E. (2021) Scoping review of mental

health in prisons through the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMJ Open 11*(5)*,* 1-

8. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-046547

Johnson, R. and McGunigall-Smith, S. (2008). Life without parole, America's other death

penalty: Notes on life under sentence of death by incarceration. *The Prison Journal

88*(2), 328–346. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885508319256

Jolliffe, D., & Hedderman, C. (2015). Investigating the impact of custody on reoffending using

propensity score matching. *Crime & Delinquency*, *61*(8), 1051-1077.

Kay, C., & Monaghan, M. (2019). Rethinking recovery and desistance processes: Developing a

social identity model of transition. *Addiction Research & Theory 27*(1), 47-54.

doi:10.1080/16066359.2018.1539479

Khan, S. N. (2014). Qualitative research method: Grounded theory. *International Journal of

Business and Management 9*(11), 224-233. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v9n11p224

Kennealy, P., Skeem, J., Louden, J., and Manchak, S. (2012). Firm, fair and caring officer-

offender relationships protect against supervision failure. *Law and Human Behaviour

36*(6), 496-505. doi:10.1037/h0093935

Kruttschnitt, C., and Gartner, R. (2003). Women's imprisonment. *Crime and Justice 30*, 1-81.

doi:https://doi.org/10.1086/652228

Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2001). Understanding desistance from crime. *Crime and

Justice 28*, 1-69. doi:10.1086/652208

Laursen, J. (2022). Radical hope and processes of becoming: examining short-term prisoners'

imagined futures in England & Wales and Norway. *Theoretical Criminology*, *27*(1), 48-

65. doi:10.1177/13624806211069545

Leigey, M. E. and Ryder, M. A. (2015). The pains of permanent imprisonment: Examining

perceptions of confinement among older life without parole inmates. *International*

Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 59(7): 726–742.

doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X13517868

Leverentz, A. (2020) Fostering family relationships and women's employment. *International*

Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy 9(1), 126-138.

https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i1.1469

Liebling, A. (1999). Doing research in prison: Breaking the silence? *Theoretical Criminology*

3(2), 147-173. doi:10.1177/1362480699003002002

Liebling, A., Price, D., and Shefer, G. (2010). *The prison officer*. Routledge.

Liebling, A., Laws, B., Lieber, E., Auty, K., Schmidt, B. E., Crewe, B., Gardom, J., Kant, D.,

and Morey, M. (2019). Are hope and possibility achievable in prison? *The Howard*

Journal 58(1), 104-126. doi:10.1111/hojo.12303

Link, N. W., and Roman, C. G. (2017). Longitudinal associations among child support debt,

employment, and recidivism after prison. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *58*(1), 140-160.

Doi: 10.1080/00380253.2016.1246892

Mackenzie, C., and Amirault, J. (2021). From incarceration to reintegration: Using the human

services model to manage Canadian prisoner mental health. *Journal of Correctional*

Health Care 27(1), 66-70. doi:10.1089/jchc.19.05.0046

Maier, K. (2021). 'Mobilizing' prisoner reentry research: Halfway houses and the spatial-temporal dynamics of prison release. *Theoretical Criminology*, *25*(4), 601–618. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480619896371

Maier, K. H., and Ricciardelli, R. (2019). The prisoner's dilemma: How male prisoners experience and respond to penal threat while incarcerated. *Punishment & Society*, *21*(2), 231-250. doi:10.1177/1462474518757091

Maier, K. and Ricciardelli, R. (2021). Prison didn't change me, I have changed: Narratives of change, self and prison time. *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 1-16. doi:10.1177/17488958211031336

Martin, K. and Stermac, L. (2010). Measuring hope: Is hope related to criminal behaviour in offenders? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 54*(5), 693-705. doi:10.1177/0306624X09336131

Maruna S. (2001). Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Books.

Meško, G. and Hacin, R. (2017). Self-legitimacy, organizational commitment and commitment to fair treatment of prisoners: An empirical study of prison officers in Slovenia. *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice 25*, 11-30. doi:10.1163/15718174-25012104

Mitchell, O., Cochran, J., Mears, D. & Bales, W. (2017) Examining prison effects on recidivism: A regression discontinuity approach, *Justice Quarterly*, 34:4, 571-596, DOI: 10.1080/07418825.2016.1219762

Morris, R. and Worrall, J. (2014). Prison architecture and inmate misconduct: A multilevel assessment. *Crime and Delinquency 60*(7), 1083-1109. doi: 10.1177/001112871038620

Moulden, H., and Marshall, W. (2005) Hope in the treatment of sexual offenders: the potential

    application of hope theory. *Psychology, Crime & Law 11*(3), 329-342.

    doi:10.1080/10683160512331316361

Mowen, T., Stansfield, R., and Boman IV, J. (2019). Family matters: Moving beyond "if" family

    support matters to "why" family support matters during reentry from prison. *Journal of*

    Research in Crime and Delinquency 56(4), 483-523. doi:10.1177/0022427818820902

Nixon, S. (2020). 'Giving back and getting on with my life': peer mentoring, desistance and

    recovery of ex-offenders. *Probation Journal 67*(1), 47-64.

    doi:10.1177/0264550519900249

Ortiz, J. and Jackey, H. (2019). The system is not broken, it is intentional: The prisoner re-entry

    industry as deliberate structural violence. *The Prison Journal 99*(4), 484-503.

    doi:1.o0r.g1/107.171/0770/30208328858515918985522090

Peticca-Harris, A., deGama, N., and Elias, S. R. (2016). A dynamic process model for finding

    informants and gaining access in qualitative research. *Organizational Research*

    Methods 19(3), 376-401. doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428116629218

Phillips, L. and Lindsay, M. (2011). Prison to society: A mixed methods analysis of coping with

    re-entry. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 55*(1),

    136-154. doi:10.1177/0306624X09350212

Piquero, A.R., Blumstein, A., Brame, R., Haapanen, R., Mulvey, E.P., & Nagin, D.S. (2001).

    Assessing the impact of exposure time and incapacitation on longitudinal trajectories of

    criminal offending. *Journal of Adolescent Research 16*(1), 54-74.

    doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558401161005

Piquero, A. (2016). "Take my license n'all that jive, I can't see... 35": Little hope for the future

encourages offending over time. *Justice Quarterly*, *33*(1), 73-99.

doi:10.1080/07418825.2014.896396

Prior, F. B., and Farough, S. (2021). Struggling to make good: The dilemmas of fatherhood for

formerly incarcerated African American men. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice &*

Criminology 11(1), 1-36. doi:10.21428/88de04a1.dcb1accd

Ricciardelli, R. (2014). *Surviving incarceration: inside Canadian prisons.* Wilfrid Laurier Univ.

Press.

Ricciardelli, R. (2015). Establishing and asserting masculinity in Canadian

penitentiaries. *Journal of Gender Studies 24*(2), 170-191.

doi:10.1080/09589236.2013.812513

Ricciardelli, R., Maier, K., and Hannah-Moffat, K. (2015). Strategic masculinities:

Vulnerabilities, risk and the production of prison masculinities. *Theoretical*

Criminology, *19*(4), 491-513. doi:10.1177/1362480614565849

Ricciardelli, R., and Sit, V. (2016). Producing social (dis) order in prison: The effects of

administrative controls on prisoner-on-prisoner violence. *The Prison Journal*, *96*(2), 210-

231. doi:10.1177/0032885515618362

Ricciardelli, R., and Memarpour, P. (2016). 'I was trying to make my stay there more positive':

rituals and routines in Canadian prisons. *Criminal Justice Studies 29*(3), 179-198.

doi:10.1080/1478601X.2016.1189423

Ricciardelli, R., & Perry, K. (2016). Responsivity in practice: Prison officer to prisoner

communication in Canadian provincial prisons. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal*

Justice, *32*(4), 401-425. doi:10.1177/1043986216660004

Ross, J. I. (2007). Social science and public policy: Supermax prisons. *Transaction Social*

    Science and Modern Society 44(3), 60-64. Retrieved from:

    https://www.academia.edu/459960/_Supermax_Prisons_SOCIETY_March_April_Vol_4

    4_No_3_2007?auto=download

Ruddell, R., and Gottschall, S. (2011). Are all gangs equal security risks? An investigation of

    gang types and prison misconduct. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *36*, 265-279.

    doi:10.1007/s12103-011-9108-4

Sandberg, S. (2010). What can "lies" tell us about life? Notes towards a framework of narrative

    criminology. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education 21*(4), 447-465.

    doi:10.1080/10511253.2010.516564

Sandberg, S., Agoff, C., and Fondevila, G. (2022). Stories of the "good father": The role of

    fatherhood among incarcerated men in Mexico. *Punishment & Society 24*(2), 241-261.

    doi:10.1177/1462474520969822

Schaefer, L. (2017). Correcting the "correctional" component of the corrections officer role:

    How offender custodians can contribute to rehabilitation and reintegration. *Corrections:*

    Policy, Practice and Research 3(1), 38-55. doi:10.1080/23774657.2017.1304811

Scheier, M. F., and Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping, and health: assessment and

    implications of generalized outcome expectancies. *Health psychology*, *4*(3), 219–

    247. doi:10.1037/0278-6133.4.3.219

Serin, R. C., and Lloyd, C. D. (2009). Examining the process of offender change: The transition

    to crime desistance. *Psychology, Crime & Law 15*(4), 347-364.

    doi:10.1080/10683160802261078

Skeem, J., Louden, J., Camp, J., and Polaschek, D. (2007). Assessing relationship quality in

    mandated community treatment: Blending care with control. *Psychological Assessment*

    19(4), 397-410. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.19.4.397

Skjott-Linneberg, M., and Korsgaard, S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the

    novice. *Qualitative Research Journal 19*(3), 259-270. doi:10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012

Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T.,

    Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., and Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways:

    Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of*

    Personality and Social Psychology, 60(4), 570-585. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.60.4.570

Snyder, C. R. (1995). Conceptualizing, measuring, and nurturing hope. *Journal of Counseling &*

    Development, *73*(3), 355-360. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1995.tb01764.x

Snyder, C. R., Feldman, D. B., Taylor, J. D., Schroeder, L. L., and Adams, V. H. (2000). The

    roles of hopeful thinking in preventing problems and enhancing strengths. *Applied and*

    Preventive Psychology, 9(4), 249-270. doi:10.1016/s0962-1849(00)80003-7

Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*(4), 249-

    275. doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1304_01

Statistics Canada. (2022). Adult sentenced custody admissions to correctional services by sex

    and sentence length ordered. *Government of Canada.*

    doi:https://doi.org/10.25318/3510001801-eng

Stevens, E., Buchannan, B., Ferrari, J, Jason, L., and Ram, D. (2014). An investigation of hope

    and context. *Journal of Community Psychology 42*(8), 937-946. doi:10.1002/jcop.21663

Stevens, E., Guerrero, M., Green, A., and Jason, L. (2018). Relationship of hope, sense of community, and quality of life. *Journal of community psychology 46*(5), 567-574. doi:10.1002/jcop.21959

Sweeten, G., Pyrooz, D., and Piquero, A. (2013). Disengaging from gangs and desistance from crime. *Justice Quarterly 30*(3), 469-500. doi:0.1080/07418825.2012.723033Ó2012

Sykes, G. (1958) *The society of captives.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Taxman, F and Gordon, J. (2009). Do fairness and equity matter? An examination of organizational justice among correctional officers in adult prisons. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour 36*(7). 695-711. doi:10.1177/0093854809335039

Travis, J., and Petersilia, J. (2001). Reentry reconsidered: A new look at an old question. *Crime & Delinquency*, *47*(3), 291-313. doi:10.1177/0011128701047003001

Travis, J. (2002). Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment. New York, NY: The New Press.

Ugelvik, T. (2021). The transformative power of trust: Exploring tertiary desistance in reinventive prisons. *British Journal of Criminology,* 1-16. doi:10.1093/bjc/azab076

Umamaheswar, J. (2014). Gate keeping and the politics of access to prisons: Implications for qualitative prison research. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology 2*(2), 1-30. doi:10.21428/88de04a1.a0f03b64

Usher, K., Durkin, J., & Bhullar, N. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and mental health impacts. *International journal of mental health nursing*, *29*(3), 315. doi:10.1111/inm.12726

Van Der Kaap-Deeder, J., Audenaert, E., Vandevelde, S., Soenens, B., Van Mastrigt, S., Mabbe, E., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2017). Choosing when choices are limited: The role of

perceived afforded choice and autonomy in prisoners' well-being. *Law and Human Behavior 41*(6), 567–578. doi:10.1037/lhb0000259

Vacca, J. S. (2004). Educated prisoners are less likely to return to prison. *Journal of Correctional Education 55*(4), 297-305. Retrieved from:https://www.jstor.org/stable/23292095

Vignansky, E., Addad, M., and Himi, H. (2018). Dispair will hold you prisoner, hope will set you free: Hope and meaning among released prisoners. *The Prison Journal 98*(3), 334-358. doi: o0r.g1/107.171/0770/302083288585515817876644920

Wai-Ming Mak, V., Man-Yin Ho, S., Li, W., and Ka-Yan Pau, B. (2021). Relationship between hope and mental health among women in prison. *Criminal Behaviour Mental Health, 31.* 96-108. doi:10.1002/cbm.2191

Walker, D. & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research 16*(4), 547-559. doi:10.1177/1049732305285972

Walker, J., Illingworth, C., Canning, A., Garner, E., Woolley, J., Taylor, P., and Amos, T. (2014). Changes in mental state associated with prison environments: A systematic review. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica 129*, 427-436. doi: 10.1111/acps.12221

Watson, T. M., and Van Der Meulen, E. (2019). Research in carceral contexts: Confronting access barriers and engaging former prisoners. *Qualitative Research, 19*(2), 182-198. doi:10.177/146879411753353

Weinrath. (2016). *Behind the walls: Inmates and correctional officers on the state of Canadian prisons*. UBC Press.

Weinrath, M., Carrington, J., and Tess, C. (2019). Pretrial detainees, sentenced prisoners, and treatment motivation. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 63*(15-16), 2693-2712.

Williams, G. and Schaefer, L. (2021). Expanding desistance theories through the integration of

    offender strategies, *Journal of Crime and Justice 44*(1), 16-

    32. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2020.1782248

Wright, S., Hulley, S., and Crewe, B. (2022). Trajectories of hope/lessness among men and

    women in the late stage of a life sentence. *Theoretical Criminology,* 1-19.

    doi:10.1177/13624806211067770

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Thanks again for agreeing to talk to me. This interview will consist of several questions about your future, your experience of incarceration and your experience of reentry.

If it's okay, I'll ask you some demographic questions and some questions about your life more generally.

How old are you?
How do you self-identify in terms of your gender?
What is your race?
What is your highest level of formal education?
Do you have children?

I'll move on to some more specific questions about your future if that's okay.

How do you define hope? What are specific ways that you feel hopeful about your future?

What are some of your goals or aspirations for the future?

What was your experience of incarceration like? Do you feel like it had a positive or negative

impact on you?

Did having hope change your experience of incarceration? How did being incarcerated affect

your aspirations and hope for the future?

I'll move on to some questions about your experience of incarceration.

What were specific examples of negative experiences while in prison? What things about being

in prison did you dislike?

Were there any positive experiences? Things about prison that you thought might have helped

you avoid trouble in future, or helped prepare you for release?

Was health care and mental health care available when requested? How long was the wait?

While you were incarcerated was there opportunity for traditional teachings and culture for

example, through ceremonies, way of life, traditional parenting, arts and crafts?

How did you get along with staff? Do you feel most treated you fairly? What impact, if any, did

the staff have on how you felt day to day? What impact, if any, did your relationship with staff

have upon your feelings of hope when you were released?

Were there any Indigenous correctional officers? Were you or would you be more comfortable

with an Indigenous correctional officer, why or why not?

Finally, I have some questions about your reentry in the community.

Upon being released from prison what were some of the goals you wanted to achieve in the

community?

Do you think there were some barriers to achieving these goals?

As an Indigenous person who has experienced incarceration, what is lacking in the correctional

facility that could have better prepared you to re-enter the community?

In your experience this far of reintegrating into the community, have you achieved any of the

goals you set out for yourself while you were incarcerated?

Based on your experience of reentry so far, how do you feel about your future? What are the

strategies you have found that help you to desist from engaging in crime?

Is there anything else that you would like to talk about? Are there any other questions that you

feel I should have asked you?

Appendix B

I WOULD LIKE YOUR INPUT!!

WHO: I AM A MASTERS STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG AND I AM CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN SASKATCHEWAN ON MALES EXPERIENCE OF PROVINCIAL INCARCERATION AND REENTRY INTO THE SASKATOON COMMUNITY.

ELIGIBILITY: MALES WHO HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL INCARCERATION FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS OR MORE.

WHAT: I WOULD LIKE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN A 45-60 MINUTE INTERVIEW BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCES. INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED THROUGH ZOOM OR TELEPHONE.

WHEN: YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY AND INTERVIEWS CAN BE SET AROUND YOUR SCHEDULE. IN RESPECT OF YOUR TIME YOU WILL RECEIVE $40 FOR PARTICIPATING

For more information please contact me by email (zerebeski-k@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca)

KELSIE ZEREBESKI, MASTERS STUDENT
DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Email: zerebeski-k@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

This research has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) at the University of Winnipeg. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you may contact the primary researcher or the ethics program officer at 204-786-9058 or ethics@uwinnipeg.ca

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Appendix C

STC URBAN FIRST NATIONS SERVICES, INC.

Owned by the Saskatoon Tribal Council

ASIMAKANISEEKAN ASKIY RESERVE # 102A

Mailing Address Suite 200 - 335 Packham Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 4S1

Tel: (306) 956-6100 Fax: (306) 244-7273

April 27, 2022

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Justice Program will provide consultation to Ms. Kelsie Zerebeski on how her research might better address the experience of Indigenous ex-offenders and their re-entry into the community after release from prison.

We will provide guidance to her on the type of questions she might ask that are relevant to Indigenous peoples.

Ms. Zerebeski has agreed to do a presentation to our organization when she is finished her research. As we work with ex-offenders who are Indigenous, this will be most helpful.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Crystal LaPlante

Director of Justice

Saskatoon Tribal Council

claplante@sktc.sk.ca

306-270-2728

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center;">Appendix D</div>

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG | Vice-President, Research and Innovation

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

TO: **Kelsie Zerebeski (Graduate Student)**
Principal Investigator

Michael Weinrath
Supervisor

FROM: **Jeannie Kerr, Chair**
University Human Ethics Research Board (UHREB)

Re: **Protocol # HE17760**
Hope, Incarceration and Reentry for Provincial Prisoners

―――

Effective: 19-May-2022   **Approval Period:** 1-Year   **Expiry:** 19-May-2023

University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. UHREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. This approval is subject to the following conditions.

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the research must be submitted to UHREB through WebGrants for approval before implementation.
3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to UHREB immediately.
4. This approval is valid for one year only and may be renewed for one additional year by submitting a renewal request through WebGrants ("Post Approval Activity" form) by the above expiry date.
5. Any unanticipated issues or events during this project that may increase the level of risk to participants, or has other ethical implications that may affect participants' welfare, must be reported to UHREB without delay.
6. A Status Report must be submitted through WebGrants to UHREB when the research is complete or terminated.
7. The University of Winnipeg may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Winnipeg UHREB policies and procedures.

Signed:

J. Kerr
_____   May 19, 2022
Chair, UHREB   _____
                                                              Date